

# COUNTER-MIGRANT SMUGGLING

## IOM's Immigration and Border Management Division

The large-scale smuggling of migrants across international borders is a global threat to migration governance, national security and the well-being of migrants. Many migrants resort to using migrant smugglers when they do not have the option of travelling through legal channels. Consequently, migrant smugglers have become an integral part of the irregular migration journey, and criminal networks profit significantly from this situation.



**Objective 7:** Address and reduce vulnerabilities in migration.

**Objective 9:** Strengthen the transnational response to smuggling of migrants.

**Objective 11:** Manage borders in an integrated, secure and coordinated manner.

**Objective 23:** Strengthen international cooperation and global partnerships for safe, orderly and regular migration.



**Target 10.7:** Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.

**Target 16.4:** By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flow, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime.

**Target 16.5:** Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms.



The International Organization for Migration's (IOM) Immigration and Border Management (IBM) Division assists Member States to build and strengthen their capacity to directly intervene in and disrupt migrant smuggling operations, requiring coordination with legislative bodies, implementing effective border control measures and ensuring the concerted action of law enforcement agencies. IOM also assists in enhancing regional and international cooperation among key States and advocating for the exchange of best practices.

### WHAT IS MIGRANT SMUGGLING?

Smuggling of migrants is the “procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident”.

– Art. 3, Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

## IOM'S COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO COUNTER MIGRANT SMUGGLING

The International Organization for Migration's (IOM) Comprehensive Approach to Counter-Migrant Smuggling addresses the complex dimensions of migrant smuggling by arranging the Organization's work around the following four pillars:

- a. Provide protection and assistance to smuggled migrants;
- b. Address the causes of migrant smuggling;
- c. Enhance States' capacity to disrupt the activities of migrant smugglers;
- d. Promote research and data collection on migrant smuggling.

## KEY DIMENSIONS OF IOM'S ROLE IN COUNTER-MIGRANT SMUGGLING



### LEGAL FRAMEWORK

IOM assists Member States with building their capacity on legislative processes through the following:

- a. Enhancing or developing procedures and processes that enable law enforcement agencies and criminal justice authorities to more effectively target migrant smugglers and develop the skills and procedures required to conduct prosecutions;
- b. Ensuring that the judiciary has the requisite national legislation in place and is party to all relevant international instruments to criminalize and prosecute migrant smugglers, including the confiscation and recovery of illegally obtained assets.

IOM is also involved in promoting legal channels of migration by facilitating access to visa procedures in order to reduce recourse to migrant smugglers.



### TECHNICAL TOOLS

IOM works in the development and strengthening of IT tools to effectively combat migrant smuggling. In particular, IOM supports States to put in place effective border management information systems as a valuable tool in combating smuggling, both through the gathering of intelligence against organized criminal gangs and the formulation of risk profiles that can assist in identifying perpetrators and those being smuggled at an early stage in the process.



### NATIONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL BORDER MANAGEMENT CAPACITY-BUILDING

IOM assists States to prevent migrant smuggling by building national and institutional capacity to detect, prevent and investigate migrant smuggling cases while providing adequate processing and referral services to smuggled migrants to meet their protection needs. This includes enhancing the institutional capacity to support an evidence-based, intelligence-led approach to countering migrant smuggling.

IOM's technical assistance includes developing or amending standard operating procedures, training on intelligence cycles, performing risk analyses, investigative skills, debriefing and interviewing, and tackling document fraud. Its support also involves guidance on tackling illicit financial flows, money laundering and corruption.

### IOM'S PARTNERS IN COUNTERING MIGRANT SMUGGLING



European  
Union



International Civil  
Aviation Organization



United Nations Office  
on Drugs and Crime



African  
Union



INTERPOL



International Air  
Transport Association



United Nations High  
Commissioner for Refugees



For more information, please contact IOM's Immigration and Border Management Division at [ibm@iom.int](mailto:ibm@iom.int).