



International Organization for Migration (IOM)  
Organisation internationale pour les migrations (OIM)  
Organización Internacional para las Migraciones (OIM)

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**International Dialogue on Migration 2012  
Managing Migration in Crisis Situations**

New York Policy Seminar

**MIGRANTS IN TIMES OF CRISIS: AN EMERGING PROTECTION CHALLENGE**

**Date:** 9 October 2012

**Organizers:** International Organization for Migration and International Peace Institute, New York

**Target audience:** diplomatic missions in New York, United Nations officials, think tanks, experts

**Background:**

The massive population movements resulting from events in North Africa during the past year have brought to the fore a major humanitarian issue: when destination countries of migration flows experience crises, turmoil and war, migrants may find themselves caught up in such situations, often with little or no means to escape and ensure their own safety. These vulnerabilities are exacerbated when migrants are in an irregular situation and when their home country lacks the capacity to effectively assist its nationals abroad. To make matters more complex, migrants may be forced to cross borders into neighbouring countries to evade life-threatening circumstances. Thus, repercussions may be felt throughout entire regions, particularly in border areas and neighbouring States. Moreover, the consequences of such situations can outlast the original crisis: this is especially true for home countries as they experience sudden and large scale returns, or as families and communities have to cope with the loss of remittance income upon which they depended. In countries of destination, vital tasks, for example in health care or extractive industries, may be left unattended due to the sudden departure of migrant workers.

**Purpose:**

The plight of stranded migrants in crisis situations is emerging as a key challenge for the international community and as a major issue for migration governance. The subject merits attention from policy and operational perspectives and needs to be approached from both a humanitarian and migration angle. The policy seminar will allow policymakers and practitioners to identify the principal issues at stake – such as humanitarian, protection, development, security and cooperation challenges – and contribute to recommendations for priority areas of action for governments and international organizations.

This policy seminar will take place in the broader context of IOM's International Dialogue on Migration ([www.iom.int/idm](http://www.iom.int/idm)) which in 2012 is framed by the theme "Managing migration in crisis situations", as chosen by the IOM membership. The seminar in New York will build on work previously undertaken in Geneva by way of two workshops on related topics which are scheduled to take place in April and September 2012, as well as on IOM's long operational experience in assisting

and protecting stranded migrants, for example in Lebanon, Yemen, Somalia, and most recently Libya and Syria. The seminar will serve to disseminate the conclusions of the workshops held in Geneva and to open up the debate to humanitarian, peace and security and development actors, as well as policymakers, government representatives and international organizations based in New York.

Overall, this programme of work proposed by IOM for 2012 aims to contribute to charting a concrete and practical way forward for the international community as regards migration in crisis situations.

The International Dialogue on Migration is IOM's principal forum for migration policy dialogue. Founded in 2001 and rooted in IOM's Constitution and Strategy Document, the IDM is open to IOM Member and Observer States, as well as international and non-governmental organizations and other partners. The IDM provides a space to analyse current and emerging issues in migration governance and to exchange experiences, policy approaches and effective practices. IDM workshops typically attract around 200 participants, including mainly government representatives, but also civil society, academia, international organizations and other sectors.