



IOM Extends Global Humanitarian Assistance



With 3.2% of the world's population identified as migrants and over one billion people on the move, the relevance of humane and orderly migration is more urgent than ever before. IOM is well-positioned to provide and administer humanitarian assistance on a global level, working with governments, agencies and local partners and stakeholders in the fast-changing and challenging global arena.

In this issue, IOM Norway raises its recovery work in earthquake-struck Nepal, Norwegian-funded IOM programs and IDPS in Ukraine and the International Working Group (IWG) on resettlement.

This issue also provides an in-depth interview with the Afghanistan ambassador to Norway, the Honourable Manisha Bakhtari. There is a detailed account of returning to Afghanistan with the Voluntary Assisted Return Programme (VARP) through the Information, Return and Reintegration of Afghan Nationals to Afghanistan (IRRANA) Project from the viewpoint of an escort mission to Kabul.

The Voluntary Assisted Return Programme (VARP) concentrates on A Dignified Way Home campaign, new television commercials and the strength of the Vulnerable Groups Project (VG). With emphasis on youth-centered campaign, we focus on counter-trafficking activities and websites through the dynamic IOM Learn, Act and Share Project.

IOM's comments on the EU Agenda on Migration' Relocation Mechanism. This EU initiative is to ensure a balanced participation of all EU member states in responding to the disproportionately high migratory pressures experienced by some EU member states. Finally, IOM follows the work of the Norway Cultural Orientation Programme (NORCO) in Lebanon, where Syrian refugees selected for resettlement receive their first introduction to Norway.

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Seven Questions: Afghanistan's Ambassador to Norway, The Honourable Manizha Bakhtari



Ms. Manizha Bakhtari was appointed Afghanistan Ambassador to the Nordic countries in 2009. Prior to her assignment, Ms. Bakhtari was the chief of staff of the Afghan foreign minister and a lecturer at Kabul University. She has written a number of stories which are influenced by her feminist views. Her stories reflect the challenges and problems Afghan women go through in day-to-day life, and analyze and interpret those challenges and problems.

She has also worked for the Cooperation Center for Afghanistan (CCA), an NGO specializing in gender, human rights and political training for Afghan women, as well as providing vocational training and advocacy for Afghan women.

Ms. Bakhtari is the author of numerous books, including *The Interesting World of News, Ethics and Law in Journalism*, the contemporary history of Afghanistan's written satire, *Angabin Neshkhand* and *Sharing Noshkhand*, and a collection of stories, *Three Angels*. Ms. Bakhtari was also editor-in chief for *Parnian Magazine*, a cultural and literature magazine.

The Afghanistan government has made great strides in the stabilization of Afghanistan as a modern state. What is the greatest challenge to Afghanistan today?

The greatest challenge Afghanistan is facing is insecurity. Insecurity permeates all aspects of daily life, making the simplest things difficult, such as going to school and work, shopping for groceries or visiting a relative. It also affects the economy and investment, as Afghanistan is a land-locked country and most of its transportation is done by road. This only contributes to the economic crisis, a challenge we are facing along with many other countries.

Of course, Afghanistan is facing social challenges as well, such as high unemployment derived from the economic crisis and the destruction of the industry and agriculture after decades of war, and the lack of rule of law in some areas. Outdated traditional or extreme conservative views are another issue, which can be resolved only through education.

Most of our readers have never been to Afghanistan. Can you tell us a story or an experience that speaks of the character and strength of the Afghan people?

When people see what the western media has to say about Afghanistan, they only receive the dark side: insecurity, poverty, war, discrimination. Yet Afghanistan is not only that. It is a country of rich culture and history that has had many positive developments in the last 13 years. The people of Afghanistan are strong and resilient, and never lose their smiles or hope for a brighter future, no matter how poor they are.

Once I was stuck in a traffic jam in Kabul when I noticed a little girl in the street. She was not older than 8-9 years. She was working, waxing boots in the street, with her school bag next to her and one book displayed on the floor in front. She was studying while waxing boots, glancing at the book every moment she had free. She had a difficult life, no doubt, but she had hopes and dreams and the strength to achieve them.

What has been your experience with IOM's Voluntary Assisted Return Programme (VARP), specifically through the Information, Return and Reintegration of Afghan Nationals to Afghanistan (IRRANA) project?

The VARP and IRRANA programmes have been very successful, helping many Afghans to return. The greatest achievement of these programs is that they not only provide the means for return, but for a successful return. These include aid/benefits such as educational grants, job training or support to start a business. It provides migrants a ground to start over and make a successful life in their home countries. It also helps the economy, as it helps to create local businesses which in time can provide more jobs in the country. From this Embassy's point of view, the experience has been extremely successful and the cooperation between IOM and the Afghan Embassy and the Afghan authorities has been fluent and efficient.

What is the Afghanistan government's position on forced return?

The Afghan authorities are against forced deportation of refugees, especially vulnerable groups like women, children and the elderly. The goal of the Ministry of Refugees is to ensure the safety and protection of Afghan refugees and their human rights. We of course welcome back all Afghans, as long as it is their wish to return to their country.

If you could speak directly to the Afghanistan diaspora considering returning to Afghanistan, what would you say?

I would like to say to the Afghan in Norway that if they do not meet the conditions to receive asylum, it is better to go back to Afghanistan. If not, they just spend years in asylum centers to be finally rejected and returned home by force. Afghanistan is their country, too and we need their help to rebuild it. Norway is a beautiful place and a great country, but only in Afghanistan does one feel truly at home.

Norway and Afghanistan have a successful history of cooperation and mutual respect. What do you see and hope for this relationship in the future?

I see the relation continuing as good as it is and also extended in many ways. Norway is aiding Afghanistan in different programs like education and human rights, but I would also like to see a more developed economic relationship. Afghanistan is a country with many resources, like gas and metals. Norway is one of the leading countries in the gas and oil industry, and can provide counsel and legal assistance when Afghanistan negotiates contracts with big companies. I would also like to see our cultural relations extended and strengthened.

Can you relate an experience or story that speaks of the positive nature of Norwegian involvement and work in Afghanistan?

Before being an Ambassador, I visited Maymana in Faryab province, where Norway had a camp. The local people were very happy about the respectful and kind behavior of the Norwegian personnel in the camp. In Norway, I visit Vinderen School every year. The children raise money to help Afghan children, and send them many letters. This has shown me that not only is the Norwegian government involved in helping Afghanistan, but Norwegian society is as well.

THE IRRANA PROJECT

What is IRRANA?

The objective of the project is to facilitate the voluntary return and sustainable reintegration of Afghan nationals residing in Norway, to Afghanistan. It aims at an orderly, humane and dignified voluntary return and sustainable reintegration back into society.

Who can apply for IRRANA?

Afghan nationals with unsuccessful asylum claims, or with pending asylum claims, who wish to return; Afghan nationals in an irregular situation; Afghan nationals with a residence permit who want to return to Afghanistan.

Before you can be included in the return programme IOM needs to get approval from the Norwegian authorities. Those who have 'Dublin' status are not eligible for IRRANA, but they can contact IOM to get information about receiving another type of return assistance.

IRRANA in Norway offers the following services:

Return and reintegration information and counseling; acquisition of travel documents; travel arrangements; airport assistance at departure and in transit.

IRRANA services in Afghanistan include:

Assistance at the airport with border and customs clearance; provision of medical assistance, if needed; further support with reintegration advice; information about security guidelines in Afghanistan; temporary accommodation at the IOM operated reception centre in Kabul will be provided, if needed; onward transportation to your final destination; information about governmental institutions, international and local NGOs and UN programmes that can be relevant upon return.

The reintegration component includes the following:

You will receive 1,800 USD if you are an asylum seeker. These will be paid in cash by IOM in Afghanistan. If you have a residence permit in Norway you will receive 15,000 NOK from UDI. The money will be paid in Norway before departure.

You will receive in-kind assistance worth 4,500 USD. IOM Afghanistan will assist you in investing in one of the following reintegration options:

- Education, training or schooling
- Employment salary subsidies
- Set-up of small business

Additional reintegration support can be granted to the following returnees:

- Housing allowance for vulnerable returnees
- Vocational training for people between 18 and 30 years of age

You will receive continuous follow-up and reintegration assistance for between six to nine months after the date of return.

Nepal:

Nepal's devastating earthquakes have wreaked havoc and destruction on the mountain nation. IOM and Norway assist in urgent recovery and counter-trafficking efforts.



UPDATE: To date, Norway has contributed over 155 million NOK to humanitarian assistance to Nepal, including 15 million NOK to IOM's direct appeal for Nepal.

On 25 April 2015, a 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck Nepal with its epicentre in Lamjung District, approximately 81 km northwest of the capital, Kathmandu. Nepal has suffered numerous aftershocks and another large 7.3 magnitude earthquake on May 12, 2015.



An estimated eight million people have been affected across 39 of Nepal's 75 districts, with over two million people living in the 11 most severely affected districts.

Initial analysis suggests that over 530,000 houses have been

damaged and over 2.8 million people displaced.

The Government of Nepal is leading the response through the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC). The Government estimates that over 70,000 houses have been destroyed and up to 90 per cent of health facilities in rural areas have been damaged.



Emergency shelter and health assistance are vital in preparation for the impending monsoon season and have been highlighted as priority sectors for intervention. There is also an urgent need to locate displaced populations and gather more

information on their needs and current living conditions in order to provide the most vulnerable with immediate life-saving services while they are displaced.

This IOM appeal highlights emergency humanitarian assistance that IOM, as Cluster lead for the Camp Management and Camp

Coordination (CCCCM) and partner in the Shelter, Health, Protection and Early Recovery Clusters proposes to deliver in Nepal between April and July 2015.

In developing this appeal, IOM closely consulted with humanitarian partners and the government to determine the most urgent needs of the affected populations.

8 million

People affected

2 million

People living in the 11 most severely affected districts

530,000

Houses have been damaged

IOM APPEAL (USD)

TOTAL \$31 M

	Camp Coordination and Camp Management	5 M
	Shelter and Non Food Items (NFIs)	20 M
	Health and Psychosocial	2.5 M
	Protection	1 M
	Early Recovery	2.5 M

Ukraine: Norway's Continued Efforts to Assist Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

by IOM Ukraine's Varvara Zhlutenko



The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs continues to actively contribute to the efforts to assist internally displaced persons (IDPs), estimated to be over 1,000,000 people, in Ukraine. Working with the European Union, the United States State Department, the UN Central Response Fund, the Swiss Confederation, the German Humanitarian Fund and the government of Japan, Norway has distributed substantial assistance to the people of Ukraine.

In the IOM-administered IDPs programme, 526 vulnerable IDP families have already received non-food items and similar assistance

with Norwegian funds. 305 families are in the process of getting assistance. 70% of all these families have children.

The place of their residence before re-location: AR Crimea – 72 families, the Donetsk region – 468 families and the Luhansk Region – 291 families.

Type of assistance	Number of families*
Non-food items**	326
Medicine	161
Hygiene items	172
Special needs***	33
Psychological counseling	60
Professional equipment	11
Legal counselling	5
Other	77

Some families received several types of assistance

** clothes, bed linen, heaters, construction materials etc.

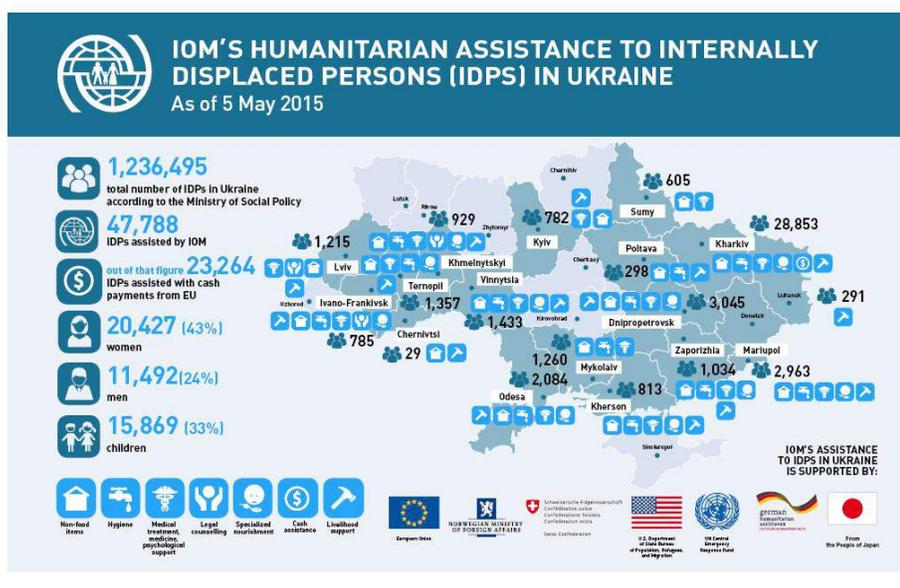
*** baby food, or covering the needs of disabled people

Micro-enterprise Training

285 IDPs (165 women and 120 men) have participated in micro-enterprise trainings conducted by IOM partner NGOs in Ukraine (Vinnytsia, Lviv, Ternopil, Dnipropetrovsk, and Odesa) with the support of Norway.



As of mid-May, 130 people out of the training participants have been supported with grants up to USD 2,500 for micro-entrepreneurship or USD 700 for self-employment. The business plan defense sessions are ongoing.



IOM's Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Ukraine

Over 47,000 people, including 15,000 children, have been assisted by IOM's humanitarian assistance, partially funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The assistance programs, which include the whole of Ukraine, involve non-food items, hygiene, medical treatment, medicine and psychological support, legal counselling, specialized nourishment, professional equipment and livelihood support.



NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

COUNTER-HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND VULNERABLE GROUPS PROJECT



IOM X (Learn, Act, Share)

In partnership with USAID, Learn, Act and Share is an innovative and dynamic project aimed predominately at counter-trafficking efforts in Asia (56% of all trafficking victims are in Asia Pacific). The project features a youth-focused website, the Kit (age-appropriate, graphic-rich learning kit for students and teachers, including facts about human trafficking, what to consider when planning a counter-trafficking action, safety and security and stopping exploitation) and online E-learning. <http://iomx.org/#learnbar>



Vulnerable Groups (VG) Monitoring Report Now Available

Extensive publicity and awareness-raising work has resulted in a dramatic increase in returns through the Vulnerable Groups (VG) Projects. VG's informative monitoring report details the motivation for return as well as specific stories of return for recipients of reintegration assistance. http://issuu.com/iomnorway/docs/vg_monitoring_report_pdf_1.

FAST FACTS (IOM AND CNN)

Over 20,000,000

Number of world trafficking victims at any given time

670 NOK

Average price of a male, female or child slave tricked, forced or coerced into slavery (CNN Freedom Project)

150,000,000,000

Illegal human trafficking criminal activity in USD



Vulnerable Groups Project: Providing an Alternative for the Most Vulnerable Migrants in Norway

Since 2007, IOM Norway has assisted victims of trafficking with return and reintegration support. In 2012, the reintegration project for victims of trafficking was expanded to also include other vulnerable migrants under the Vulnerable Groups (VG) Project. The project is part of the Voluntary Assisted Return Programme (VARP) at IOM Norway. All migrants who return under the Vulnerable Groups Project receive individually tailored return and reintegration assistance through close support and follow-up both prior to return and in the first year after returning to country of origin. Vulnerable migrants are entitled to 7,800 USD in reintegration support to cover immediate needs, housing and to start an income-generating activity, such as a small business or a work placement.

Many victims of trafficking who approach IOM are at first sceptical. Many wish they could stay in Norway, yet have come to the realization that returning with IOM is the best alternative given their situation. At IOM Norway, there are two staff working full time on the Vulnerable Groups Project. Considerable time is devoted to each individual as it takes time to build up trust and to organize a safe return, taking into account the individual situation and needs. Project caseworker, Arbresha Dula, said, *"It's important to prepare the migrants well before the return takes place. We take a step at a time with the migrant to ensure that the return is organized in a safe and dignified way, and that the migrant understands what IOM can assist with and how the support is provided in country of origin."*

Returning might also represent a risk to victims of trafficking. Some victims were trafficked with the involvement of family members or other members of their local community, and it is therefore a considerable risk to return to the same local community. For some victims, the best alternative is therefore to re-establish a life in a different part of the country. Others have strong family networks who support and help victims becoming more resilient upon return. IOM Oslo always conducts a risk assessment prior to return. Project coordinator, Kristin Strøm, explains, *"We always discuss the risk of re-trafficking with the victims. We ask what they are afraid of and try to find ways to mitigate these risks. Victims always get the option of reporting to the police in country of origin. Some decide to tell their story to the police, yet others do not want contact with the police. It is up to them to decide."*

In 2014, IOM Norway assisted eight victims of trafficking as well as seven minor children of victims. To date for 2015, nine victims of trafficking have been assisted with return and reintegration through the Vulnerable Groups Project. The needs of the victims returning with IOM are diverse. Some are from poor backgrounds, have low levels of education and return to countries of origin without a family network to support them. Others are more resourceful and have support from their families. The need for support from IOM naturally also depends on their situation upon return. As Dula explains, *"We are in contact with some victims who have returned on a weekly basis over the phone in addition to the support they receive from the IOM office in country of origin. They need to feel taken care of and we assist actively from Norway after their return. Others contact IOM to implement their reintegration plan, but are not in need of close contact with us"*.

Despite the inherent challenges, return and reintegration represents an important alternative to victims of trafficking, according to Strøm. She stresses, *"Return for vulnerable migrants, and especially victims of trafficking, is never easy, yet it represents a chance to have a new start and to take control of your life and future."*

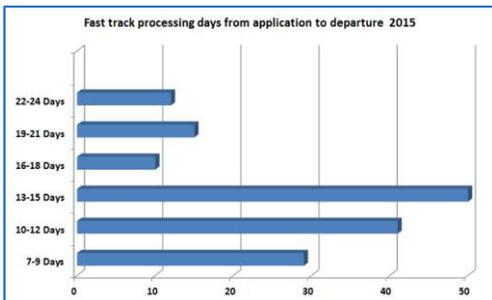
VARP NEWS



New Television Production - IOM Can Help You

IOM Norway has expanded its capacity and reach in creating a new television campaign designed for Norwegian television. Based on a series of productions from IOM Poland, the 15-second spot features IOM Norway's in-house media and language talent. The narrative describes a man's desire to go home and the assistance IOM may provide. Plans are underway for an expansion of television and media productions to reach not only rejected asylum seekers but irregular migrants as well. The production aired on a minimum of six Norwegian channels May 24, 2015.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AwVAz5TA16U>



RETURN PROCESSING TIME

35 days

Average return (application submission to departure)



Campaign posters
A Dignified Way Home
 Posters featuring the intangible rewards of the Voluntary Assisted Return Programme (VARP) in English and Norwegian for targeted audiences in Oslo, Drammen, Tromsø, Bergen, Trondheim and Kristiansand.

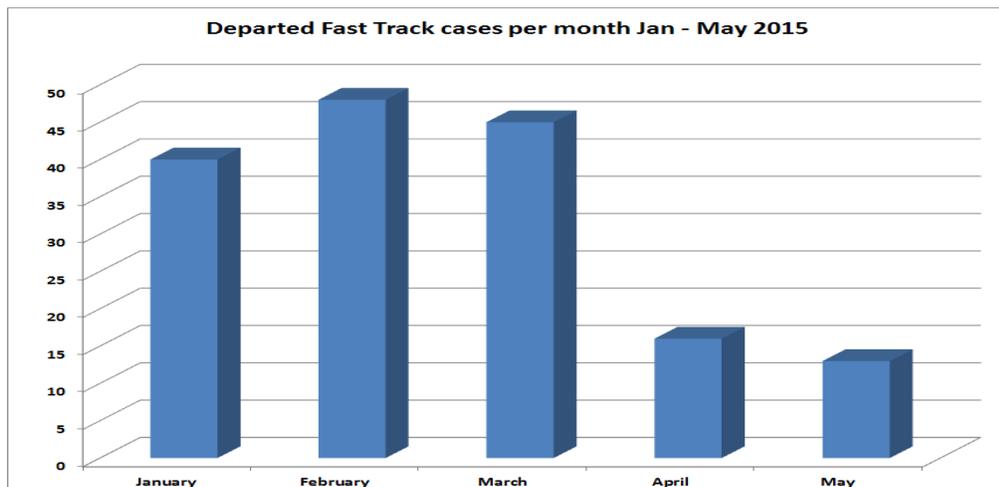
A Dignified Way Home Campaign

IOM Norway continues its efforts to reach irregular migrants by launching a nationwide campaign focusing on the intangible rewards of the Voluntary Assisted Return Programme. The campaign is aimed at reaching irregular migrants who are not part or have withdrawn from the reception center system as well as irregular migrants in the reception center system.

The campaign develops the concept of **A Dignified Way Home/En verdig hjemreise**. Returning to your country of origin through forced deportation can be a humiliating and debilitating experience. The ads reflect that voluntary return is an honourable and dignified alternative to this process with the slogan **IOM can help you**.

An original concept developed for IOM Norway, **A Dignified Way Home** produces new material in addition to elements from a campaign by IOM Finland. The campaign also will be featured online and in mass media, including television, creating a recurring theme that will run throughout IOM Norway's materials.

The ad incorporates images and phrases of family, homecoming and the future, as well as key phrases like courage, pride, independence, joy, love and determination. The posters will be featured in public transport (buses, subway and trams) around Norway, with a heavy concentration of advertisements in central Oslo, including Oslo S. The ads will also feature original quotes ("I am happy to be reunited with my family after returning," "I needed help and IOM understood my situation," "Home is where my family is.") from stories of migrants who have returned to their country of origin. These ads will tie in with the launch of a new Postcards of Return in September.



A Dignified Way Home: A Voyage to Afghanistan

by Howard Cameron Davis, Return Councilor, Salangen Kommune

Howard Cameron Davis escorted an Afghan returnee from a Norwegian reception center to Kabul. His detailed account, from pre-departure to arrival, reflects IOM Norway's commitment to a dignified way home.

Pre-departure in Norway: The returnee applied for asylum in Norway. Returnee now very keen to return to homeland, asylum application refused after a number of appeals and states reunion with his family in Kabul as main motivation. Very close dialogue between reception centre returnee, IOM Norway, during this phase. Close contact locally between reception centre member regarding responsibility, common approach, open dialog on details and preparations. While local dialog was important from day to day, it was very important for returnee (and reception centre) to have good contact with IOM Norway.

Daily contact considered necessary due to applicants needs for information, often repeated, and need to inform, discuss and prepare for journey and reunion. A number of meetings also focused on time spent in Norway, putting things in perspective, experiences – good and bad, that applicant can build on regarding resettlement in home country.

Reception centre drove the returnee and escort to local airport after farewell with reception centre staff. We think it is important that the returnee closes one chapter before commencing another and that the journey starts in a relaxed and controlled manner. Returnee commented on the weather: he arrived four years ago in snow and now leaving in much the same weather. The returnee remembered his arrival and his experiences during the drive to airport.



The flight from to Gardermoen gave us adequate time for more discussion and reflection. I thought applicant was "reliving" his time in Norway. While waiting, we were joined by another person travelling home with IOM and I think this was positive. Short briefing from IOM airport staff before check-in and security and through to International departure hall where IOM delivered travel documents, etc. Very good tone from IOM staff, many questions, all answered.

During flights the returnee talked constantly reflecting over time spent in Norway. He also used time on mobile telephone (on the ground), nervous but impatient, pleased to have an escort and used a lot of time to get his experiences in context. He also exchanged conversation with one of the other three people returning to Afghanistan.

Flight from Istanbul-Kabul: Boarding OK, food and drink, flight into Kabul uneventful. Applicant sat by window, quieter now by perhaps important to view homeland and prepare for arrival. Again, the returnee was very talkative and told me about his time in Istanbul and his experiences en route to Europe. It took him three months to travel from Turkey to Norway and three hours to return. I felt he was retracing his steps, talked openly about what he'd experienced.

Arrival:



Arrival in Kabul: quick identity and arrival through customs/passport control. Returnee was tired, quiet but expectant. The arrival procedure at Kabul airport for the four returnees was very friendly and efficient. All returnees received and signed for money for transport home to addresses in Kabul. A number of persons were involved in this process. When the briefing was completed I wished the four returnees good luck and took farewell with my charge. **After four very eventful years, this young man had come home.**

Evaluation of the trip and recommendations for return:

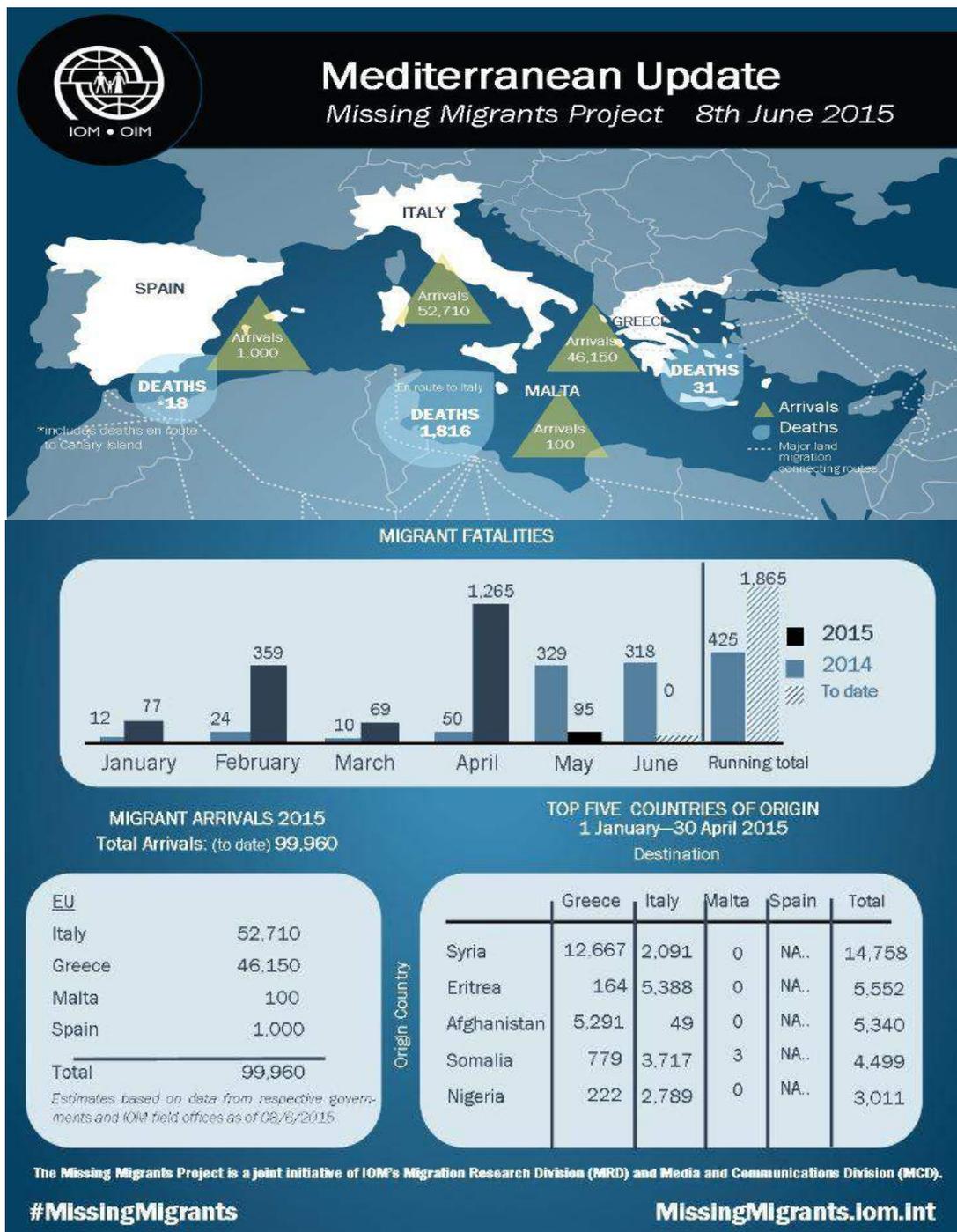
I would like to thank the staff at IOM Norway who participated in planning and organizing this journey, both for the returnee, and permitting me to travel as escort, which gave me a greater insight into organizing such a complex operation and journey, something the returnee (or reception centre members) are not always aware of. Both from the returnee's point of view and myself (Return Councilor/Escort) the journey went according to plan. Information during the application and planning phase harmonized with the practical aspects, in other words, no changes, surprises or disappointments. This is very important if we are to ensure that returnees (and potential returnees) have faith in the system. I would very much like to thank the IOM Kabul staff for their immense hospitality and allowing me to be present and observe their professional approach to working with people in a vulnerable state (When humans need help, it helps to be human).



Death in the Southeast Asian and Mediterranean Seas

The number of missing and lost migrants continues on an unprecedented scale in the Mediterranean and the seas of Southeast Asia. William Lacy Swing, Director General, IOM, reaffirmed in "Tide of migrants in Mediterranean is the world's problem" (worldwide publication) that the problem is not just Europe's and Asia's problem but a global one.

<http://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-0423-swing-migrants-20150423-story.html>



Discussing the EU Agenda on Migration

From Jo De Backer, IOM EU Policy and Liaison Officer, IOM Brussels

Following the EU's Agenda on Migration, which includes a distribution mechanism for intra-EU relocation of persons in clear need of international protection, Jo De Backer spoke at the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) seminar "A Humanitarian Crisis on the Doorstep of Europe" in Oslo.

IOM welcomes the EU Agenda on Migration as a good initial step towards a comprehensive European approach but we feel that to achieve this more attention will need to be given to improving migration governance across the board. While IOM particularly welcomes the Commission's renewed focus on life saving, we are equally ready to support further measures that include, but move beyond a crisis response towards medium- and longer-term reforms which better address persistent structural issues at the root of irregular migration.

IOM's key messages in dealing with the situation in the Mediterranean should guide responses – it is essential that they are pursued simultaneously and with equal resolve:

1. Saving lives and protecting rights
2. Addressing the root causes and push factors of irregular migration
3. Promoting safe, orderly and dignified human mobility
4. Developing partnerships for growth and competitiveness

"A crisis response is not enough. Urgent humanitarian action is needed to end the loss of life and suffering and protect rights but it is

equally urgent to face and resolve the structural causes of the present situation. IOM believes it is important to recognize that large scale migration is inevitable, necessary and desirable if well governed through the adoption and implementation of sensible and responsible policies. We need to refocus our cooperation recognizing our challenges and responsibilities are shared and interlinked."

- IOM supports the idea of a distribution mechanism for intra-EU relocation of persons in clear need of international protection to ensure a fair and balanced participation of all EU member states in responding to the disproportionately high migratory pressures experienced by some EU MS. This is in line with IOM's advocacy for responsibility (burden) sharing and intra-EU solidarity.

- The redistribution key is based on criteria such as GDP, size of population, unemployment rate and past number of asylum seekers and of resettled refugees.

- IOM would also like to highlight the need for due consideration of **family unity** as well as common standards for international protection across the EU member states. Moreover, solid integration programmes will be needed at EU national level so that persons in need of international protection receive the support they need to contribute to our societies and are allowed at the earliest opportunity to work in the concerned member state.

- IOM is ready to support EU member states with practical and logistical support including pre-departure assistance such as information provision, case processing, cultural orientation

programmes as well as transportation arrangements, transit assistance and arrival assistance.



- **Relocation** is an expression of internal EU solidarity and burden-sharing, particularly with those countries at the borders of Europe that receive a high number of refugees.

- **Refugee resettlement** Resettlement is a protection tool for refugees whose lives and liberty are at risk; a 'durable solution' for refugees alongside local integration and voluntary repatriation; and an expression of solidarity with those developing countries that host the majority of the world's refugees.

In terms of **Resettlement**, the EU agenda proposes an EU-wide resettlement scheme. This is a clear message of solidarity and responsibility sharing with first countries of asylum and provides a durable solution for those in need. The scheme consists of **a single European pledge of 20,000 resettlement places**. It will cover all **EU Member States** based on GDP, size of population, unemployment rate and past numbers of asylum seekers and resettled refugees and takes into account the voluntary efforts already made by Member States. The **priority regions for resettlement** will include North Africa, the Middle East and the Horn of Africa, focusing on the countries where the Regional Development and Protection Programmes are being implemented.

Saving migrants lives in The Mediterranean is not enough!

By Joost van der Aalst, Chief of Mission, IOM Norway



IOM Greece Chief of Mission, Daniel Esdras, and Norway (Chief of Mission Joost van der Aalst) shouldering the cooperation in AVRR.

Greece is at the doorstep of Europe. For years, migrants have used this route until that crossing became a strong, guarded border. From 2010 to 2014, the number of entries decreased from 50,000 to 2,000. Once inside the Schengen area, many tried to make their way further into Europe. Asking for asylum in Greece was often not a preferred option, as this procedure is lengthy and reception facilities for waiting migrants are very poor.

Those who got 'stuck' in Greece often applied to IOM for voluntary assisted return. Since 2010, 27,000 migrants have returned.

Since last year, many migrants, including Syrian refugees, are embarking on anything that sails from Turkey to nearby Greek islands. This year alone, 34,000 people have arrived and many more might possibly come. IOM, together with the Greek Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction, organized a three-day seminar to brainstorm with counterparts how best to prepare and respond to the challenges of this migration flow.

Norwegian authorities supportive of the IOM programme participated in the meeting, recognizing their solidarity and partnership are crucial to avoid another humanitarian catastrophe. Boats being used to pass the blue liquid borders are often no more than dinghies. It is a credit to vigilant coast guards that the death toll so far is 51 in the Aegean Sea.

However, any loss of life is one too many. Hence, reason enough for stepping up to a comprehensive approach in Greek migration movement. This will require building up capacities in temporary accommodation, providing protection to vulnerable migrants and relocation as well as increased capacity in registration and administration of the arrivals. It is essential that the existing IOM structure respond to the needs of migrants and facilitate when requested in their return in dignity. The Mediterranean migratory flows are reaching an all-high number and are likely not to stop due to the instable conditions in the region. It is not an emergency that takes the European community by surprise. Bold action that supports the existing mechanism in preventing a humanitarian catastrophe is what is needed.

Official numbers of irregular Greece border crossings (Source: Hellenic Police & Coast Guards):

Year: 2015 (as of March)

Land Borders: 317
Sea Borders: 12,960
Total: 13, 2777

Main Countries of Origin: Syria, Albania, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia

Integration Working Group (IWG) Meets In Norway

IOM Norway participated in the Integration Working Group (IWG) two-day seminar in Norway, hosted by the Norwegian government and the Norwegian Red Cross. Participants included the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC). Four meetings are planned for this year. The first was co-hosted by the US and Australia on integrity in the resettlement process. The second was hosted by Norway on simplification of the resettlement process.

IOM Norway's Chief of Mission Joost Van Der Aalst introduced a discussion on managing expectations, both pre & post-arrival, with the Norwegian Cultural Orientation Programme (NORCO), Migrant Training & Integration Support Unit. Joost van der Aalst, said, "Respect for differences, personal engagement and common realistic objectives are cornerstones in integration processes. Practices all around demonstrate that where people in society allow for participation and are inclusive, integration is taking place. Sharing such best practices is the way forward – not reinventing the wheel, not creating more rules and structures, not redefining integration – that will foster the energy to secure and maintain a world to live in peace for all."

Discussions included introducing integration in Norway (Department of Integration & Diversity & Ministry of Children Equality & Social Inclusion), cooperation and collaboration with municipalities and other local stakeholders (Norwegian Directorate for Diversity & Integration (IMDi - Regional Office West) and reception, study & employment: integration for emergency resettlement cases (Municipality of Oslo). The Norwegian Red Cross' Annette Sørli (and participant in IOM Norway's panel discussion for International Migrants Day) led a discussion on the role of NGOs in resettlement and integration in Norway. Of vital interest was the inclusion of migrants from Syria, Congo and Sudan, who discussed their experiences. The IWG also visited the Norwegian Agency for Lifelong Learning (VOX) in Oslo as well as the Primary Healthcare Workshop (PMV).



Cultural Orientation: Preparing Syrian Refugees for Resettlement in Norway

IOM Norway works in Lebanon to prepare Syrian-quota refugees for their time in Norway.

By Stine Sandnes

In March 2011, a civil war erupted in Syria, forcing more than 11 million people from their homes. The war has claimed more than 220,000 Syrian lives. By May 2015, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNCHR) registered over four million Syrian refugees scattered around the Middle-East. Nearly two million of these refugees are in Lebanon. Norway has committed to accepting 1,500 Syrian refugees.

Through the Norwegian Cultural Orientation Programme (NORCO) in classes given by specially-trained IOM staff, refugees are given intensive Cultural Orientation (CO) training for adults aged 16 and older. Children receive training through games, theatre-in-education and animation. The CO trainers are fluent in both Norwegian and Arabic and are Norwegian citizens. This allows them the ability to understand the cultural context of both identities, making learning and teaching easier and more effective. It is also a good way for the refugees to learn about Norway and reduce culture shock prior to their arrival.

Through the CO program, refugees are given the opportunity to get a closer look at Norway. For example, the CO classes try to put an emphasis on preparing the Syrians for the cold weather in addition to teaching them about Norwegian geography. The CO classes combine discussion, visual teaching aids, theatre-for-development and learning through dialogue and case studies.

The participants are eager to learn about Norway and how they can adjust quickly. To make this process easier, the CO facilitators focus on topics like climate, history, geography housing, introduction programme, education, employment, health care and other public services. The participants are engaged and say that they are highly motivated to learn the language fast, which is one of the most important things for integrating in Norway. The participants are looking forward to take part of the Norwegian cultural and civil society. The children say that they are looking forward to helping siblings with the language, joining local sports teams and joining other activities. The participants are looking forward to a secure environment and the opportunity to work and study. The parents express excitement about thinking about the possibilities for their children's education and future. The women say that they are also looking forward to working and making money, and being able to leave their children in the kindergarten or school.

The participants come from all life stages of and socio-economic backgrounds. Some participants are very interested in knowing about the income and expenses in Norway. Many of the participants would also like to know of the possibility to continue their skills and profession. Some other participants also wanted to know of the possibilities for a second job in addition to the Introduction Course. They also asked about Norwegian citizenship.

Many participants are also very eager to know how they can start to contribute to the Norwegian society and wants to get politically active. The participants also wanted to know about the political system and parties in Norway, when they can start voting and after how long they will be able to join a political party.

Coming to Norway will not be easy. The Syrians face many challenges such as learning the Norwegian language, continuing halal and shaking hands with the opposite sex. Child upbringing is also an issue, concerning religious views and Child Protection Services (Barnevernet). The majority of the refugees want to know of the possibility of return, and if Norway would send them back when the situation in their home country improves.

With the help of the CO program, these issues can be minimized and refugees can be given starter tools to appropriately handle them. Throughout the training, NORCO has received very good feedback from the refugees regarding the programme. The participants say that they are content and happy with the information given. They say that they now feel more prepared and motivated to integrate. While integration may be difficult, IOM remains committed to assisting refugees and making a difference in people's lives.