



Foreword

Telling our Positive Stories!

The Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) of the UN Migration Agency (IOM) is proud to be launching the first issue of its monthly newsletter entitled “For Migrants.”

This newsletter is part of the regional media and public information strategy for the years 2018-2021 and is designed to tell the general public, the youth, the future migrants and current ones, as well as the press and partners about some of IOM’s contributions in the region.

In this issue, we’ve highlighted three important policy-oriented updates: the signing of a cooperation agreement with the Kingdom of Bahrain, which marks a new milestone for IOM’s work in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries; the signing of an important agreement on climate change with the Government of Sudan, expected to go a long way towards building the resilience of communities to the effects of climate change; and the establishment of procedural safeguards for the implementation of a consistent set of actions for the protection of unaccompanied and separated migrant children in Libya.

We’ve included as well, positive stories from the field offices, of which IOM Kuwait’s support to the migrant workers returning home; the story of two Syrian refugee girls in Jordan; Yemen’s celebration of International Women’s Day despite the ongoing conflict; and Egypt’s innovative awareness campaign.

“For Migrants” emanates from our belief in our work’s impact for the protection of migrants’ dignity, safety and mobility.

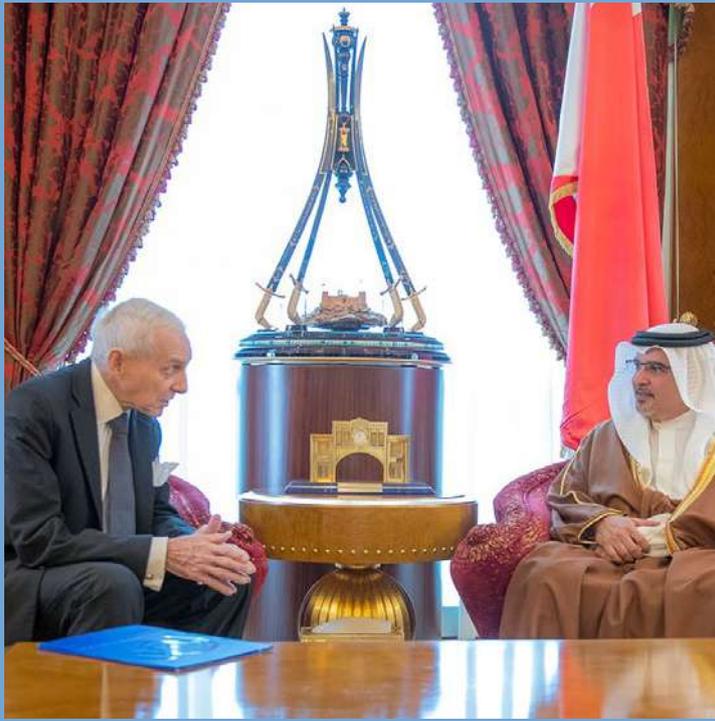
I wish you a pleasant read.



Safaa, is 9 years old, she has been living in displacement with her family for two years. Chamakor camp, east of Mosul, Iraq.
Photo by: Raber Aziz

Carmela Godeau,

**Regional Director, UN Migration Agency
(IOM) Middle East and North Africa**



(His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa and IOM Director General, William Lacy Swing.
Photo by IOM.

UN Migration Agency Signs Cooperation Agreement with the Kingdom of Bahrain

March 8 marks a milestone in the relations between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the UN Migration Agency (IOM), following the signing ceremony of a Cooperation Agreement that will pave the way for establishing official IOM presence in Bahrain.

Upon an invitation by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister of Bahrain, IOM's Director General (DG), Ambassador William Lacy Swing, visited Bahrain on March 8 to discuss strengthening Bahrain-IOM relations.

The signed Cooperation Agreement complements Bahrain's ten years of IOM observership and crowns the strong relationship between IOM and the Kingdom, particularly through IOM technical cooperation with the Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA). This significant development will be the cornerstone for advancing cooperation between Bahrain and IOM in the fields of Migration Management and Counter-Trafficking.

Swing conveyed to His Royal Highness IOM's support of his leadership and vision in the reforms of the Bahrain labour market, which will certainly make a positive impact on Bahrain and the region. He further assured of IOM's firm support in advancing the priorities of the Government of Bahrain through its global expertise in the vast field of migration.

UN Migration Agency (IOM) Bahrain

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Mr Marcello Goletti, Head of Transition and Recovery Unit, Mr Andrew Gray, Officer in Charge, IOM Sudan, Dr. Hassan Abdul Qader Hilal, Minister of Minister of Environment and Natural Resources and Urban Development, Dr. Nour Eldin Ahmed Abdalla, Secretary General of the Higher Council for Environment and Natural Resources (HCENR) during the signing ceremony of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Photo by Dana Elsieid.

An Important Agreement on Climate Change in Sudan

On March 10, 2018 an important agreement on climate change was signed in Sudan to boost cooperation between the UN Migration Agency (IOM) and the Government of Sudan (GoS) in regards to climate change and human mobility programming within the framework on Migration, Environment and Climate Change (MECC).

The agreement provides an effective roadmap that ensures complementarity and mutually supportive actions between the GoS and IOM, it will go a long way towards building the resilience of communities to the effects of climate change. In Sudan, food security and water supply are heavily dependent on rainfall.

Approximately 70 per cent of Sudan's rural population rely on traditional rainfed agriculture for their food and income, and over 80 per cent of Sudan's population rely on rainfall for their water supply requirements. Crop failure and high livestock mortality increase rural and urban migration. According to Sudan's climate change risk profile the projected changes in climate include a 0.5°–3° C increase in temperature by 2050, increased unpredictability of seasonal rain, increased incidence of drought as well as rising sea levels and higher storm surges could be expected.

The agreement will also strengthen Sudan's contribution to the regional strategies such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN).

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Intake system of the rehabilitated water irrigation system, Salamiyah, along the Tigris River in Ninewa, Iraq.
Photo by Sandra Black.



Returning migrants accompanied by IOM staff at Kuwait airport.
Photo by IOM Kuwait.

Water Flows for Returning Community South of Mosul

During the period that ISIL held the town of Salamiyah, on the Tigris River, homes and infrastructure were significantly damaged. This included the irrigation system, vital to local farms.

When the town was retaken in November 2016, displaced community members began to return, including many farmers.

In cooperation with the Government of Iraq, IOM identified Salamiyah as a return area in need of assistance. The irrigation system was identified as a priority by the community, and rehabilitation began in October 2017, with the financial support of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA).

The project required rehabilitation of the generators, electrical system and pump station. More than 60 community members participated in a cash for work effort to dig out debris from the irrigation channels.

In March 2018, IOM Iraq held a ceremony to handover the project to the Irrigation Directorate of Mosul. Water is now running through 20 kilometres of irrigation canals, enabling farmers to again grow their crops. The water reaches 12 villages and 2.5 million square metres of farmland – which will have a positive impact on an estimated 14,000 people.

Supporting Migrants Returning Home

From January to April 2018, more than 300 women in Kuwait who had been trafficked or exploited benefitted from the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programme of the UN Migration Agency (IOM).

Following the announcement of an amnesty period by Kuwait's Ministry of Interior on 21 January 2018, expatriates who were in violation of their terms of residency could now leave the country freely without being subject to fines or punishments as stipulated by Amiri Decree No. 959/17, the Aliens Residence Law.

IOM Kuwait was supported by six case workers from other IOM missions in conducting interviews with potential victims at the Government Shelter for Foreign Workers, who had escaped abuse and exploitation at the hands of various recruitment agencies and employers.

This programme was funded by IOM's Emergency Fund (EF) and the Global Assistance Fund (GAF).

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IOM staff conducting interview with a migrant woman.
Photo by IOM Libya.



Two friends on a bus in Azraq camp, Jordan.
Photo by Laura Sisniega

IOM Steps up Child Protection for Migrants in Libya

The UN Migration Agency (IOM) has, in close cooperation with the United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), established procedural safeguards for the implementation of a consistent set of actions for the protection of unaccompanied and separated migrant boys and girls under the age of 18 in Libya. A Best Interest Determination (BID) panel is convened for complex cases where child protection experts discuss and identify protection solutions for individual cases.

In the first BID Panel, which took place in the Libyan capital Tripoli on 29 March, the case of Sofiya* (name called to protect identity), a 7 year old girl from West Africa, was addressed by experts from IOM, UNICEF and UNHCR.

In 2017, Sofiya lost her mother at sea, while they embarked on the dangerous Mediterranean Sea crossing in an attempt to reach Europe. Sofiya was then brought back to Libya by the Coast Guard and transferred to a detention centre, where she was identified by IOM as an unaccompanied child. IOM visited Sofiya on regular basis to conduct a child protection assessment and started efforts to trace her family back home. After a few weeks, IOM found Sofiya's father and initiated the family verification.

The final recommendation of the first BID Panel was to reunite Sofiya with her father. Sofiya's father expressed immense relief and happiness of hearing news about his daughter.

In March 2018, IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix identified some 29,370 unaccompanied migrant children in Libya, the real figure could be much higher.

Friends on a Bus: The Story of Hanadi and Nour

Hanadi and Nur are two young refugees from Syria. They became best friends in Azraq camp, Jordan, where they move with their families to cope with the difficulties caused by the conflict in their home-towns.

Hanadi, from Homs, is still in 1st grade. Nur, from Aleppo, attends 2nd grade. We find them at the door of the school waiting for their friends to ride together the school buses provided by the UN Migration Agency (IOM) with funds of the United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF).

They have a lot of friends that live with them in Village 6, one of the sectors in which the camp is divided. Their houses are far, and the bus service helps them to reach the school fresh and on time.

More than 7,250 children in Azraq camp use the school buses daily. Before the service started in March 2017, they had to walk up to two kilometers to school under extreme weather conditions in the early morning or at noon. IOM and UNICEF work together to ensure that all children in Azraq camp have an easy access to school.

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Egypt Launches its Second “Wave” of Awareness Raising Campaign

The second phase of the national awareness raising campaign on the dangers of irregular migration, an ongoing collaboration between the National Coordinating Committee on Combatting and Preventing Illegal Migration and Trafficking in Persons (NCCPIM and TIP) and the UN Migration Agency (IOM) starts this quarter. This phase includes the production of a second public service announcement in the form of a song and video clip entitled Fares, with the support of celebrity artists Zap Tharwat and Ahmed Shiba, to be followed by a community outreach activation in the six highest sending governorates across Egypt.

Under the first phase of the campaign, IOM Egypt developed a video featuring Egyptian international footballer Hazem Emam, to inform children and youth and their families about the risks involved in attempting sea migration journeys. The video was complemented by a social media campaign which incorporated messages from IOM’s ‘Aware Migrants’ campaign, launched earlier this year by IOM Rome.

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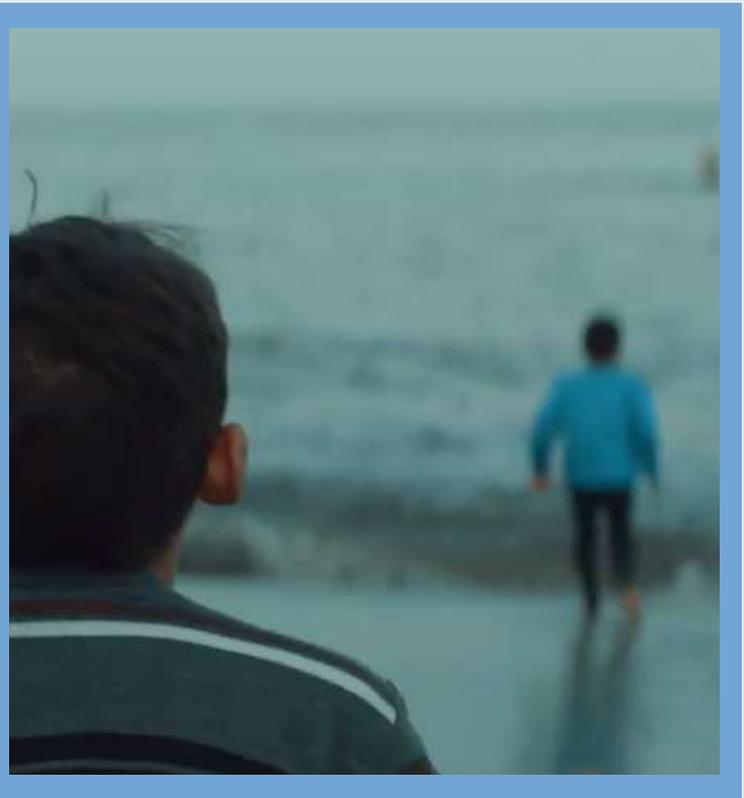


Photo from the video “fares”

Despite the Conflict: Red Roses Blossom in Yemen

Despite the ongoing conflict and hardships Yemen is facing, the UN Migration Agency (IOM) mission in Yemen celebrated International Women’s Day (IWD) by honoring the resilience of Yemeni women and more precisely mothers of children suffering from cancer.

The event took place at Sana’a Oncology center, where a team of IOM volunteers provide psychosocial support to both children and mothers undergoing cancer treatment through IOM Yemen’s Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) program.

The IWD celebration included speeches by IOM representatives, an awareness session, as well as artistic performances by youth in traditional costumes. Attendees included the director and staff of the oncology center, mothers and children as well as IOM representatives.

IOM concluded the day by offering the mothers red roses and the children toys, and by reiterating its commitment to continue its support to the Yemen population undergoing the region’s most severe humanitarian crisis.

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Letters for resilient women.
Photo by: Saba Malme



For Migrants is a monthly newsletter by the UN Migration Agency (IOM) Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa, highlighting key activities of IOM’s mission in the region. The publication only publishes flash news from the missions, and for the full spectrum on each mission’s activities readers are invited to consult the country offices website indicated under each article.

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