

Perilous journeys

**Vulnerabilities
along migratory
routes to the EU**

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Editor: Anaïs Faure Atger - Senior Manager: Leon Prop, Director.

Contact details:

Red Cross EU Office

Rue de Trèves 59-61

B-1040 Brussels

Email: info@redcross.eu

Web: <http://www.redcross.eu>

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To order copies, please contact migration@redcross.eu

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Cover photo:
A group of migrants
walk on the last leg
of their crossing
from Greece to FYR
Macedonia, 2015.

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Protect humanity: Stop indifference

**Francesco Rocca, President of the Italian
Red Cross and IFRC Vice President**

Stop indifference.
Join our call and add your voice
at www.ifrc.org/protecthumanity



The global “Protect Humanity – Stop indifference” campaign is a collective call for the protection of vulnerable migrants to be recognised as a universal responsibility.

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The Tunis Partnership Meeting¹ has given us the opportunity to identify ways not just to do more, but also to secure support and consensus in response to the increasing needs of the most vulnerable – we have a duty to them to renew our action. For while governments, institutions and civil society recognise our essential role in providing frontline assistance to migrants on a daily basis, we ourselves must do what is expected of us and reach further.

Recently, as increasing numbers of migrants cross the Mediterranean Sea and make their way through the Western Balkans, we have seen the strength of the Red Cross Red Crescent humanitarian response. Sadly, this is not enough. It is our immediate response, but we now call for a wider global strategy that includes the international community. What we are now seeing in Eastern Europe and on the Balkan routes is something we predicted and have been shouting about for some time. We knew that this moment would arrive. We have been providing humanitarian support and relief for many years, and our current experience should make us realise the need not only to get the attention of our governments, but also to press them for answers. Our Movement is on the front line, where it is well placed to be on the lookout for future struggles.

The world looks to current tragedies with stupor, and is astonished and touched by them. As humanitarian actors, we need to come forward and strengthen our advocacy efforts so as to put humanity and human dignity at the core of all migration policies.

The impact of baby Aylan’s picture, which exposed the tragedy of these perilous journeys, should not be the only way to trigger a reaction from our governments. Europe cannot wait until such tragedies occur to open its eyes, whilst at the same time continuing to build walls in an attempt to ignore the issue and avoid its duty.

¹ IFRC, Tunis Commitment to our shared humanity. Responding to the needs of migrants and building their resilience: a pressing humanitarian imperative, October 2015.

In recent years, we at the Italian Red Cross have seen many children like Aylan. The point is not that we are used to these images, but that if governments do not change their approach, Aylan will not be the last baby to die. As a humanitarian community we need to speak as one on behalf of the vulnerable.

We need to call for more concrete and effective action to respond to their needs and to avoid further tragedies. Advocacy also implies a need to remind governments of their responsibilities. Everyone must be treated in a humane and respectful way; every human being must be recognised as a holder of rights.

With this in mind, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has developed the global “Protect Humanity” campaign. Its message is a strong one: every migrant is first and foremost a human being and must be protected. The aim is to raise awareness of the need to stop indifference, and of the fact that protecting people on the move is a collective responsibility. In addition, the Response Plan² to meet the humanitarian needs of vulnerable migrants, put together by the Federation with the support of National Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), is an important initiative that benefits from all the necessary resources to strengthen our voice.

We understand that several programmes are needed to ensure that moving from one country to another does not expose people to mortal danger; that the current situation does indeed require work on the drivers of migration, such as conflict, violence, drought, famine, or lack of opportunities. We are also well aware that no country can address these challenges alone.

At the same time, the imperative must be to implement actions to address risks such as human trafficking, violence, or the detention of those who have crossed the border in an irregular way. We must address the risks that arise along migratory routes in particular. The reality is that there are limited opportunities for safe and legal migration. This is what forces migrants to undertake dangerous journeys, often using the services of smugglers who deprive them of their dignity and rights, and criminalising them in the eyes of both the public and the authorities.

This frequently results in increasing discrimination. Discrimination is often directly related to the instability, economic challenges and lack of future opportunities that are affecting our societies. Programmes that promote and spread a culture of peace and non-violence should also be at the top of the humanitarian agenda. Based on Humanitarian Principles, Red Cross and Red Crescent staff and volunteers are the foundation of real action within communities.

² IFRC, A response plan to meet the humanitarian needs of vulnerable migrants, a Movement coordinated approach focusing on the Mediterranean and neighbouring regions, 18 September 2015; IFRC appeals for enhanced support and partnerships to respond to the needs of migrants at any stage of their journey, 19 September 2015.

This is indeed the first level that needs to be addressed. We need to spread the idea that migration is not just the result of an emergency situation, but a phenomenon which should not have negative connotations. Instead, migration deals with the choices and rights of people to move from one place to another, as citizens of the world. We have to work on mind-sets, so that questions like “Why do they want to come here?” or “Why don’t they stay at home?” are no longer asked.

We have to work on bringing about an appreciation of the global context in order to guarantee a wider understanding of such a complex phenomenon.

In conclusion, we call for migration to be considered as a right. Looking beyond the emergency approach that has too often characterised the response to this trend, we can make this much needed step forward together.



Baby Paolo was just 14 days old by the time he reached Sicily in July 2015. He travelled in a boat from Libya with his mother.

© Carlos Spottorno / British Red Cross

Migrants' journeys to the European Union

The story of humankind is to a large extent a story of migration. Since the beginning of time, people have left their homes in search of a better life, often taking enormous risks to flee dangerous and desperate circumstances. This is the case for thousands of people who in recent years have had to flee armed conflict and other situations of violence, persecution, discrimination, famine and poverty. Many have lost their lives in their attempts to reach a safe haven and secure a better future. Faced with limited options for safe and regular migration, migrants must often rely on the services of smugglers and embark on dangerous sea and land journeys. The routes they take carry substantial risks, adding both physical and psychosocial trauma to their pre-existing vulnerabilities. More than 3,000 people are estimated to have died attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea in 2014. This trend continues, as almost 3,500 people have reportedly lost their lives in the Mediterranean Basin whilst trying to reach the European Union (EU) during the first ten months of 2015.

Much attention has been given to the perilous journeys made across the Mediterranean Sea, which constitute a humanitarian tragedy. However, migrants experience additional vulnerabilities throughout their migratory trails to the EU. In this booklet, we share our unique expertise and perspective regarding these risks.

Migration is today a global phenomenon that is politically charged and contested. In some countries, migrants are used as scapegoats for political and social anxieties about security, national identity and deficient economies. Despite the existence of binding legal human rights norms, these tensions influence national policies and practices, and put the dignity and wellbeing of migrants at risk. Across Europe and beyond, policies are made with the objective of limiting migration, including measures such as building walls or fences. In our view, this has negative consequences for migrants and the entire population. In particular, the criminalisation of migration has contributed to an atmosphere of intolerance and suspicion towards migrants and minorities. In addition, the externalisation of EU migration controls through collaboration with third countries in order to strengthen external borders and facilitate the removal of migrants from the EU, has a grave impact on the ability of migrants to access support and protection.³

Even though more people than ever are now living abroad, migration involves great risks for an increasing number of people. Through this publication, we hope to shed light on the current experiences of migrants making their way to the EU. We are

³ RCEU, *Shifting Borders - Externalising migrant vulnerabilities and rights?*, 7 November 2013.

witnessing significant abuses at all stages of the migratory process, particularly for those who are obliged to migrate in an irregular way and have to resort to the services of smugglers.

This exposes them to risks that can result in both physical and psychological trauma, as well as increased vulnerability. The factors that affect migrants' vulnerabilities along migratory routes include smuggling, trafficking, rape, abuse, robbery, lack of status, family separation, impoverishment and socio-economic hardship, unsafe journeys through hostile environments (areas of conflict, desert, open sea), as well as criminalisation and migration-related detention. In some cases migrants have already experienced significant trauma in their country of origin as a result of poverty, neglect, conflict, persecution or physical or sexual violence. As we observe in our everyday humanitarian activities, migrants' vulnerabilities are linked to their original reasons for departure, to the risks they are exposed to during their journeys to the EU, and finally, to the ways in which their initial vulnerabilities are recognised or ignored upon arrival in their destination countries. This booklet provides an overview of some of the risks and associated vulnerabilities that arise along migratory trails to the EU.⁴ Highlighting concrete activities undertaken by Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, it features life stories and concrete examples of the vulnerabilities that may be triggered by these journeys.

Search and rescue services are a vital part of addressing the human rights challenges faced by migrants trying to reach the EU along precarious routes. We should however not overlook the root causes of the use of such dangerous channels by migrants. Over the last three years, National Red Cross Societies in the EU have stepped up their advocacy on behalf of migrants, with particular emphasis on the need to implement safe, legal channels for migration to the EU. This would allow people to reach safety and access international protection in Europe, as well as to be reunited with family members residing in the EU.

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the Movement) has a long standing commitment to working with governments, host populations and migrant communities to meet the humanitarian needs of vulnerable migrants. In accordance with the Migration Policy of the IFRC,⁵ and in order to capture the full extent of the humanitarian concerns around migration, the Movement's definition of migrants is deliberately broad. It is not constrained by their legal or administrative status. We define a 'migrant' as a person who leaves or flees their habitual residence to go to a new place – usually abroad – in order to seek new opportunities or safer and better prospects. Migration can be voluntary or involuntary, but most of the time a combination of choices and constraints are involved. Our activities therefore benefit

⁴ RCEU, Position paper: Access to International Protection, November 2012; RCEU, Position paper: Legal Avenues to Access International Protection in the EU, 27 February 2013; RCEU and ECRE; Disrupted flight - The realities of separated refugee families in the EU, November 2014; RCEU, Position paper: Resettlement in the European Union, 19 June 2015.

⁵ IFRC, Policy on Migration, endorsed by the 17th General Assembly of the IFRC in Nairobi, Kenya in November 2009.

economic migrants, stateless migrants, and migrants deemed irregular by public authorities, as well as refugees and asylum seekers, notwithstanding the fact that these constitute a special category under international law.

Principle 7 of the IFRC Migration Policy reaffirms the importance for the Movement of engaging and working along migratory trails. Through our trans-national and trans-regional presence, we are able to contribute to providing protection and assistance to vulnerable migrants. The Movement is in a unique position to help bridge the gaps in assistance and protection offered to migrants. National Societies in countries along migratory trails work together to optimise their humanitarian action. This requires a focus on the situations and conditions that exacerbate the vulnerabilities of migrants along their migratory trails, as well as on developing measures that help to reduce such vulnerabilities. National Societies can disseminate life-saving information along migratory trails without seeking to encourage, prevent or dissuade migration.⁶

At the last Mediterranean conference in May 2015, National Societies reaffirmed their shared duty to assist and protect vulnerable migrants, irrespective of nationality, administrative or legal status.⁷ As outlined in the Response Plan presented in Tunis in September 2015, it is now imperative for the Movement to harmonise its approach, coordinate its humanitarian action, and reinforce the auxiliary role of National Societies' vis-a-vis public authorities to engage them in responding to the plight of migrants along migratory routes.⁸

⁶ IFRC, Policy on Migration, endorsed by the 17th General Assembly of the IFRC in Nairobi, Kenya in November 2009.

⁷ IFRC, San Marino Declaration, 12th Mediterranean Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, 26 May 2015.

⁸ RCEU, Position paper: Addressing the Vulnerabilities linked to Migratory Routes to the European Union, 9 December 2015.

Migration corridors and associated risks in West Africa *



Migrants are exposed to the following risks along those migratory routes:

- Arrest, detention for an indefinite period in detention or deportation
- Violence, inhuman or degrading treatment in detention or in the hands of smugglers or criminal gangs when crossing borders
- Kidnapping by people smugglers and other intermediaries in refugee camps or along the borders, in exchange for a ransom to be paid
- Death in detention, during their journey or when they are abandoned in the middle of the desert by smugglers.

States which receive funding from the EU for supporting their border control, staff training, upgrading and police training

European Union

Border between Morocco and Algeria, closed since 1984

Libya's southern borders, closed and designated as military areas by the Libyan National General Council as of December 2012

Main migratory routes in the Sahara

Less frequently used migratory routes

Expulsions

Main migratory routes by sea

Main stop-over cities along migratory routes

Reception centers for migrants providing humanitarian assistance

Refugee camps

Holding centers

Self-constructed camps

WALLS/MINES

Main obstacles on migratory routes (date of establishment)

* ALGERIA and MOROCCO : States criminalizing irregular emigration

IGM reception centre (operating as program of discouraging migration)

Agadez (over 100,000 migrants transiting this city)

Scale: 0, 500, 1000 km

© D. Lagarde

Sources : FIDH, 2012. Libye : en finir avec la traque des migrants ; Interactive Map on Migration ; La Cimade. Toute personne a le droit de quitter tout pays, même le sien - Migreurop, 2012. La carte des camps d'étrangers en Europe ; UNHCR, Syria Regional Refugee Response.

* This map was originally designed in 2014. Given that migratory routes are changing regularly, the trails displayed in this map are indicative.



CHAPTER 1

Each year, thousands of migrants pass through Niger. Many of the people travelling this route are in dire need of assistance. In Agadez, the Red Cross Society of Niger with the support of the ICRC, provides aid to the most vulnerable among them, 2014.

© François Therrien / ICRC

Limited access to rights and services

In the absence of a suitable legal framework to regulate the admission, stay and transit of migrants at the different stages of their journeys, they often remain invisible, which limits their access to rights and services. Migrants may have no other choice than to enter and remain in a particular country clandestinely while they are in transit or awaiting their next border crossing. They are then categorised as being in an irregular situation, which can contribute to their stigmatisation and criminalisation.

The level of access to rights and services available to migrants deemed in an irregular situation varies depending on the context, but it generally does not go far beyond emergency assistance. Even when migrants have a legal right to services such as health care, they may experience problems in actually benefiting from these services due to administrative, linguistic or cultural barriers. This may in turn give rise to additional vulnerabilities; for example, the failure to treat illnesses at an early stage can lead to serious or chronic conditions. Migrants in an irregular situation can also face difficulties in accessing legal services and counselling. Some may be tempted to hide from the authorities or be reluctant to ask for help and redress, even after their rights have been violated, as they fear punishment because of their legal status.

At the 9th European Regional Conference, Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies of Europe and Central Asia called on states to stop labelling migrants as “illegal” and urged them to ensure that everyone has unhindered access to basic human rights, in particular the right to protection, health care, education and social services, at every stage of their journey.

National Red Cross Societies in the EU call on EU leaders to respect and protect the rights of all migrants – irrespective of their legal status – in domestic and foreign policies.

Assistance and protection in Agadez

The region of Agadez is a well-known transit point for migrants from Sub Saharan Africa who are either on their way to Europe via Libya or Algeria, are returning voluntarily, or have been deported.

After crossing the Sahel, migrants wind up in the middle of the desert, in some cases with parasitic, respiratory and digestive tract infections, or even malaria. A combination of circumstances such as lack of documents or loss of social networks mean that migrants can be extremely vulnerable to all manner of threats and abuse along the way, jeopardising their wellbeing and safety. For many, migration is a traumatic experience and the psychosocial attention they require should not be underestimated. Migrants transiting through Agadez may experience sleeping problems, anxiety, depression, anger, and loss of appetite.

The Red Cross is one of the few sources of aid; providing health assistance, psychosocial support, and other humanitarian services to these migrants. With the support of the High Authority for the Consolidation of Peace (EU-Stability Instrument), the Red Cross Society of Niger and the French Red Cross offer psychosocial assistance, both in mobile clinics and in the treatment room of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) transit centre. Additionally, an agreement with the regional hospital of Agadez allows for the referral of injured migrants, particularly those with fractures, burns or firearm injuries so that they can receive specialised care. Supported by the ICRC, the Red Cross Society of Niger offers migrants a free phone service so that they can contact their families.

Rights of Migrants in Action in Morocco

Morocco is a key stage in migrants' journeys to the EU. Originally a transit country, it has increasingly become a country of destination for Syrian and sub-Saharan migrants. Initially intending to reach the EU but faced with an impenetrable EU border, migrants are forced to prolong their stay in Morocco. A situation which neither they, nor the Moroccan population were prepared for.

In response, Moroccan Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) have stepped up their activities on behalf

of migrants in the country. Key actions include advocating to prevent the expulsion of migrants, promoting more peaceful relations between migrants and host communities, and supporting access to basic services for all migrants. Since September 2013, the government of Morocco has been revising its legal framework to develop a new migration policy, thereby acknowledging that the Kingdom has become host to an ever increasing migrant population. In the first instance, this has translated into a regularisation campaign that has benefited some 23,000 undocumented migrants

(as of February 2015), with three subsequent legislative proposals that for the first time define a policy framework on asylum, anti-trafficking and migration more generally.

This framework provides an opportunity for civil society actors to better target their activities. In particular with regard to the support and protection of migrants, either directly through health and legal services, or by advocating towards public authorities for the protection of migrants' rights and migrant-friendly policy developments.

Morocco is one of the target countries of the EU-funded project "Rights of Migrants in Action", which is being implemented by the IFRC and 15 National Societies in various regions around the world. The project aims to promote and protect the rights of migrants through globally coordinated civil society actions, focussing specifically on migrant domestic

workers and victims of human trafficking. In supporting access to social services and legal protection for labour migrants and victims of human trafficking or violence, the activities implemented in Morocco aim to ensure that migrants, including particularly vulnerable groups such as women and children, are protected from exploitation and exclusion. As part of the project, the Moroccan Red Crescent is playing a key role in the coordination and capacity building of national CSOs. This builds on other activities in favour of both documented and undocumented migrants, which range from delivering food and non-food items, to providing medical assistance, psychosocial support, vocational training, and restoring family links services, as well as managing playgrounds for migrant children.



The Moroccan Red Crescent provides assistance to vulnerable migrants.

© Moroccan Red Crescent



CHAPTER 2

Amsha and her daughter, Shanaz, from Iraq in the detention centre in Fylakio, Greece.

© Kent Klich /
Swedish Red Cross

Arbitrary arrests and detention

Arbitrary arrest, detention, and other forms of deprivation of liberty are all common risks experienced by migrants making their way to the EU. The detention of migrants has become an increasingly common sanction for failure to present valid travel documents. No one should be deprived of their liberty other than for reasons and conditions provided for by law. In practice however, migrants are detained in certain contexts as a result of arbitrary arrests or decisions. There are often no procedural safeguards to accompany such detention. As a result, migrants are also likely to experience a lack of adequate services, including the absence of proper legal representation and effective remedies, limited access to consular, interpretation or translation services, unavailability of health care or psychosocial support, and a failure to identify and respond to any specific needs that they may have.⁹

The deprivation of liberty has a significant impact on the wellbeing of migrants. Medical and sociological studies show that detention can seriously affect an individual's physical health and psychological wellbeing, both in the short and long term. Certain groups of individuals are especially vulnerable in detention, and are therefore disproportionately affected. These include children,¹⁰ the elderly, and victims of torture, among others.

National Red Cross Societies in the EU call on EU leaders to ensure that humanitarian organisations are given the means to access all migrants in need, especially in detention and at border crossing points, in order to provide them with humanitarian assistance, including tracing services.

⁹ Made real project, Alternatives to immigration and asylum detention in the EU – Time for implementation, January 2015.

¹⁰ ICRC, Children and detention, November 2014.

Visiting immigration detention centres

The Swedish Red Cross monitors conditions in Sweden's immigration detention centres and provides humanitarian assistance to asylum seekers and migrants who have been detained. Swedish Red Cross volunteers regularly visit three of the five existing detention centres (Åstorp, Källered and Märsta) run by the Swedish Migration Board. The purpose of these visits is to ensure that detained migrants are treated humanely, and that they are held in conditions that preserve their dignity and are mindful of procedural safeguards and other fundamental rights.

Volunteer groups provide various humanitarian assistance services such as restoring family links, psychosocial support and, in special cases, referrals to Swedish Red Cross legal counsellors for questions relating to migrants' rights. To complement to these activities, the Swedish Red Cross monitors the general conditions of immigration detention, the treatment of detained migrants, and their access to services. If the volunteer groups find detainees who are not receiving fair and humane treatment or who are not detained in conditions that support their physical and mental wellbeing, it is brought to the attention

of the authorities. Based on this monitoring, the Swedish Red Cross raises issues of humanitarian concern with the Swedish Migration Board, and engages in advocacy with the pertinent authorities in order to improve detention conditions and prevent abuse.

The Swedish Red Cross also engages in advocacy on the detention of migrants and other alternatives to detention. Detainees in Sweden's detention centres often express a lack of understanding as to why they are being detained. In light of this, in 2012 the Swedish Red Cross published a report¹¹ that examines the implementation of detention legislation, focusing on the justification of the grounds for detention and the preference for detention over supervision. Since the report was published, the Swedish Red Cross has advocated for the legal and factual grounds for depriving a person of their liberty to be carefully justified and clearly stated in immigration detention decisions. In this context, the Swedish Red Cross continues to press for the increased use of alternatives to detention, underlining that detention should only be used as measure of last resort, which should last the shortest time possible. ■

¹¹ Swedish Red Cross, *Detention under scrutiny - A study of the due process for detained asylum seekers*, 2012.

Torture-related trauma and detention

Torture is inflicted in innumerable ways and methods vary from one country to another. Some methods of torture leave very distinct marks, while others leave no visible traces at all.

Nevertheless, the psychological consequences of torture often remain long after the episode of torture has ended. Torture commonly occurs in the context of detention. This means that for a

large number of torture survivors, their torture-related trauma is closely connected to, and inseparable from, their experience of detention.

Trauma resulting from torture is particularly severe and often aggravated by prolonged and unpredictable detention. It starts on arrest or abduction, and at best ends with release from detention, hours, days or even months later. It is characterised by a total loss of control for the affected individual. The interpersonal component of torture has consequences for the individual's ability to form relationships, especially when it comes to forging trust and closeness. Furthermore, in the immediate aftermath, the person usually lacks the social support that is known to be of great importance in the recovery process.

People affected by torture have experienced cumulative and complex traumas. Migration and exile often result in the loss of protective factors such as social support, leading to

increased vulnerability for the individual. As a consequence, everyday crises may generate responses that seem out of proportion. Post-migration challenges such as isolation, lack of proper housing, poverty and too much pressure – or a lack of support – from authorities, become obstacles to recovery.

Torture affects not only the individual in question, but also their family and the society to which he or she belongs. It is known that the children of torture survivors are at risk of developing secondary post-traumatic stress symptoms, even though they have not had traumatic experiences of war or torture themselves. Given the multi-layered consequences of torture, the rehabilitation approach needs to take account of all the levels that are affected. Treatment has to address not just the psychological and physical consequences, but also the interpersonal and social domains so as to enable the individual's re-integration into their family and society at large. ■



A detainee in the central prison of Monrovia, Liberia.

© Noora Kero / ICRC



CHAPTER 3

Along migratory routes, women and children are at high risk of being victims of violence.

© Stephen Ryan / IFRC

Violence and human trafficking

The factors affecting migrants' vulnerabilities along migratory routes include both physical and mental abuse, which may result from the use of force in the context of smuggling, trafficking, rape, or robbery: just some of the pitfalls of unsafe journeys through deserts, open seas and areas of conflict. Such violence may therefore be structural – due to the hostile environments that migrants are exposed to during the journey, or situational – because of the people they encounter, such as the criminal groups that take advantage of the limited availability of legal safeguards for migrants.¹²

Migrants are exposed to a multitude of potential abuses caused by the loss of family and community support mechanisms, limited access to reliable information along the route, partial knowledge of the local legal frameworks, as well as their changing legal status and limited prospects. They may also have been deceived by smugglers and compelled to engage in activities under exploitative conditions in order to pay back their debts. Whether in the country of origin, transit and/or destination, migrants are specifically vulnerable to labour exploitation and human trafficking. The violence and intimidation which often characterise trafficking usually result in long-lasting physical, moral and psychological consequences.

At the 9th European Regional Conference, Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies of Europe and Central Asia called for reengagement in effective cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination, with a priority given to ensuring humanitarian protection of migrants and to tackling human trafficking. At the 12th Mediterranean Conference National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies acknowledged that while prevention of human trafficking is a need, they must carefully consider the potential risk for the security of staff and volunteers in countries of origin, transit and arrival in responding to situations of violence and exploitation. They also committed to strengthen efforts in ensuring that victims are recognised as such and have access to information and support, irrespective of their legal status, to make informed decisions.

National Red Cross Societies in the EU call on EU leaders to uphold a victim-centred approach in all efforts to tackle human trafficking.

¹² IFRC and UNODC, Fact sheet: Combating violence against migrants, December 2014.

Raising awareness of human trafficking

In the light of the seriousness of the problem of human trafficking and its mission and mandate to alleviate human suffering, the Red Cross of Serbia is actively engaged in efforts to prevent this illegal trade in human beings. Through a range of prevention, advocacy and public awareness activities, the Red Cross of Serbia seeks to alleviate the consequences of trafficking and decrease the number of victims affected.

Building on the potential for everyone to contribute to prevention, the Red Cross of Serbia places great emphasis on educating individuals and groups to recognise the problem, its manifestations, and the various tricks that traffickers use to lure people into the human trafficking chain. Interactive workshops through peer education are proven methods of reaching out to children and young people, especially when the goal is to influence their behaviour with regards to sensitive and serious issues. With this in mind, the Red Cross of Serbia uses a network of 500 trained volunteers to conduct interactive workshops at over 100 local branches throughout Serbia. Target groups include school-age children, children with intellectual disabilities, children without parental

care, and children in Roma settlements and in centres for migrants and asylum seekers. Over the last ten years, more than 370,000 children and young people have been educated to spot the signs of human trafficking and to implement preventive measures.

The Red Cross of Serbia also advocates better engagement of medical personnel in the primary identification of victims of human trafficking, as well as improved referral mechanisms that include all professionals who may come into contact with potential trafficking victims. This is achieved through panel discussions, round table debates and forums with professionals working in the health and social welfare sectors, education, and the police. Furthermore, with the aim of influencing future decision makers, the Red Cross of Serbia is also rolling out education programmes for students of medicine, law and humanities.

Finally, each year on EU Anti-trafficking Day (18 October) and on the World Day against Trafficking in Persons (30 July), the Red Cross of Serbia undertakes a distinctive public awareness campaign in city squares, streets and shop windows. ■



The Red Cross of Serbia participates in the transnational “Red Bell” campaign which aims to raise awareness of trafficking in human beings among the general public.

© Red Cross of Serbia

Women and children at risk

In 2014, two children were freed from a house where they had been confined. At the time of their rescue, they were found drugged and with their hands tied, presenting obvious signs of physical and psychological abuse. Having arrived on the Spanish coast some years before, they were released following a complaint made by the mother of one of them because she could not be with her child. Originally from Nigeria, the mother explained that a friend's brother had convinced her father to let her travel to Europe, where she could apparently get a good job. She and her family sealed the deal during a voodoo ceremony, where she agreed to pay for the help she was to receive during the journey. She was only 18 years old at the time. She could not have imagined how much older she would feel just a few years later.

She crossed Nigeria, Mali, Algeria and Morocco, covering some stretches on foot and others by bus. Upon her arrival in Morocco, she was told to hide until it was safe to make the crossing to Europe. She spent several years in Morocco, moving between a number of makeshift camps. During this time, she gave birth to one child, had three abortions, and fell pregnant again. One day, she and her first son were told that it was time to cross the Mediterranean. Around 60 people, including

women with children, other pregnant women, and at least one unaccompanied child, embarked on the journey in a small boat. They were rescued by coastguards who took them to the Spanish coastline, where they were attended by the Spanish Red Cross on arrival. The mother was immediately taken to a specialised shelter for migrant women and children where she gave birth to her second child. While at the Red Cross shelter, she avoided talking about her migratory journey, giving only vague answers as to her expectations once in Spain. She found it hard to explain and could only keep repeating "very tough, very tough". Having received assistance from Spanish Red Cross staff to help her recover physically and psychologically, after an extended period of time she finally disclosed that she had experienced multiple assaults during her journey to Europe: she had been raped several times, been forced into prostitution and been coerced into having abortions. While she did not wish to explain the exact circumstances around her separation from her first child, her specific vulnerabilities were recognised through the support offered by the Spanish Red Cross. This gave her sufficient protection and security to take the necessary steps to be reunited with her older son after he was rescued in 2014. ■

CHAPTER 4



Every year, thousands of family members are separated by conflicts, disasters or migration. The ICRC and National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies work together around the world to locate people and put them back into contact with their relatives.

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Family separation and the loss of family links

Men and women embarking on the perilous migratory routes to Europe risk losing contact with their loved ones; even when travelling together, they can be separated at some point in the journey. The loss of family links is a frequent consequence of increasingly dangerous migratory trails everywhere in the world. Separations force people to take critical decisions based on a limited number of options: wait for the missing person, initiate a search, or stick to the original plan in the hope that the rest of the family will follow.

From the moment contact is lost, the level of anxiety is such that it may interfere with the person's capacity to take decisions. It can affect not only their wellbeing, but also their future choices, such as those relating to the migratory project previously agreed with their loved ones. Furthermore, there are other implications to losing contact with a family member that can extend beyond the profound psychological burden that rapidly results. Moreover, if the situation persists, the psychological effects can be exacerbated, making it not uncommon for problems such as alcoholism, violent behaviour and drug addiction to emerge. Uncertainty as to the fate of a family member hinders the ability to successfully start a new life and does not allow for any kind of mourning process. In addition to these psychosocial consequences, the absence of official news as to the whereabouts of a spouse or parent also has a direct impact on the family members' rights and entitlements.

At the 12th Mediterranean Conference of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, participating National Societies committed to continue to focus their migration related activities on emergency health facilities, restoring family links services, psychosocial support as well as on National Societies' institutional preparedness and capacity development.

National Red Cross Societies in the EU call on EU leaders to facilitate family reunification and address the legal, practical and/or administrative obstacles which limit or prevent family unity. They also call for the EU and its Member States to uphold the rights of all migrants and their families to know about the fate of their loved ones.

Supporting the families of Senegalese migrants¹³

Throughout Senegal, a vast number of families have lost contact with a family member who has left for Europe. This situation puts the lives of those left behind on hold. Uncertainty and feelings of shame and responsibility are frequently experienced when a child, a spouse or a friend has left and can no longer be traced. This phenomenon has been on the increase since 2006 because of mass emigration by young people who are faced with limited economic opportunities in the country. In the absence of adequate alternatives, between 2006 and 2008 most Senegalese emigrants used irregular migration channels which proved extremely dangerous.

The ICRC and National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies work together to locate people and put them back in contact with their relatives. This work includes looking for family members, restoring contact, and seeking to clarify the fate of those who are still missing.¹⁴ Every year, the Restoring Family Links (RFL) services of European National Societies receive thousands of tracing requests from people in search of loved ones that they have lost on their way to what they had presumed was a better place.

In cooperation with the Senegalese Red Cross, in 2012 the ICRC conducted a needs assessment of the families of missing migrants. Spanning across more than 50 locations in Senegal, the team carried out over 250 individual interviews with the family members of missing migrants, as well as some group interviews, consultations with representatives of associations of families of missing persons, and administrative and religious authorities. The aim was to identify

the concrete difficulties and specific needs of the families of missing migrants and to understand the existing institutional and non-institutional resources (i.e. governmental, NGOs) so as to create improved solutions that would enable national authorities and other actors, as well as the ICRC and other components of the Movement, to better respond to the situation.

This research revealed that the number of families with missing migrant members was much larger than first anticipated. Three basic needs were identified: (1) the need to know what has happened to the missing relative - about 77% of families have initiated a search for their missing relatives, of which approximately 60% are still waiting for reliable news; (2) the need for economic support - most of the families are farmers and fishermen, and nearly 92% are experiencing financial difficulties as it is the family breadwinner who is often missing; (3) the need for psychological support - due to their feelings of blame; most people, in particular the mothers and wives of missing migrants, continue to experience emotional problems which can lead to insomnia and anxiety. Furthermore, the research also revealed a need for assistance in resolving legal and administrative problems. About 65% of families are not aware of their legal rights or of the procedures to apply for benefits.

On the basis of this assessment, the ICRC and the Senegalese Red Cross have identified the following three courses of action: the launch of tracing requests, the implementation of support programmes to assist families to regain financial independence, and the identification of structures which can provide psychosocial assistance to family members who have remained behind. ■

¹³ Croix-Rouge sénégalaise et CICR, Etude sur les besoins actuels des familles de migrants sénégalais disparus, 2013.

¹⁴ See more at: <http://familylinks.icrc.org>.

Unfortunately, a rather “typical” story

Mohamed, a 30-year old Syrian and his pregnant wife had to flee their country. As they were in two separate boats, the couple lost contact with each other while crossing the sea between Turkey and Greece. The husband's boat was intercepted by border guards who took him back to Turkey where he was put in jail. A prison employee told him that a boat of women and children had arrived in Greece that night. Following his release, he finally made it to the Greek coast after several failed attempts. After a fruitless eight month search for his wife in Greece, he eventually decided to continue the journey to Belgium alone, as this was the destination country that they had originally agreed together.

In 2013, the husband contacted the Belgian Red Cross Tracing Service to initiate a search for his wife. At the time, Mohamed was already severely psychologically affected. Although he

still had contact with his wife's family in Syria, he could not admit to them that they had lost contact during their journey to Europe. He didn't even know whether his wife had given birth or if she had lost the baby. He felt very guilty. The Belgian Red Cross agreed to launch a search in several European countries.

Over time, Mohammed's condition got worse. He was becoming more anxious and started drinking a lot, so the Belgian Red Cross guided him to a specialist organisation that would be able to provide psychological support. Mohamed is currently trying to regain control of his life; he has a job and continues the search for new information about his wife's fate. Unfortunately, the request has so far only received negative feedback from other European National Societies. The tracing request is still pending and for the time being, Mohammed has no news of his loved one. ■

A happy ending

Paul's family became separated at the end of 2007 because of the situation in Eastern Congo. During the night, his house was attacked by an armed group and all the members of the family fled in different directions. Since then, Paul had no contact with any of them.

Paul got to Uganda and tried in vain to locate his family there. After several months he made his way to Belgium, where he told his story to his social worker in the Red Cross asylum reception centre, at which point he was

informed of the existence of the Belgian Red Cross tracing service.

The tracing service launched a search in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and neighbouring countries, although Red Cross Congo staff were quick to advise that the search would be left pending for an indefinite length of time due to the volatile situation in the country. Nevertheless, just two weeks later some amazing news arrived from the ICRC delegation in Kinshasa: they had just received a new tracing request from the ICRC Delegation

in Bujumbura. Paul's wife was also looking for him 6000 kilometres away!

It was such a pleasure for the Belgian Red Cross tracing service to be able to pass on the good news to Paul, who shortly afterwards revealed that he had just been in contact with his wife and children for the first time in six years.

The Belgian Red Cross tracing service was able to advise Paul about the family

reunification procedure. Under Belgian legislation, Paul's family members were all eligible for reunification and after ten months, the relevant visas were delivered. On the day of the family's arrival, Paul was accompanied to the airport by a tracing officer to welcome his loved ones. This was a really intense and emotional moment. Just two months later, Paul informed the Tracing Service that he had just got a job at ... the Red Cross! ■



In the Gevgelija transit camp in FYR Macedonia, the Red Cross provides tracing services for people who have lost someone close and free internet access to connect with family members, 2015.

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CHAPTER 5



On the shores of Lesvos, a Hellenic Red Cross rescue team of volunteers helps migrants to get out of boats, gives survival blankets and provides first aid, 2015.

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IFRC / Belgian
Red Cross

Deaths during the journey

There is no official data concerning the number of migrant deaths at European borders. According to those who attempt to document this phenomenon, the number of reported deaths rose from dozens at the beginning of the 1990s, to thousands per year at the outset of the 2000s.¹⁵ The majority of migrants who die along migratory journeys to Europe do so in transit, before even reaching European coasts. Causes of death differ widely depending on the route taken, the type of border and the mode chosen for crossing the border. Many have drowned while crossing the Mediterranean. This is not the only cause of death, but it is the most widely known given that there is relatively better access to data relating to shipwrecks in the Mediterranean. However, the focus on a particular region and a specific means of transport should not overshadow the deaths of migrants along other parts of the migratory trails to Europe.

Migrants who attempt to cross razor-wire fences, fast-flowing rivers, deserts and dense forests, face multiple dangers such as severe wounds, starvation, dehydration, hypothermia and drowning. Even when using a means of transport that is generally considered relatively safe, migrants are exposed to risk because they travel clandestinely. It is not uncommon for migrants to hide underneath lorries, in aircraft landing gear, and within sealed containers, or the engine rooms of ships to avoid being caught. In doing so they risk suffocation, freezing or falling to their deaths. The majority of dead migrants remain unidentified, which means that their families are deprived of the right to know of their fate, and to mourn and honour them.

At the 12th Mediterranean Conference of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent Societies, participating National Societies emphasised that when people are impelled to move, in unsafe conditions, this may lead to tragic loss of lives. Moving could be the last chance that people have. National Societies committed to making sure that migrants can move safely and that their right to live in dignity is respected.

National Red Cross Societies in the EU call on EU leaders to set up dedicated search and rescue operations covering the entire Mediterranean Basin and to support assistance to migrants in distress.

¹⁵ Such calculations are of course partial. Firstly, because the attention given to this issue by organisations that protect the rights of migrants has significantly increased over the same period. Likewise, media coverage of 'migration dramas' has intensified. It is thus true to say that as much as a real increase in numbers of deaths, the development (admittedly imperfect) of measuring tools, combined with the magnifying effect of media coverage, have contributed to the explosion of these figures. On the other hand, several factors have the opposite effect, including the invisibility of a likely significant number of unknown deaths along migratory routes.

Providing life-saving assistance

The number of migrants transiting through the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) has been increasing since September 2014. In August 2015, up to 1,000 migrants were transiting through Macedonia on a daily basis. They usually come from Greece, and travel through the country towards Kumanovo and the neighbouring villages. Either on foot or by bicycle along the highway M5, or using public transport, mostly trains and taxis, they cross the border to Serbia on their way to other EU Member States. These migrants face many challenges on route, not least due the lack of information, food and water, basic first aid and medical care.

Among its regular activities and programmes, the Red Cross Society of FYROM ensures primary health care support seven days a week at reception centres. Activities include referral to secondary and tertiary medical institutions, distribution of medicine, food, clothes and non-food items, as well as the dissemination of information on available services. In cooperation with the UNHCR office in Skopje, in June 2015 the Red Cross Society of the FYROM established a mobile team made up of a driver, a paramedic and a doctor to work on highway M5. This mobile

team administers first aid to persons in transit to Serbia, giving priority to babies and children, pregnant women, older people, and people with chronic illnesses or special needs

Since July 2015, there has been a significant increase in the number of migrants who cross the Greek-Macedonian border by train. They then wait at the railway station in Gevgelija for another train to Tabanovce, close the Serbian border. This wait can sometimes last a whole day. Red Cross teams are present throughout the day to provide first aid and other support at the railway stations in Gevgelija and Kumanovo-Tabanovce.¹⁶

Given the frequency of rail accidents and the fact that many migrants have lost their lives on railway tracks in the last six months, in cooperation with the UNHCR and the ICRC, the Red Cross has produced 20 information boards that warn of the potential dangers on the railway. The boards are placed along the railway tracks that migrants use for the journeys on foot and the information has been translated into eight languages. ■

¹⁶ On 22 June 2015, the IFRC released a Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) grant for the total of 200,098 CHF to support these activities.

The story of Selam: a long and painful trip

Sometimes there is no alternative, and things have to be left to destiny: into the desert, into the sea. This was the case for Selam. Every step of her long trip was dramatically difficult. She had no choice but to escape Eritrea to avoid mandatory military service. At the age of seventeen, she wanted to continue her studies, live a normal life, and plan her future. A "normal life" was a dream for Selam, as her family was convinced that she had to join the army. They told her that "this was life". But Selam was sure that "life can be different". So, unbeknown to her parents, she decided to travel to Europe.

In February 2015, Selam left Asmara and her family. Within a few days she arrived in Khartoum, where she remained for two months before joining a group that was trying to get to Libya. They entrusted their lives to Sudanese smugglers, and on 12 April they left Undurman for Tripoli. Selam travelled with twenty-six other people, including six women and three children. The majority of the men were Somalis, there were only two Eritreans. After four days in the desert they reached the border between Tchad, Egypt and Libya, where they were passed on to a new group of smugglers. From then on, everything changed. From then on Selam and her companions were simply treated as goods to be delivered. They were no longer treated like human beings - men, women and children - but just objects. It should have been a two-day journey, but in a couple of cars moving at great speed across the desert it became a longer trip under the hot sun, with little to eat or drink. Far away from her relatives, Selam's new family became this group of companions. They shared the desert crossing and the hope of reaching a safe place. After three days, the new family mourned its first loss: Paul,

a Somali boy, had severe breathing difficulties and had died by the time the group stopped. But the smugglers insisted that the boy was still alive. They took him away, saying that they would take him to hospital. But Selam was sure they had abandoned the body in the middle of the desert to avoid conducting a burial, to avoid losing time on the delivery. When human lives are not important, a dead boy is only an obstacle to business. In the days that followed another three boys died, injured after a car accident and abandoned in the desert. When somebody died in this little travelling community, it was like losing a piece of your soul and you were scared that you may become part of the next pack to be abandoned in the desert. This was the case for Sarah, who did not wake up after a night spent in Iglabia.

Reaching Tripoli was an illusory relief. Selam believed that her journey was coming to an end: the next step would be embarking for Italy. But the group was stopped by Libyan police and put in jail. Selam spent two months in prison; enough time to see 13 Eritrean boys beaten and killed by the guards. The police then sold Selam and other prisoners to new smugglers, who used a satellite phone to contact their families and ask for money to embark them on a rubber boat. Finally, on 23 August the money was collected and after 8 hours in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea, their rubber boat was rescued by Italian coast guards. Seven months after starting her trip, Selam was finally safe.

At seventeen she escaped a scary future, enduring the endless horror of being smuggled and treated as "an object". She lost people who had become family to her during the trip. Her life will always be dramatically affected by this terrible voyage. ■

Francois Crépeau, UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of migrants

In the past year we have seen an unprecedented number of asylum seekers and migrants arriving at Europe's borders. What we rarely hear about is the large-scale suffering experienced at each stage of migration. The use of precarious routes into the EU, particularly through the central Mediterranean Sea, has increased dramatically since 2013 and resulted in large-scale violations of the right to life, as well as significant human rights abuses at all stages of the migratory process. This form of migration is largely driven by conflict and poverty (push factors), as well as by unmet needs within European labour markets (pull factors). Many of these migrants are being forced to use precarious routes because of their desperate situation and a lack of regular migration opportunities.

Organised smuggling rings are profiting from the lack of regular migration channels, staying ahead of border control initiatives and facilitating crossings through precarious routes in exchange for large payments. Smugglers have displayed a remarkable disregard for the dignity, life and rights of migrants and have systematically exploited those desperate to reach safer soil. Many migrants have come an extremely long way to arrive at Europe's borders, including from sub-Saharan and Middle Eastern countries. Migrants travelling through the Sahara are subjected to horrific treatment, including rape and other forms of violence. When migrants reach their intended country of departure towards the EU, they often suffer further violations of their rights. There are reports of makeshift camps with extremely poor conditions that are run by migrants in Morocco, as well as accounts of migrants locked in small huts by smugglers in Turkey. Smugglers typically charge several thousand United States dollars per person for boat journeys to the European Union. Families with multiple members can pay over US\$ 10,000 to make the trip.

The boat trips themselves are perilous, involving very basic vessels that have limited navigation systems, are not seaworthy and often have insufficient amounts of food, water, fuel, first aid kits and life jackets. Boats are usually extremely overcrowded and sometimes contain more than double the recommended capacity. Once migrants have paid for the journey, they are often forced to go ahead with their plans despite sometimes having second thoughts when seeing the vessels. Migrants have reported incidents of boats not having captains, with inexperienced migrants being required to navigate as smugglers do not want to risk being caught by the authorities.

When smugglers are on the boats, incidents of sexual violence and slavery against women have been reported. On average, the crossing from North Africa takes between one and three days, but this time-frame can increase significantly depending on the boat and the

maritime conditions. Many boats capsize or go into distress. For those who survive the sea journey or are rescued by the EU's search and rescue operation, Triton, the suffering is not over. Many face mandatory and prolonged detention, racial and xenophobic acts of violence, discrimination and labour exploitation.

Asylum seekers and migrants arrive against a backdrop of a poor economic climate, the rise in nationalist populist parties within the EU, and the tragic terrorist attacks in Paris at the beginning of 2015. This rise in xenophobia and hate speech against asylum seekers and migrants is a significant trend relating to how migrants are perceived in Europe, as well as a stumbling block in the development of more progressive policies. Upon their arrival in the midst of this scenario, asylum seekers and migrants meet the Red Cross. After having endured suffering to get to Europe, it is organisations like the Red Cross that are able to restore some of their dignity by providing them with basic items such as first aid, clothes, food, blankets, medicines and basic hygiene items. The Red Cross has also provided psychosocial support to the many men, children and women who have survived the migratory journey but suffered great trauma.

The EU and its Member States can act to stop this unnecessary suffering at EU borders by opening regular and safe channels for migration that recognise the EU's genuine labour needs as well as the humanitarian and protection needs of those fleeing humanitarian situations. It is paradoxical that in the name of securing borders, European States are actually losing control over their borders. Smugglers will always be ahead of the game: repressive policies without regular migration channels for asylum seekers and much needed low-wage migrants, only entrench smuggling operations and underground labour markets where organised gangs and unscrupulous employers exploit undocumented migrants, and increase the precariousness of the migrant's situation, resulting in more deaths at sea and more human rights violations.

The increased use of the central Mediterranean route demonstrates beyond any reasonable doubt that whatever measures the EU implements, "sealing" European borders is impossible and migrants will continue to come to the region. The risks that migrants are prepared to take to reach safer soil show that border control measures are not an effective disincentive when desperate people face situations of war, insecurity, violence and extreme poverty.

It is my hope that the EU and its Member States will invest in the overall development of a coherent and robust migration policy that fully reflects the human rights of migrants as enshrined in both international and regional law.

In the meantime, I am encouraged by the work of the Red Cross, which reminds us all that no matter our nationality, race, religion or legal migratory status, we all have inalienable rights, we are human beings, and we all matter.

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The Fundamental Principles the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

Humanity

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

Impartiality

It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

Neutrality

In order to continue to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

Independence

The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

Voluntary service

It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

Unity

There can be only one Red Cross or one Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

Universality

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all Societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.

Perilous journeys

Vulnerabilities along migratory routes to the EU

The Red Cross EU Office booklet *Perilous Journeys – Vulnerabilities along migratory routes to the EU* takes a closer look at the vulnerabilities experienced by migrants throughout their migratory journeys to the EU. Highlighting concrete activities undertaken by Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, it features life stories and concrete examples of the vulnerabilities and risks that may be triggered by these journeys.

The Red Cross EU Office booklet features:

- Limited access to rights and services
- Arbitrary arrests and detention
- Violence and human trafficking
- Family separation and the loss of family links
- Deaths during the journey

In each chapter, the principles of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' (IFRC) Migration Policy, which guide the Red Cross Red Crescent approach towards migrants, are highlighted and illustrated through the related activities of National Societies.

Principle 7 of the IFRC Migration Policy reaffirms the importance for the Movement of engaging and working along migratory trails. Through our trans-national and trans-regional presence, we are able to contribute to providing protection and assistance to vulnerable migrants. The Movement is in a unique position to help bridge the gaps in assistance and protection offered to migrants. National Societies in countries along migratory trails work together to optimise their humanitarian action. This requires a focus on the situations and conditions that exacerbate migrant vulnerabilities along their migratory trails, as well as on developing measures that help to reduce such vulnerabilities. National Societies can disseminate life-saving information along migratory trails without seeking to encourage, prevent or dissuade migration.

This publication aims to support and reinforce the auxiliary role of National Societies vis-a-vis public authorities to engage them in responding to the plight of migrants along migratory routes with a view to reducing the very specific, and often invisible difficulties that migrants face on their way to the EU.

The Red Cross EU Office represents and promotes the interests of Red Cross National Societies in the EU, the Norwegian Red Cross, and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the world's largest volunteer-based humanitarian network, reaching 150 million people each year through its 190 member National Societies.

The Red Cross EU Office works to increase the Red Cross influence on European Union policies across a number of areas that are of importance for its members such as Migration and Asylum, Social Services, International Development and Disaster Management.

For more information, please visit www.redcross.eu