Centre for Humanitarian Action at Sea

Marc Tilley
Jonathan Dubath
Richard Watts
Caroline Abu Sa'Da

Mass Rescue at Sea:
A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

2023

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The Centre for Humanitarian Action at Sea aims to address the global humanitarian crisis at sea by serving three primary functions. First, it will establish a High-Level Dialogue platform to convene stakeholders from diverse sectors, facilitating discussions on challenges and solutions to Search and Rescue (SAR) operations. Second, it will coordinate research, advocacy, diplomacy, and technical expertise on the imperative of saving lives, becoming a hub for comprehensive analysis of the humanitarian crisis at sea. Third, it plans to expand the fleet conducting SAR operations across various maritime routes. Situated in Geneva, the Centre leverages the city's position as an international hub for refugees, maritime, and humanitarian organizations. The Centre for Humanitarian Action at Sea is presently incubated within the Creative Spark division of the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP).

SOS MEDITERRANEE

SOS MEDITERRANEE is a European maritime and humanitarian organization dedicated to the rescue of lives in the Mediterranean. It operates as a European network with teams in Germany, France, Italy, and Switzerland. The network initially operated the rescue ship Aquarius from February 2016 to October 2018 and currently operates the Ocean Viking. To date, over 38,500 survivors have been brought to safety. SOS MEDITERRANEE was honored with the Right Livelihood Award in 2023 and is one the founding member of the Centre for Humanitarian Action at Sea, currently incubated at the GCSP.

Authors   **Marc Tilley**
Researcher for SOS MEDITERRANEE Switzerland, based in London.

Jonathan Dubath
Data Analyst for SOS MEDITERRANEE Switzerland, based in Geneva.

Richard Watts
Director of HR maritime, actively providing consulting and training services in the maritime sector.

Caroline Abu Sa'Da
Founder and Director of SOS MEDITERRANEE in Switzerland and the Centre for Humanitarian Action at Sea.

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Executive Summary

The International Organization for Migration cites drowning at sea as the leading cause of death and disappearance of migrants worldwide. Since recording began in 2014, the Missing Migrants project has recorded 58,447 deaths globally, of which 24,875 (or 43%) lost their lives to dangerous maritime crossings. While this phenomenon has become synonymous with the Mediterranean Sea, this is in fact a global humanitarian crisis, spanning every geographical region. Unfortunately, due to limitations in monitoring and data collection, the global scale of maritime deaths is both underreported and little understood, exacerbating the shortfall in vital Search and Rescue capacity. In response to maritime migration, commercial vessels often find themselves being mobilised as first responders to distress cases, providing lifesaving assistance. However, seafarers are typically ill-prepared, ill-equipped and insufficiently supported for the complexities of mass rescue. Recognition of seafarers' vulnerabilities, and greater support, are therefore needed to minimise the risk of harm to seafarers, rescued people, and commercial maritime interests. Search and Rescue is a shared responsibility that requires cross-sectoral cooperation across all stakeholders in order to effectively prevent deaths and disappearances at sea. Mass rescue at sea is a complex, dangerous and often traumatic operational environment, which can easily be compounded by delays in intervention and disembarkation, and the lack of vital medical, psychological, and technical support. The complementary resources and capacities of civil society, States and the private shipping fleet are essential to building a comprehensive SAR system that protects both rescued people and rescuers alike. In order for private vessels to undertake commercial operations freely and safely, and Search and Rescue organisations to reduce deaths and disappearances at sea, States need to uphold international maritime obligations by ensuring the proactive coordination of distress cases and the timely disembarkation of rescued people in full accordance with International Humanitarian Law, as well as the wellbeing and dignity of all parties.

Against this backdrop, the concept for the Centre for Humanitarian Action at Sea (CHAS) was born. The Centre will serve three purposes: Firstly, it will establish a High-Level Dialogue platform to convene stakeholders from diverse sectors, facilitating discussions on challenges and solutions to Search and Rescue (SAR) operations. Secondly, the Centre will coordinate research, advocacy, diplomacy, and technical expertise on the imperative of saving lives, becoming a hub for comprehensive analysis of the humanitarian crisis at sea. And thirdly, the Centre will support Search and Rescue efforts through the provision of training, technical expertise, and channelling support.

This report conducted an extensive literary review of the existing sources of data on maritime migration, deaths, and disappearances in order to better understand the scale of the global humanitarian crisis at sea. The report also serves to identify existing data gaps, with the aim of creating comprehensive overviews of the key routes in each region. This

report also employed both qualitative and quantitative methodology, including a survey and long-form interviews on the perceptions and experiences of maritime professionals, to better understand the concerns and vulnerabilities of seafarers in Search and Rescue operations.

This report finds that, despite excellent reporting initiatives, such as the International Organization for Migration's Missing Migrants Project, there is a considerable gap in available data on all routes, particularly in Australasia, Southeast Asia, and the Americas, where there is limited civil society access and visibility, and States have adopted a securitised response to maritime departures. The report also identifies a need to better understand and respond to the challenges faced by seafarers who have been involved in Search and Rescue. Obstacles, such as the difficulties of coordinating the swift disembarkation of rescued people, the need for greater training on legal protections and clarifying or minimising the liabilities for Ship Captains, and the often overlooked but vitally important psychosocial post-care support for rescuers. As such, there is a pressing need for consolidated data collection efforts, and cross-sectoral dialogue, to ensure the full extent of the humanitarian crisis at sea is better understood, and the response is suitably informed by all affected stakeholders, including the States, civil society, and the commercial shipping fleet, all of whom have vital and complimentary expertise.

Migration

In June 2023, the UNHCR Global Trend Report estimated that the number of people forced to flee their homes globally has risen to a record 110 million presently displaced. In particular new outbreaks of conflict, such as Sudan and Ukraine, has contributed to a significant increase, while emerging drivers, such as extreme weather events and food scarcity resulting from climate change, will continue to play a leading role in pushing people to move, both directly and indirectly over the coming years and decades. Human mobility is, and will continue to become, a vital adaptation strategy for many people who seek to protect their safety and livelihoods. 70 per cent of refugees and people in need of international protection move to neighbouring countries, but as political intolerance and fatigue grows, States that have historically provided assistance to those affected by protracted crises are no longer as accommodating, forcing people to undertake more lengthy journeys.

Maritime migration - a global issue

The majority of migratory movements take place on land and as such are typically well managed, monitored and surveyed allowing for consistent and accurate data collection which tends to be publicly accessible. In contrast, most maritime crossings traverse geographical regions without clear jurisdiction and rules which compounds the opportunities for data collection. This is compounded by disputes or abdications of responsibility that arise when boats leave territorial waters and enter the extraterritorial High Seas. Maritime crossings have been recorded in every major region of the world, with deaths and disappearances a consistent feature across all routes. The high probability that lives lost due to capsizing may never be reported or bodies found, presents a major challenge to our collective understanding and response of the global humanitarian crisis at sea. The routes taken by migrants have evolved over time and the emergence of new routes in recent years is linked to increased area securitisation by migration control measures, driving the same people to take on more dangerous journeys. These routes will be uncovered later in this report along five major regions: Australasia, Southeast Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas.

The clandestine nature of irregular maritime migration is such that both migrants and their facilitators will attempt to mask their journeys, often departing under the cover of darkness and from remote areas to avoid detection. This not only undermines data collection efforts but makes it impossible to fully understand and address the true scale of migrant boat crossings and disappearances.
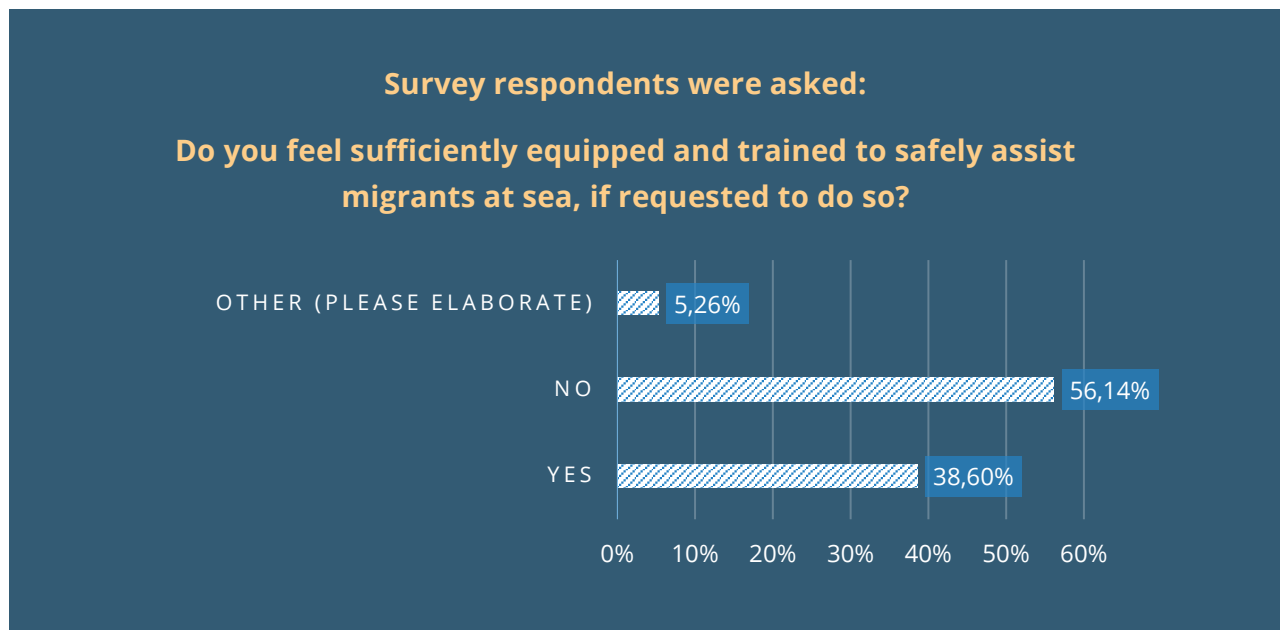
As the number of attempted maritime crossings increase, so too do the number of deaths and disappearances at sea. While these deaths are simplistically attributed to drownings across public discourse, other avoidable causes of death and prolonged suffering include

lack of food, drinking water, navigation and safety equipment, warm clothing, and other factors relating to exposure during these journeys. When overladen, unseaworthy boats depart, the integrity of the boat, its fuel consumption and the wellbeing of those onboard become pitched in a race against time, to either reach their intended destination, or be rescued. Most reported drownings, disappearances and prolonged suffering are therefore largely avoidable with cross-sectoral cooperation, will and the allocation of appropriate resources. It remains that the available figures present a dire situation.

Search and Rescue: a shared duty

Search and Rescue is a long-standing maritime tradition and legal obligation which far predates the modern migratory phenomenon. NGOs are a relatively new phenomenon in the context of maritime migration. Despite the first organised assistance of this nature occurring in the 1980s with the "boat people" of Southeast Asia, the professionalisation of humanitarian support to maritime crossings emerged post 2015 in response to the largely Euro-Mediterranean humanitarian crisis. This movement was born primarily from humanitarian and activist organisations frustrated by the perceived inaction of European States to save lives and alleviate the suffering of those on their metaphorical doorsteps, and so a mixture of experienced and qualified volunteers and professionals were sought to crew, manage and operate Search and Rescue vessels. Outside Coast Guard or dedicated national lifeguard organisations, the majority of seafarers do not embark with the expectation of encountering a distress event at sea, nor being suddenly entrusted with the potential responsibility over life and death. Yet rendering assistance at sea is nonetheless a longstanding maritime convention and even an obligation under maritime law. How a Ship Captain renders assistance, however, is not subject to the same regulations, and can vary enormously based on the sea state, available resources, crew size, type of vessel, and nature of the distress case. Inevitably, the burden of responsibility, regardless of whether a rescue is successful or otherwise, can have profoundly traumatic consequences on crews. It can be an isolating, nerve wracking experience. In the event of an unsuccessful rescue, feelings of guilt or helplessness can be deeply psychologically scarring in ways that affected seafarers may never fully recover from. Even in the event that a Ship Captain is not called upon to provide assistance, the fear of being required to take on such responsibility can influence how seafarers approach their jobs.

Survey respondents were asked:

Do you feel sufficiently equipped and trained to safely assist migrants at sea, if requested to do so?

OTHER (PLEASE ELABORATE)   5,26%

NO   56,14%

YES   38,60%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60%

In the mid-2010s, the urgency of maritime Search and Rescue made it, in practice, a collaborative operation, comprising the private sector, civil society, and States, all complementing each other with their expertise and resources to ensure the best outcomes. This demonstrated the value of a participatory, cross-sectoral Search and Rescue model including all stakeholders.

As the politicisation of migration has taken hold, we have moved away from this model, towards States increasingly coordinating commercial vessels in a migration management role, placing seafarers and operators in legally and operationally precarious situations.

This was most evident in the initial stages of the Covid-19 pandemic States closed their borders to non-nationals, leading to standoffs at sea becoming more common and increasing in duration while solutions were sought.

This policy shift occurred with little consideration for the voice and agency of seafarers or their needs. It is therefore understandable that commercial and private seafarers are wary of the consequences of the politicisation of the maritime space.

These, as well as other key issues faced by sailors in the context of maritime Search and Rescue, are explored in this next section.

Maersk Etienne – a cautionary tale of what can happen when collaboration breaks down

In August 2020, the Captain and crew of the Maersk Etienne were reportedly requested by the Maltese Maritime Recues Coordination Centre to assist a small fishing boat in distress, carrying 27 people, including a pregnant woman and small child. The Etienne then proceeded to Malta, where the vessels was refused entry, leading to a 40-day stand-off at sea for the crew and rescued migrants alike, while a solution was sought for disembarkation.

The government of Malta argued that, as the rescue took place in Tunisia's designated Search and Rescue Region (SRR) and Tunisia was the nearest port, Tunisia was therefore responsible for coordinating the disembarkation. Malta and Italy, as receiving countries of maritime migration, have also argued for greater Flag State responsibility in resolving issues of this nature, citing Article 94 of UNCLOS which provides that a Flag State should "exercise its jurisdiction and control in the administrative, technical and social matters". In practice, the distance of most Flag States to any rescues, would make this very challenging for them to disembark migrant but, as in this case Denmark took the initiative to encourage Tunisia through diplomatic channels to allow disembarkation.

It is believed that the Captain of the *Etienne* headed towards Malta on the understanding that this was the coordinating State, as the initial instruction to rescue came from the Maltese authorities, and so disembarkation would swiftly follow. Despite International law and maritime conventions placing clear responsibilities on governments to ensure people in distress are promptly disembarked, the ambiguity surrounding responsibility on providing a place to disembark led to the rescued people remaining onboard for more than a month while awaiting a solution, prolonging the suffering of those rescued, as well as the burden of an already under-equipped crew.

Speaking after this event the CEO of Maersk Tankers, Christian M. Ingerslev said: *"We trust that when we are performing our humanitarian and legal obligations that others will also do the right thing. What is most disconcerting is that there was lack of political action then, and there is no solution now."*

Invisible shipwrecks

This report has used available data to visualise the global scale of deaths and disappearances against the density of maritime traffic on key routes and illustrate how this humanitarian crisis coexists on the peripheries of seafarers' daily reality. The occurrence of invisible shipwrecks is unfortunately not uncommon, and their occurrence has been widely and consistently reported in all major regions of the world where people undertake perilous journeys across seas. These shipwrecks are additionally traumatic as those affected also include family members and loved ones who are left to grieve without closure, prolonging pain and uncertainty, and also often inheriting the administrative and financial liabilities that comes with not being able to prove the death of a loved one.

This is evident in the hundreds of remains found on the shores of North Africa and entangled in fishing nets that are not linked to any known shipwrecks, as well as reports of shipwrecks with no survivors that are difficult to verify. This reinforces our understanding about the shortcomings in existing data collection. Therefore, not only is the documented number of deaths and disappearances on these migratory routes likely to be considerably underestimated, but also little to no information is available about the individuals who died in the vast majority of documented cases.

Legal framework governing mass rescue at sea

International Maritime Conventions	International Human Rights Law	Additional Relevant Maritime Directives
• SAR Convention (1979) • SOLAS Convention (1974) • UNCLOS - United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea (1982)	• Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984) • European Convention on Human Rights (1953) • International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) • The Refugee Convention (1951) • Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)	• EU Regulation 656/2014 • GMDSS Manual • IAMSAR Manual (Edition 2016) • Resolution MSC 167(78) • Resolution MSC A.917(22) • IMO Circ. 194

The rescue of migrants at sea overlaps several distinct legal regimes: International Refugee, Maritime, Humanitarian and Human Rights Laws, each focusing on one particular aspect of this phenomena. International Maritime Law is clear in defining Ship Captains' responsibility

to render assistance to those in distress. This is the legal basis for civil society Search and Rescue operations, as well as the commendable efforts of private vessels.

The duty to provide assistance at sea according to international law is primarily governed by Article 98 of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). This Convention's framework is further supported by additional regulations found in International Maritime Organization (IMO) treaties, namely the 1974 International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (1974 SOLAS) and the 1979 International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue (1979 SAR). The practices of States demonstrate that the key rules governing this duty, as implemented, and enforced through domestic laws, have become customary international law. In addition to these norms, there exists a set of non-binding principles known as soft law, which has been developed by the IMO in collaboration with various organizations, including the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. These soft law instruments offer practical guidance to Ship Captains and crews, especially in the context of large-scale rescue operations involving irregular migrants. Article 98(1)(a) of UNCLOS stipulates that every flag State must require the Ship's Captain, when flying its flag, to provide assistance to any individual found at sea facing the risk of being lost. This assistance can encompass actions such as providing navigational aids, fuel, or even escorting the vessel for part of its journey. The obligation may also extend to the actual rescue of individuals.

Article 98(1)(b) of UNCLOS further mandates that the Ship Captain must promptly proceed to rescue persons in distress if informed of their need for help, as far as this can be reasonably expected of them. In both instances, the duty is understandably conditioned upon the Ship Captain being able to provide assistance "without serious danger to the ship, the crew, or the passengers." Notably, UNCLOS does not specify the criteria for assessing the seriousness of the risk to the ship, crew, or passengers, leaving this matter to the Ship Captain's professional judgment, taking into consideration the specific circumstances of each rescue operation. Additionally, the Ship Captain's duty to provide assistance is complemented by the coastal State's responsibility to facilitate effective Search and Rescue (SAR) services, as outlined in Article 98(2) of UNCLOS.

However, it has been argued, since maritime migration was not foreseen when the respective conventions on Search and Rescue were drafted, the migratory component is not sufficiently acknowledged and should be treated distinctly from non-migration distress cases. Refugee Law, which explicitly prohibits *refoulement* for example, is only applicable to States, unless otherwise transposed into a Flag States' domestic law, whereas the respective maritime conventions stipulate Search and Rescue as a responsibility for all Ship Captains. As such, this presents a challenge to the consistent application of disembarkation. Where there are gaps in the interpretation of the legal regime, liability often, unfairly, falls onto the Ship Captains' shoulders to address. The Centre provides a space for discussion of such issues while taking into consideration seafarers' position.

Maritime space as a designated humanitarian space?

The concept of humanitarian space can be defined both as a physical area or region, and also as an abstraction through which we understand key humanitarian notions, such as access, need, and impact. In his 2021 address to the UN Security Council, Director-General of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Robert Mardini, reflected that:

"While there may be different views on what humanitarian space is, there can be little doubt about what happens when there is no humanitarian space…and, believe me, it is ugly. It is a dire lack of protection and assistance for those who need it most. It is humanitarian workers – including our own colleagues – in mortal danger, far too many of them traumatised, missing, maimed or killed. And that really is the bottom line. Humanitarian space – or spaces – must be protected, without exception."

Conceptually, humanitarian space can also be understood as the environment in which the humanitarian principles can be applied, and humanitarian action can thrive, which is less operationally determined, and more a product of the political system and forces which shape it. In order to craft a conceptual humanitarian space at sea, efforts need to focus on the integrity of International Maritime and Humanitarian Law, as well as the promotion of collective social values, tools and cooperation.

Overview of maritime migration routes

It has been found that the maritime migration routes can be broken down into 5 distinct regions.

Maritime migration Regions

1. Australasia   2. Southeast Asia   3. Africa   4. Europe   5. Americas
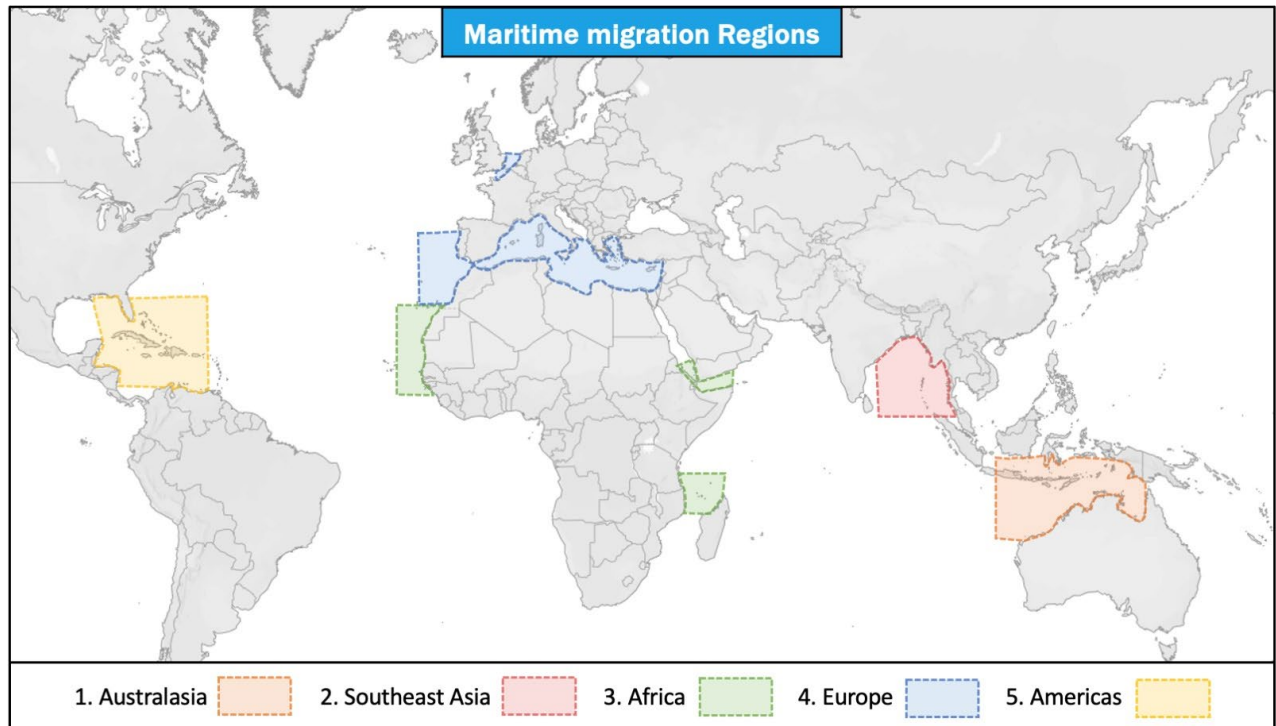
Maps make use of the following symbols

Maritime traffic Intensity (**MTI**): estimate number of individual commercial and private vessels which operated a journey in the defined zone in 2023 (up to mid-August). This highlights the potential crossover between commercial and migratory flows.
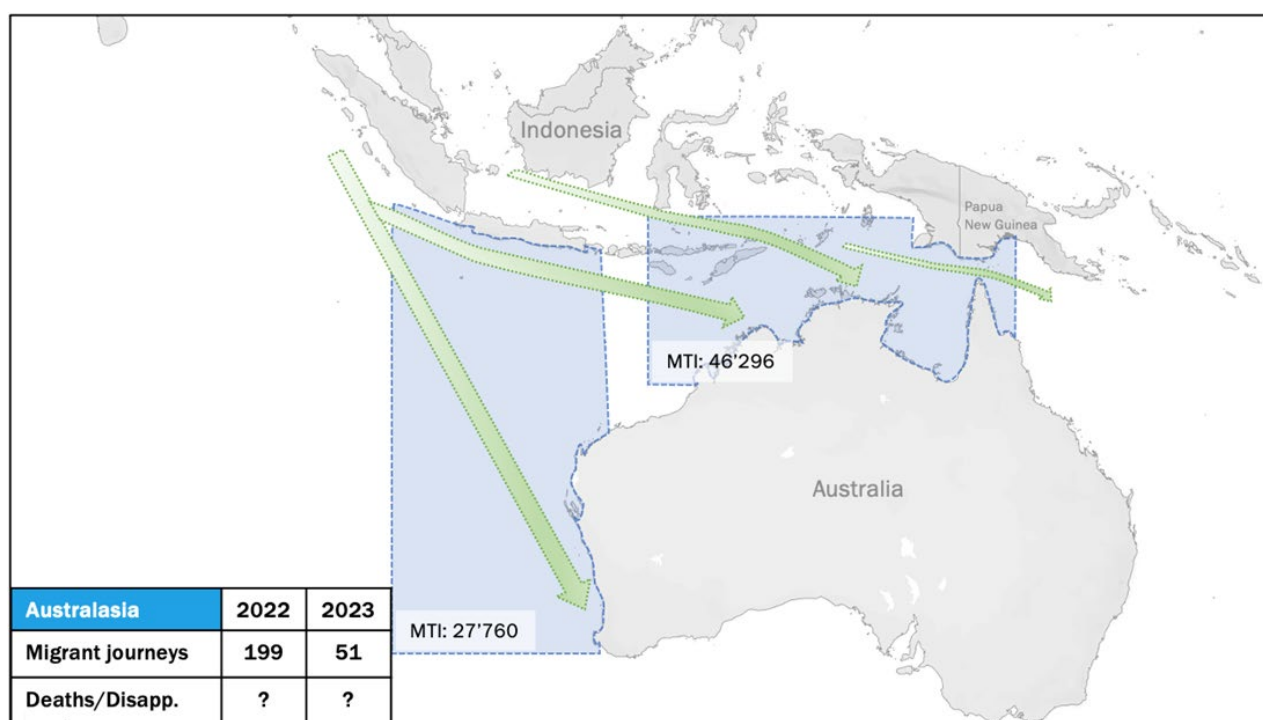
Known migration route

Potential migration route (for visualisation purposes)

Site of drowning/disappearance in 2023 (GPS, up to mid-August)

Australasia

Australasia	2022	2023
Migrant journeys	199	51
Deaths/Disapp.	?	?

Political considerations

Maritime migration towards Australia has been a long-standing issue, with numerous high-profile incidents, capsizes and drownings occurring over the years. This trend can be traced back to the late 1970s and early 1980s, when refugees from Vietnam and Cambodia began attempting to reach Australia by boat. A significant intensification of this migratory flow occurred in the early to mid-2010s, with many refugees fleeing conflict and persecution in the Middle East and North Africa. The Australian government responded by implementing a policy known as *Operation Sovereign Borders*; a policy that involves turning boats back to their point of origin, offshore processing and detention of asylum seekers on the islands of Nauru and Manus, and a deterrent campaign to discourage people from attempting to reach the country irregularly by sea.

Australia is one of the first and most prominent maritime migration contexts and the State's policy and practice response has set a number of global precedents, most notably with regards to differentiated asylum outcomes for those arriving by sea and systematic maritime interceptions and returns. As a result, the number of boats attempting to reach this destination has dropped significantly, with only a handful of boats reportedly making it to Australian waters in recent years.

Data availability

The *Refugee Council of Australia* provides a comprehensive overview of maritime migration developments with a particular focus on the activities of *Operation Sovereign Borders*, to illustrate both the number of boats and affected people attempting to reach Australia.

However, the data that is relied upon for this analysis are primarily collected by the Australian Government and screened for public release. A policy of not disclosing any data deemed to be operationally sensitive is maintained, albeit without a clear definition of what type of data may be categorised as such.

As the Australian Maritime Command - comprising both the Australian Defence Force and the Australian Border Force - is the principal operational actor in and around Australian waters, there is no opportunity for independently and transparently monitoring maritime migratory movements. The true extent of boat arrivals, deaths, disappearances and interceptions therefore remains unknown.

Southeast Asia

Southeast Asia	2022	2023
Migrant journeys	3'545	?
Deaths/Disapp.	348	?
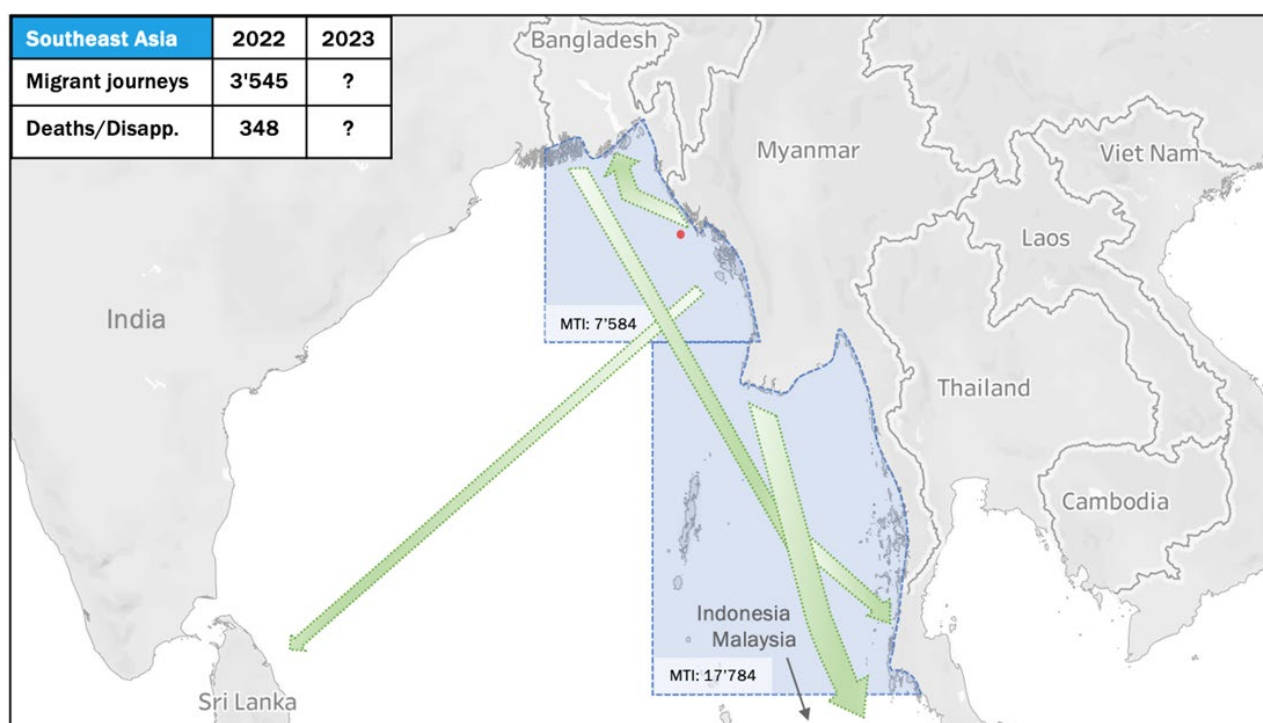
Political considerations

The most significant maritime crossings across this region are suspected to be Rohingya people principally fleeing Myanmar to Malaysia, Indonesia and Bangladesh, as well as onward journeys from Bangladesh, including less frequent crossings to Thailand, India and Sri Lanka. Although very little research and reporting exist on these maritime movements, recurring media stories of large scale capsizes, mass rescues and prolonged standoffs all allude to this recurring phenomenon. For example, in 2015 a boat carrying hundreds of Rohingya refugees was stranded at sea for weeks, with several deaths reported due to dehydration and starvation. Guardian journalist Emma Graham-Harrison spoke to several Rohingya and drew the alarming, but unsurprising, conclusion that: *"A few interviewees also told of entire boats sinking, but there was no way to verify such reports or if, and how many, lives*

were lost". In addition, reports emerged of Rohingya people being stranded at sea in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with many countries in the region closing their borders to prevent the spread of the virus.

Data overview

There is little consolidated and verified data available in this region, making it difficult to infer any trends, patterns, or even the scale of the migratory movements. Bangladesh is known to have borne the bulk of the responsibility for hosting Rohingya refugees, with scarce support from the international community. This has created a hesitation among neighbouring countries to allow boats to disembark, leading to prolonged standoffs and an attempt to downplay the scale of boat departures.

The restrictive maritime space around Myanmar, and limited UN recognition of the *de facto* government, have hindered efforts by international organizations to confirm this phenomenon. The Civil Society Organisation *MOAS* has twice attempted to monitor the situation, but faced considerable restrictions and intimidation from Naval patrols, and ultimately no SAR mission was established, undermining efforts to build civil society monitoring and SAR capacities in the region.

Africa

East Africa

Gulf of Aden	2022	2023
Migrant journeys	73'200	86'822
Deaths/Disapp.	29	37
Returns (➝)	108'588	?

MTI: 19'768
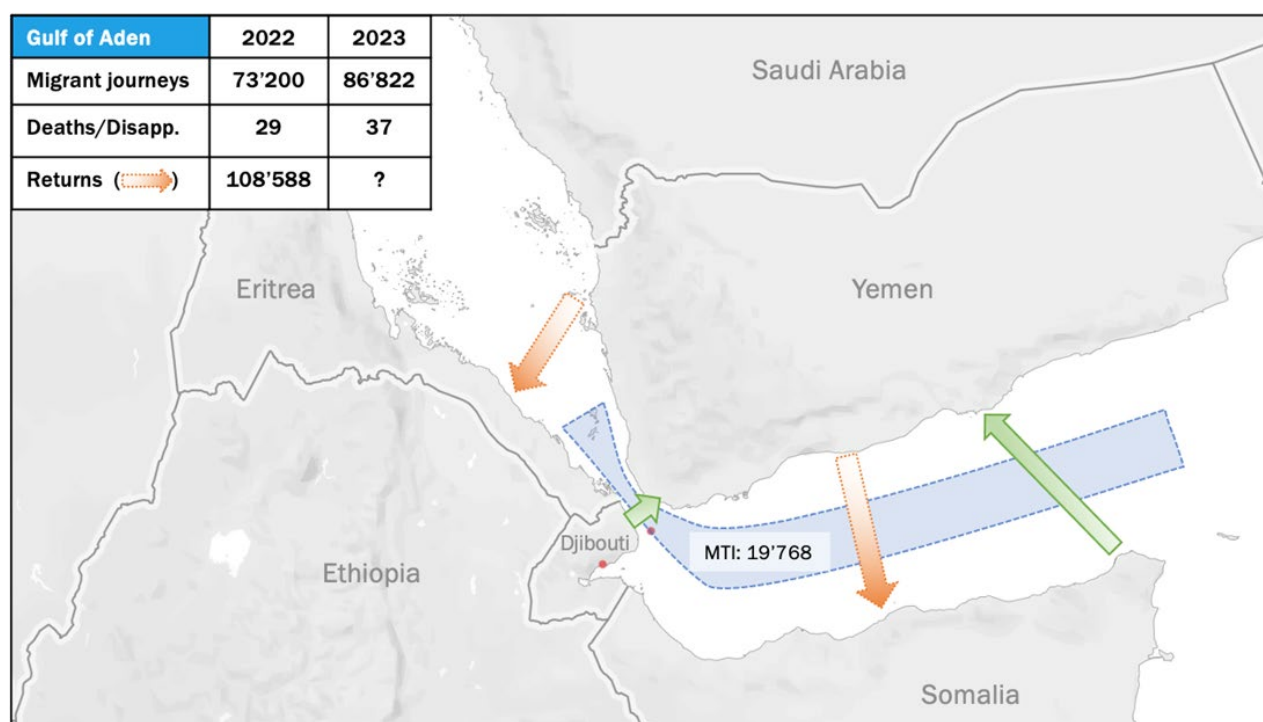
Maritime migration from Africa to neighbouring continents is a longstanding phenomenon. Two growing routes are the Southeastern African crossing from the Island of Comoros to Mayotte (an overseas French territory) and East African (Horn of Africa) departures across the Gulf of Aden to Yemen. The latter route has seen an upsurge in crossings following the outbreak of violence in Sudan this Spring. The Horn of Africa - Gulf of Aden migratory route is unique in that it sees a near continuous stream of movement in both directions, largely driven by the long-standing civil wars in Yemen, Ethiopia, Sudan and Somalia, friendly weather patterns, and the relatively short crossing compared to the Atlantic and Mediterranean routes. On average, 11,500 people boarded vessels each month from the Horn of Africa to Yemen in 2019, making it the busiest maritime migration route in the world at the time.

Comoros - Mayotte	2022	2023
Migrant journeys (estimate)	36'500	22'600
Deaths/Disapp.	?	> 34
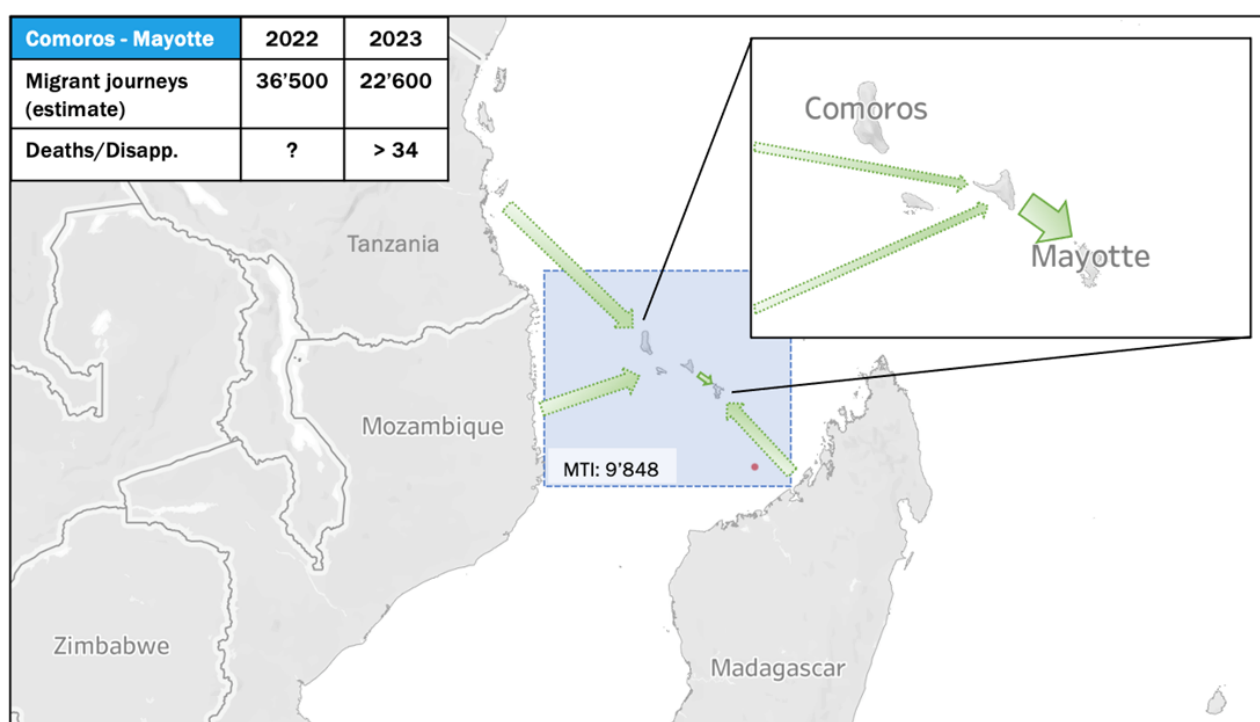
Mayotte's status as a French overseas territory has created a microcosm of Africa-Europe migration in the Indian Ocean region. In the Spring of 2023, the French government launched *Operation Wuambushu*, anti-migration crackdown to prevent and return new arrivals on the island.

West Africa

West African Route	2022	2023
Migrant journeys	?	7'213
Deaths/Disapp.	479	315
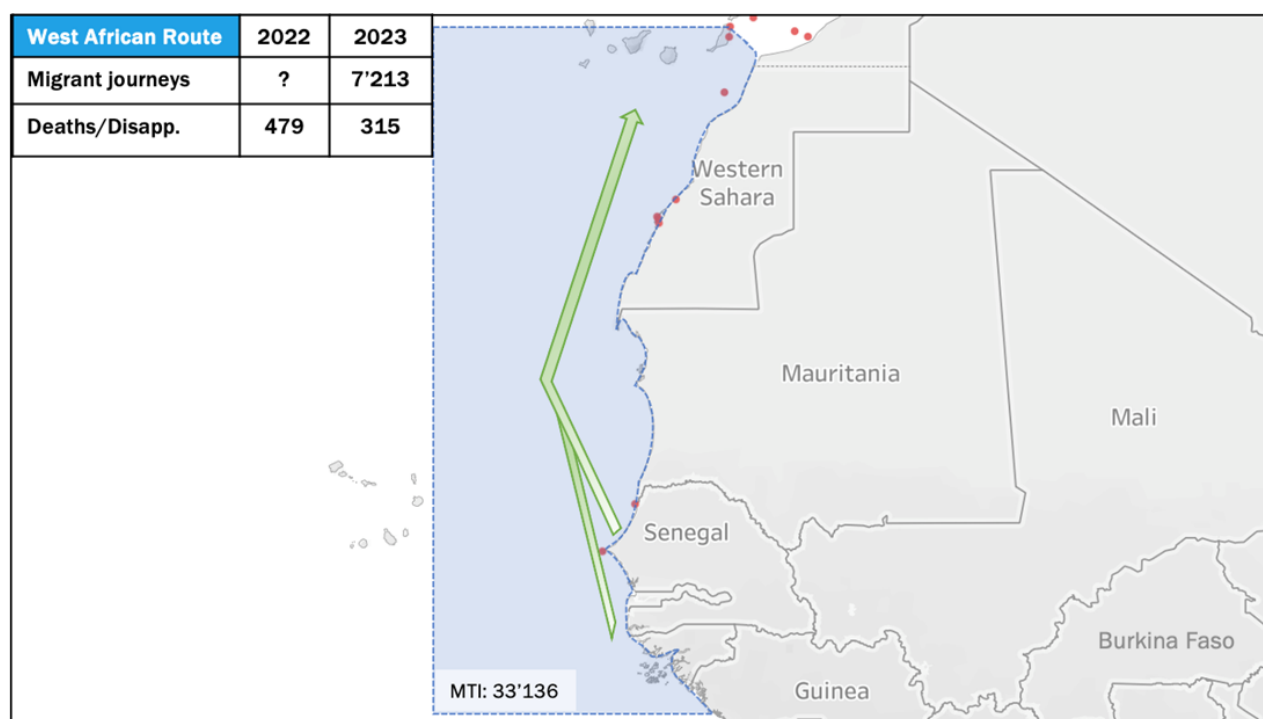
An important but largely unknown route in this region is the West African crossing to the Canary Islands. In 2020, the number of people crossing along this axis soared following the deterioration of the security citation in the Sahel region along with an increased securitisation of the central Mediterranean corridor. The flow crosses the Atlantic and is thus subject to extreme weather conditions and exposed to less commercial shipping, increasing the risk of distress situations.

Data overview (East and West Africa)

There is a regional shortfall of accurate and timely data on the region due to a lack of resources and cooperation between transit countries. In this context, most available migration data is collected and extrapolated in countries of destination. This creates an information bias in favour of successful journeys whilst unsuccessful journeys, particularly those on emerging routes, remain invisible.

Considerable data and analysis exist on the humanitarian situation in the Mediterranean corridor, as International Organisations and civil society organisations operating in countries of arrival have created an effective monitoring network to understand the scale of deaths and disappearances at sea. The same cannot be said for routes where Europe is not the intended destination. Very little data exists about crossings from Comoros to Mayotte for example.

Europe

Mediterranean

Mediterranean	2022	2023
Migrant journeys	178'558	160'960
Deaths/Disapp.	2'775	2'450
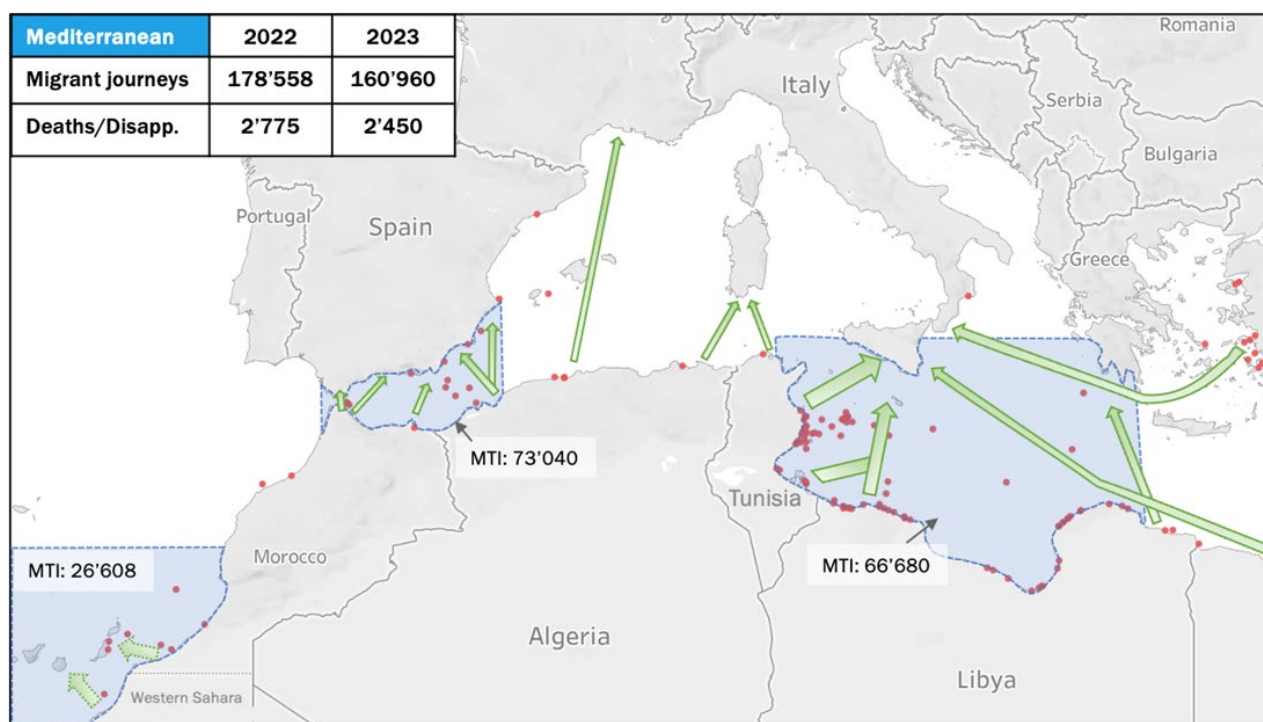
Central Mediterranean routes have received widespread visibility due to the disproportionately high numbers of deaths and disappearances, leading to the moniker "deadliest migration route in the world". Often referred to as a single route, this corridor comprises in fact several routes from Tunisia, Libya and Algeria to Italy and Malta; all of whom have a distinct history and carry unique risks.

East of the Mediterranean is the Aegean Sea crossing between Turkey and Greece, which has seen high levels of continuous activity since 2015. Hellenic Coast Guard pushback operations have led to more and more boats now departing from further South in Turkey with the aim of reaching Italy. This has prompted people to start journeys from even further out in the hope of reaching Europe, including an increase of departures from Lebanon and Syria's Akkar region towards Cyprus. This implies much longer journeys across the Mediterranean Sea, exposing people to greater danger.

The English Channel

The Channel	2022	2023
Migrant journeys	45'755	20'101
Deaths/Disapp.	5	7
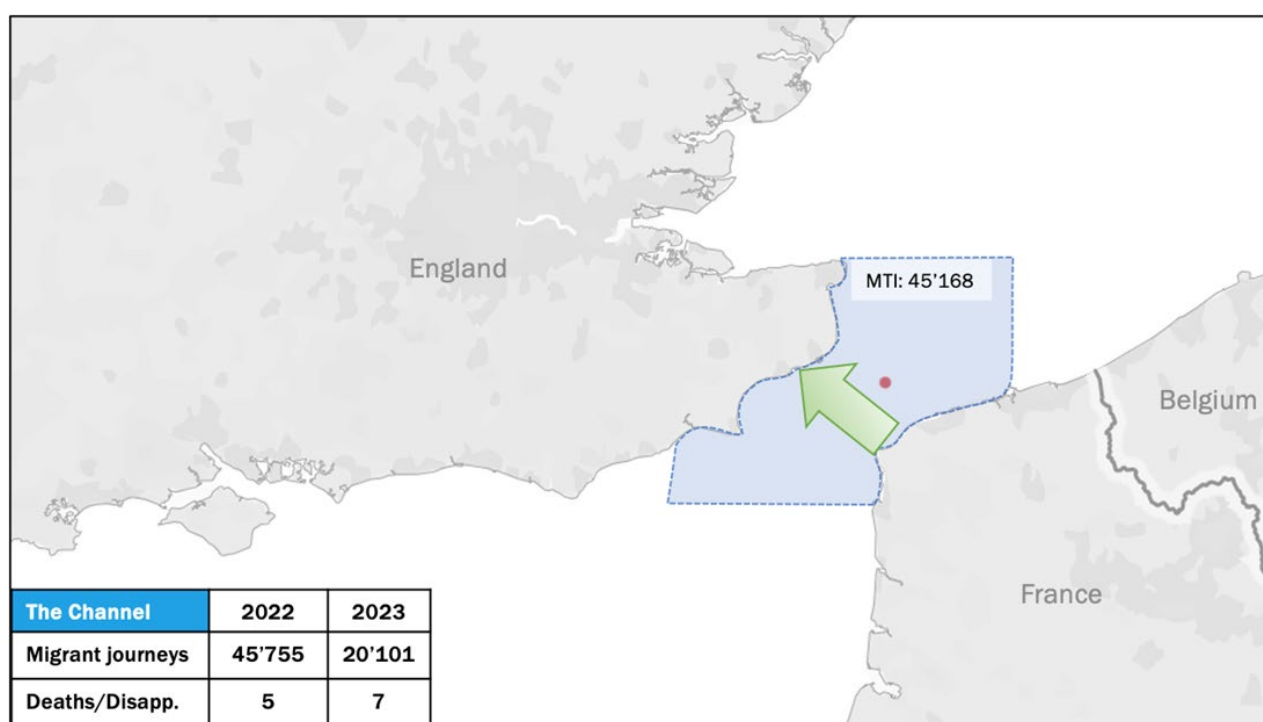
UK Home Office figures show that Channel crossings from Belgium and France to the United Kingdom have risen dramatically in the past two years. The policy response was twofold: the freshly adopted Illegal Migration Act which seeks to disqualify all irregular arrivals from regularisation in the United Kingdom and a partnership with Rwanda to relocate all irregular arrivals while they undergo asylum procedures, although it is too early to determine the impact this will have on deterrence and risk of future crossings.

Data overview Europe (Mediterranean and The English Channel)

Europe is the region with the most available data sources in terms of both quantity and quality, in part due to the availability of cross-sectoral migrant and refugee support services and also due to public interest in migration issues. However, increasingly strict government securitisation policies have the effect of excluding civil society organisations from data collection. In Greece, for example, exclusion zones exist near parts of the border, creating blind spots where Coast Guards operate and reducing the opportunities for independent monitoring.

All three of these routes traverse major shipping lanes and maritime industry representatives have expressed serious concerns about the rise in crossings, and the resulting likelihood of collisions with commercial ships. The perception of risk among seafarers remains largely unaddressed and reflects a serious knowledge exchange gap with civil society and humanitarian actors, who have not traditionally engaged with the maritime industry.

Americas

The Americas	2022	2023
Migrant journeys	?	?
Deaths/Disapp.	373	207
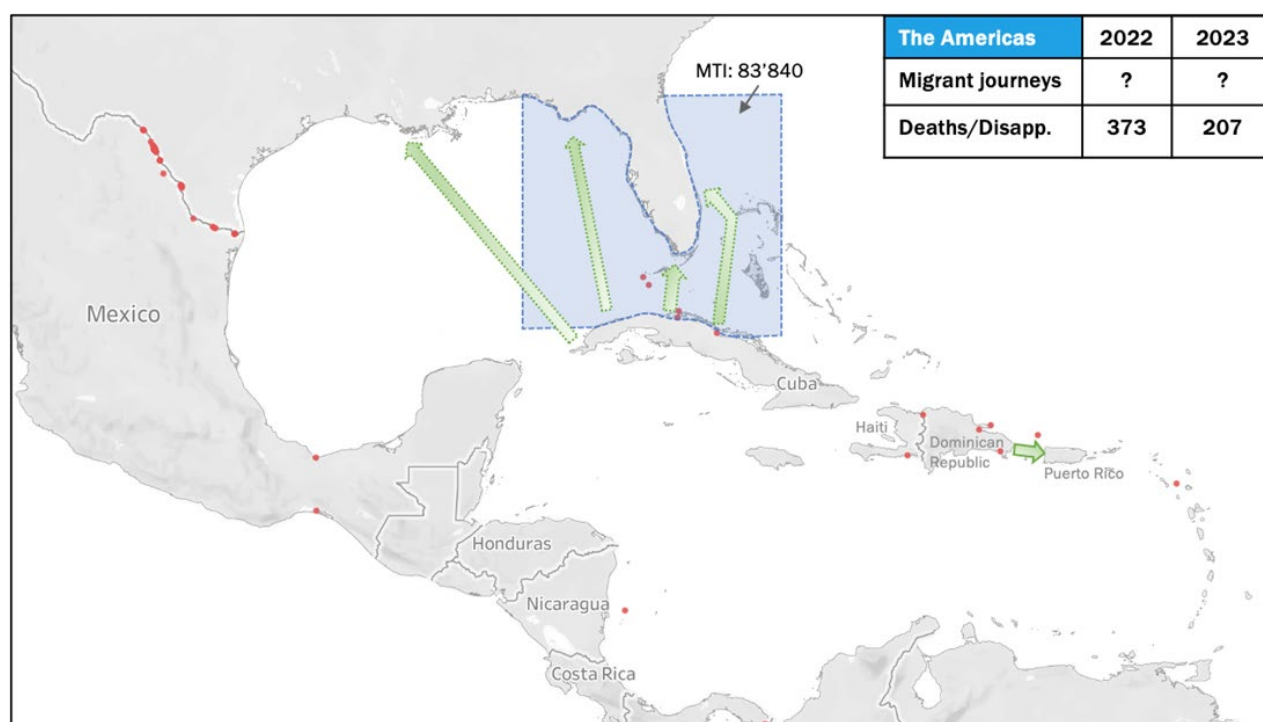
Migration and displacement in the region typically occur Northbound, from the Caribbean, Central and South America, to the United States. The most prominent type of maritime migration in this region is the Sea route from Central American island nations, such as Cuba and Haiti, to the United States. Additionally, other less visible intraregional routes include maritime crossings from Haiti, the Dominican Republic and Dominica to Martinique, Guadeloupe, and Saint Martin. These movements tend to fluctuate following the annual hurricane seasons, as people rely on small fishing boats to navigate in between islands in search of rebuilding livelihoods and reconnecting with loved ones.

In 2004, following a decade of high numbers of irregular maritime crossings, the U.S. government launched *Operation Vigilant Sentry*. The mission's primary objective is "to protect the safety of life at sea, and to deter and dissuade a maritime mass migration". In 2022, the operation recorded the deadliest year for maritime migration-related deaths in recent history, with approximately 65 reported fatalities: a fourfold increase from the 17 recorded deaths in 2021, and an eleven-fold increase from the 5 reported deaths in 2020, which is clearly below reality. In the same year, the US Coast Guard intercepted more than 6,000 Cubans at sea; the highest figure since the 1990s.

The U.S. government currently employs a policy of differentiated outcomes for irregular maritime arrivals, either intercepting and returning boats from within territorial waters, or detaining without parole those who reach land.

Data overview

While figures on maritime crossings are regularly made available by authorities to the media, consolidated data is only held by Government agencies and released sporadically, and often with an accompanying deterrent narrative. Available data often lacks the context and details on methodology required to make useful comparisons between time periods, as well as the sufficient data to map the geography of migratory movements, interceptions and capsizes. While a general overview of maritime migration to the Americas is achievable, the available data does not effectively inform on the humanitarian landscape of such a large and key region for maritime migratory movements.

Cross-regional patterns

Data can be obtained for all routes, albeit to varying degrees of availability and quality. The following observations can be made across regions:

- Consolidated data are typically not available; this can be due to a neglect of the issue, limited resources and/or political pressure that aims to present data in a certain way.
- Data may originate from governments but is more often collected by international organizations and NGOs.
- Several maritime spaces are restricted, hampering efforts to collect testimonies and compute accurate estimates of migratory routes by said organisations.
- A large number of migration journeys remain unaccounted for due to non-arrival

A case for more robust data

Accurate and comprehensive data on mixed maritime movements are crucial for policymakers, researchers, and humanitarian organisations to develop effective responses, understand migration trends, and address the challenges associated with this complex and evolving issue. Four diverse sources of data exist on maritime migration, comprising all the major and affected stakeholders, apart from migrants themselves:

1. The United Nations (UN) and International Organizations (IOs)

2. Civil Society Organisations

3. States and National Authorities

4. Private Shipping and the Commercial Maritime Industry

The following is an assessment of the availability, reliability, and relevance of these data sources pertaining to maritime migration.

The United Nations (UN) and International Organizations (IOs)

The United Nations and various International Organisations play a pivotal role in collecting, analysing and disseminating data on maritime migration. This includes the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the International Maritime Organization (IMO); all of whom have been active in mapping the scale, evolution and humanitarian needs at sea, developing best-practice and guidelines for first responders, and advocating for greater State proactivity in Search and Rescue, disembarkation and responsibility sharing. To provide a comprehensive picture of maritime migration, data is collected via a range of methodologies: surveys, interviews, and collaborations with member states. These organisations contribute significantly to our understanding of maritime migration.

Limitations: A significant portion of the data is collected second-hand, and there are issues with incomplete coverage and inconsistent methodologies. Constraints, determined by the political landscape, such as restrictions of access, are also a pressing concern in politically volatile settings.

Civil society

Civil society - comprising non-governmental organisations (NGOs), research institutes, advocacy groups and activists' networks - also plays a crucial role in documenting and analysing maritime migration trends. These organisations often work closely with affected communities, and survivors of maritime journeys, providing them with support and resources while gathering first-hand accounts and data. Additionally, civil society entities engage in research and monitoring initiatives, employing innovative approaches such as

social media analysis, remote sensing technologies, and community-based data collection. The data collected by civil society organisations can offer valuable insights into the experiences of migrants and the challenges they face during their maritime journeys.

Limitations: Restricted access and scarcity of resources limit the scope and scale, political positioning and objectives, potential attempts by activists and NGOs to hold on to valuable data or methodologies so as to avoid compromising working methods or the identities of vulnerable people.

States and national authorities

States and national authorities, as primary actors in managing borders and migration processes, possess a wealth of data on maritime migration. Governments collect information through various channels, including immigration records, border control agencies, and maritime surveillance systems. This data can provide detailed insights into migration routes, origins, destinations, and demographics.

Regional authorities, notably the *European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation* (EUROPOL) and the *European Border and Coast Guard Agency* (FRONTEX), have developed specific platforms. The latter's Risk Analysis Network, for example, aims to collect, exchange, analyse and forecast invaluable data on maritime journeys to Europe.

Limitations: limited release of information, accompanying narratives and political biases, inconsistent methodologies, differing definitions across different states leading to hindered comparability and reduced reliability of aggregated data sets. Some States have taken steps to enhance data sharing and cooperation at regional and international levels to overcome these limitations.

Private shipping and the commercial maritime industry

Private and commercial seafarers are the principal stakeholder to our seas, both in terms of maritime necessity and global footprint. As such, private and commercial seafarers are positioned to simultaneously benefit the most from the collection of data on deaths and disappearances at seas, as well as being the best placed to collect and centralise such data for the purposes of situational awareness, disruption monitoring and risk analysis.

Limitations: No companies or operators currently systematically undertake such research, with many major shipping operators unaware of how many rescues and deviations their companies and ships have been involved in. The limitations largely centre around a lack of dedicated resources for such research and data collection, which is itself derived from the mistaken assumption that this is a rare and exaggerated phenomenon.

Merchant shipping - experiences and perceptions

The report has focused on merchant marine, due to it being the least vocal sector of this topic. Going forward the Centre shall also be extending the survey and interviews to all stakeholders.

Participants from the maritime sector with particular expertise and experience of migrant Search and Rescue incidents were invited to participate in a qualitative survey as well as quantitative interviews. This dual approach was employed to ensure that this report accurately reflected current and emerging obstacles, from the perspective of seafarers and maritime professionals.

The survey asked respondents to rank the following six professional concerns according to their experiences or perceptions:

- The safety and condition of the rescued people
- The safety and security of your vessel
- The safety and wellbeing of your crew
- The commercial impact of diversions to your ship
- The risk of long standoffs at sea and detentions in port
- The risk of criminalisation

For the analysis of this data, each concern can be summarised as:

Issues relating to the company (economic)

Survey respondents ranked the adverse commercial implications of Search and Rescue as their lowest consideration, instead prioritising both the safety of the crew and ship, as well as the welfare of the rescued people as their main concerns. However, all respondents also ranked their perceived support from their companies last, behind protection from their flag states and respective national authorities involved in coordinating or supporting rescue operations. This data opens an important conversation about the nature of the relationship between seafarers and their companies, particularly in the event that there is a relatively limited expectation of support during a Search and Rescue event.

Unlike dedicated, professional SAR organisations, the primary purpose of global shipping vessels is to undertake commercial operations. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), "*The main transport mode for global trade is ocean shipping: around 90% of traded goods are carried over the waves.*" The centrality of marine traffic in upholding global supply chains was publicly illustrated in the 2021 *Ever Given* incident, when the vessels' obstruction of the Suez Canal for six days was estimated to have held up 9.6bn USD of trade. The interconnectivity of our global economic system, and its

reliance on maritime routes, means that the repercussions of delays and diversions extend far beyond shipping companies' profit margins, but also threaten regional economic interests and livelihoods on a scale unparalleled by other supply chains.

In this context, the commercial implications of delays and diversions can be devastating for shipping operators, placing a huge burden on companies to resolve incidents as efficiently as possible. When the relevant Coastal States, or on-scene coordinating authorities, are unable to swiftly offer disembarkation or transhipment options, resolution of the rescue operation can often fall onto the initiative of the Ship Captain, who may opt to disembark rescued people according to geographic proximity and ease of permission, over considerations for their protection or access to certain rights, such as asylum procedures. There are concerns that vessels are being increasingly tasked by certain national authorities beyond the reasonable range of demands that could be considered Search and Rescue. This includes the practice of tasking commercial vessels to deviate from their intended route in order to visually confirm boat reports, then act as a visual reference point for intervening Libyan Coast Guard vessels. This could result in lengthy, regular delays of up to several days, placing commercial shipping into a volatile context, without any intention of using the crew to directly offer assistance, but instead being employed as a tool in migration management operations. In the event that rescued migrants are knowingly returned to a place where they will then be subject to extreme human rights violations, such as torture, rape and forced labour, it is necessary to determine the legal and moral liability of the Ships Captains. While international public law, such as the Refugee Convention, is applicable to States, some States, such as Germany, have considered codifying the principle of non-refoulement into domestic law, applicable to German-flagged vessels and their crew.

Should the responsibility for determining a place of safety for disembarkation fall onto the shoulders of Ship Captains, then-it has been argued- so should the criteria for determining such safe port for disembarkation, requiring greater considerations for Ship Captain's needs and intended journeys.

The 2020 briefing *When Private Vessels Rescue Migrants and Refugees: A Mapping of Legal Considerations*, prepared by Dr Jean-Pierre Gauci, reported that the direct accumulated economic costs of food, fuel, port charges, additional wages, and decontamination can result in costs "of up to 500,000 USD arising out of a single rescue causing the vessel to be delayed for one week.", with a significant proportion of this burden falling on the shoulders of the operator. The *Hague, Hague Visby, Rotterdam and Hamburg rules* for the international carriage of goods by sea all have provisions in favour of protecting the carrier from 'Any deviation in saving or attempting to save life or property at sea or any reasonable deviation shall not be deemed to be an infringement or breach of these Rules or of the contract of carriage, and the carrier shall not be liable for any loss or damage resulting therefrom.'

Issues relating to the crew (wellbeing and legal)

Search and Rescue at sea is inherently a risky undertaking, often aggravated by additional factors such as the sea state, weather conditions, lighting, availability of resources, levels of crew training, language barriers and size and type of vessels. The long-established maritime tradition, and legal obligation, to render assistance at sea uniquely empowers seafarers as first responders, albeit with minimal professional training and support. This responsibility is not only an operational one, but also a moral one which requires adequate operational, legal and psychological support to affected seafarers.

Most commercial seafarers are not as equipped with the same range of tools and resources to find, communicate with, and embark, people from unseaworthy boats, leading to dangerous situations which could place crews at risk of being overwhelmed. Through considerable trial and error, Search and Rescue NGOs have adopted Standard Operating Procedures for complex mass rescues, drawing on lessons learned from closely monitoring trends and patterns. This level of attention to detail is simply not feasible for commercial Ship Captains, particularly those who sail globally, and so situational awareness often derives, as one Captain described, "from the headlines, social media and word of mouth". One such example of vital contextual awareness is the use of large fishing boats, departing from Libya, which peaked in 2017. Evacuating people from boats of this nature is uniquely dangerous due to their size, top-heavy weight distribution, and concealed lower decks. Without the technical knowledge and training to maintain calm, secure the boat, and extract people from the lower decks and engine compartment, these boats are susceptible to sudden capsize, resulting in the loss of hundreds of lives.

Maritime sector professionals are conscious of both the moral and criminal liability of failed rescue attempts, as well as the risk of psychological harm resulting from being exposed to such traumatic events without the appropriate support. The Seafarers Happiness Index, devised by *The Mission to Seafarers* has mapped a considerable lull in the overall mental wellbeing of seafarers, and their professional satisfaction. The accumulation of working conditions and intensity, compounded by a sector-wide struggle to recover to pre-Covid working conditions, have created an elevated risk of psychological vulnerability.

Issues relating to rescued people (safety and security)

Seafarers have identified the perceived risk of challenges to crowd management onboard the rescue vessel, citing a few notable incidents where either rescued people had protested their circumstances to the crew, or inter-community tensions had arisen between rescued people following their transhipment. While such events are exceptional, and do not reflect the typical circumstances witnessed by seafarers, there is a risk that traumatised and desperate people can undermine security onboard. Two prominent examples are the infamous *Tampa* event in 2001, and the 2019 *El Hiblu 1* event. In both cases, the rescued

people allegedly protested to the crew against their perceived return to their country of departure, citing serious concerns for their safety. Regardless of the substance of those fears, small tanker crews are ill-equipped to tend to the needs and safety of large groups of vulnerable people, particularly with the added complication of language barriers and the many hazards present onboard a working vessel.

A dangerous situation, or the perception of one, may rapidly arise, leading the Ship Captain to wish to disembark as quickly as possible in the nearest willing port, without consideration for the asylum status of those onboard. Similarly, in the Mediterranean, many rescues are conducted by small fishing trawlers just off the shore of their initial departure point, in which case such trawlers have limited disembarkation options due to their size, range, and condition of the vessel and those onboard. Under these circumstances, Ship Captains have no other option but to disembark rescued people as quickly as possible in their port of departure.

Survey results

The survey will continue to be distributed and at the time of publishing a total of 115 replies have been received. The vast majority of respondents were seafarers (89%), followed by professionals working onshore to manage vessels (7%) and also those identifying as "Other" (4%). The respondents so far are predominantly working on tanker vessels (95%) and efforts are being made to expand the scope of the survey to cover other areas of commercial shipping such as Container, Dry bulk and Cruise.

When asked which region they worked in, the responses showed quite an even split:

Which maritime regions do you mostly work in? (Select all that apply)
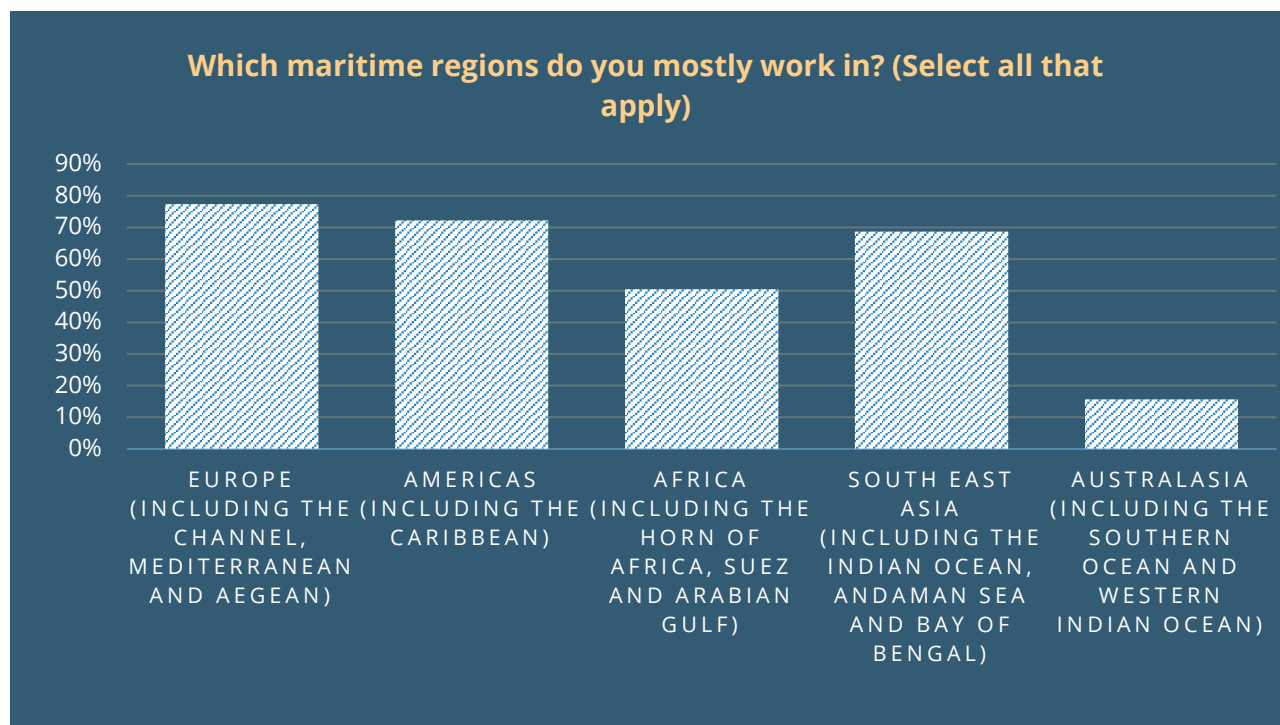
Level of concern about encountering migrants at sea

How concerned are you about the possibility of encountering migrants at sea?
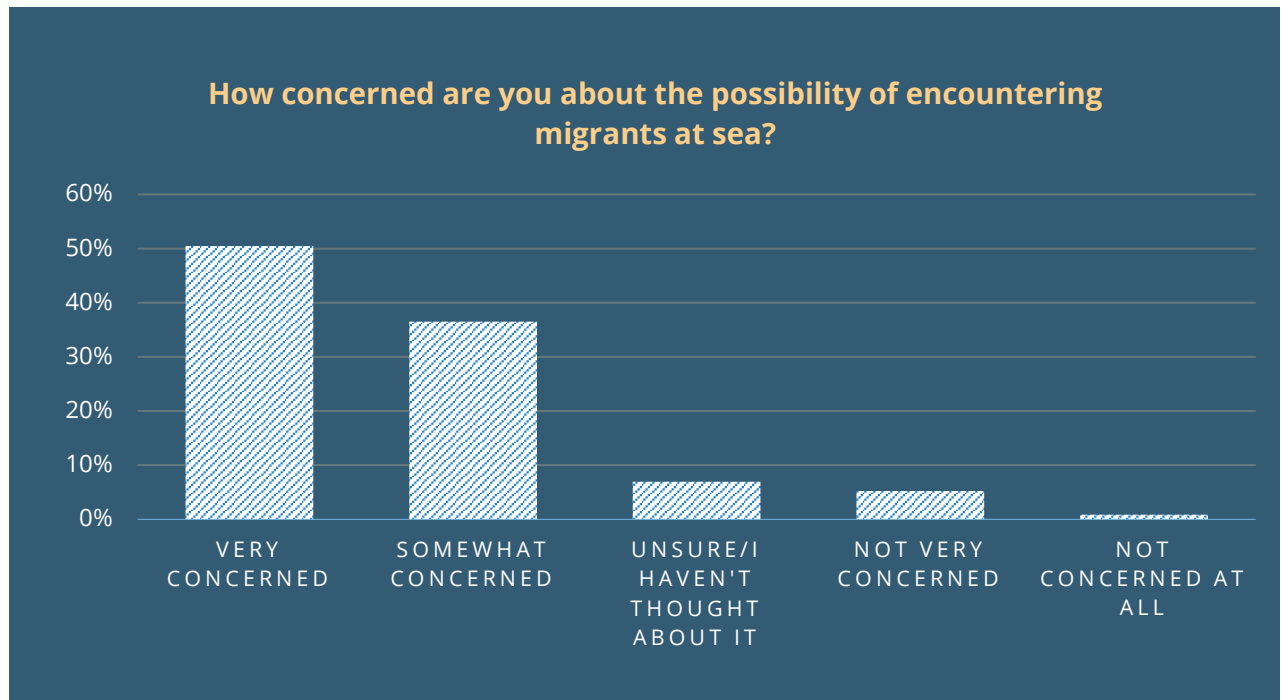
Reasons for concern about encountering migrants at sea

Please rank your biggest concerns about the possibility of encountering migrants at sea
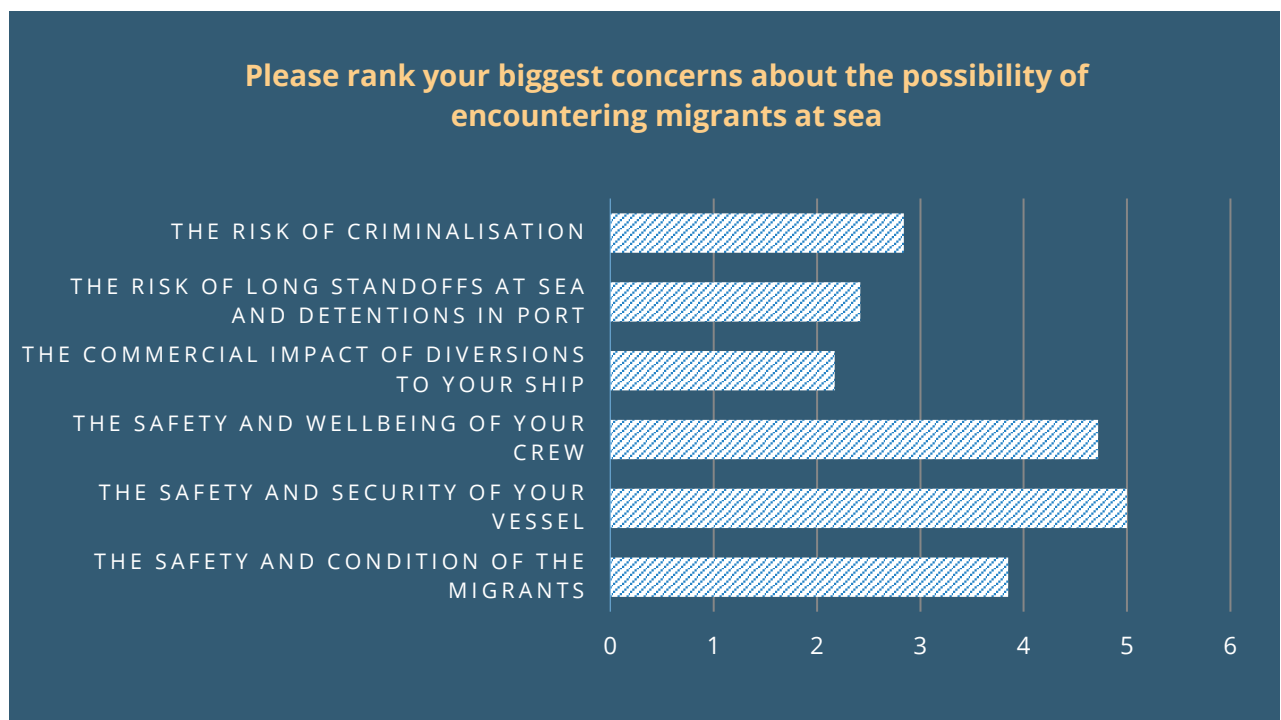
Feeling sufficiently equipped and trained to safely assist migrants at sea
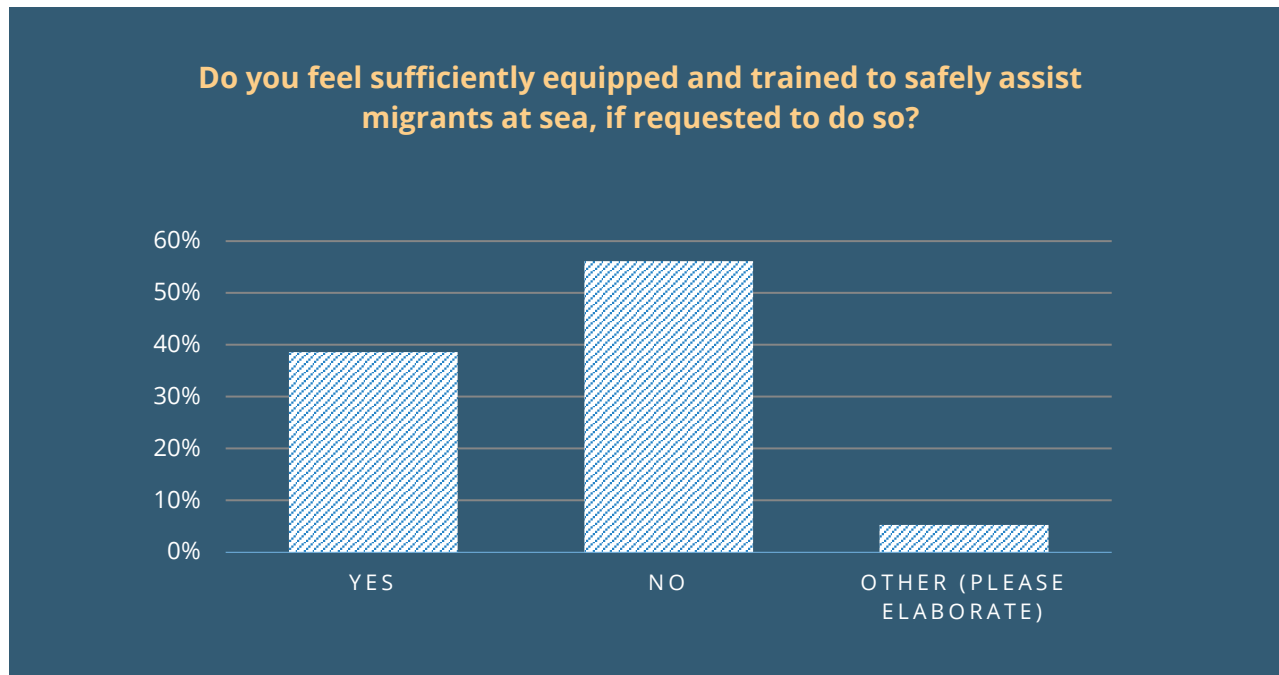
It is interesting to note some of the answers given when elaborating on this question (all answers were provided anonymously).

– We have general procedures in-place, but a variety of scenarios could push us to act as advised by other parties
– If greater number of migrants then no as vessel has a limited accommodation space
– A chemical tanker with dangerous, toxic and flammable cargo on board is not the best place to safely house a huge number of migrants. First of all, this is NOT safety for the migrants, and then for the crew. Chemical tankers are considered high-risk vessels.
– no experience
– My ship is chemical tanker which is regularly carrying dangerous products. The cabin space and food provision are limited for short voyages. To assist and remains long days in this matter is considering as risk for the safety/security/well-being of the crewmember as well as refugees
– We can provide basic medical aid from our side, but our equipment / supplies are limited

Which of the following do respondents feel sufficiently supports and protects them in the event of providing assistance
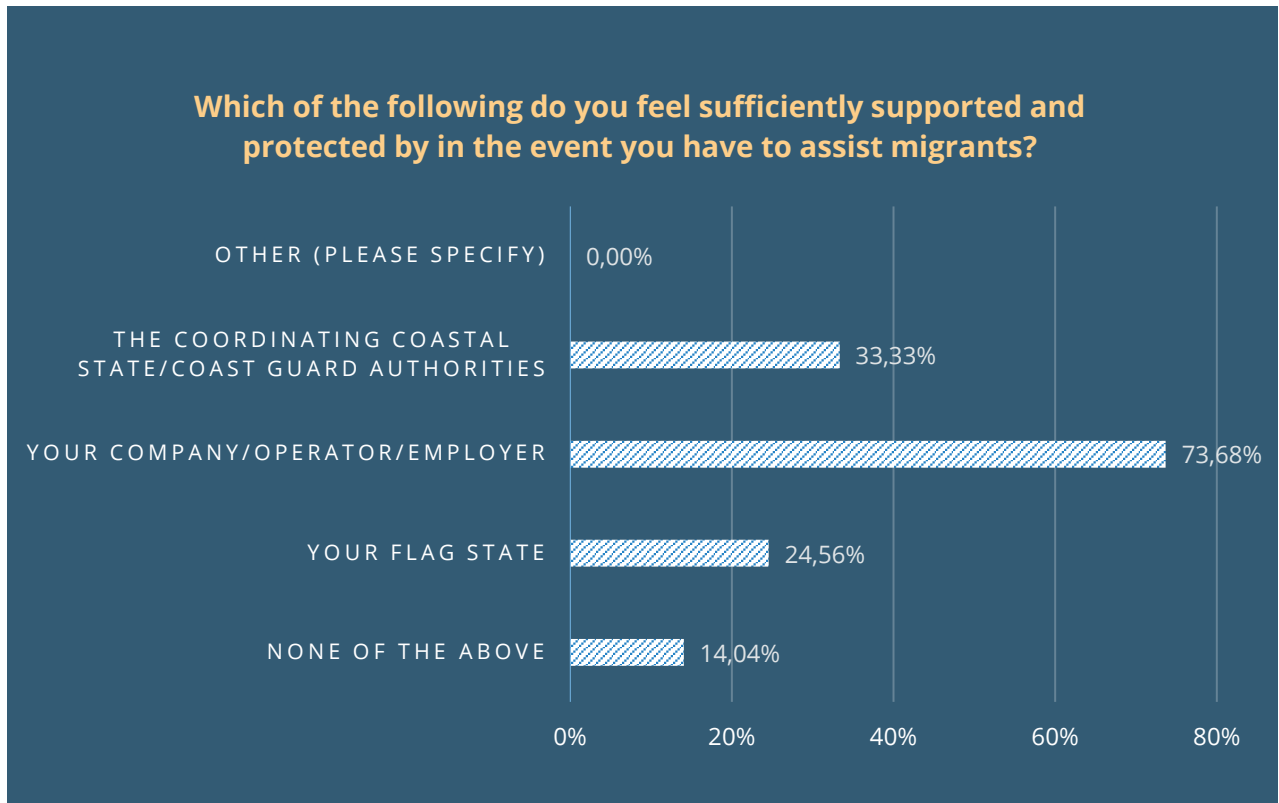
Interestingly the respondents felt most supported and protected by their employers.

On the role of Search and Rescue NGOs and coast guards assisting migrants at sea
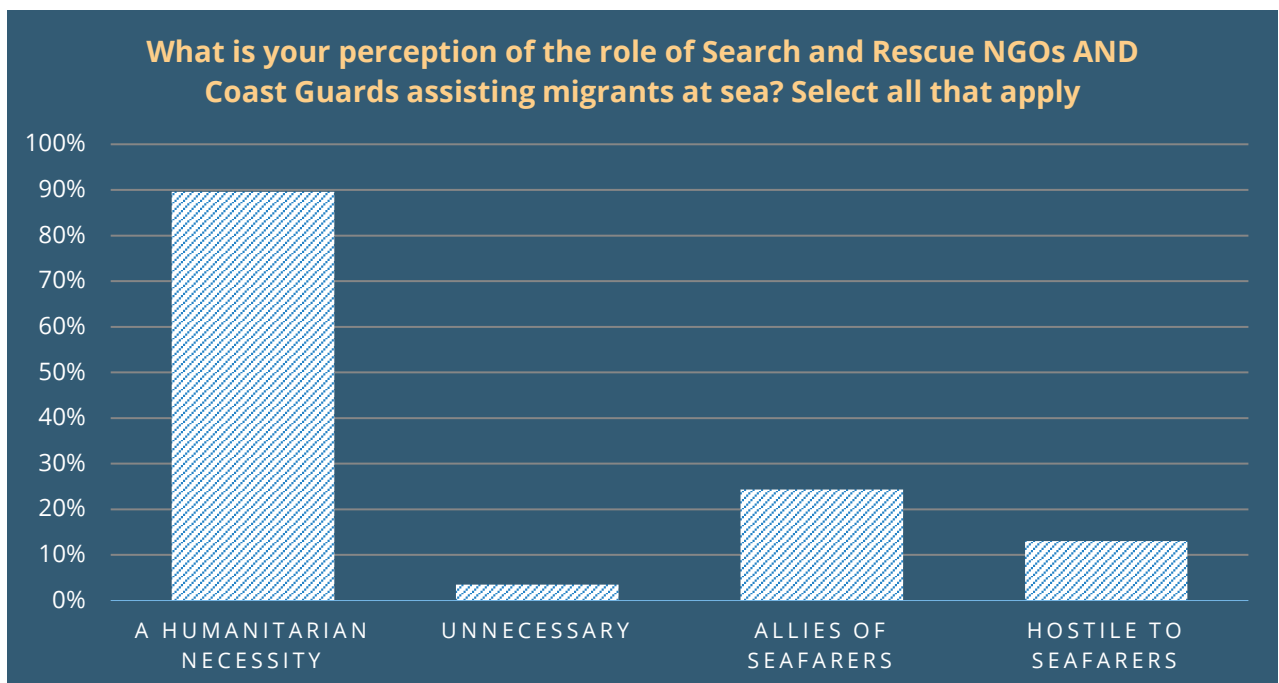
Suggestions for addressing maritime migration and its impact on seafarers

What suggestion(s) would you make to decision-makers about addressing maritime migration and its impact on seafarers? Select all that apply
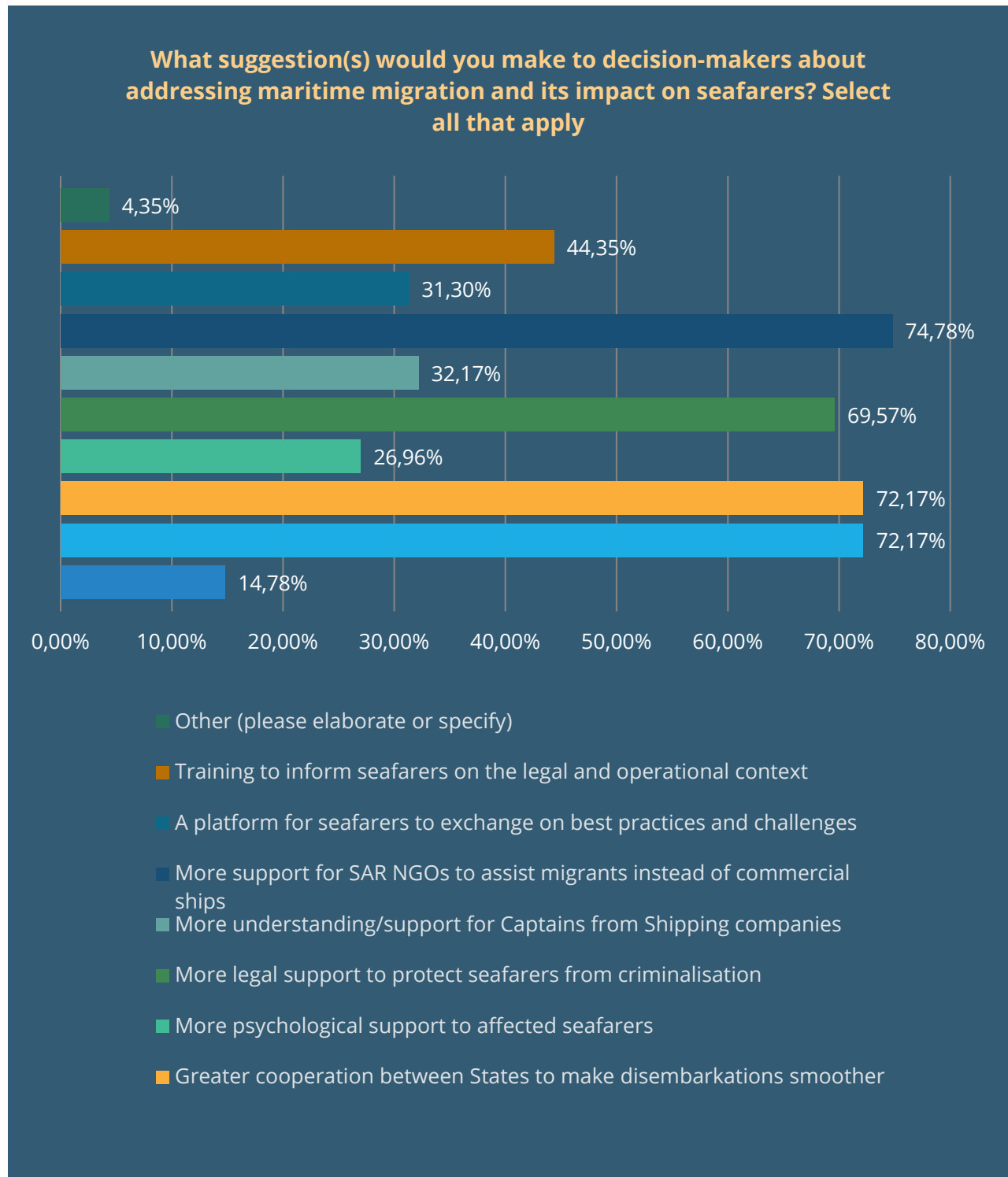
Category	Value
Other (please elaborate or specify)	4,35%
Training to inform seafarers on the legal and operational context	44,35%
A platform for seafarers to exchange on best practices and challenges	31,30%
More support for SAR NGOs to assist migrants instead of commercial ships	74,78%
More understanding/support for Captains from Shipping companies	32,17%
More legal support to protect seafarers from criminalisation	69,57%
More psychological support to affected seafarers	26,96%
Greater cooperation between States to make disembarkations smoother	72,17%
	72,17%
	14,78%

Legend:
- ■ Other (please elaborate or specify)
- ■ Training to inform seafarers on the legal and operational context
- ■ A platform for seafarers to exchange on best practices and challenges
- ■ More support for SAR NGOs to assist migrants instead of commercial ships
- ■ More understanding/support for Captains from Shipping companies
- ■ More legal support to protect seafarers from criminalisation
- ■ More psychological support to affected seafarers
- ■ Greater cooperation between States to make disembarkations smoother

Conclusion

This report set out to map the global humanitarian crisis at sea, using existing data tools to demonstrate that this issue extends far beyond the Mediterranean Sea which features the most prominently in our media reporting and collective awareness. The lack of equivalent visibility in other regions does not necessarily indicate safer journeys, but instead points towards critical data gaps resulting from lack of monitoring capabilities and cooperation between key stakeholders. The global underreporting of deaths and disappearances at sea poses a number of critical challenges to effective policy formulation for States, humanitarian implications for victims and their loved ones, and undermines the situational awareness and preparedness of the commercial shipping fleet. Following this research, this report had identified three key recommendations:

High Level Dialogue Platform – Firstly, in order to effectively advocate and strategically influence policymakers on the humanitarian consequences of maritime migration, it is essential to foster cross-sectoral dialogue, through trust building and regular, mutual exchanges, to ensure that the concerns and experiences of the maritime sector are heard by States and humanitarian actors.

Centre of Excellence - Secondly, to inform best practice in Search & Rescue, it is essential that that the complementary roles and experiences of different stakeholders are consolidated and disseminated through formalised training, research & Development and data analysis. A dedicated Centre of Excellence would fulfil the role of centralising resources and expertise.

Direct Support - Thirdly, in order to grow Search and Rescue capacity to meet the global humanitarian need and to reduce the burden on merchant marine, material operational support, such as funding and infrastructure, is essential for improving the quality and reliability of both existing and new Search and Rescue operations.

This report is intended as the first step in a long journey to bring together a range of stakeholders and initiate a mutual and collaborative way forward to addressing one of the world's most pressing humanitarian issues, whilst acknowledging the commendable role of seafarers as first responders and recognising the need for greater support to overcome the vulnerabilities and obstacles this presents.

Glossary

Disembarkation – The process of taking rescued people to land where basic medical and other needs can be met, rescue vessels are released of their responsibility, the rescue is concluded, and authorities can commence administrative procedures.

Distress - A situation wherein there is reasonable belief that a vessel or other craft, including an aircraft or a person, is threatened by grave and imminent danger, requiring immediate assistance. Methodology and Bibliography

Flag State – The State with jurisdiction over and vessel and under whose laws the vessel is registered or licensed, this is deemed the nationality of the vessel.

International waters / High Seas - Any body of water situated beyond 12 nautical miles from the baseline – outside the territorial waters of a State. Not subject to the sovereignty of any State.

Migrant – Any person who crosses a national border, out of their country of usual residence, regardless of motivation or status.

Non-discrimination - Parties shall ensure that assistance be provided to any person in distress at sea. They shall do so regardless of the nationality or status of such a person or the circumstances in which that person is found.

Place of Safety (PoS) - Location where rescue operations are considered to have terminated. It is also a place where the survivors' safety of life is no longer threatened and where their basic human needs (such as food, shelter and medical needs) can be met. Further, it is a place from which transportation arrangements can be made for the survivors' next or destination.

Port State Control (PSC) - An inspection regime for countries to administratively detain and inspect foreign-registered ships in ports other than those of the flag state and take action against ships that are not in compliance.

Rescue Coordination Centre (RCC) - An organisation responsible for promoting the efficient mobilisation of SAR services and for coordinating the conduct of SAR operations within a designated region.

Rigid-Hulled Inflatable Boat (RHIB) - Boat with rigid hull and inflatable tubes around the hull, generally with outboard engine.

Search and Rescue (SAR) - An operation, normally co-ordinated by a Rescue Coordination Centre, using available maritime resources to locate and assist people in distress.

Search and Rescue Region (SRR) – A defined area associated with a designated Rescue Coordination Centre, within which a Coastal State has responsibility for coordinating SAR services.

SAR Convention - International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue (SAR or Hamburg Convention), adopted under IMO auspices on 27th April 1979 and entered into force on 22nd June 1985. It has 111 State Parties, and its purpose is not only to enable cooperation and coordination of State actions in terms of rescue at sea but also to "encourage cooperation between Search and Rescue organizations worldwide and between all those who take part in Search and Rescue operations at sea".

SOLAS Convention - International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS or London Convention), adopted under IMO auspices on 1st November 1974 and came into force on 25th May 1980. It includes 121 State Parties. It imposes important obligations to States in terms of Search and Rescue. In particular they are committed to monitoring coasts and supplying any information regarding their own rescue means.

Survivors – The official term to designate the people rescued from a distress situation.

Territorial waters – The belt of coastal waters extending at most 12 nautical miles from the baseline (usually the mean low-water mark) of a coastal state. The territorial sea is regarded as the sovereign territory of the state, although foreign ships (civilian) are allowed innocent passage through it, or transit passage for straits; this sovereignty also extends to the airspace over and seabed below. Adjustment of these boundaries is called, in international law, maritime delimitation.

Commercial marine data

Data was obtained from a prominent private company active in the maritime community, which collects AIS signals and renders the precise number of vessels which have entered a defined area within a given timeframe.

To obtain a meaningful estimate of traffic we have selected a timeframe of 2 weeks at the beginning of the year and another at the beginning of August, taken the average of the two and multiplied it by the number of 2-week periods since the beginning of 2023 up to mid-August.

The 14-day timeframe allows for the avoidance of two phenomena:

- Double counting, which would be common if we had taken a daily or weekly average given that most ships do not have the time to traverse the entire zone in short timeframes.

- Underestimation, which would be inevitable with longer timeframes given that many ships come back through the same given zone many times a year.

Limitations: the MTI figures represent an estimate of traffic and may, in some cases significantly, over/underestimate the real number of vessel journeys in an area.

Drownings and disappearances

For both 2022 and 2023, data for drownings and disappearances at sea was obtained from the IOM's Missing Migrants Project, available at: https://missingmigrants.iom.int/downloads

For each individual region, data was filtered to include only cases where the cause of death was "drowning". The plotting on the maps is done according to the provided coordinates linked with each individual incident. The points indicate only the location of an event and in some cases multiple deaths/disappearances are linked to it.

- In all regions, Missing Migrants Project data represent a minimum estimate of the number of migrant deaths.
- Data on missing migrants tend to over-represent parts of the world where there is better media coverage and official reporting of deaths, such as Europe and the Mediterranean. Comparatively few data on migrant deaths are recorded in areas of the world with large volumes of *irregular migration*, despite the many dangers migrants face in these regions. For example, some experts believe that more migrants die while crossing the Sahara Desert than in the Mediterranean Sea.

Limitations: Data extraction occurred on the 18th of August 2023, any case occurring past this date is not accounted for.

Regional data

Australasia

- Data originates from the Australian Border Force' monthly reports about operation Sovereign Borders. Available at: https://www.abf.gov.au/sitenewsroom

Southeast Asia

- Information on migrant journeys in 2022 was extracted from the following article: UNHCR, January 17 2023. UNHCR seeks comprehensive regional response to address rise in deadly Southeast Asia sea journeys. Available at: https://www.unhcr.org/news/unhcr-seeks-comprehensive-regional-response-address-rise-deadly-SouthEast-asia-sea-journeys

Mediterranean

- Data from UNHRC, Global Report 2022, in "Departures". Available at:
  https://reporting.unhcr.org/operational/situations/western-and-central-mediterranean-situation#:~:text=Central%20Mediterranean%20route%3A%20Algeria%2C%20Egypt,excluding%20the%20rest%20of%20Spain
- Additional 2023 data from UNHCR, Mediterranean Situation 2023. Available at:
  https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean
- Routes were plotted according to the following report: International Organization for Migration (IOM), May 27 2022. DTM Europe — Mixed Migration Flows to Europe, Quarterly Overview Maps (Jan-Mar 2022). IOM, Europe

The Channel

- The number of Journeys was obtained from the following data set:
  Gov. UK, Aug 30 2023. Migrants detected crossing the English Channel in small boats – time series.
  Limitations: Data extraction occurred on the 30th of August 2023, any case occurring past this date is not accounted for.

Yemen

- Data on the situation in Yemen was obtained in analysing the following report: International Organization for Migration (IOM), Feb 10 2023. DTM 2022 Migration Overview: Horn of Africa and Arabian Peninsula. IOM, East and the Horn of Africa.
- 2023 migration numbers were extracted from the following dataset: International Organization for Migration (IOM), Aug 10 2023. DTM Yemen - Flow Monitoring Datasets - July 2023. IOM, Yemen.
  The mode of transportation was set to "boat" and the data was filtered to only include the category "migrant".

Comoros-Mayotte

- The number of Journeys was obtained from the following source (estimate up to Mid-August): Assemblée Nationale, May 2023. Commission Des Affaires Étrangères : Enjeux Migratoires aux Frontières Sud de L'union Européenne et en Océan Indien. (Intervention from Mrs. Youssouffa, timestamp 2:37:00). Available from:
  https://event.assemblee-nationale.fr/video.13497191_6476edbd9bc80?timecode=8216540
- Routes were plotted according to the following report: UNHCR, June 2021. Report of the Secretary-General on Oceans and the Law of the Sea, Part II (pages 5-6). Available from https://www.un.org/depts/los/general_assembly/contributions_2021/UNHCR.pdf

West Africa

- Data for the West African Route was obtained in analysing the report: International Organization for Migration (IOM), Aug 01 2023. DTM West and Central Africa - WCA Routes Through Sahel (June 2023). IOM, West and Central Africa.

Miscellaneous:

- The Mission to Seafarers: Seafarers Happiness Index https://www.missiontoseafarers.org/seafarers-happiness-index
- Maersk Tankers: Safe disembarkation of the 27 rescued persons from Maersk Etienne https://.com/newsroom/caught-at-sea-after-rescuing-27-people

Applicable legal framework

International maritime conventions

- SAR Convention (1979)
- SOLAS Convention (1974)
- UNCLOS - United Nation Convention of the Law Of the Sea (1982)

International Human Rights Law

- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984)
- European Convention on Human Rights (1953)
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)
- The Refugee Convention (1951)
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)

Additional Relevant Maritime Directives

- EU Regulation 656/2014
- GMDSS Manual
- IAMSAR Manual (Edition 2016)
- Resolution MSC 167(78)
- Resolution MSC A.917(22)
- IMO Circ. 194

GCSP
Geneva Centre for
Security Policy

Geneva Centre for Security Policy

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The GCSP Creative Spark supports senior experts and practitioners in making their innovative project a reality. It offers an up to 12 months programme to applicants presenting promising ideas with a high likelihood of generating sustainable impact on international peace and security.

www.gcsp.ch/the-creative-spark

Centre for Humanitarian Action at Sea

Marc Tilley
Jonathan Dubath
Richard Watts
Caroline Abu Sa'Da