

IOM's COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO COUNTER MIGRANT SMUGGLING



WHY IS IOM INVOLVED IN COUNTER MIGRANT SMUGGLING?

The large-scale smuggling of migrants across international borders has developed into a global threat to migration governance. Many migrants resort to using migrant smugglers when they do not have the option to travel in a regular manner. Consequently, migrant smugglers have become an integral part of the irregular migration journey resulting in significant profits for criminal networks. Once paid, smugglers often have little or no interest in migrants' wellbeing, leaving them particularly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. All too often, migrants also pay with their lives: they suffocate in containers, perish in deserts or drown at sea.

As the United Nations migration agency, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) advocates and actively supports a holistic migration policy approach - one that recognizes migration as a “mega-trend” of this century. From that perspective migration is not only inevitable, but also necessary and desirable if well-managed through sensible, humane and responsible policies. IOM has a long history of working with States and partners to combat migrant smuggling, and ensures that its activities align with, build on and directly complement other national, regional and international initiatives. IOM's broad migration management mandate, including facilitating migration, regulating migration, and addressing forced migration, places the Organization in a unique position to offer a comprehensive approach to counter migrant smuggling.

IOM'S COUNTER MIGRANT SMUGGLING ACTIVITIES

IOM's comprehensive approach to counter migrant smuggling is based on direct assistance to migrants and building capacities within States. This approach addresses the multiple dimensions of migrant smuggling by organizing IOM's work around the following four pillars:

1

PROVIDE PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE TO SMUGGLED MIGRANTS

2

ADDRESS THE CAUSES OF MIGRANT SMUGGLING

3

ENHANCE STATES' CAPACITY TO DISRUPT THE ACTIVITIES OF MIGRANT SMUGGLERS

4

PROMOTE RESEARCH AND DATA COLLECTION ON MIGRANT SMUGGLING

MIGRANT SMUGGLING DEFINITION

“The procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident”.

Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime



1

PROVIDE PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE TO SMUGGLED MIGRANTS

The underlying principle guiding IOM's intervention in counter migrant smuggling efforts is the protection of migrants' human rights. As some migrants approach migrant smugglers to escape conflict and natural disasters, effective access to asylum and protection must be safeguarded while countering migrant smuggling.

- IOM assists States with providing dignified and well organized **reception, registration and identity management services**.
- IOM actively promotes and assists with the development of **alternatives to detention**. The Organization contributes to improving detention facilities and services necessary for ensuring humane immigration detention conditions in accordance with international law and best practices.
- IOM helps ensure that **voluntary return and reintegration** of migrants is organized in an orderly, humane and cost-effective manner through its Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) and Reintegration (AVRR) programmes.
- IOM cooperates with States on **Humanitarian Border Management (HBM)** processes to improve preparedness and responses to protect those who cross borders in emergencies, as well as to ensure that the security of the border is maintained.

2

ADDRESS THE CAUSES OF MIGRANT SMUGGLING

The decision to migrate irregularly is in most cases not driven by a single motivating factor, but rather an array of factors which traverse social, economic, environmental, political and security-related considerations. Migration management policies must involve opening regular channels for migration, community stabilization, development programmes, conflict prevention, transition, recovery, resilience building and disaster-risk prevention. IOM supports Member States in all these areas.

- IOM assists States in **facilitating regular travel and migration schemes**. Regular channels include opportunities for family reunification; openings for labour migration; access to asylum or international protection through resettlement schemes; humanitarian admission schemes for refugees and other alternative pathways; and community based and academic scholarships.
- IOM cooperates with States in managing regular migration channels through well-administered **visa and entry schemes**.
- IOM assists States in organizing targeted **public education and information campaigns** to discourage people from turning to migrant smugglers.

3

ENHANCE STATES' CAPACITY TO DISRUPT THE ACTIVITIES OF MIGRANT SMUGGLERS

A crucial aspect of a successful counter migrant smuggling approach to protect migrants is direct intervention in and disruption of migrant smuggling operations. This requires coordination of legislation, border control measures and the activities of law enforcement.

- IOM supports States' efforts to **enhance or develop procedures and processes** that enable law enforcement agencies and criminal justice authorities to **more effectively target migrant smugglers** and develop the skills and procedures to effect proper prosecutions.
- IOM assists States in ensuring that the judiciary has the requisite national **legislation** in place and is party to all relevant international instruments to criminalize and prosecute migrant smugglers.
- IOM assists with **building appropriate capacity and organizational structures** to prevent and interdict migrant smuggling, geared towards the proper use of a migration intelligence-led approach.
- IOM supports governments to put in place **effective Border Management Information Systems** as a valuable tool to fight migrant smuggling through intelligence gathering and formulating risk profiles of both perpetrators and those being smuggled.

4

PROMOTE RESEARCH AND DATA COLLECTION ON MIGRANT SMUGGLING

To develop more effective and sustainable responses to migrant smuggling, it is important that targeted research is undertaken and shared. Proper research and data is central to the development of global, national and regional level policies that are better able to respond to irregular migration movements supported by migrant smuggling. Such research should focus on modus operandi, routes, economic models of smuggling networks, on links with trafficking in persons and other crimes, financial transfers, and on the factors that shape the smuggling industry, including its root causes.

- IOM **conducts research, collects data and shares information** on irregular migration and migration smuggling practices to assist States with developing evidence-based policies. This research and data complements existing information and intelligence on migrant smuggling held by governments. In addition, IOM's research assists in raising public awareness of the consequences of migrant smuggling.



IOM works together with governments, international partners and civil society organizations to effectively counter migrant smuggling by providing practical assistance, offering expert advice and policy recommendations, and strengthening the knowledge base on migrant smuggling.



INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION FOR MIGRATION

DEPARTMENT OF MIGRATION MANAGEMENT (DMM)

17 ROUTE DES MORILLONS, P.O. BOX 17, 1211 GENEVA 19, SWITZERLAND

TEL: +41 22 717 9111 | FAX: +41 22 798 6150 | E-MAIL: HQ@IOM.INT

WWW.IOM.INT