

MIGRATION BY SEA: OPERATIONAL RESPONSE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA

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1. MOTIVATION

Global migration crisis (UNHCR, 2016): **65.3 million** forcibly displaced worldwide

*“We are facing the biggest refugee and displacement crisis of our time. Above all, this is **not just a crisis of numbers**; it is also **a crisis of solidarity**.”* Ban Ki Moon, Former United Nations Secretary General (UN, 2016)



Source: dailymail.co.uk

How can the effectiveness of the undertaken operational response be enhanced?

1.1 STATISTICS

Mediterranean Migration Crisis (general information)

Nationality
Syrian Arab Rep 21%
Afghanistan 10.6%
Nigeria 10.3%

Routes
Eastern
Central
Western

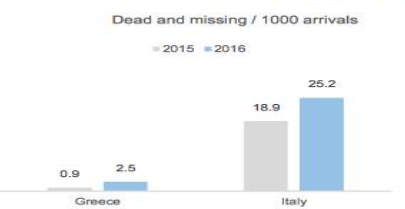
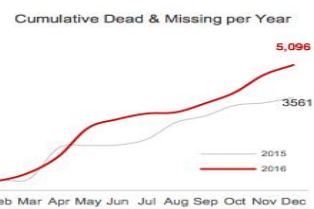
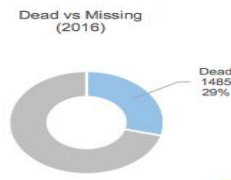
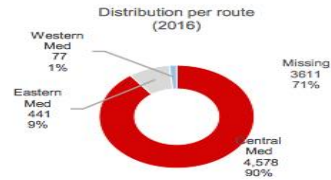
Demography
Men 57.8%
Women 16.5%
Children 25.8%

Number of Dead and Missing by Route



Key Figures

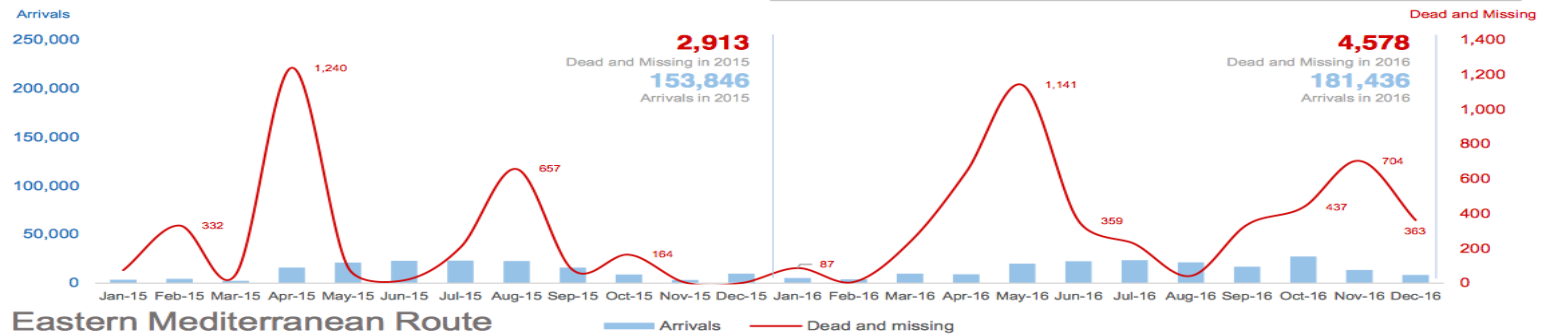
5,096
Dead and Missing in 2016
3,771
Dead and Missing in 2015



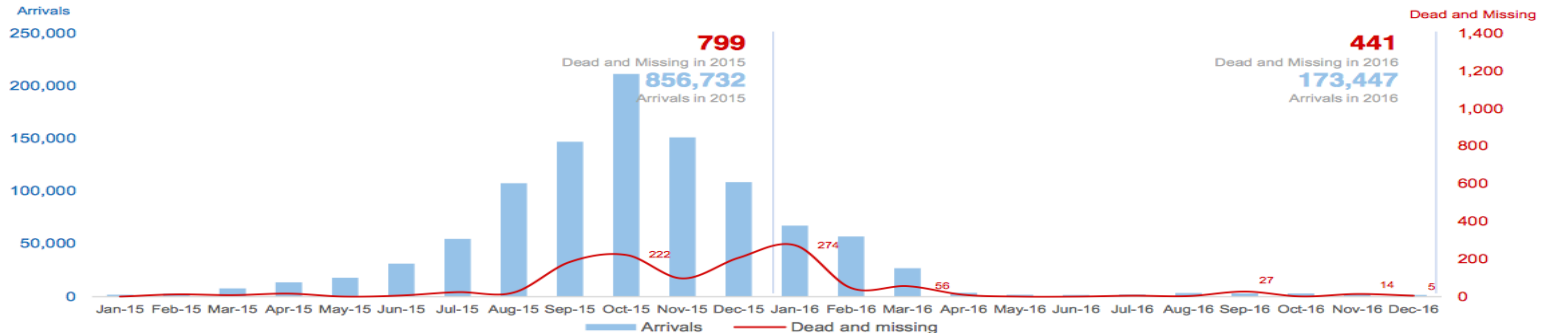
(UNHCR, 2017)

Death toll at the Borders of Libya proves the ruthlessness of the smugglers

Central Mediterranean Route



Eastern Mediterranean Route



(UNHCR, 2017)

Flows in Eastern Med have been reduced due to the EU–Turkey agreement
BUT
in the Central Med the flows have increased as well as the deaths

2. LITERATURE GAP-ANALYSIS SO FAR

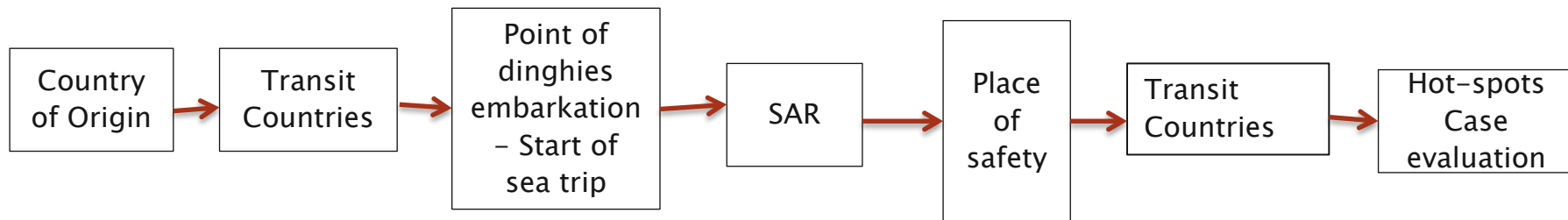
- Extensive literature for migration and refugees e.g. Simmons (1996), Shevel (2011), Heckmann and Bosswick (1995), Black and Koser (1999) etc.–policy, economic impact etc.
- Miltner (2006) talks about irregular migration by sea; emphasizing on the “collision” between migrant rescue and countries’ efforts to prevent access to migrants
- Pastore et al.(2006): irregular migratory systems associated with smuggling networks across the Mediterranean
- No study regarding the operational response from various involved stakeholders

Analysis so far

- Data collection from various reports: UNHCR (2015,2016,2017), EC (2016), IAI (2016), ICS (2015), IMO et al. (2015), NATO (2015), Frontex (2017) etc.
- Interviews with involved stakeholders (NGOs: MSF, UNHCR / Ship-owners / IMO / Coast Guards: Libyan, etc.)

3. OPERATIONAL RESPONSE

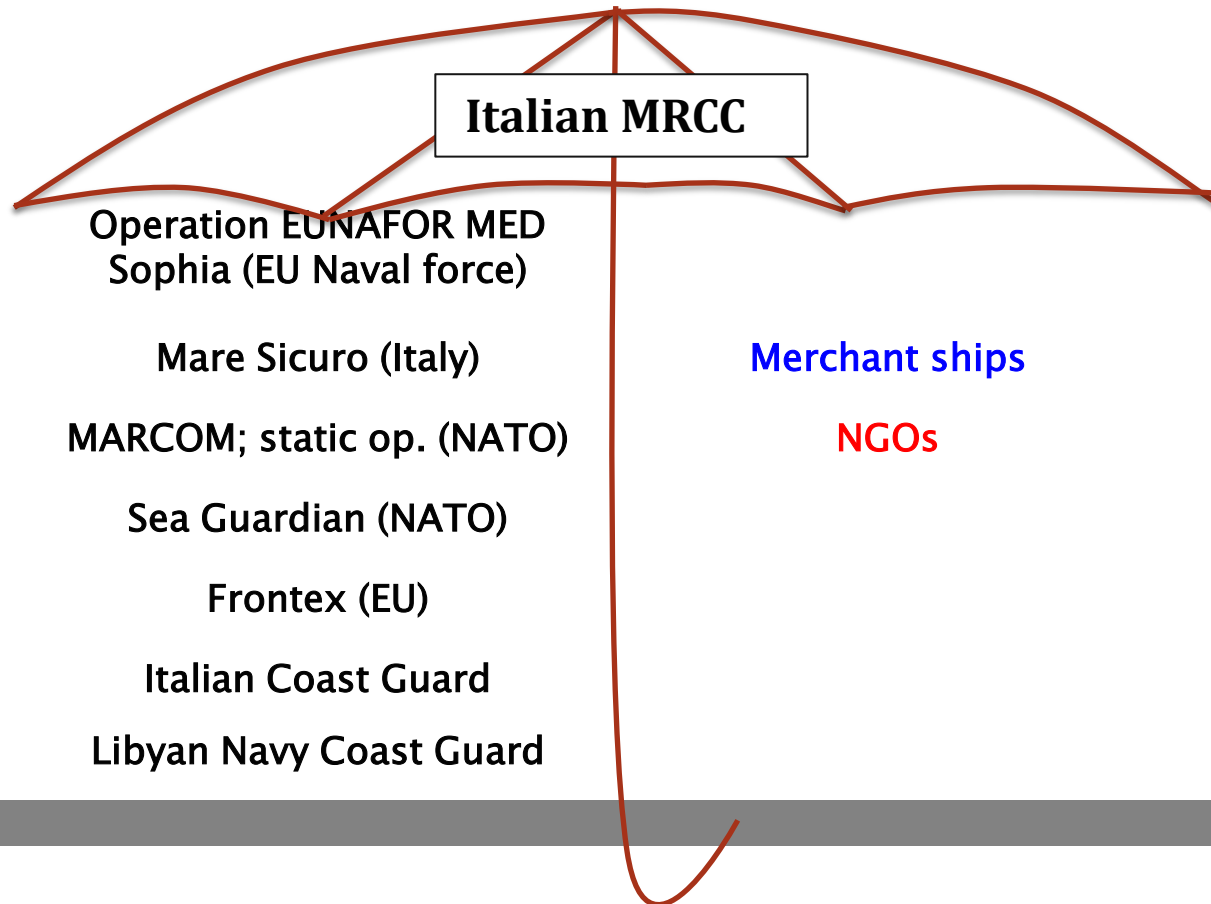
Figure 1: The Journey



Safe Legal Pathways ? EU-Turkey agreement	New migration trends (Bangladesh)	Libya as a migrant hub-EU focuses on a Libyan solution
Smuggler networks At least 90% of irregular immigrants have employed smugglers (Monzini et al., 2015)	Low risk for the criminal syndicate-High profitability (attracts other criminal syndicates)	High risks for migrants
Unseaworthy and overcrowded boats	Rubber dinghies (reuse of already destroyed dinghies)	

3. OPERATIONAL RESPONSE IN CENTRAL MED

- Italian Maritime Rescue Coordination Center (MRCC) responsible for the coordination of Search and Rescue Operation Operations
- Differentiated operations with differentiated mandates and mission objectives
- The military operations focus on anti-smuggling (including SAR)-NGOs (only SAR)(Mandate of Frontex does not include SAR)



3. OPERATIONAL RESPONSE

NGOs Involvement (focus explicitly on SAR operations)

- Joint operations and cooperation among them(*Aquarious)

Categorisation	
Competent large scale SAR op.	Supporting SAR op.
MSF, MOAS, SOS Méditerranée	Sea-EYE, Jugend Rettet, Refugee Boat Foundation, UK-based Save the Children

*joint operation of **SOS Méditerranée and MSF** in cooperation with Save The Children and Jugend Rettet, that was jeopardised by gun shots on the 24th May 2017.

3. OPERATIONAL RESPONSE

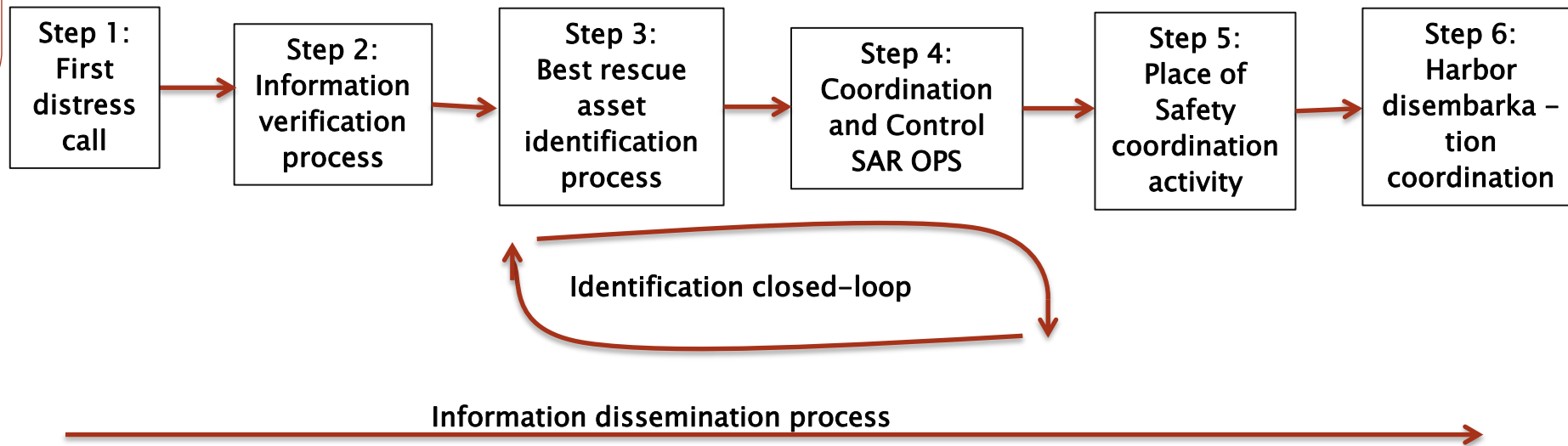
Military Operations: Anti-smuggling
Change in Mandates of the Operations has started
Focus on SAR

Since 2013 on an ad hoc basis

Obligation by International Maritime Law

Fatality of Lampedusa was the beginning

SAR coordination is a complex dynamic and active operational activity



4. OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES

Cooperation among the involved stakeholders

- Cooperation through agreements only among the military operations
- Lack of cooperation among military and NGOs
- Accusations regarding cooperation between NGOs and smugglers

Information sharing (key for an improvement?)

SMART System (information exchange platform):

- Used by the military
- Not used by the NGOs
- Not used by merchant ships (no internet connectivity on board)

Modus operandi of smugglers

- They adopt to the changes in the undergoing operations
- Success if they increase the number of migrants that they send (all boats of military are involved in SAR operations)
- Reuse of dinghies or destroyed boats

4. OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES

Libyan Navy Coast Guard

- Low quality and inadequate number of ships
- Low quality and no secure communication process
- Financial and training support by the EU

Military operational challenges

- Modus operandi of smugglers
- Need for capacity building- **BUT** Frontex decreased its deployed ships

NGOs challenges

- Meet with boat in distress, smugglers, Libyan coast guard
- First aid supplies
- Medical emergencies
- Capacity constraints

4. OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES

Challenges for merchant ships

- Capacity and safety constraints
- Food and medical aid supplies constraints
- Post distress issues of the crew
- SAR plans were not designed for such large scale operations
- Deviation

Territorial water constraints

- Operational vessels cannot enter the territorial waters of LBY
- Cases in international waters:
 - NGOs and Libyan coast guard meet: conflict regarding the SAR

New upcoming challenge:

Extreme European right wing parties will deploy their own ship to disrupt SAR operations

5. FUTURE STEPS

1. Next step :

Semi-structured interviews with the involved in operation stakeholders i.e. NGOs, merchant shipping companies, military and paramilitary, agencies, UNHCR, IMO, ICS etc.

Sample > 30 interviews

6. CONCLUSION

- Migrants flow will continue as new migration trends have arisen
- Need for a common policy
- Need for bridging the gap among the involved stakeholders
- Need for a common information sharing platform
- Tackling the root causes of migration in the countries of origin
- Many operational challenges

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