

[Flow of refugees, migrants to Europe slows but sea journey remains deadly – UN](#)

24 August 2017 – Fewer [refugees and migrants](#) arrived in Europe in the first half of this year, but the likelihood of dying among people seeking to reach Europe is still “alarmingly high,” the United Nations refugee agency today reported, calling for renewed commitments to protect people.

According to the report, [Desperate Journeys](#), an estimated 2,253 people died or went missing at sea, and at least 40 died on land routes at or near European borders.

“Taking measures to reduce the number of refugees and migrants arriving in Europe, without at the same time stepping up peace-making, development, and safe pathways is morally unacceptable,” [said](#) UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi. “We can’t afford to ignore abuses clearly taking place simply because they happen out of our sight.”

In terms of passage, the report shows that overall Mediterranean crossings fell sharply in the first half of this year compared with the same period in 2016, due mainly to a 94 per cent decline in people using the sea route from Turkey into Greece.

Meanwhile, crossings from North Africa to Italy have remained at around the same level as last year, The High Commissioner’s Office ([UNHCR](#)) said, adding that violence and abuse along the journey is rife.

“Many of the migrants and refugees who have reached Italy from Libya have survived dangerous desert crossings and abuses that include sexual violence, torture, and abductions for ransom,” according to the report. “At sea, the risk of dying en route to Italy is one in 39.”

Some 11,400 of those who reached Italy in the first half of the year were children unaccompanied or separated from their families, according to the latest figures.

Many arrivals, amongst them children, were victims of sexual violence or trafficking. In all, over 40 per cent of asylum applicants in Italy between January and June qualified for protection of some kind, the UN agency noted.

The UNHCR report also shows a rise in arrivals to Spain, with 9,500 people reaching the country as compared with 4,936 in the first months of 2017 and 2016, respectively.