

The Central Mediterranean route: Migrant Fatalities

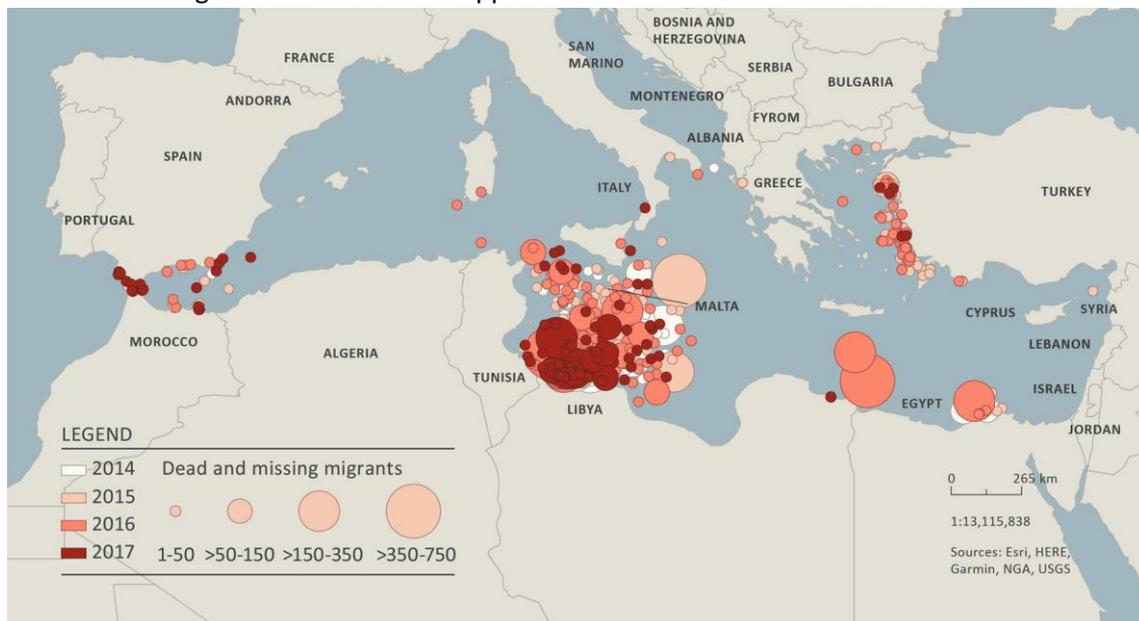
January 2014 - July 2017

Prepared by IOM's Data Analysis Centre, Berlin

Introduction

The Central Mediterranean is considered to be the deadliest migration route in the world, with more than **14,500 deaths recorded in this area since 2014**. During the first seven months of 2017, **2,224 migrant fatalities** were recorded by IOM in the Central Mediterranean. During 2017, **1 in 36 migrants** attempting to cross the Central Mediterranean route perished. This is a significant increase compared to 2016 when **1 in 88** were reported missing or dead. This briefing is part of IOM's forthcoming global report on migrant fatalities, **Fatal Journeys Vol. 3**.

Migrant fatalities and disappearances recorded in the Mediterranean



Source: IOM's Missing Migrants Project, 2017

Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM. FYROM stands for the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Smuggling on the Central Mediterranean

The available evidence indicates that the rise in the number of migrant deaths on this route is a result of several factors, including increasingly dangerous smuggling practices.¹ IOM staff in Libya and Italy report that smugglers increasingly use less-seaworthy vessels to send migrants across the Central Mediterranean. There has also been an increased number of instances in which multiple boats leave the North African coast at the same time. Additionally, there is evidence that embarking from Libya to Europe is no longer restricted to particular seasons with better weather and sea conditions: the four-month period between November 2016 and February 2017 saw 35,448 arrivals in Italy, a 61 per cent increase compared with the winter months of 2015-2016.

¹ International Organization for Migration, 2017. *Migrant deaths and disappearances worldwide: 2016 analysis*. IOM, Geneva. Available from publications.iom.int/pdf/gmdac_data_briefing_series_issue_8.pdf

Recorded migrant arrivals and deaths in the Mediterranean by route, January-July 2017

Migrant arrivals and deaths in the Mediterranean, January-July 2017

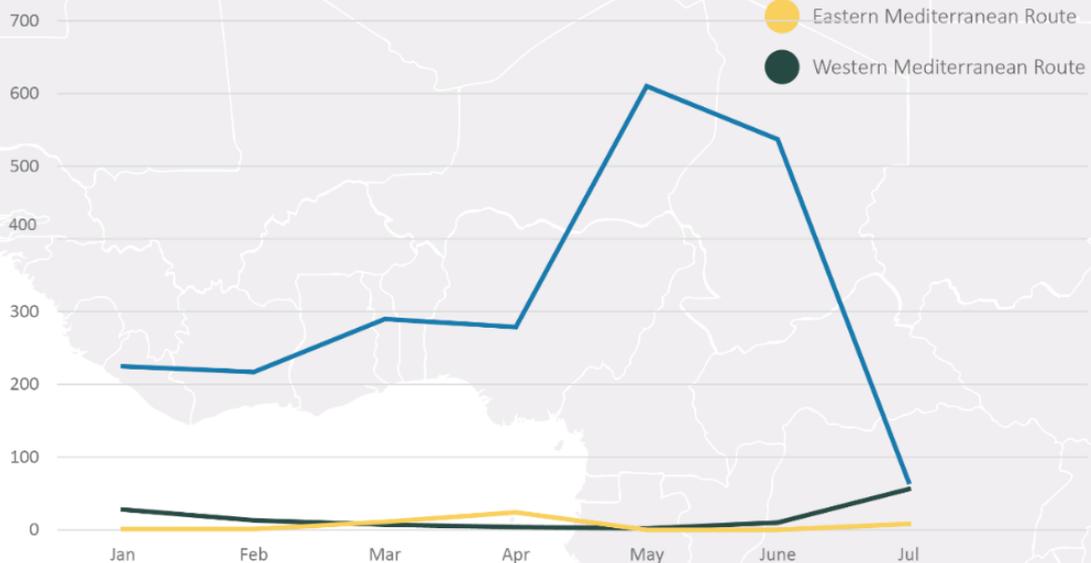
2,389 migrants

Estimated to have died or gone missing in the Mediterranean en route to Europe.

Route	Western Mediterranean Route	Central Mediterranean Route	Eastern Mediterranean Route
Arrivals	8,157	95,213	11,687
Dead and missing	120	2,224	45
% of bodies found	39%	28%	82%
Rate of death	1.5%	2.0%	0.2%

Deaths by month

93% of deaths between January - July 2017 occurred in the Central Mediterranean.



Source: IOM Missing Migrants Project. Data obtained from local authorities, IOM field offices and media. Notes: (a) All figures on dead and missing migrants should be taken as estimates. (b) Additional bodies may be recovered after initial search and rescue and may not be reflected in estimates on share of bodies found. (c) The rate of death is calculated by dividing the number of deaths and disappearances by the sum of arrivals and deaths on each route. (d) Names and boundaries indicated on map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

Source: Data on deaths from IOM's Missing Migrants Project, 2017. Arrivals data from IOM and government authorities, including the Italian Ministry of the Interior, Hellenic Police, Turkish and Libyan Coast Guards, and the Spanish Salvamento Marítimo.

Fewer large shipwrecks in the Central Mediterranean in 2017

Between 2014 and 2016, most migrant fatalities in the Central Mediterranean were recorded during large incidents in which 100 or more people died or went missing. However, the frequency of these large-scale incidents and the proportion of total deaths attributed to them has declined in 2017. In the first seven months of 2017, six incidents occurred in which 100 or more people died, totalling 929 dead and missing. During the same period in 2016, 1,849 migrants are estimated to have died in large incidents in the Central Mediterranean, and 1,457 migrant fatalities were recorded in such incidents between January and July 2015. Most notably, the proportion dying in large-scale incidents in the Central Mediterranean fell from 63 per cent between January-July 2016, to 42 per cent in the first seven months of 2017. The average number of migrant fatalities per incident decreased during the same period (see table below). The marked decrease in the number of large-scale shipwrecks resulting in hundreds of deaths may indicate that search and rescue efforts in the Central Mediterranean are becoming more effective.

**Average number of fatalities per incident recorded in the Central Mediterranean
January-July, 2014-2017**

	Incidents recorded	Total migrant fatalities recorded	Average number of fatalities per incident
2014	32	1,542	48.19
2015	32	1,970	61.56
2016	54	2,692	49.85
2017	127	2,224	17.51

Source: IOM's Missing Migrants Project, 2017

Data collection and analysis for this briefing was conducted by IOM's [Global Migration Data Analysis Centre](#) in Berlin, Germany. All numbers in this paper are current as of the date of publication (08/2017) and should be seen as approximations which nonetheless reflect the scale and trends of those who die during their journey for a better life. More information regarding the data sources and methodology for data on migrant deaths can be found at: <http://missingmigrants.iom.int/methodology>.

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