



UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges: Protection at sea

Regional roundtable: protection at sea in the Gulf of Aden

Thursday, 11 December 2014, 09:00-10:45, Palais des Nations, Room XXIII

Co-Moderators:

Mr. George Okoth-Obbo, Director, Regional Bureau for Africa, UNHCR
Mr. Amin Awad, Director, Regional Bureau for Middle East and North Africa Bureau/Regional Refugee Coordinator, Syria and Iraq Situation, UNHCR

Panellists:

Mr. Amir Salem Alaydarous, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yemen
Mr. Hussein Suleiman Ahmed, Technical Advisor, Ministry of Interior Affairs, Local Government and Rural Development, Puntland State of Somalia
Mr. Chris Horwood, Coordinator Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat, based in Kenya
Dr. Lorenza M. Rossi, IOM / UNHCR Special Adviser, Sana'a Declaration follow-up



SHS / 2010

This regional roundtable provides the opportunity for a focused analysis of maritime movements of mixed flows to and through countries such as Djibouti, Somalia and Yemen, to the countries of the Cooperation Council of the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC), particularly Saudi Arabia. In 2014, there has been an increase in sea crossings in the Gulf of Aden, with large numbers of unaccompanied and separated children from Somalia and Ethiopia, causing serious protection concerns. Recent reports reveal the prevalence of physical and sexual abuse perpetrated by smugglers and traffickers. Search and rescue capacity in the region is extremely limited. So far in 2014, over 215 people are known to have lost their lives at sea.

The Yemeni Government convened a regional conference on asylum and migration in November 2013. The conference led to the adoption of the Sana'a Declaration, which recognizes that the context of asylum and migration to Yemen has been significantly altered, with large increases in arrivals due to the rise in smuggling and human trafficking activities and networks. Through the Declaration, States agreed that the effective management of migration and refugee protection requires international and regional cooperation, with greater support from UNHCR, IOM, non-governmental organizations and others. Key areas for progress identified included: law enforcement capacity against smuggling and trafficking networks in sending, transit and receiving countries; awareness-raising of the risks associated with irregular migration and possible alternatives; support for the implementation of return programmes; and programs to address the root causes of the mixed migration movements from the Horn of Africa. More recently, the Regional Conference on Human Trafficking and Smuggling in the Horn of Africa (Khartoum, October 2014) organized by the African Union in collaboration with the Sudanese Government, UNHCR and IOM, explored cooperation among member States in the region in addressing the challenges of trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants within and from the Horn of Africa, and sought a common regional approach to address this issue.

Coffee & croissants will be provided for participants outside of the room. Interpretation will be offered in Arabic, English and French.