



3 July 2017 - A study of refugee and migrant flows by the UN Refugee Agency ( [UNHCR](#) ) has found that around half of those travelling to Libya do so believing they can find jobs there, but end up fleeing onwards to Europe, mostly through Italy, to escape life-threatening insecurity, instability, difficult economic conditions plus widespread exploitation and abuse.

“What is happening in front of our eyes in Italy is [an unfolding tragedy](#) . In the course of the last week, 12,600 migrants and refugees arrived on its shores, and an estimated 2,030 have lost their lives in the Mediterranean since the beginning of the year,”

[said](#)

Filippo Grandi, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees on Friday, urging more solidarity with Italy.

In recent years, the number of people crossing by sea from North Africa to southern Europe has increased, and so far this year 83,650 people have reached Italy by sea, which represents an increase of almost 20 per cent compared to the same period last year. Of the three main routes used by refugees and migrants to reach Europe, Libya to Italy (Central) has become the most commonly used one, but also the deadliest.

Foreign nationals going to Libya are part of mixed migration flows, meaning that people with different backgrounds and motivations travel together along the same routes, often with the help of ruthless people smugglers and criminal gangs. They include refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants, unaccompanied minors, environmental migrants, victims of trafficking and stranded migrants, among others.

In addition to Libya's strategic location, the conflict and instability in the country has contributed to create an environment where human smuggling and criminal networks flourish. At the same time, the collapse of the justice system and reigning impunity have led many armed groups, criminal gangs and individuals to participate in the exploitation and abuse of refugees and migrants.

"We are only at the beginning of the summer, and without swift collective action, we can only expect more tragedies at sea," Mr. Grandi [warned](#) .

Click here to read the report [Mixed Migration Trends in Libya: Changing Dynamics and Protection Challenges](#)