



18.12.2017 – More people around the globe are on the move than ever before. Each migrant's story depicts the reality of migration today, which for some is a safe experience but for all too many is a matter of life, death or disappearance.

In 2016, an estimated 10,000 unaccompanied refugee or migrant children went missing in Europe. Their current location? The answer is: no one knows. And the real number is estimated to be much higher than the figure announced

[by Europol](#)

a year ago. Back in 2016, only three EU countries (Italy, Sweden and Germany) publicly released figures on missing migrant children, and the numbers from these three countries alone already add up to over 12.000 missing children.

“The figures are the equivalent of two entire school classes disappearing every month. In which other circumstances would society accept this?”, said Amir Hashemi-Nik, national development leader at the Stockholm County Administrative Board, in response to the Swedish [Children's Ombudsman](#)

's alarming

[report](#)

, published on 11 December, that 1.736 unaccompanied minors have gone missing from Swedish reception centres between 2014 and October 2017. “If these children were Swedish youth, we would be tracking them down with all resources possible”, he said.

In [Germany](#), over 9000 children went missing in 2016. Although France has no such statistics, an NGO [reported](#) 129 migrant children having gone missing simultaneously after the dismantling of “the Jungle” in Calais. And in the United Kingdom, more than 100 unaccompanied minors are known to have crossed from northern France via unauthorised routes since August 2016 remain [unaccounted](#) for by British authorities, according to investigations by British media.

Disappeared – or dead

Far too many migrants, children and adults alike, have perished along the way. The Mediterranean remains the deadliest border crossing in the world, with 3091 deaths [recorded](#) in 2017 alone, according to the International Organization for Migration, [IOM](#). That means over 250 persons have died every month in 2017.

This mass movement of people along dangerous routes globally has inspired the theme of this year’s [International Migrants Day](#), celebrated annually on 18 December: “Safe Migration in a World on the Move”. According to IOM, one in every seven people on our planet is a migrant – someone living, working or starting a family somewhere else than in their habitual place of residence.

“I’m a migrant, but didn’t have to risk my life on a leaky boat or pay traffickers. Safe migration cannot be limited to the global elite”, [wrote](#) United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres on Twitter in September 2017.

Extreme poverty, climate change, broken and corrupt economies put millions of men, women and children at risk and on the move. As if these driving factors were not sufficient, the eight full-scale conflicts happening in various parts of the world which displace people inside and

outside their countries' borders.

“Our message is blunt: migrants are dying who need not”, [says](#) IOM Director William Lacy Swing “It is time to do more than count the number of deaths.”

UNRIC's related links:

- UNRIC's library backgrounder on [migration](#)
- A [Global Compact for migration](#) is expected to be adopted at the end of 2018. It will be negotiated by UN Member States under the auspices of the United Nations and aims to address international migration in a comprehensive manner.