



## Civil Society recommendations on Protection at Sea

### Sea Change Seven

Together, the undersigned civil society organizations around the world offer the following recommendations on Protection at Sea. These recommendations are in the larger context of addressing the assistance and protection needs of all migrant and refugee victims of violence and trauma in transit.

As in other moments in history—including the histories of many of our own countries, people are being driven across borders by armed conflict, political repression, and economic destitution. Some are so desperate that they risk their lives boarding unseaworthy boats to cross the Mediterranean and other seas; thousands upon thousands are dying in front of our eyes.

We call for a clear needs-first approach to the challenge of protection at sea and emphasize that *all* who cross the sea are bearers of universal, international human rights. All must be treated with dignity and respect. This includes all migrants, quite explicitly those who are refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, vulnerable women and children, and victims of torture, human trafficking, trauma and violence in transit.

**It is the responsibility of States, with the support of the international community as a whole, to:**

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### **1 Ensure a needs-first approach to rescue at sea (SAR) operations and reception centers, regardless of anyone's migration status**

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Such an approach requires:

- ✓ Humane treatment and respect for the human rights of everyone rescued or surviving distress at sea
- ✓ Respect for the principle of non-refoulement
- ✓ Desistance from criminalization of irregular immigration
- ✓ Avoidance of punitive, arbitrary, or deterrent immigration detention

Timely rescue and safe disembarkation are critical for migrants and refugees in distress at sea. All should have prompt and fair hearings at reception centers to establish their status and to care for their needs.

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## **2 Scale-up existing multi-actor frameworks of protection on a needs-first basis that meaningfully engage civil society competencies and partnership**

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such as:

- ✓ UNHCR's "10-point Plan of Action for Refugee Protection and Mixed Migration"
- ✓ IOM's Migration Crisis Operational Framework
- ✓ The Praesidium (Lampedusa) project, with increased emphasis on interdisciplinary mobile protection teams for post-rescue differentiation and referral to specific protection and assistance
- ✓ Interagency minimum standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action
- ✓ The UNODC International Frameworks for Action to implement the Palermo Protocols, in particular the recent guidelines on protection of victims of human trafficking and smuggling of migrants

Human traffickers and smugglers must be apprehended, prosecuted, and punished in accordance with international conventions, protection frameworks, and national laws.

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## **3 Establish a protocol based on a needs-first principle to protect particularly vulnerable migrants and refugees, e.g., women and children**

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including provisions that ensure that:

- ✓ The best interests of the migrant child shall be the primary consideration
- ✓ Children are kept with their parents, and the safety and care of unaccompanied children are provided for
- ✓ Children are not detained
- ✓ Women are protected from gender-based violence

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## **4 Ensure fair and competent responsibility-sharing and regional cooperation among coastal and non-coastal States of tasks and costs involved in SAR, relocation and resettlement procedures**

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including:

- ✓ Revision or replacement of the Dublin Regulation
- ✓ Support of search-and-rescue operations with humanitarian priority, like Italy's Operation Mare Nostrum

We urge States to remove disincentives to rescuing migrants and refugees at sea by reaching cooperative international agreements on asylum, migration, and border systems. Regional responsibility-sharing should address not only disembarkation but also reception conditions, efficient asylum procedures, and durable solutions.

We also urge that disincentives for private shipmasters to assist those in distress at sea be removed, with consideration given to compensating those who incur financial losses for rescuing migrants and refugees.

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## 5 Address “route causes” and “root causes” of forced and dangerous migration

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with:

- ✓ Express reference in the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals to migrants and refugees as subjects and actors in transformative development
- ✓ Decent work and sustainable development in countries of origin to strengthen the right to remain at home, with migration a choice not necessity
- ✓ More opportunities for legal migration while reducing barriers due to increased securitization
- ✓ Cooperative international agreements by States to provide more safe-havens for asylum seekers, e.g., through expanded UNHCR resettlement programs
- ✓ Migration and asylum policies that recognize the benefits of migration and the contributions of migrants and refugees to the development of countries of destination and origin

Great care, consultation and convergence with UN agencies and civil society is imperative before implementing any proposal for external or in-country processing of refugees and others in need of protection.

It is urgent to provide pathways for legal entry to address the drivers of irregular maritime movements undertaken to achieve family reunification and access the labor market. Opening legal channels for migration and regularized movement for migrant workers, asylum seekers, refugees, and especially low-skilled workers will reduce the use of smugglers as well as underground labor markets.

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## 6 Ensure that border management is firmly based on human rights principles

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including:

- ✓ Requiring States engaged in migration control cooperation with third countries to ensure that their migration control agreements fully respect international human rights and refugee laws as well as the law of the sea
- ✓ Imposing human rights and refugee law obligations, as well as the international law of the sea and other relevant standards, on the procedures regarding the rescue of migrants and refugees at sea
- ✓ Requiring training of border authorities on international human rights law relevant to their work including its practical implementation and gender equality training
- ✓ Requiring monitoring for human rights-compliance regarding SAR and reception and holding States accountable for adversely impacting the human rights and dignity of migrants and refugees

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## 7 Empower migrants and refugees

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including:

- ✓ Access to the legal system through administrative agencies, courts, and other tribunals, including those that trigger human rights mechanisms, to enable them to take legal action on their own behalf
- ✓ Decent work and sustainable development in countries of origin to strengthen the right to remain at home, with migration a choice not necessity
- ✓ More opportunities for legal migration while reducing barriers due to increased securitization
- ✓ Cooperative international agreements by States to provide more safe-havens for asylum seekers, e.g., through expanded UNHCR resettlement programs
- ✓ Migration and asylum policies that recognize the benefits of migration and the contributions of migrants and refugees to the development of countries of destination and origin

A multi-stakeholder Migrants-in-Crisis Group should develop a matrix of existing legal instruments, guidance, and practical examples on how States and other parties can best protect all migrants and refugees in distress crossing sea, land, and air borders.

## CIVIL SOCIETY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROTECTION AT SEA (*December 2014*)

### SIGNATORIES

1. Abiodun Adebayo Welfare Foundation
2. Action Aides Aux Familles Demunies
3. ADIN - Africa Development Interchange Network
4. ADYNE - African Diaspora Youth Network in Europe
5. AFRICA UNITE
6. African Sky
7. African Youths Organization
8. Alliance for Development
9. Alliance Nationale contre la Faim et la Malnutrition (ACFM NIGER)
10. Asociacion Civil de Derechos Humanos Mujeres Unidas Migrantes y Refugiadas (AMUMRA)
11. Antenne pour la reconnaissance de l'environnement au Congo(AREC)
12. AP DOMESTIC WORKERS WELFARE TRUST
13. Asian Pacific Catholic Network
14. Association for Community Development
15. Association for Trauma Outreach and Protection
16. Association pour la Promotion des Droits Humains (APDH)
17. AVIC OIL COMPANY LTD
18. Awareness Against Human Trafficking (HAART)
19. Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio & Communication(BNNRC)
20. BASUG
21. Bougeons-nous, DRC
22. Caritas Sweden
23. CIDEHUM
24. Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME)
25. CO-HABITER
26. Commission Episcopale pour la pastorale des migrants et des Réfugiés, Burkina Faso Niger
27. CONFÉDÉRATION CHRÉTIENNE DES SYNDICATS MALAGASY "SEKRIMA"
28. Confédération générale des Travailleurs de Mauritanie CGTM
29. Congregation of our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd
30. Congregation of Saint Joseph
31. Congregation of the Mission
32. Consiglio italiano per i rifugiati- Italian Council for Refugees (CIR)
33. Construction and Allied Workers Union of Nepal
34. Construisons Ensemble le Monde
35. CORPORACION ANNE FRANK
36. Curia Generalizia Agostiniana – Augustinians International
37. Dominican Development Center
38. Dominican Leadership Conference
39. DRIELUIK MAATSCHAPPELIJK ACTIEF (DMA)
40. Dutch Council for Refugees
41. Edmund Rice International
42. EL Amel Association for Social Development
43. ENDA LEAD AFRIQUE FRANCOPHONE
44. Espace Afrique International
45. Estancia del Migrante González y Martínez A.C./
46. Federacion Zacatecana A.C.
47. FEDERATION EURO-AFRICAINE DE SOLIDARITE
48. Fédération Internationale de la Diaspora Afar
49. Federation of Environmental and Ecological Diversity for Agricultural Revampment and Human Rights ( FEEDAR & HR)
50. Global Workers Justice Alliance
51. Gray Panthers
52. GREEK COUNCIL FOR REFUGEES
53. Greek Forum of Refugees
54. GROUPE DE RECHERCHE-ACTION POUR LE DEVELOPPEMENT INTEGRAL
55. Haut Conseil des Maliens de l' Extérieur
56. Health Services Workers' Union of TUC Ghana
57. Human Rights Development Information Centre
58. Indigenous Nationals Development Integration Organization
59. INHURED International
60. International Association of Schools of Social Work
61. International Association TIP
62. International Catholic Migration Commission
63. International Council of Jewish Women
64. International Council of Psychologists
65. International Council of Women
66. International Detention Coalition
67. International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)

## CIVIL SOCIETY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROTECTION AT SEA (December 2014)

### SIGNATORIES

68. International Federation of Business and Professional Women
69. International Federation of Settlements and Neighborhood Centers
70. International Federation on Ageing
71. International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA)
72. International Network of Alternative Financial Institutions (INAFI)
73. International Presentation Association of the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
74. International Voluntary Organisation for Women, Education and Development
75. Kapo Seba Sangha KSS
76. Labour, Health and Human Rights Development Centre
77. Loretto Community
78. Migrant Support-Qatar
79. Migrant Voice
80. MODELCI / CADUS
81. Mouvement d' Action pour le Renouveau Social (MARS)
82. NATIONS INSTITUTE INDC
83. NCHEKOUA BUSINESS CONSULTING
84. NGO BARIQ21 "Promotion of renewable energy and sustainable development"
85. Nigerian Diaspora Youths Movement for Peace and Development Organization
86. NGO Committee on Migration
87. PHALS
88. PNCC
89. POSITIVE RUNWAY
90. Poverty Eradication and Community Action Foundation (PEACE)
91. Recherches et Documentation Juridiques Africaines (RDJA) asbl
92. Red Internacional de Migración y Desarrollo/International Network on Migration and Development
93. Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU)
94. Rehabilitation and Development Organization for the Landless (RADOL)
95. Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary
96. Research and Enterprise Development (ZA)
97. Research and Enterprise for Diaspora -UK
98. Reseau Marocain Transnational Migration & Développement (RMTMD)
99. Save the Climat
100. Scalabrini International Migration Network
101. SERAC, Bangladesh
102. Service, Health, Education, Bread & Aid (Sheba USA)
103. SHINE
104. Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur
105. Solidarité Agissante pour le Developpement Familial [ SADF ]
106. Student Action for Refugees
107. Syndicate of Kadisha
108. Terre des Hommes
109. TERRE DES JEUNES DU BURUNDI
110. Together To Palestine
111. UNANIMA
112. Unitarian Universalist Association
113. VIVAT International
114. WARBE Development Foundation
115. West Nepal Law Firm
116. Women and Gender Institute
117. World Christian Life Community
118. World Council of Churches
119. World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organizations
120. World Organisation for Early Childhood Education (OMEPE)
121. Zimbabwe United Nations Association