



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

DANGERS OF TRAVELLING BY SEA
IN THE BAY OF BENGAL AND ANDAMAN SEA

Photographs © AFP

NEARLY
100,000

PEOPLE HAVE TRAVELLED IN MIXED MARITIME
MOVEMENTS ACROSS THE BAY OF BENGAL
AND ANDAMAN SEA SINCE 2014

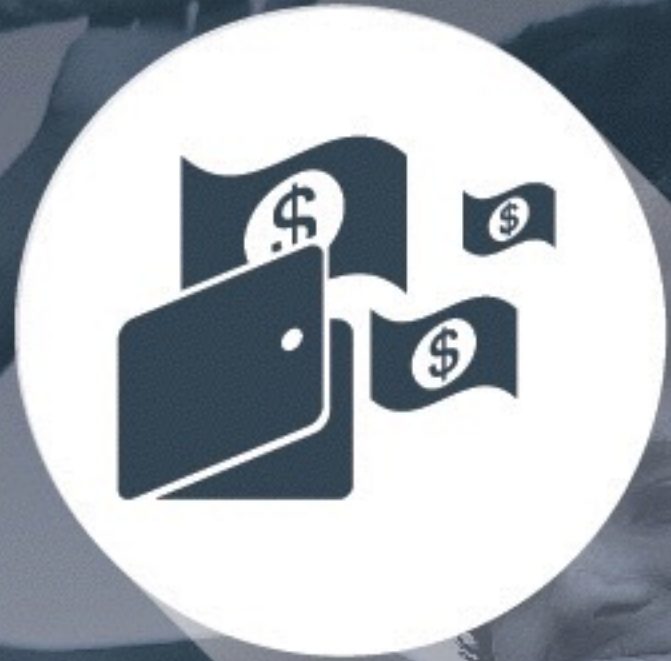


SERIOUS CRIMINAL ACTIVITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES WERE COMMON, AND MORE THAN 1,100 PEOPLE ARE THOUGHT TO HAVE DIED ALONG THIS ROUTE SINCE 2014 DUE TO STARVATION, DEHYDRATION, AND BEATINGS BY SMUGGLERS AND CREW MEMBERS.



IF YOU ARE THINKING ABOUT TRAVELLING BY BOAT TO ANOTHER COUNTRY, UNDERSTAND THE RISKS TO YOU AND YOUR FAMILY AT EACH STAGE OF THE JOURNEY.

DEPARTURE



YOU MAY BE REQUIRED TO PAY MUCH MORE THAN THE AMOUNT SMUGGLERS CHARGE FOR BOARDING A BOAT. ALMOST EVERYONE WHO TRAVELS BY SEA TO THAILAND AND MALAYSIA THROUGH SMUGGLERS EVENTUALLY HAS TO **PAY AROUND USD 2,000** IN ORDER TO BE RELEASED.



WHATEVER BELONGINGS YOU BRING WITH YOU ARE USUALLY CONFISCATED BY THE SMUGGLERS AND BOAT CREWS. **THIS INCLUDES MONEY, FOOD, AND MOBILE PHONES.**



SOME PEOPLE HAVE BEEN TRICKED OR ABDUCTED AND FORCED ONTO BOATS AGAINST THEIR WILL, AND THEY ARE STILL FORCED TO PAY **THIS AMOUNT.**



YOU COULD BE AT SEA FOR SEVERAL MONTHS, DEPENDING ON WEATHER, THE CONDITION OF THE BOAT, AND HOW LONG THE SMUGGLERS WAIT TO FILL THE BOAT WITH MORE PASSENGERS.

MOST BOATS USED BY SMUGGLERS ON THIS ROUTE LOAD **MANY MORE PASSENGERS** THAN THEIR CAPACITY. YOU WILL HAVE TO CROUCH IN A SPACE HALF THE SIZE OF A PRAYER RUG FOR THE ENTIRE JOURNEY, SHOULDER TO SHOULDER WITH OTHERS. BOAT CREWS OFTEN BEAT PASSENGERS WHO TRY TO MOVE AROUND.

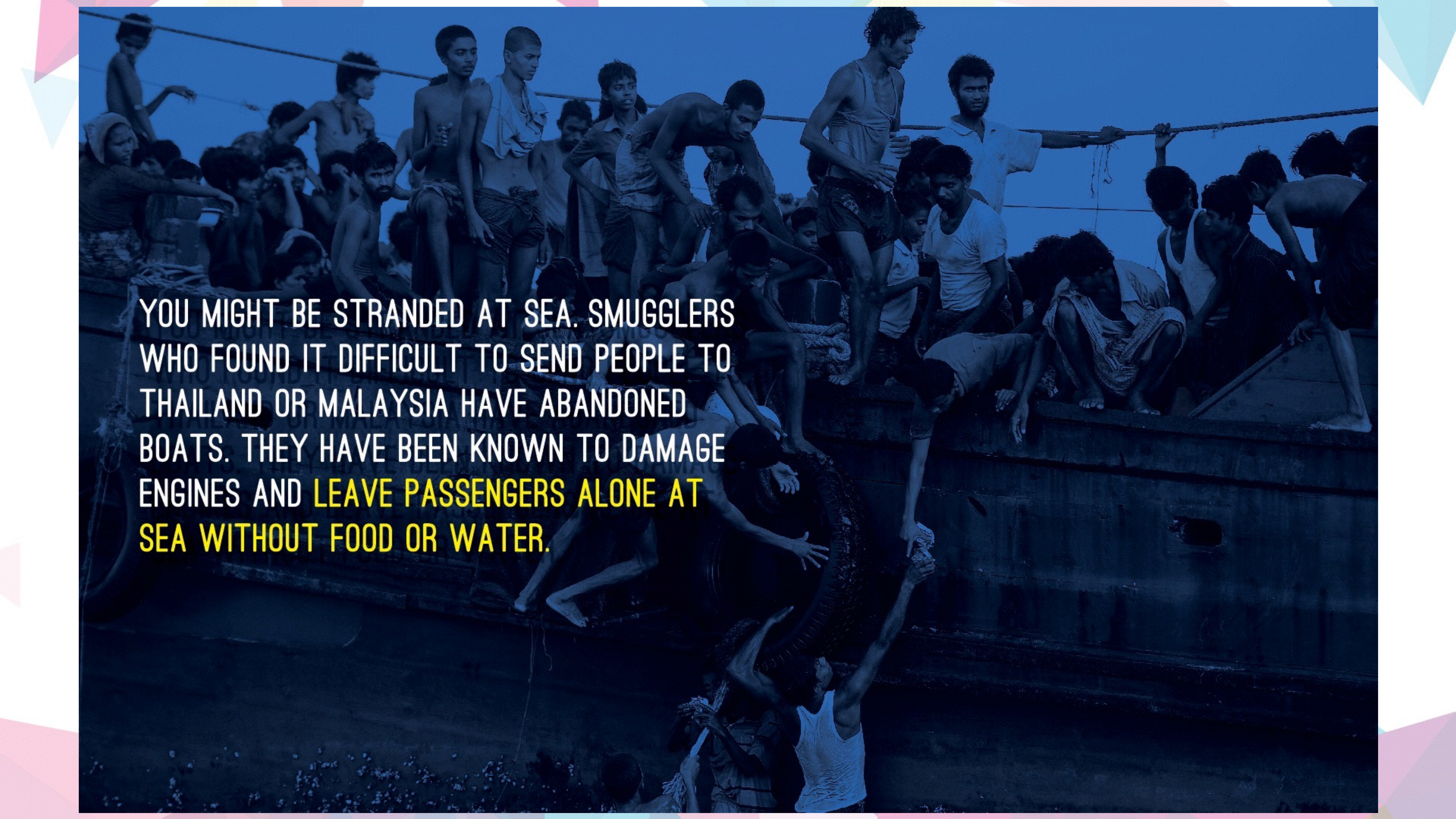


FOOD AND WATER ON THE BOAT ARE SCARCE. EACH DAY, YOU WILL PROBABLY BE FED ONE BOWL OF RICE, AND RECEIVE ONE OR TWO CUPS OF WATER TO DRINK. PASSENGERS WHO TRY TO ASK FOR MORE FOOD AND WATER ARE OFTEN BEATEN.

SANITATION IS POOR ON BOARD, AS THERE IS OFTEN ONLY ONE TOILET ON THE BOAT, AND SOMETIMES NO TOILET AT ALL. IF THERE IS A TOILET, YOU WILL ONLY BE ABLE TO USE IT ONCE A DAY, AND THERE IS NO SEPARATE FACILITY FOR WOMEN.



MANY PEOPLE FALL SICK AT SEA. BECAUSE FOOD IS SO LIMITED AND LACKS NUTRITION, YOU MAY LOSE MOVEMENT IN YOUR LIMBS BY THE TIME YOU REACH LAND, AND YOU MAY DIE IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO TAKE THE REQUIRED MEDICATION, SUCH AS VITAMIN B1. WITHOUT MUCH WATER, YOU WILL SUFFER FROM DEHYDRATION AND EXHAUSTION. POOR HYGIENE ALSO OFTEN LEADS TO SKIN DISEASES. ON MANY BOATS, SEVERAL PEOPLE — SOMETIMES DOZENS — DIE FROM SICKNESS AND FROM SEVERE BEATINGS BY CREW MEMBERS. SOME PEOPLE FEEL SO DESPERATE THAT THEY JUMP OFF THE BOAT AND GO MISSING AT SEA. MANY OTHERS HAVE ALSO DROWNED, ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY ARE TRANSFERRED FROM ONE BOAT TO ANOTHER NEAR THE COAST.

A photograph of a group of people, mostly men and children, on a boat at sea. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting dusk or dawn. The people are gathered on the deck, some standing and some sitting. A rope runs across the boat, and several people are holding onto it. The overall mood is one of uncertainty and distress. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

YOU MIGHT BE STRANDED AT SEA. SMUGGLERS WHO FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO SEND PEOPLE TO THAILAND OR MALAYSIA HAVE ABANDONED BOATS. THEY HAVE BEEN KNOWN TO DAMAGE ENGINES AND **LEAVE PASSENGERS ALONE AT SEA WITHOUT FOOD OR WATER.**

ON LAND



IF YOU SURVIVE THE BOAT JOURNEY, ONCE YOU ARE ON LAND, YOU WILL PROBABLY BE PUT IN A PICKUP VAN WITH UP TO 20 OTHER PEOPLE, AND FORCED TO SIT OR LIE ON TOP OF EACH OTHER WHILE BEING TAKEN TO A SMUGGLERS' CAMP IN THE JUNGLE. WHEN SMUGGLERS TRANSFER YOU TO THE MALAYSIAN BORDER, THE ROAD JOURNEY CAN TAKE ANYWHERE FROM SEVEN HOURS TO A WHOLE DAY.

YOU WILL BE KEPT IN THE JUNGLE FOR AS LONG AS IT TAKES YOUR FAMILY TO PAY THE **USD 2,000** DEMANDED BY THE SMUGGLERS. THIS CAN TAKE MONTHS, DURING WHICH YOU WILL ONLY HAVE PLASTIC SHEETING FOR COVER, OR MAY BE HELD IN A WOODEN CAGE.



THE SMUGGLERS WILL OFTEN BEAT YOU WHILE THEY SPEAK TO YOUR RELATIVES ON THEIR MOBILE PHONES.



WHILE THE SMUGGLERS WAIT FOR PAYMENT, THEY MAY FORCE YOU TO STAND IN PAINFUL POSITIONS FOR HOURS, OR RUB CHILI POWDER IN YOUR EYES.



SOME WOMEN HAVE ALSO BEEN RAPED.



PEOPLE WHO TRY TO ESCAPE HAVE BEEN SHOT DEAD.



IF YOU ARE CAUGHT BY AUTHORITIES, YOU WILL BE CONFINED IN IMMIGRATION DETENTION CENTERS OR SHELTERS, SOMETIMES FOR MONTHS. MORE THAN 5,000 PEOPLE WHO TRAVELLED ON SMUGGLERS' BOATS IN ASIA WERE DETAINED IN 2015.



THE THAI AND MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENTS WILL LIKELY CONSIDER YOU AN ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT, AND YOU WILL PROBABLY NOT BE GIVEN ANY LEGAL **WORK OR RESIDENCE PERMIT**. THERE WILL BE NO OFFICIAL CHANNELS FOR YOU TO BRING OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS TO JOIN YOU.



IF YOU MAKE IT TO MALAYSIA, YOU WILL BE KEPT IN A "RECEIVE GHOR," WHERE YOU WILL **HAVE TO PAY AN ADDITIONAL USD 50-100** TO BE RELEASED TO A RELATIVE OR FRIEND.

BACK HOME

YOUR FAMILY MIGHT HAVE SOLD ALL THEIR PROPERTY OR BORROWED A LARGE AMOUNT OF MONEY TO PAY FOR YOUR JOURNEY, LEAVING THEM WITH A HEAVY FINANCIAL BURDEN, ESPECIALLY WOMEN WHO HAVE TO CARE FOR CHILDREN ON THEIR OWN.

WITHOUT A LEGAL WORK PERMIT, IT WILL BE DIFFICULT FOR YOU TO EARN A STEADY INCOME AND SEND MONEY BACK TO YOUR FAMILY REGULARLY. IN THE MEANTIME, ANY DEBT OWED BY YOU OR YOUR FAMILY WILL ACCRUE INTEREST AT A RATE THAT INCREASES EXPONENTIALLY.

