



PRESS RELEASES

Meeting of the Joint AU-EU-UN Taskforce to Address the Migrant Situation in Libya

Joint Press Release - Meeting of the Joint AU-EU-UN Taskforce to Address the Migrant Situation in Libya

The joint EU-AU-UN Task Force on migration set up last month in Abidjan met today in Brussels. The EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission Federica **Mogherini**, the African Union Commissioner for Social Affairs, Amira El Fadil, Director General of the International Organization for Migration, William Lacy Swing, and UNHCR's Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, Volker Turk discussed the encouraging results of initiatives put in place and a set of concrete actions aimed at addressing the dramatic situation of migrants and refugees in particular inside Libya, following the formal launch of the Task Force on 4th December in Addis Abeba.

The emergency voluntary humanitarian return (VHR) operation has started in line with the agreement reached in Abidjan: 3,100 migrants have been assisted to return from Libya to their countries of origin 28 November to today. This brings up the number of migrants that have been assisted by the IOM to return home safely to a total of 16,561 persons, compared to 2,700 for the whole of 2016. All participants confirmed the shared commitment to provide VHR assistance to an additional 15,000 migrants by February 2018. In this context IOM will scale up the reception, reintegration and community based support to returnees and its counter-trafficking efforts and its assistance to victims of trafficking.

Under the newly established UNHCR's Emergency Transit Evacuation Mechanism (ETM),

the first asylum seekers and refugees have been evacuated to further processing in view of resettlement.. Further evacuations from Libya are to take place before the end of the year. As the Emergency Transit Mechanism scales up it will be essential to provide additional targeted pledges to support it and ensure predictable engagements of the African and European Member States as well as the international community. UNHCR confirmed their engagement to evacuate further 1,300 persons through the Emergency Transit Mechanism by early 2018.

Building on this basis and to accelerate the operations, the parties agreed on a series of urgent measures on the basis of the common goals set in Abidjan:

- The European Commission and Member States are making available at least EUR 100 MLN additional funding to support the work of IOM and UNHCR on the ground allowing them to continue to scale up the operations.
- The African Union continues to step up its work/contacts/exchanges with African countries of origin to provide consular services to their nationals in Libya. The chairperson of the African Union also called upon Libyan authorities to expedite the granting of landing rights and neighbouring countries to grant over flight permits. The AU also welcomes and encourages its Member States to receive and resettle refugees and asylum seekers who cannot go back to their countries of origin and further welcomes those Member States that have offered logistic support to the evacuation exercise.

It is of paramount importance that the evacuation can rely on protection sensitive identification and disembarkation procedures in Libya for all nationalities, notably to cater for the needs of those who are in need of protection and Unaccompanied Minors. The Task Force will work together with the Libyan authorities to ensure unhindered access for International Organisations and NGOs to detention centres and to allow the full and transparent registration of all refugees and migrants both at the disembarkation points and in detention centres by International Organisations. Looking beyond the immediate needs we will work together with the Libyan authorities to overcome – once and for all – the system of systematic detention.

Finally, in order to strengthen action targeting migrant smugglers and human traffickers, the parties agreed to coordinate positions in Addis, New York and in Geneva to promote African, European and international initiatives aiming at reducing demand, disrupting the supply chain and bringing perpetrators to justice. They stressed the importance to cooperate with key origin, transit and destination countries on judicial as well as on law enforcement level to exchange information, build capacity and counter the culture of impunity and vowed to support enhanced efforts by Libya in this field. They reconfirmed their commitment to build stronger security architecture in the region, including through targeted action against all forms of organised crime, especially trafficking in human beings.

The European Union, the African Union and the United Nations agreed to meet in the

coming weeks on a regular basis at operational level and hold joint mission at senior official level to develop the operations further in close coordination with Libyan authorities.

See also

[One year of EU partnership with the IOM: migrant protection and reintegration in Africa](#)

[Factsheet: EU Action in Libya on Migration](#)

[EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration: one year on](#)

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