



## CONCEPT NOTE

### **UN SECURITY COUNCIL ARRIA FORMULA MEETING**

#### **“Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers crossing borders on Land and at Sea: New Wave of Crisis”**

**Date:** 13 July 2023

**Time:** 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

**Venue:** ECOSOC Chamber

**Participation:** All UN Member States, Permanent Observers, UN entities, civil society organizations and press are invited

The meeting will be held in all UN official languages and will be open to all UN Member States, Permanent Observers, UN entities, civil society organizations and press. It is our intention to webcast this meeting, in absence of objections from Council Members pending final agreement on this issue among them.

#### **Objective:**

The objective of the informal meeting is to address the pressing challenges faced by migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, both on land and at sea, and explore potential solutions to ensure their safety, security, and well-being. The meeting aims to foster a comprehensive understanding among Security Council Members and Member-States about the complexities and humanitarian dimensions of migration and displacement with a focus on perilous border-crossings.

#### **Background:**

Not long after the crisis of 2017, the world is again witnessing a significant increase in the number of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers aspiring to safer lives and opportunities

across borders. These individuals often undertake perilous journeys on both land and sea, facing various risks, including human trafficking, smuggling, exploitation, and abuse.

According to IOM 3,800 people died on migration routes within and from the Middle East and North Africa region last year, the highest number since 2017 when 4,255 deaths were recorded. On North African land routes, particularly during the perilous Sahara Desert crossing, 203 deaths were recorded, while an additional 825 deaths occurred on Middle Eastern land routes.

Mediterranean Sea continues to be the most dangerous migration route in the world, with the highest fatality rate: overcrowded boats, harsh weather conditions and the activities of human traffickers and smugglers have contributed to tragic incidents, leading to mass casualties. In the Central Mediterranean the first quarter of this year is the deadliest on record since 2017: IOM documented 441 migrant deaths.

The increasing loss of life on the world's most dangerous maritime crossing comes amidst reports of delays in State-led rescue responses and hindrance to the operations of NGO search and rescue vessels that reportedly led to least six incidents this year resulting in death of at least 127 people. The complete absence of response to a seventh case claimed the lives of at least 73 migrants.

The IOM called the persisting humanitarian crisis in the central Mediterranean intolerable.

In Americas, the 2022 became the deadliest year ever for migrants trying to cross the U.S.-Mexico border claiming lives of more than 800 persons. It is the second year in a row that migrant deaths near the border have climbed sharply. Most migrants die painful deaths: dehydration, heat exhaustion, or exposure at night in deserts and dry brushland appear to be the most common causes. An increasing number are drowning in the Rio Grande and irrigation canals. An increasing number are killed, or badly injured, trying to climb segments of 30-foot-high border wall.

In April 2023 in Mayotte the military operation Wuambushu was launched to dismantle and forcibly expel irregular migrants by destroying their houses and push them outside the island. Many children were left on their own after their parents were deported: between 3,000 and 4,000 were deprived of their carers before the start of the operation.

UN experts, civil society organizations express deep concern about policies and practices of migration governance that lead to deaths, torture and other grave human rights violations at and around international borders. Migration policies that contribute to deaths and other grave violations of refugee and migrant rights disproportionately affect

individuals of certain national, ethnic, racial origin and religious groups. The report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants regarding the human rights impact of pushbacks of migrants on land and at sea (A/HRC/47/ 30) documents a deeply concerning global pattern of routine human rights violations. The practice of “pushbacks” is widespread and exists along most migration routes. "Pushbacks" manifest an entrenched prejudice against migrants and demonstrate a denial of States’ international obligations to protect the human rights of migrants at international borders.

The alarming death toll on migration routes as a symptom of the current global migration crisis demands urgent attention and collaborative efforts to address the root causes, enhance protection mechanisms, and develop comprehensive solutions.

### **Discussion Points:**

1. Overview of the global migration trends, including the number of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers on land and at sea.
2. Analyzing the main challenges faced by migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, such as violence, persecution, racism and discrimination.
3. Discussing the challenges and responsibilities of states in conducting effective and timely search and rescue operations for migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers at sea.
4. Identifying ways to enhance maritime security while ensuring the protection of the rights and safety of those in distress on land and at sea.
5. Exploring comprehensive approaches to address the root causes of forced displacement and promoting long-term solutions to prevent forced displacement.

### **Expected Outcome:**

The informal meeting will facilitate identify practical measures, policy recommendations, and possible areas for coordinated action to address the immediate and long-term needs of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, both on land and at sea and strengthen protection mechanisms.

### **Program:**

#### **Opening remarks:**

- **H.E. Mr. Vassily Nebenzia**, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations

**Briefers (VTC):**

- **Ms. Elizabeth Tan** – Director, International Protection Division, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
- **Mr. Federico Soda** – Director, Department of Operations and Emergencies, International Organization for Migration
- **Ms. Angelina Nyachol** – Civil Society Representative, Financial Consultant
- **Mr. Daniel Kovalik** – Professor, Labor and Human Rights Lawyer

**Discussion:**

Statements by the UN Security Council Members and other UN Member States as time permits, Q&A. Interventions are suggested to be limited to 3 minutes.

**Logistics:**

To register and to request further information please contact the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, at *hrteam.rusun@gmail.com*.