



**International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Inputs to the Secretary-General's Report on Oceans and the Law of the Sea 2024**

IOM feedback to *Secretary General Report on Oceans and Law of the Sea*

Migration by Sea

- The lack of safe and regular migration pathways has compelled thousands of people around the world to risk their lives at sea in search of a better life, safety and security. Inadequate state-led search and rescue in several regions coupled with restrictions on NGO-led search and rescue and safe and predictable disembarkation mechanisms further compound the fatal risks that migrants face at sea. Since September 2023, more than 1,400 people drowned in the Mediterranean Sea, where more than 67 per cent are still missing, leaving their families suffering from ambiguous loss. Out of the 817 people who lost their lives in the Mediterranean this year, 70 died due to starvation, dehydration, exhaustion and exposure, an indication that preventable deaths are often caused by lack and delay of search and rescue at sea. The same phenomenon can be observed on the Western Africa Atlantic Route to the Canary Islands where at least 249 people lost their lives since September 2023. At least 43 per cent have lost their lives due to sickness or harsh conditions leading to hypothermia, starvation and dehydration. In the Caribbean Sea, at least 229 people drowned while trying to reach the U.S since September 2023. In the same period across the world, a minimum of 71 Rohingya refugees have drowned while crossing the Andaman Sea to Indonesia.
- In September 2023, IOM and UNHCR jointly launched the online course “The Protection of Migrants and Refugees Moving by Sea”. The online course is available on IOM’s E-Learning platforms I-Learn for IOM staff and E-Campus for non-staff, as well as on UNCHR’s platform Workplay for UNHCR staff, and on the International Institute of Humanitarian Law open online platform for all. By April 2024, globally, 543 individuals completed the online course. The online course will be made available in Arabic, French and Spanish in the near future.
- IOM carries out capacity development support to coastal States on the legal framework applicable to migration by sea, including law of the sea, human rights law, transnational criminal law, among others, in the form of training, as well as legal, policy and operational programming support.

- IOM developed a training curriculum on “Protecting the human rights of migrants at sea” for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, which was carefully crafted to elevate the technical proficiency of government officials, coast guards, UN staff and other relevant partners. Emphasizing protection-sensitive and vulnerability-informed approaches, the curriculum aims to strengthen the handling of maritime interceptions and search and rescue (SAR) operations at sea. The training provides an extensive overview of international instruments and their application on the day-to-day SAR interventions. Additionally, it builds the capacity of key actors, including healthcare providers, to effectively respond by integrating health considerations into SAR operations.