

UNHCR - Précis

[X] *Refugees and migrants at sea*. Movements of refugees, asylum-seekers, stateless persons and migrants by sea increased very significantly in 2014 compared to 2013. Despite strong efforts in some affected regions to provide robust rescue responses to meet this challenge, loss of life at sea and other threats to safety and human rights remained a feature of these movements. Refugee movements at sea are one symptom of much larger displacement crises globally. The trend has continued—and in some cases increased—in 2015, highlighting the importance of the duty to promote effective search-and-rescue services and to render assistance to anyone found in distress at sea, as provided for in the Convention and other instruments.

[X+1] The High Commissioner for Refugees' annual Dialogue on Protection Challenges was devoted to the theme of Protection at Sea in 2014. The Dialogue notably reinforced the need for effective State-led search-and-rescue arrangements; dialogue with the shipping industry; cooperation to improve data collection and analysis; improved arrangements for disembarking and receiving rescued people; access to alternatives to dangerous sea journeys; and avoiding punitive responses to refugees and migrants. UNHCR's *Global Initiative on Protection at Sea*, which underpinned the Dialogue, has been complemented and operationalized through a number of region-specific initiatives directed at supporting comprehensive approaches to protection at sea. UNHCR has initiated a number of joint inter-agency statements highlighting the humanitarian and protection needs of refugees and migrants at sea, in cooperation with IOM, IMO, OHCHR, UNODC and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for International Migration and Development. UNHCR has partnered with IMO and the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) to produce an updated version of the joint publication *Rescue at Sea: A Guide to Principles and Practice as Applied to Refugees and Migrants*.