

**Joint Statement by  
UNHCR, OHCHR, IOM and the SRSB for Migration and Development**

***A comprehensive people-oriented approach to the  
irregular movement of migrants and refugees in South East Asia***

(1 July 2015)

We, the undersigned\*, welcome the convening later this week of the Emergency ASEAN Ministerial meeting on *Transnational Crime: Irregular Movement of Persons in the South East Asia Region*. The meeting provides a timely opportunity to move meaningfully forward on the comprehensive and durable solution called for by the Foreign Ministers of Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand in Putrajaya on 20 May 2015, in keeping with the spirit of unity and solidarity of a people-oriented and people-centered ASEAN.

Progress has been made on a number of the individual and collective actions called for in that statement, as well as on the 17 recommendations of the *Special Meeting on Irregular Migration in the Indian Ocean* held in Bangkok on 29 May 2015. But much more needs to be done. This includes providing access for relevant national and international actors, such as UNHCR and IOM, to the refugees and migrants. We encourage States to act consistently with the recommendation we made to avoid the use of immigration detention in our earlier Joint Statement of 19 May 2015.

We strongly urge States to undertake sustained efforts to expand avenues for safe and legal migration, including for family reunification and labour migration at all skill levels, while stepping up law enforcement. This includes prosecution of individuals involved in human trafficking and migrant smuggling syndicates—whoever they may be and whatever their affiliations—in a manner fully consistent with international standards for human rights in the administration of justice. Likewise, we continue to urge intensified efforts to identify and respond to the drivers and root causes of the irregular movement, as recommended in the Putrajaya Statement, and therefore call for the protection of the human rights of all migrants and refugees at places of origin, transit and destination.

The creation of an ongoing mechanism, such as the Task Force recommended at the *Special Meeting*, is the best way to ensure that a regular channel is available for international community support for efforts undertaken by affected States. This must include ensuring protection of the rights of all migrants and refugees, instituting appropriate law enforcement measures and responding to the drivers and root causes of forced movement. The Emergency Meeting on Thursday 2 July 2015 is a welcome opportunity to implement that recommendation.

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Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

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