



MIGRANT HELP
3 MINUTE OBSERVER STATEMENT FOR
THE 106TH SESSION OF THE IOM COUNCIL
ON 27TH NOVEMBER 2015

Director General, Your Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour to talk to you today.

The International Organisation for Migration sees at first-hand the misery of the current migration crisis; the misery of people forced to move across the world.

We at Migrant Help are experiencing the impact this year with a sharp increase in migrants requiring our services. As the national provider of advice and support to asylum seekers in the United Kingdom we have reached an unprecedented high in demand. Our advisers work day and night assisting our clients by providing them with basic requirements, offering comfort, respect and kindness. Following their perilous journey they desperately need clothes and many have outstanding health issues. It takes a few days for clients to adjust to their new environment and start engaging with our advisers. Then their stories start to emerge. Last week, Yousef, a Syrian refugee, came to see our advisers just to show them a photo and tell them how much he missed his family – his wife and two children aged five and two, who he had to leave behind. We believe that having the opportunity to do this makes a big difference to the wellbeing of our clients.

As an organisation providing services across the United Kingdom, we need to become more active internationally in order to contribute to the solution of the current situation and to alleviate the unnecessary suffering of refugees. We can offer better assistance to the most vulnerable members of our society by linking our services and expertise with other organisations. We want to build on the long-established and strong partnership Migrant Help has with the IOM and explore ways of working together even more closely. As the new UK Immigration Bill passes through parliament, it is becoming increasingly obvious that it concentrates heavily on enforcement measures including a focus on removal of people without status from the UK. The UK government is also taking over the delivery of Assisted Voluntary Return services from 1st January. Considering these facts there is an opportunity for Migrant Help to work directly with the policy makers to ensure that failed asylum seekers and irregular migrants are able to return to their countries of origin with dignity, while receiving assistance in establishing a new and successful life. We are very keen to link these activities to the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programmes which IOM has been running successfully since 1979.

In the light of the recent terrorist attacks in Paris, it is our duty, as organisations working with refugees and asylum seekers, to keep the public informed and raise awareness of the plight of people escaping life threatening situations. We have to make sure that those who need our help can rely on the generosity and understanding of their fellow human beings.

Thank you.

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