

**STATEMENT BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON MISSING PERSONS  
AT THE 112<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE COUNCIL  
OF THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION**

Excellencies,

Director-General,

Distinguished Council Members,

I am pleased to have the opportunity to address the 112<sup>th</sup> Session of the Council of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) on behalf of the Commissioners and Director-General of the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP).

Since signing a cooperation agreement in 2013, the IOM and ICMP have worked together to address the issue of missing migrants. IOM's Missing Migrants Project (MMP) has recorded almost 23,000 migrants missing or dead in the Mediterranean region since 2014.

The pandemic has not stopped irregular migration: it has simply forced migrants and refugees to take more dangerous routes. In 2020, 1,427 migrants were reported missing or dead in the Mediterranean region, according to IOM, the figure for 2021 had already reached 1,650 by the beginning of December.

The 2018 UN Global Compact for Migration lists among its 23 objectives, the need to “save lives and establish coordinated international efforts on missing migrants”. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights urged states in 2019 to “reinforce international cooperation to locate missing migrants,” and in May this year, the European Parliament called for “a coordinated European approach” to identifying missing migrants, among other things by establishing a customized database. And in July the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights urged countries to standardize data collection, and establish effective coordination mechanisms to account for missing migrants.

Successful approaches have been developed that can mitigate the humanitarian consequences of irregular migration and at the same time enable governments to fulfill their obligations and uphold the rule of law. In this regard, ICMP invited countries from the Mediterranean and beyond to attend the third meeting of the Joint Process to Account for Persons Missing as Result of Migration in the Mediterranean in November this year. At the meeting, the countries participating in the Joint Process agreed, among other things, on the need for a secure way of data collection and exchange that can improve efforts to find missing migrants and reunite families.

The IOM and ICMP are engaged in complementary activities – IOM tracking deceased migrants en route, and ICMP supporting governments in their efforts to account for the missing. Governments can make use of these complementary activities to enhance the effectiveness of their own efforts.

ICMP looks forward to continuing cooperating with IOM, and is confident that this partnership will advance the security, development and wellbeing of persons that we are mandated to help, including in these difficult times.

I would like to thank the Director-General for providing ICMP with this opportunity to participate in the 112th session of the Council of IOM.