

## EU should seek common approach to address tragic loss of life on Mediterranean – UN agencies

2 February 2017 – Ahead of a meeting of the European Council, the United Nations refugee and migration agencies have called on European leaders to take “decisive action” to save lives of migrants and refugees attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea along its central route in hopes of a better future.

Ahead of a meeting of the European Council, the United Nations refugee and migration agencies have called on European leaders to take “decisive action” to save lives of migrants and refugees attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea along its central route in hopes of a better future.

“To better protect refugees and migrants, we need a strong European Union that is engaged beyond its borders to protect, assist and help find solutions for people in need,” said the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in a joint statement today.

Such efforts, they noted, should include building capacity to save lives at sea or on land, strengthening the rule of law and fighting against criminal networks.

The agencies also expressed hope that the meeting, to be held tomorrow, will also help move towards the adoption of a common approach to migration by the European Union.

They also appealed for addressing “deplorable conditions” for refugees and migrants in Libya and called for concerted efforts to ensure that sustainable migration and asylum systems are established in the country and in neighbouring countries.

“This should include a significant expansion of opportunities for safe pathways such as resettlement and humanitarian admission, among others, to avoid dangerous journeys,” the noted, urging to shift away from migration management based on “automatic detention of refugees and migrants.”

In this context, UNHCR and IOM underlined the need for creating proper reception services and building capacity to register new arrivals, support the voluntary return of migrants, process asylum claims and offer solutions to refugees.

Further, stating that they, together with partners on the ground, have made “tremendous effort” to deliver basic protection not only to refugees and migrants but also to affected local populations, which in some

places are also in dire need of assistance, the UN agencies, however, expressed worry that security constraints continued to hinder their efforts.

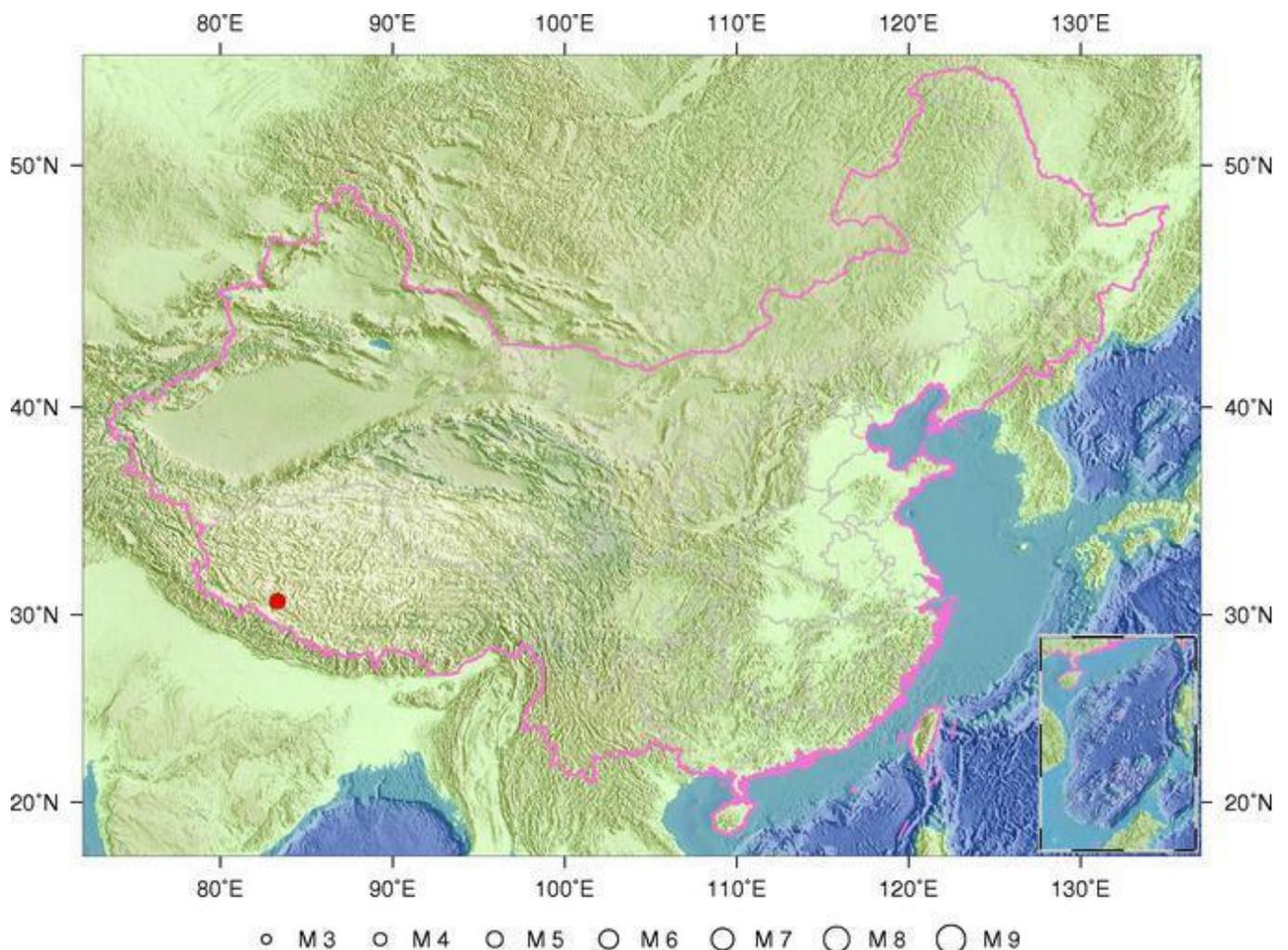
They also outlined that given the current context, "it is not appropriate to consider Libya a safe third country nor to establish extraterritorial processing of asylum-seekers in North Africa."

Expressing hope that humane solutions can be found end the suffering of thousands of migrants and refugees in Libya and across the region, the agencies added: "We stand ready to assist and enhance our engagement, conditions permitting."

Last year, 2016, was the worst year in terms of people perishing while attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea. According to preliminary figures from UNHCR, of the 363,348 people who crossed the sea, 5,079 people almost 1 in 72 were lost (died or missing).

---

## [5-magnitude quake hits Tibet; no casualties reported](#)



A 5.0-magnitude earthquake jolted Zhongba County in Tibet on Wednesday, February 1, 2017. [Photo: China Earthquake Administration]

A 5.0-magnitude earthquake jolted Zhongba County in southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region at 6:07 p.m. Wednesday (Beijing Time). No casualties were reported.

The epicenter was monitored at 30.67 degrees north latitude and 83.34 degrees east longitude. The quake struck at a depth of 8 km, according to the China Earthquake Networks Center.

The epicenter, 124 kilometers from the county seat and 757 kilometers from Lhasa, is in an uninhabited zone and therefore the moderate quake caused no injuries and death of people and livestock, Wei Xince, deputy county governor, told Xinhua by phone.

Local authorities were checking damages to roads and makeshift livestock pens in the summer pasture.

Zhongba, which is in the western-most of Xigaze prefecture and borders Nepal, covers an area of 45,900 square kilometers and has a population of 24,800. It has an average altitude of over 5,000 meters.

---

## [China sees rising traffic as holiday nears end](#)

China's transport system saw rising traffic Wednesday as millions of people started to return to work after the week-long Lunar New Year Holiday.



Passengers wait for trains at the Nanchang West Railway Station in Nanchang, capital of east China's Jiangxi Province, Feb. 1, 2017. (Xinhua/Peng Zhaozhi)

Some 9.7 million passenger trips were estimated on Chinese railways on Wednesday, year-on-year growth of 9 percent, as the week-long holiday draws to a close Thursday, according to China Railway Corporation.

Traffic on expressways around major cities also increased, leading to rising congestion.

During the New Year holiday, hundreds of millions of people go back to their hometowns to meet relatives and old friends, and as Chinese people become more affluent and keen to travel, pressure on the transport system is huge.

Data from the China National Tourism Administration showed some 27.4 million visitor trips were made in China Wednesday, up 14.1 percent year on year.

Tourism revenue reached 34 billion yuan (about 4.96 billion U.S. dollars) on the day.

---

**[Press release: Quarter of people would not call 999 at the first signs of](#)**

# stroke

Public Health England (PHE) today (2 February 2017) launches its annual Act FAST campaign to remind people of the main symptoms of stroke and the importance of calling 999 immediately if they notice any single one of the symptoms in themselves or others.

Stroke kills over 40,000 people a year and leaves around two-thirds of stroke survivors with a disability.

Research shows that 24% of people would wait to call an ambulance because they wrongly believe that they need to see 2 or more symptoms of stroke to be sure. Other barriers to dialling 999 include feeling that they need permission to act on behalf of others.

As part of the campaign, new films will encourage everyone – whether they are a stranger in the street, a family member at home or the person themselves – not to hesitate and make the call immediately when they see any of the main stroke symptoms:

- Face – has their face fallen on one side? Can they smile?
- Arms – can they raise both their arms and keep them there?
- Speech – is their speech slurred?

Radio DJ Mark Goodier, who had a stroke last November, and TV presenter Anna Richardson, whose father had a stroke, tell their personal stories alongside people who have survived stroke – some who have recovered well and others who have been left with life-changing disabilities.

The stories show how disability can be greatly reduced if people react quickly to any of the signs of a stroke – urging people to act fast and call 999.

Professor Kevin Fenton, PHE's National Director for Health and Wellbeing, said:

Stroke is one of the leading causes of death in the country, and the faster someone experiencing a stroke gets emergency treatment, the more chance that person has of surviving and avoiding serious disability.

It is crucial to Act FAST when you see any single one of the symptoms of stroke, and do not delay making that all-important 999 call.

Dr Lasana Harris, Experimental and Social Psychologist, University College London, said:

We always look to make sense of a situation and even if someone appears to be having a stroke we may worry about causing offence or mutual embarrassment. If no one else acts, then we ourselves may not see it as an emergency.

However, the imagined consequences of action are minor compared to the consequences of inaction when someone is having a stroke. So act first and worry later.

Juliet Bouverie, Chief Executive, Stroke Association said:

We know people recognise the signs of stroke but they aren't taking the right action at the right time. A stroke is a brain attack and acting fast makes a huge difference.

You are more likely to survive a stroke and make a better recovery if you call 999 on spotting any one of the symptoms. The quicker you act the more of the person you save.

## Background

1. Download the Act FAST campaign videos and pictures from [dropbox](#).
2. The Act FAST campaign will run nationally from 2 February to 31 March 2017. The campaign includes advertising on TV, radio, bus interior posters and digital, supporting PR and a social media drive. A separate strand of activity will specifically target BME audiences as African, African-Caribbean and South Asian communities have a higher incidence of stroke. Website: [www.nhs.uk/actfast](http://www.nhs.uk/actfast) Twitter: [@ActFAST999](https://twitter.com/ActFAST999), Facebook: [www.facebook.com/ActFAST999](http://www.facebook.com/ActFAST999).
3. The Act FAST campaign:
  - Face – has their face fallen on one side? Can they smile?
  - Arms – can they raise both their arms and keep them there?
  - Speech – is their speech slurred?
  - Time – to call 999 if you see any single one of these signs
4. Additional symptoms of stroke and mini stroke can include:
  - sudden loss of vision or blurred vision in one or both eyes
  - sudden weakness or numbness on one side of the body
  - sudden memory loss or confusion
  - sudden dizziness, unsteadiness or a sudden fall, especially with any of the other symptoms
5. Professor Tony Rudd, National Clinical Director for Stroke at NHS England, said “NHS stroke care and survival are now at record levels, stroke is very treatable but every minute counts. Knowing when to call 999 when you see any single one of the signs will make a significant difference to someone’s recovery and rehabilitation.”
6. A stroke is a brain attack that happens when the blood supply to the brain is cut off, caused by a clot or bleeding in the brain. There are around 100,000 strokes in the UK every year and it is the leading cause of severe adult disability. There are over 1.2 million people in the UK

living with the effects of stroke. A mini stroke is also known as a transient ischaemic attack (TIA). It is caused by a temporary disruption in the blood supply to part of the brain.

7. [Public Health England](#) exists to protect and improve the nation's health and wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities. It does this through world-class science, knowledge and intelligence, advocacy, partnerships and the delivery of specialist public health services. PHE is an operationally autonomous executive agency of the Department of Health. Follow us on Twitter: [@PHE\\_uk](#) and Facebook: [www.facebook.com/PublicHealthEngland](http://www.facebook.com/PublicHealthEngland).
8. "[Stroke Association](#) is a charity. We believe in life after stroke and together we can conquer stroke. We work directly with stroke survivors and their families and carers, with health and social care professionals and with scientists and researchers. We campaign to improve stroke care and support people to make the best recovery they can. We fund research to develop new treatments and ways of preventing stroke. The Stroke Helpline (0303 303 3100) provides information and support on stroke."

For further information, images or interviews please contact:

---

## [Following first mission to Africa as UN chief, Guterres highlights strengthened cooperation](#)

1 February 2017 – Speaking to the media on his return from Africa and his participation at the African Union Summit, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres highlighted enhanced synergies and avenues of cooperation with the regional bloc.

"We have agreed that Agenda 2063 [the development agenda of the African Union] and the 2030 Agenda [for sustainable development] will be aligned," said Mr. Guterres at a press encounter at the United Nations Headquarters, in New York, today.

"There will be only one line of reporting, which means that there will be a total cooperation between the UN and the African Union in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals and the implementation of the Paris Agreement [on climate change] in the years to come," he added, noting the establishment of regular, high-level interaction between the two organizations.

The Secretary-General further informed the media on the establishment of a mechanism of cooperation between Intergovernmental Authority for Development – a subregional organization in Africa that includes Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda as members – the African Union and the UN to "do everything possible" to avoid deterioration

of the situation in South Sudan and to bring it back on a better track for peace.

“We will be clearly working together with the same voice, in order to make sure that the national dialogue that will be launched in South Sudan is truly inclusive, including all the key elements of the opposition,” noted Mr. Guterres.

He also said that a full agreement was reached with Kenya in order for it to participate in the Regional Protection Force in South Sudan.

The UN chief also spoke of his meeting with the Heads of State of Mali, Chad, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, and Niger on moving the political process forward and addressing complex security and terrorism challenges.

He also expressed hope for progress regarding the situation in Burundi.

Further, underscoring the importance of subregional and regional unity, as evidenced in the resolution of the political crisis in the Gambia, the Secretary-General said: “When the neighbours of a country are together, when [ECOWAS] is united and the African Union is united, then it is possible for the Security Council to decide; it is possible for action to be taken, and it is possible for democracy, human rights, and the freedom of peoples to be defended.”

Recalling the potential that African continent presents, he said that the momentum of recent successes to make sure that the continent is able to achieve sustainable and inclusive developments, knowing that that is also the best way to prevent the conflicts that, unfortunately, have created so much suffering there.