

Sexual Violence and Refugees/Migrants coming to Malta Infosheet

The Central Mediterranean Route: from sub-Saharan Africa

- *Every year, tens of thousands of refugees and migrants travel through **Libya & Tunisia towards Italy and beyond (the route often taken by migrants coming to Malta).***
- *This is one of the **most dangerous migrant routes in the world.***
- *Many experience **kidnapping, exploitation, extortion and enslavement.***

Women and Girls

- *Fleeing abuse and domestic violence is often part of the reason why women embark on this dangerous journey.²*
- ***Sexual violence against refugee and migrant women and girls is rampant throughout the Mediterranean route.**³*
- *A 2018 UN report found that, of approximately 1,300 interviews with refugees and migrants in Libya, the **“overwhelming majority” of women and older adolescent girls endured gang rape or witnessed other women and girls being taken away for sexual violence.**⁴*
- *A 2017 UNICEF survey with migrant women and children travelling on the Mediterranean route found that **three quarters of the migrant children interviewed said they had experienced violence, harassment or aggression.** Girls reported a higher incidence of abuse than boys.⁵*

¹ <https://reliefweb.int/report/italy/more-one-million-pains-sexual-violence-against-men-and-boys-central-mediterranean-route>

² <https://drc.ngo/it-matters/current-affairs/2020/7/these-illustrations-reveal-the-human-stories-of-the-world-s-most-dangerous-migration-route/>

³ <https://reliefweb.int/report/italy/more-one-million-pains-sexual-violence-against-men-and-boys-central-mediterranean-route>

⁴ <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/NewsDetail.aspx?NewsID=24037&LangID=E>

⁵ <https://refugeemigrants.un.org/fr/node/100043019>

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Men and Boys

- However, men and boys also encounter sexual violence.
- **Sexual violence, including sexual abuse within families, is the reason why some refugee/migrant men and boys leave their home countries.**
- A 2019 study by the Women's Refugee Commission found that during the journey to Italy, **men and boys encounter sexual violence at borders, checkpoints, random stops by armed groups, and while kidnapped and imprisoned.**
 - Men and boys are forced to:
 - **witness sexual violence** against women and girls in centres of captivity & in the desert
 - **rape women and girls, including family members.**
 - Women are also forced to perpetrate sexual violence against men and boys.⁶

Go to <https://childhub.org/en/series-of-child-protection-materials/bridge> to find out more about different types of gender-based violence and how it affects migrant and refugee children and youth

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⁶ <https://reliefweb.int/report/italy/more-one-million-pains-sexual-violence-against-men-and-boys-central-mediterranean-route>

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