

People Smuggling

1. TEXTS

TEXT 1:

This text describes the workings of people smuggling, and explains why it is a booming business.

- a) Look up the underlined words and expressions in a dictionary, and learn them.
- b) After reading the article, give a definition of people smuggling.
- c) Who benefits from people smuggling?
- d) What measures have been taken to stop migrant smuggling?
- e) Try to remember some examples and figures that might be useful for an oral commentary (how much migrants pay to be smuggled into Europe, how much smugglers make, etc.).

People smuggling: how it works, who benefits and how it can be stopped

The Guardian, Clár Ní Chonghaile Fri 31 Jul 2015

One of the most distressing elements of the worldwide migrant crisis is that people who have risked all for a better life should be held to ransom by smugglers. The lines between migration and human trafficking all too easily converge. While migration implies a level of individual choice, migrants are sometimes detained and even tortured by the people they pay to lead them across borders.

Following the cash across borders – through a network of kingpins, spotters, drivers and enforcers – is central to understanding how this opaque and complex business works.

Everyone agrees there is not enough data. No one knows how many migrants are smuggled. However, enough is known about the money paid – by Eritreans, Syrians, Rohingya, and Afghans, among others – to demonstrate it is a multimillion-dollar business.

As Europe debates measures ranging from military attacks to destroying smugglers' boats to increasing asylum places, what more can be done to prosecute those profiting at the crossroads of dreams and despair?

How much do migrants pay?

The cost varies depending on the distance, destination, level of difficulty, method of transport (air travel is dearer and requires fake documents) and whether the migrant has personal links to the smugglers, or decides to work for them.

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) says journeys in Asia can cost from a few hundred dollars up to \$10,000 (£6,422) or more. For Mexicans wanting to enter the US, fees can run to \$3,500, while Africans trying to cross the Mediterranean can pay up to \$1,000, and Syrians up to \$2,500.

Abu Hamada, 62, a Syrian-Palestinian refugee, reckons he has earned about £1.5m (\$2.3m) over six months by smuggling people across the Mediterranean from Egypt. A place on a boat from Turkey to Greece costs between €1,000 and €1,200 (£700 and £840), say migrants. Afghans pay between €10,000 and €11,000 to get to Hungary, which includes help from smugglers.

The UNODC says smugglers operating from Africa to Europe earn about \$150m annually, while those from Latin America to North America are believed to earn roughly \$6.6bn a year. Money is often paid in instalments as a migrant moves from one group of smugglers to the next. For example, migrants from Afghanistan often use informal remittance systems, such as *hawala*. Funds are deposited with a hawaladar in Afghanistan, and on each stage of the journey the migrant will contact that person to release money to other hawaladars in transit countries.

Yama Nayab, an Afghan surgeon fleeing persecution by jihadists, said: “Sometimes the smugglers give me a GPS coordinate, sometimes they send a map, sometimes they send a car.” The cost can involve buying fraudulent visas. For example, the UNODC says Bangladeshi migrants hoping to work in the Gulf need a sponsor, and some recruitment companies act as such, buying work visas and selling them to migrants.

“One source estimated that at one point, as many as 70% of Saudi Arabia’s work visas were sold on the black market,” said a UNODC report on migration published in April this year.

Other transactions are more blatantly criminal: Eritreans, who with Syrians and Afghans make up the majority of migrants attempting to cross the Mediterranean, are often driven “for free” from Khartoum in Sudan to Ajdabiya on the Libyan coast, where they are locked up and tortured until relatives pay a ransom.

“They put you in a house until you pay,” said Osmorum, 19, an Eritrean who arrived in Italy this year. “They gave us food, but every night beat us with a whip of animal skin. They did this until my sister’s husband sent the money three weeks later.”

Smuggling migrants involves recruiters, transporters, hoteliers, facilitators, enforcers, organisers and financiers. Some smugglers were once themselves smuggled migrants, who now operate either in destination countries or transit states.

“You may have occasions where one of the smuggled migrants is given the key to drive the boat, and he’s paying maybe less than the others. Is this a smuggler?” said Ilias Chatzis, chief of the UNODC’s human trafficking and migrant smuggling section, organised crime and illicit trafficking branch. “Judicial systems are really struggling with handling and understanding the complexity of all these factors.”

One of Egypt’s most active smugglers is a Syrian who estimated he earned about £1.5m in 2014 sending an estimated 10,000 migrants to Italy. That was after payments to middlemen, sailing crews, shipowners – and the police. “If I want to smuggle 300 [migrants], the authorities will [arrest] 50 and let 250 go, to show the Italians they are doing some work. Maybe they [take] 100,000 Egyptian pounds (\$12,800) per operation,” said the smuggler, who called himself Abu Uday.

Corrupt officials – police officers, border guards, diplomats – are rarely exposed. In July, however, Thailand’s state prosecutors said they were pressing charges against more than 100 people, including an army general, in a multinational human trafficking scandal that emerged after dozens of bodies were discovered in the south of the country this year.

Smuggling networks are generally not hierarchical, but some individuals may have transnational contacts. In some cases, for example on the US-Mexico border, criminal gangs are involved. A powerful drug cartel, Los Zetas, is believed to be supervising migrant smuggling. “You have small groups handing the migrants over to the next groups. It’s very, very difficult to track the money,” said Chatzis.

The legal framework

The protocol against the smuggling of migrants by land, sea and air, which supplements the UN convention against transnational organised crime, came into force in January 2004, and 141 countries are party to it. It defines smuggling of migrants as “the procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a state party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident”.

“The protocol requires the criminalisation of smuggling, it requires member states to focus on the smugglers not the migrants, it requires the protection of the human rights of the migrants, it asks for closer international cooperation,” said Chatzis. “It recognises sealing the borders is not going to solve the problem and is not possible in the majority of cases.”

What next?

Experts say migrant smuggling must be transformed from a “low-risk, high-reward” enterprise to a “high-risk, low-reward” one. “It’s a business. It’s criminal, but it’s a business. It plays on supply and demand,” says Feshchenko. “Law enforcement agencies ... should understand how this illegal business operates, and try to use all possible legal measures to destroy it.”

The UNODC has put together a database of case law on migrant smugglers to inform global legal opinion. It would also like to see improved collaborative investigation and prosecution responses, the creation of specialist operational units with high-level investigative and prosecutorial skills, and a transnational approach by law enforcement officials and policymakers.

In an action plan published in May, the European commission said it was essential to disrupt the criminals’ business models, which would require stronger coordination between law enforcement and judiciary structures in the EU. While it offers no comfort to those who have lost loved ones, the increased visibility of migrants may spur change. The smugglers’ success may prove their downfall if it causes world governments to cooperate more.

**TEXT 2:**

This text tells the story of Helena Maleno, an aid worker who is facing charges of migrant smuggling.

- a) Look up the underlined vocabulary.
- b) Why was Helena Maleno accused of people smuggling?
- c) Is this accusation justified? How does she defend her position?
- d) According to you, should facilitating the smugglers’ work by rescuing people at sea constitute a crime? Write down some arguments, and try to produce an oral commentary on the subject, without looking at your notes.

Migrants' heroine faces jail for people smuggling

By James Badcock Madrid, *BBC News*, 30 January 2018

A Spanish woman has been credited with saving the lives of thousands of migrants crossing the Strait of Gibraltar to get to Europe. So why is she now facing a lengthy prison sentence?

When Helena Maleno gets the call, she does not think twice. As soon as she has been told that a boat has set forth into the treacherous waters of the Strait of Gibraltar, she alerts the emergency services. Based in Tangier for the past 16 years, Ms Maleno, who heads a non-governmental organisation called Walking Borders, monitors the movement of migrants and helps to call rescuers if they get into danger as they cross from Morocco to Spain.

Her actions have made her a heroine to thousands of African immigrants trying travel to Europe. "I am not exaggerating when I say that she is probably the person who has saved most lives in the Strait - at least 10,000," says Captain Miguel Zea, chief of the Maritime Rescue centre in the Spanish coastal city of Almería. "She is providential for our work."

But Ms Maleno's activity on what she refers to as Europe's "southern border" has also earned her enemies. She now faces prosecution in Morocco for human smuggling, accused of working with criminal gangs to facilitate the illegal movement of people.

Speaking to the BBC ahead of a court appearance in Tangier on Wednesday, she denied this and insisted she had not committed any crime. "We cannot create a precedent whereby those who protect people have police investigations mounted against them. We cannot open the door to the idea that people who call to save people from drowning at sea should be imprisoned. The crime would be to not make that phone call."

More than 22,000 migrants made the dangerous sea crossing to Spain last year - the biggest number since more than 39,000 immigrants were picked up along the country's coastline in 2006. Some

critics suspect that Ms Maleno has been helping migrants achieve their objective of reaching European soil.

In a previous court appearance in December, the judge asked her why she called the Spanish coastguard instead of the Moroccan authorities when she got news that a boat was on the water. "Spain and Morocco co-operate on migration but the Spanish rescue services have more resources than the Moroccan navy," Ms Maleno says. "I know that as soon as I have called one police force, they will immediately inform the other country to tell them where the boat is located. The co-operation I offer is available to both countries."

Despite the rise in the number of crossings, rescue services, with the help of Ms Maleno, have managed to keep the death rate at around 1%. A total of 223 immigrants are believed to have perished on the Western Mediterranean route in 2017, according to the International Organization for Migration. As part of Ms Maleno's work, she facilitates the return of migrants' remains to relatives on the other side of the Sahara. "Some families cannot afford to have the body delivered," she says.

So Ms Maleno says she is horrified that her efforts have landed her in court in Tangier. "I am in shock at how my life could be destroyed from one day to the next," she says. It was even more galling to find out that the Spanish police, whom she had worked with in the past, had sent a dossier on her activities to the Moroccan court, describing her as an "important international smuggler of immigrants".

"I have talked to and even taught Spanish police agents in seminars about how to spot victims of trafficking for the sex trade," she says. "Now I find out that this same force has been tapping my phone for the last five years." Her case has attracted the attention of more than 200 Spanish public figures including actor Javier Bardem, who have signed a petition in support for her.



TEXT 3:

This text is the testimony of a Syrian refugee who was smuggled into Europe in 2014.

- a) How did Moutassem learn about smugglers? How did he know where to go? How did he find a smuggler to arrange his passage?
- b) What means of transportation were used to get the migrants to Europe?
- c) Describe the conditions of his second passage.

How I was smuggled into Europe -- and why it was worth it

CNN, By Moutassem Yazbek, April 23, 2015

Moutassem Yazbek is a Syrian refugee who took a smuggler's ship from Turkey to Italy in December 2014. He currently lives in Germany, where he has volunteered to help other recent arrivals from Syria. The views expressed in this commentary are solely his.

I would have done anything to get to Europe. It was worth the risk, the bad treatment and the fear, hard as that may be to believe. Simply put, I have a better life now than I did before. But my journey across the Mediterranean, like those of thousands of other migrants, wasn't easy. Here's my story.

It all started late last year when I lost my job in Dubai. My work visa had expired, and I had nowhere else to go. I'm Syrian, and returning to Syria wasn't an option -- going back means you either have to kill or be killed. But Syrians don't need visas to get into Turkey, so Turkey it was. I arrived in the country in December with an old dream in my mind: reaching Europe.

While in Istanbul, I discovered many Facebook pages about illegal smuggling from Turkey to Italy by sea. All of them mentioned that Mersin, a port city on the southern border, was the jump off point, so I made my way there. I met a Syrian guy in a hotel in Mersin who had already paid money to

one smuggler and was planning to depart within a few days. He told me his smuggler was a decent man with a great reputation.

Reputation: It was a funny thing to hear for the first time, the thought that these people, who I always considered to be little more than criminals, were concerned about what people thought of them. But why wouldn't they be? It's a long-term business, and the Syrian conflict isn't ending anytime soon. So I decided to meet the guy.

We spoke about terms of payment and agreed on a fee of \$6,500. Some of the money would be deposited into an insurance company, with the usual transaction fees. When I reached Italy the money would be released to the smuggler -- or, if I changed my mind, I'd be able to get some of it back.

"Be ready all day, every day for the next few days, because you might receive the call to go," the smuggler told me. One evening a few days later, I got the call and my journey began. They gathered 100 men and women in five buses and drove us to the smuggling point. It was far from Mersin. We walked for 30 minutes, through rough terrain and orange farms near the beach, in darkness to avoid detection by police.

The idea was to take us in three small boats to the main ship. I still remember an old lady, barely able to walk, with her two sons, marching along as fast as they could to try to reach the boats. They were told that if they didn't walk faster, the boat would leave without them. I asked myself so many times what could possibly drive a normal person to put himself and his family in this kind of danger. I decided that anyone with a past but no future was capable of doing crazy things.

Finally we reached the boat. It was just as the smuggler described. For three days we waited in the boat for two other parties of 100 people to join us before departing. We were in the middle of the Mediterranean, far enough away from the surrounding countries to be in international waters.

On the fourth day we started our journey with a mix of excitement and fear -- fear that this madness often ends in tragedy, ends with us as numbers piled on top of all the other unfortunate, nameless numbers who never made it to the other side. But there was no going back -- it's a one-way ticket. We sailed for eight hours before the boat's engine broke down. There were around 300 of us on board, and as the waves began to push us towards Cyprus the crew sent a distress signal, hoping to alert maybe a U.N. or Red Cross boat, anyone who could help us. Eventually our boat hit a cliff and got stuck. Luckily, before long, a Cypriot coast guard ship arrived to rescue us and deport us back to Turkey. Turkish authorities fingerprinted and released us within a few hours.

Some of the people I had been traveling with said they weren't going to try to make the trip again. When they asked me what I planned to do, I told them I would do it again tomorrow if I could -- another journey through a sea where no prayer works, where no one is bigger than nature, where you can feel so small, no matter how big your dreams are. I'd already lost everything. My family didn't know what I was doing, but I dreamed of being a human being who is treated like one. I wasn't going to stop. So I called the smuggler the same night I was released, and said I wanted to get on the next ship out.

Two days later I received the call, and again I headed to a smuggling point. This time, they had a bigger boat -- a cargo ship, in fact, maybe 85 meters long or more. It took five days to get everyone on board the ship -- 391 of us in total, refugees from cities all over Syria. And for the first time, I began to feel like I was in jail, trapped in conditions no human should ever suffer. We lived in the hold. There were no mattresses or sheets, but we found some wooden planks to put our stuff on to keep it from getting wet.

For five days we had no food and little water. But at least it meant not having to make frequent trips to the "toilet," if you could call it that, which was an old car tire covered with a piece of cloth.

Huge waves crashed against the ship from all angles and water leaked in from the ceiling as we slept on the cold metal floor of the ship, the smell of urine emanating from the corner.

Seven days in, despite the poor conditions, everything was going well and we were nearing the island-dotted seas near Greece. On the eleventh day, 200 miles off the coast of southern Italy our guides began to alert Italian authorities to our presence.

We were adrift at sea, they told the authorities, with no captain or crew. And that was actually true -- we didn't have a registered pilot, just one guy who had worked on this ship before. An Icelandic ship -- working in conjunction with Frontex, the joint European Union border patrol -- rescued us from our captain-less boat with the help of a scientific research boat from New Zealand. The rescue ship approached us but was unable to get close at first because the waves were so high. We knew we would have to wait some time before leaving our boat forever. The other refugees were waving their hands like children and then telling each other: "Stop waving, they've already seen us." I was one of the last 10 people to be rescued from the boat. I can still see it like it was yesterday; it was the rebirth of a new life.

They took us to Catania, on Sicily, where we finally reached land a day later. When we arrived, the first thing the Italian authorities did was look after the urgent medical cases. There was a man who was poisoned by the drinking water on the boat, a few pregnant women and old people who needed medical attention. They took us to a refugee camp and the only thing anyone talked about was being fingerprinted. They were saying: "We didn't risk everything to be refugees. We are not going to give our fingerprints, even if they torture us." Later that night a Moroccan-Italian man told us not to worry: "They will not fingerprint you." They would simply take us to different camps and we could leave from there.

Twelve days after it began, our journey to Europe was over. I spent two days in Sicily before making my way first to Milan with two Syrian guys who had become friends. We decided to go to Germany and went to Paris first and ended up in a city called Saarbrücken. I didn't know where my fellow travellers were heading, but I knew one thing: my dream of making it to Europe, no matter the cost and risk involved, had been achieved. It was worth it.



TEXT 4:

This text deals with human trafficking. It explains how some migrants are being sold as slaves in Lybia by their smugglers. Below the text, you will find the video report mentioned in the article.

- a) Look up the vocabulary.
- b) Using your own words, summarize the text in about 200 words.
- c) Why did smugglers start selling migrants in Lybia?
- d) When was slave trade abolished in the West? Draw parallels between traditional slave trade and these slave auctions.

People for sale: Where lives are auctioned for \$400

Tripoli, Libya (CNN) By Nima Elbagir, Raja Razek, Alex Platt and Bryony Jones

"Eight hundred," says the auctioneer. "900 ... 1,000 ... 1,100 ..." Sold. For 1,200 Libyan dinars -- the equivalent of \$800.

Not a used car, a piece of land, or an item of furniture. Not "merchandise" at all, but two human beings. One of the unidentified men being sold in the grainy cell phone video obtained by CNN is Nigerian. He appears to be in his twenties and is wearing a pale shirt and sweatpants.

He has been offered up for sale as one of a group of "big strong boys for farm work," according to the auctioneer, who remains off camera. Only his hand -- resting proprietorially on the man's shoulder -- is visible in the brief clip.

After seeing footage of this slave auction, CNN worked to verify its authenticity and traveled to Libya to investigate further. Carrying concealed cameras into a property outside the capital of Tripoli last month, we witness a dozen people go "under the hammer" in the space of six or seven minutes.

"Does anybody need a digger? This is a digger, a big strong man, he'll dig," the salesman, dressed in camouflage gear, says. "What am I bid, what am I bid?" Buyers raise their hands as the price rises, "500, 550, 600, 650 ..." Within minutes it is all over and the men, utterly resigned to their fate, are being handed over to their new "masters."

After the auction, we met two of the men who had been sold. They were so traumatized by what they'd been through that they could not speak, and so scared that they were suspicious of everyone they met.

Each year, tens of thousands of people pour across Libya's borders. They're refugees fleeing conflict or economic migrants in search of better opportunities in Europe. Most have sold everything they own to finance the journey through Libya to the coast and the gateway to the Mediterranean. But a recent clampdown by the Libyan coastguard means fewer boats are making it out to sea, leaving the smugglers with a backlog of would-be passengers on their hands. So the smugglers become masters, the migrants and refugees become slaves.

The evidence filmed by CNN has now been handed over to the Libyan authorities, who have promised to launch an investigation. First Lieutenant Naser Hazam of the government's Anti-Illegal Immigration Agency in Tripoli told CNN that although he had not witnessed a slave auction, he acknowledged that organized gangs are operating smuggling rings in the country.

"They fill a boat with 100 people, those people may or may not make it," Hazam says. "(The smuggler) does not care as long as he gets the money, and the migrant may get to Europe or die at sea."

The auctions take place in a seemingly normal town in Libya filled with people leading regular lives. Children play in the street; people go to work, talk to friends and cook dinners for their families. But inside the slave auctions it's like we've stepped back in time. The only thing missing is the shackles around the migrants' wrists and ankles.

Deportation 'back to square one'

Anes Alazabi is a supervisor at a detention center in Tripoli for migrants that are due to be deported. He says he's heard "a lot of stories" about the abuse carried out by smugglers. One of the detained migrants, a young man named Victory, says he was sold at a slave auction. Tired of the rampant corruption in Nigeria's Edo state, the 21-year-old fled home and spent a year and four months -- and his life savings -- trying to reach Europe. He made it as far as Libya, where he says he and other would-be migrants were held in grim living conditions, deprived of food, abused and mistreated by their captors.

"If you look at most of the people here, if you check your bodies, you see the marks. They are beaten, mutilated." When his funds ran out, Victory was sold as a day laborer by his smugglers, who told him that the profit made from the transactions would serve to reduce his debt. But after weeks of being forced to work, Victory was told the money he'd been bought for wasn't enough. He was returned to his smugglers, only to be re-sold several more times. The smugglers also demanded ransom payments from Victory's family before eventually releasing him.

"I spent a million-plus [Nigerian naira, or \$2,780]," he tells CNN from the detention center, where he is waiting to be sent back to Nigeria. "My mother even went to a couple villages, borrowing money from different couriers to save my life."

As the route through north Africa becomes increasingly fraught, many migrants have relinquished their dreams of ever reaching European shores. This year, more than 8,800 individuals have opted to voluntarily return home on repatriation flights organized by the IOM. While many of his friends from Nigeria have made it to Europe, Victory is resigned to returning home empty-handed. "I could not make it, but I thank God for the life of those that make it," he says. "I'm not happy," he adds. "I go back and start back from square one. It's very painful. Very painful." *CNN's Lauren Said-Moorhouse, Byron Manley, Henrik Pettersson, Mark Oliver, Muhammad Darwish and Edward Kiernan contributed to this report.*

2. VIDEOS

VIDEO 1: People for sale: Where lives are auctioned for \$400 (Source: CNN)

Watch this video: <https://edition.cnn.com/2017/11/14/africa/libya-migrant-auctions/index.html>

- Was it easy for the undercover journalist to access a slave auction?
- Before this report, was there evidence of slave trade in Lybia?
- Having seen this video and read the corresponding text above, explain the distinction between human smuggling and human trafficking.



VIDEO 2: Smuggled by Nigeria's 'pushermen' (Source: CNN)

Watch this video: <https://edition.cnn.com/videos/world/2018/02/26/nigeria-migrant-smugglers-lon-orig-ejk.cnn/video/playlists/migrant-exodus-italy/>

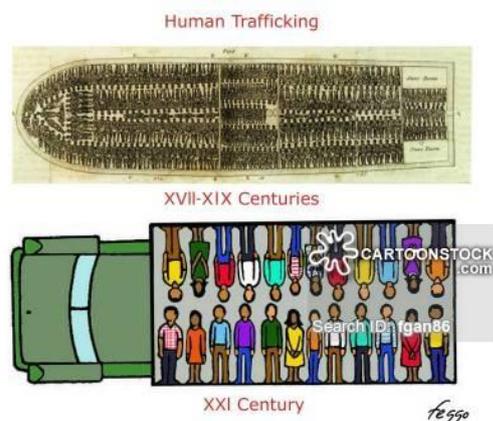
- Was it easy for the undercover journalist to find a smuggler?
- Do the migrants travel secretly?
- What does the video reveal about the dangers that smuggled women face in Africa?

3. CARTOONS

Look at the cartoons below. Explain what the authors allude to and what they are trying to denounce.



Human traffickers by Lindsay Foyle



Human trafficking by Feggo