



5 January 2015 – The arrival in Italy of yet another [abandoned cargo ship](#) laden with some 450 migrants is 'an ongoing and worrying situation' that European Governments can no longer ignore, says Vincent [Cochetel](#), Europe Bureau Director for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)).

The use of ships of such size marks a new trend, Cochetel noted, while underlining the need for urgent and concerted European action in the Mediterranean Sea, along with more efforts to rescue people at sea and stepped-up efforts to provide legal alternatives to dangerous voyages.

He emphasized his concerns about the ending of the [Mare Nostrum operation](#) despite the absence of a similar European search-and-rescue operation to replace it.

[Triton](#) , the replacing operation organised by the EU border agency Frontex, will focus on border surveillance and operate only within 30 miles of the Italian coast whereas the Italian mission carried out proactive search and rescue across 27,000 square miles of sea.

"Without safer ways for refugees to find safety in Europe, we won't be able to reduce the multiple risks and dangers posed by these movements at sea", Cochetel added.

UN Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson also commented on this new 'appalling trend', describing the situation as the latest cynical chapter in the ongoing tragedy of irregular migration at sea that has resulted in 3,000 reported deaths in the Mediterranean alone in 2014, compared to an estimated 700 migrant deaths in the same waters in 2013.

The [Ezadeen](#) was indeed not the first 'ghost ship' to be towed into an Italian port.

On December 31, around 970 migrants (mostly Syrian refugees) were saved from the [Blue Sky M](#) , another cargo ship that had been abandoned by its crew and left on autopilot.