



**20 April 2015 - An additional 700 people are [feared dead](#) after yet another boat capsized on the world's deadliest sea passage on Sunday morning. Senior UN officials have called on the EU to improve search and rescue-at-sea operations and to accelerate efforts to address the plight of asylum seekers.**

"A tragedy is unfolding in the Mediterranean, and if the EU and the world continue to close their eyes, it will be judged in the harshest terms as it was judged in the past when it closed its eyes to genocides when the comfortable did nothing," warned Maltese Prime Minister Joseph Muscat.

Ban Ki-Moon stated on 19 April: "These are urgent reminders of the critical need for a robust search and rescue capacity in the Mediterranean." He encouraged European Member States and the European Union to "accelerate their ongoing efforts to comprehensively address the plight of those seeking refuge within their borders."

"With record numbers fleeing war and persecution, more people are trying to reach Europe by boat and more lives are being lost. At least 3,500 people died in 2014 and if today's figures are confirmed, they bring the number of those who have died so far in 2015 to some 1,600. This makes the Mediterranean the world's deadliest route used by asylum seekers and migrants," he stated.

Italian Prime Minister, Matteo Renzi has responded by stating that the trafficking of migrants is "a plague in our continent - the slavery of the 21st Century". EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini has commented that "we have said too many times 'never again.'"

Ban Ki-moon added that "the international response to this must be comprehensive and collective. Their journeys are fraught with risks including discrimination, violence and exploitation, and they urgently need our protection during their hour of greatest need."

The Secretary-General recognizes the heavy impact the arrival of so many migrants has on Italy and is grateful to the Government of Italy for all its efforts. The Secretary-General appeals to the international community for solidarity and burden-sharing in the face of this crisis.

New York, 19 April 2015