

The Mediterranean Sea: a Migration Border

The deaths of around 300 migrants off the small island of Lampedusa on 3 October 2013 has brought the issue of migration in the Mediterranean sharply back into focus. Every year thousands of people, many fleeing conflict and instability in Africa and the Middle East, risk their lives in small, often decrepit vessels while trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea to European territories.

Migrants crossing in the central Mediterranean - from Libya and Tunisia - come mostly from Eritrea and Somalia, although increasing numbers of Syrians fleeing the country's civil war are also making the journey.

Speaking to reporters, the UNHCR's Adrian Edwards said: "The phenomenon of people travelling on small boats across the Mediterranean to Europe is age-old and involves issues of asylum as well as migration.

Migration charities believe that as many as 20,000 people may have died at sea trying to reach Europe in the last two decades.

Libya has become a popular starting point for many journeys, with people traffickers exploiting the country's power vacuum and increasing lawlessness.

The relatively short distance between Libya and the Italian island of Lampedusa encourages more people to risk the journey.

(Adapted from www.bbc.co.uk)



↓ WRITING

Summarize the article above.

