

# *Italy Launches Anti-Refugee Campaign to Warn Asylum Seekers Against Coming to Europe*

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Rome, July 29 (RHC)-- Italy has launched an anti-refugee media campaign to warn asylum seekers considering travelling to Europe of the perils they face. The "Aware Migrants" campaign was launched on Thursday on the internet, TV, radio and social media.

The campaign, which is a joint project by the Italian government and the International Office of Migration (IOM), is meant for the populations in 15 countries in West and North Africa which are gripped by conflict.

The campaign, which costs 1.5 million euros (USD 1.7 million), features refugees retelling their stories of sufferings at the hands of ruthless human traffickers, or the pains and dangers they endured during the perilous journey across the Mediterranean Sea.

An increasing number of refugees have taken the perilous journey across the Mediterranean to "pursue a dream, but ended up in a nightmare," said Italy's Interior Minister Angelino Alfano.

He recalled examples of women raped in front of their husbands in Libya, or people who witnessed seeing a loved-one die of thirst in the desert or drown at sea. He asked: "Did they know about all this before they left?"

According to the figures released by the Italian Interior Ministry in July, 270,930 people landed in Italy between January and June this year, compared to 153,000 refugees who arrived in the European country last year. Since 2014, more than 10,000 refugees have died or are feared to have drowned while attempting cross the Mediterranean Sea to reach Europe, according to the UN's High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

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