

# MOAS

# MAGAZINE

2017

2017

**A Turning Point**

Birth in the  
**Midst of  
Crisis**

Divine and  
the **Right to  
Happiness**

**Death** Cannot  
be Measured by  
Numbers



# Welcome

## to the 2017 MOAS Magazine

This, the first edition of the MOAS magazine, is a testament to the work that has been done across all programs and platforms throughout January to December of 2017. In it we will highlight key operational milestones, important events and give insight into some of our decisions and reflections from the year.

Our aim with the magazine is to celebrate all of MOAS' steps and achievements in a year full of change and growth that saw us re-engage in rescues in the Mediterranean and expand operations to emergency health provision in Bangladesh. In particular, as we continue to advocate and speak out on issues relating to migration, humanitarianism and human rights, we wanted to use this publication to call on all our supporters and readers to engage with the issues, and look for ways to make a difference in their own communities and worldwide.

Reach out to us here at MOAS for more information on getting involved and on any of the topics tackled in this, our first ever MOAS magazine.

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MOAS has been operational since 2014 and is registered in Italy and Malta as well as having legal representation in Germany and the USA. MOAS is an International Humanitarian organization providing emergency relief to migrants risking their lives in search of safety.

MOAS Co-Founder & Director: Regina Egle Liotta Catrambone  
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# MOAS

## 2017 Numbers

### Central Mediterranean

Number of people rescued  
and assisted:  
7,286

### Bangladesh

Number of patients treated:  
29,280  
Children:  
12041  
Women:  
12694  
Men:  
4545

### Aerial Evacuation

Number of women and  
minors evacuated from  
Libya to Niger:  
74

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# 2017: A Turning Point

If 2014 was marked by MOAS' inception and our first life-saving mission at sea, in 2017 there was a fundamental turning point as MOAS broadened its scope, mission and operational environment. In spite of the rampant campaign of fake news and criminalisation of solidarity against Search and Rescue (SAR) NGOs, on April 1st the Phoenix left the port of Valletta on its fifth mission to save lives at sea with a manned maritime aircraft. The aircraft replaced the use of drones and allowed a greater reach to better monitor the situation at sea.

Between April and August, we experienced first-hand the fatal consequences of migration flows in terms of multiple departures from Libyan shores, the dramatic escalation in the incidence of physical and psychological wounds, a growing number of people packed into flimsy vessels, and unprecedented challenges for SAR crews during rescue operations and post-rescue care. During Easter weekend alone, MOAS conducted 24 hours of uninterrupted rescues and assisted nine vessels carrying an estimated 1,500 - 1,800 children, women and men. Such a dramatic situation served as clear evidence of the deteriorating migration scenario along the Central Mediterranean route.



In August, MOAS signed the Code of Conduct for Search and Rescue in the Mediterranean in solidarity with the Italian government and its people in order to continue preventing unnecessary deaths along the world's deadliest migration route. Unfortunately, the operational environment dramatically worsened, and we decided to suspend our SAR mission: MOAS did not want to become part of a mechanism that prevented people from arriving in Europe, without taking their fate into account.

MOAS is committed to mitigating the suffering of the world's most vulnerable migrant and refugee communities, and motivated by the more than 40,000 people that we have rescued with our SAR operations, we decided to choose courage over fear and devoted our energy and resources to an unfolding crisis in Southeast Asia.

From August 25th, the stateless Muslim Rohingya minority in Myanmar was the main target of extreme persecution. A wave of violence and abuse by the Myanmar government and army forced around 600,000 people to flee Myanmar and seek sanctuary in Bangladesh in just a couple of months. Following Pope Francis' appeal to respond to the plight of the Rohingya, MOAS shifted operations to Southeast Asia at the beginning of September and identified the main priority as being the provision of health services. After distributing 40 tonnes of humanitarian aid to the Bangladeshi government, on October 14th the first MOAS Aid Station was opened in Shamlapur, a fishing village in the region of Cox's Bazar.

Less than one month later, on November 10th, the second Aid Station welcomed its first patients in Unchiprang, a remote and poorly-served area. During the first months, when massive arrivals of vulnerable and exhausted Rohingya people were recorded, our primary health centres treated 200-400 patients on average each day, including members of the Bangladeshi host communities. In December, MOAS took part in a vaccination campaign under the guidance of WHO and the Bangladeshi government and simultaneously supported UNHCR staff in Libya to evacuate 74 especially vulnerable people. This group included 51 children and 22 women who had been trapped in Libyan detention centres and were brought to a safe shelter in Niamey, Niger.

At our Aid Stations in Bangladesh, most of our patients are children, often infants and newborn babies, whose mothers are finally able to receive adequate maternal care. The second biggest demographic group among our patients is women and girls, who have often been victims of rape and extreme violence. Most of MOAS' patients have never seen a doctor before and are in desperate need of medical assistance, and continue to receive first-class treatment from our dedicated team.

The huge difference we have been able to make to so many is why MOAS continues to keep hope alive in a historically persecuted community; because humanity, mercy and brotherhood have no borders.

**Regina Catrambone**, MOAS Director





The 40-metre vessel Phoenix was used once again, and was joined by a fixed wing manned aerial asset as the organisation pushed the boundaries of technology and innovation in the field of SAR.

The addition of this critical maritime patrol aircraft marked a development of MOAS' history in combining aerial and maritime assets. The aircraft allowed for greater reach, and was equipped with a full mission suite that allowed enhanced detection of vessels in distress. Daily patrols contributed to situation awareness and enabled MOAS to be more effective at saving lives at sea. The Phoenix was once again manned by a



On April 1st 2017 MOAS launched our fifth mission to save lives in the Central Mediterranean. Founded in 2014 and the first civil society Search and Rescue (SAR) charity involved in the migration crisis, by the start of our 2017 operations we had already rescued 33,000 children, women and men. In 2017, for the first time, our life-saving mission combined our maritime operations with a manned aerial asset.

professional search and rescue team, who were joined by a hand-picked post-rescue care unit. The team of doctors, paramedics, nurses and logisticians ran its clinic and provided social and medical care, including the provision of Halal hot meals, to those rescued for the duration of their stay.

MOAS continued to operate within the framework of UNCLOS and International Maritime Law. Operations were conducted in collaboration with the Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre in Rome and all other stakeholders operating in the field.

*As our crews headed out to sea for our fifth mission with both maritime and aerial assets, they acted on behalf of all civil society on the front line of this era-defining humanitarian crisis.*

” Regina Catrambone,  
MOAS Co-Founder and Director



# A EASTER WEEKEND: Tragedy Avoided

On 19th April 2015, an estimated 700 children, women and men drowned in the Mediterranean while searching for a new life in safety and peace. The European community was outraged and politicians vowed: 'never again'.

A year later, on 18th April 2016, up to 500 people died in shipwrecks off the Libyan coast.

On Easter weekend 2017, as MOAS prepared to commemorate these mass tragedies, our crew were out in the Central Mediterranean. They knew that many rescues would lie ahead of them, but they could never have anticipated the scale of what they were about to face.

Through the determination, teamwork and solidarity among everyone at sea, another mass tragedy was avoided.







On Good Friday, 14th April 2017, more than 2000 people were rescued in the Mediterranean by Search and Rescue (SAR) agencies. The Phoenix participated in the rescue of 273 people, transferring everyone to an Italian coast guard vessel so that our crew could remain in the area to assist with further rescues the following day.

In the early hours of Saturday 15th April, the Phoenix began receiving messages from the MOAS aircraft, the Rescue Coordination Centre in Rome and other SAR assets nearby of multiple vessels in distress at various locations in the area of operations. By 05:10 the Phoenix had engaged in the first rescue of the day: a blue rubber boat with 116 people on board, immediately followed by a large wooden boat nearby. Throughout the day fresh sightings of vessels in desperate need of assistance continued to come in from all directions.

All assets in the area, from specialised SAR craft to tug boats and fishing vessels, were taking people on board and fighting to stabilise the boats they could not rescue. Life jackets and emergency rations were distributed to all boats in the area, and women, children and emergency medical cases were transferred onto the Phoenix, while the crew redistributed people among the surrounding boats in a desperate attempt to stabilise the worst affected before night fell.

By the time evening drew in the Phoenix was surrounded by seven rubber boats and two wooden boats, carrying an estimated 1000 people on board between them. The crew had been engaged in rescues for more than 15 hours and resources were stretched thin.



As other rescue vessels came and went to assist in other incidents, the Phoenix was left alone and seriously concerned, as crew members supervised an estimated 1,500 vulnerable, frightened people,

*Just when we thought we had some control, more boats appeared. The big wooden boat was the most complex; on the one hand, we needed the engines to keep running to keep the pumps going and stop the boat from sinking, but on the other hand, we knew of over 200 people in the hold who could be suffocating from the fumes produced by the engine. As each hour passed our concern increased: would we run out of fuel, or would we find bodies?*

” Paul,  
MOAS Rescue Swimmer

from those on board to those still spread across the boats in the water.

Throughout the night the Phoenix waited for assistance, desperately trying to maintain control in the rising swell. Just before midnight, another SAR NGO arrived back on the scene soon followed by a merchant vessel and began to rescue people from the most vulnerable boats.



In the early morning of Easter Sunday the MOAS aircraft began its patrol, spotting vessels previously unseen. The Phoenix distributed life jackets to one small wooden boat and immediately headed to a severely deflated rubber boat nearby to assist a SAR NGO in an incredibly delicate rescue where people were already in the water, deploying both RHIBs (rigid hulled inflatable boats), several inflatables and yet more life jackets.

Despite desperate efforts by the crews of both NGOs and the safe rescue of approximately 100 people, at least seven people lost their lives, including one boy of around eight years old. All seven casualties were taken on the Phoenix, before the MOAS crew headed back to the ongoing rescues to continue to assist.

By this time the MOAS crew had been working without rest for over 40 hours and the Phoenix was at maximum capacity, with a total of 453 people on board, among them 15 pregnant women and several very young infants, some as young as 14 days old.

Help had arrived in many different forms: NGO vessels, merchant and fishing vessels were ready to assist in the desperate situation. Through the next hours the Phoenix continued to assist as people from boat after boat were transferred onto safer vessels. With the swell still growing, the rescues became more challenging, particularly as people were assisted onto a large fishing vessel, having to scale the sides in dangerous conditions.

The solidarity demonstrated by all present over the weekend saved many lives. The efforts and dedication of all those involved can be credited for



the mitigation of a significant loss of human life this weekend.

Following many more hours of tireless work among everyone at the scene, rescues finally came to a close. In total, around 1,800 people were rescued or assisted by MOAS on Easter weekend 2017, while the total number of people rescued across the weekend has been estimated to be around 8,000.

*I don't know how we didn't get any fatalities that night. Some people on board have said it's a miracle. I'm not sure about that, but what I do know is how much of a testament it is to our team. They were relentless in their efforts to save each and every person around us. Their determination is what kept these people alive. I'm proud to be able to say I'm on that team. No one was going to die that day, they just weren't going to allow it if they possibly could.*

” Annie,  
Paramedic



MOAS X Change 2017

# Safe and Legal Routes

Since 2014, MOAS has campaigned for reform of Europe's border control policy, advocating for the prioritisation of human lives and dignity. In April 2017 we explored safe and legal alternatives to the maritime migration route in an international forum.

On 27th of March, MOAS hosted the second edition of 'MOAS X Change', a forum dedicated to exploring the migration phenomenon. For 2017's event, experts in the field of migration discussed Humanitarian Corridors and other safe and legal alternatives to the deadly maritime route. The debate was divided across two panel sittings; 'The Policy & Political Environment Surrounding Migration in 2017' and 'Humanitarian Corridors and the Role of Civil Society.'

Highlights from the event included Alganesh Fessaha using the testimony of the refugees she works with to foreground how crucial humanitarian corridors are in preventing people from dying in the desert and in the sea, while the President of Malta called for a global spirit of political will to ensure that humanitarian corridors are implemented.

## Launch of



Cesare Giacomo Zucconi outlined the Community of Sant Egidio's experience of creating humanitarian corridors, and the willingness of Italian civil society response in welcoming and hosting their beneficiaries.

Oliverio Forti of Caritas Italy highlighted that while humanitarian corridors are not the overall solution they send a message to governments that EU and global migration policies must change. Jeff Crisp of the Refugee Studies Centre encouraged the international community to look back on previous successful humanitarian corridor initiatives, including the Vietnam crisis, to use the lessons learnt to craft new advocacy strategies, while in a video message Mario Giro,

mission and stressed the leading role Italy has played in the current humanitarian crisis by rescuing and welcoming migrants and refugees.

The event also marked the official launch of a new migration research and information platform, Xchange Foundation, and a tour of MOAS' vessel, the Phoenix, ahead of its mission launch in April. Kahin Ismail, UNHCR Representative in Malta said, ***"We need to focus on the most vulnerable individuals but also to open up these [legal] avenues and replicate them where we can in examples and practices that worked elsewhere in the world. We also need to encourage governments to open up these avenues because there is resistance, due to the "unknown factor". If you show some [positive] examples, maybe this will encourage countries and communities to accept these people."***

***"Safe and legal routes are no longer a dream. They are an implementable reality and the logical next step to mitigate the unnecessary and devastating loss of life we are constantly witnessing at sea. As we enter our fourth year on the front lines of the maritime crisis addressing its devastating effects, the time to enact Humanitarian Corridors is now"***, said MOAS Co-Founder and Director Regina Catrambone.

Italian Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, stated his conviction that humanitarian corridors 'shall become a humanitarian practice'.

Dr Simon Busuttil, Leader of the Opposition of Malta concluded the event by stressing the need for governments to empower civil society to continue its underestimated efforts in this field.

The Dutch Ambassador in Malta, Joop Nijssen, took the floor to stress the urgent need for long-term EU policies to fight against growing populism, concerns and fear. Soon after, the Italian Ambassador in Malta, Giovanni Umberto De Vito, expressed his support for our upcoming



You can listen to a podcast of X Change 2017 at

[www.moas.eu/moas-x-change-2017-2/](http://www.moas.eu/moas-x-change-2017-2/)



# Nobody Decides to Be a

# REFUGEE

What makes people leave their homes, friends and family to risk their lives trying to reach Europe? MOAS Director Regina Catrambone reflects on the reasons for migration, and the importance of empathy.

In one week alone in 2017, around 12,000 people disembarked on Italian shores after being rescued by 22 ships, most of which were run by NGOs operating at sea to assist and rescue an unprecedented number of people travelling on overcrowded, unsafe vessels.

Among them was a baby born during the crossing who did not survive. Despite their best efforts, rescuers were powerless and his small lifeless body arrived in Pozzalo on board the Italian Navy ship, Foscari.

Faced with such a significant migration phenomenon, many politicians called for the closing of ports to any rescue vessels not flying the Italian flag.

The current situation is critical and its extent cannot be denied. Far from being an unforeseen emergency, this has been a daily routine for years.



The people rescued at sea don't arrive in Europe on vacation or for amusement. They arrive after surviving hellish journeys among the desert and human rights violations in Libyan prisons.

Preventing them from disembarking in Europe would mean protracting their agony.

It means increasing the amount of time people spend on board the NGOs vessels and postponing their long-awaited arrival on the mainland, which is the starting point of a new life.

Unaware of what they will face, confronted by a precarious welcoming and little integration, those who are rescued at sea try their best to escape their awful memories, and instead focus all energy on beginning a new life.

I wonder if policy-makers focus on this.

I wonder if the well-being, safety and security of those rescued is considered a priority.

Migration is too often viewed from 'our' perspective of privileged people who are born in the right part of the world. We rarely consider it from 'their' perspective, of people fleeing unspeakable horrors.

The general approach towards migration too often ignores that migration has a tragic and human dimension and focuses instead on figures, and a projected mass of people 'invading' our territory and stealing our possessions.

Nevertheless, this approach that focuses on opposition destroys empathy. We end up forgetting that those arriving in Europe after journeys of hope are victims, and that their journey is not a choice, but the only option left in order to survive.

Nobody decides to become a refugee.

Nobody decides to flee their homeland to start a brutal journey.

Nobody, thus, should forget the suffering of those who have lost everything except their life and hope.



## X Change: Central Mediterranean Route 2017

In 2017, Xchange – MOAS' sister organisation focusing on migration data and research – joined the MOAS crew on board the Phoenix to conduct a ground-breaking survey. Over a two-month period between May and July, the Xchange team examined the most active and deadly major migratory route into Europe: the Central Mediterranean.

First hand qualitative data for the report was collected by Xchange while accompanying during four of its search and rescue missions on board the Phoenix. The respondents were those rescued by MOAS, and were interviewed before disembarkation. All our respondents had restricted access to regular legal routes to Europe and had therefore lacked the ability to migrate safely and regularly, instead using dangerous smuggling networks. Overall, the survey sample consisted of 117 people of various nationalities (108 men and nine women), most of whom came from the African continent. The most represented countries of origin were Sudan, Nigeria, Gambia and Bangladesh. Most respondents (84%) were pushed to leave due to poverty and economic instability, seeking to improve their own and their families' lives.

The liberalisation of the human smuggling market in Libya has allowed established Libyan human smugglers, armed groups and militias to internationalise their networks, drawing in migrants from across the African continent and beyond. As our data demonstrates, the most dangerous country location was Libya and its borders. Many respondents spent long periods of time within Libya, ranging from 11 days and four years to three months.

"Hotspots" for abuse were located primarily in pre-departure coastal cities Sabratha and Zawiya, as well as the capital, Tripoli. Niger (Agadez), as the most transited hub before entering Libya, was the second most dangerous location. Following this, most incidents outside Libya and Niger were recorded in hubs in Algeria, Chad, Mali, Burkina Faso, Sudan, and Egypt. Our Central Mediterranean Report contains quotes from respondents about the abuse they faced:

*While I was kidnapped and take to garage, I saw how smugglers set fire to a woman and killed her. I witnessed a migrant trying to escape through a window which prompted the captors to shoot him dead, another was tortured using rocks and electricity.*

” Aziz, Sudan,  
incident location Bani Walid (Libya)

Regardless of which route was taken, or the duration of the journey, respondents faced a continuum of violence and exploitation at the hands of smugglers, government officials, gangs, insurgent groups, and citizens. Our respondents to the survey experienced a multitude of human rights abuses, including detention and extortion, physical abuse, rape, robbery, and forced labour; they were kidnapped and held for ransom, and many were tortured to extort money from their families; they constantly witnessed the dehumanisation and deaths of other migrants, and they were frequently detained in intolerable and inhumane conditions in prisons and detention centres.

**XCHANGE**  
RESEARCH ON MIGRATION



On their journeys, they faced harsh travelling environments in the desert which for many resulted in medical complications from dehydration, exhaustion, lack of food, and poor hygiene. Interviewees frequently spoke of other migrants on their journey who were taken away and “never came back”. These migrants might have managed to escape, or they may have been trafficked, lost in the desert, or left for dead.



You can read the full survey at  
[xchange.org/reports/cmsurvey.html](https://xchange.org/reports/cmsurvey.html)



## UNHCR: **Inside the Belly of the Phoenix**

In order to understand the reality of Search and Rescue at sea, Fabrizio Ellul of UNHCR Malta spent a week with the MOAS crew on board the Phoenix. Here, in an article originally published in [Moving Forward - UNHCR Malta Magazine 2018](#), he reflects on his experience on board.

Inside the Phoenix nothing is ever still. The 40-metre drone equipped ship is in constant motion, depending on the size and strength of the waves that rock the vessel. The low, deep, monotonous humming of the engine feels like you are inside the belly of the beast.

Life on board the Phoenix is challenging. It requires courage and stamina to make it through the voyage without breaking down. Living space consists of small compartments. Brushing your teeth and taking a shower require holding handles to prevent falls. Water fluctuates from cold to hot in an instant. Standing on deck is risky – you can be swept away by a wave to an almost certain death. Piracy is a reality. Lack of sleep is the norm.

I had the privilege of spending one week onboard the Phoenix as a guest of the Migrant Offshore Aid



© UNHCR/Giuseppe Carotenuto

Station (MOAS), a private Malta-based organisation that engages in search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean. During that week, I witnessed 146 men, women and children being rescued from the dangerous Mediterranean crossing that they had made in search of a better life.

From this moving experience, I came away with a deep admiration for the professionalism of the MOAS team members and the pride they take in saving lives. In their rescue efforts they have witnessed suffering

and death first hand – including the sight of those children who did not survive the journey. For this they will always have my deepest and most sincere respect.

The Phoenix is a mechanical beast whose job it is to rescue the many victims of conflict, persecution, and poverty, whose only available route very often involves unscrupulous smugglers who place them at great risk, on a dangerous journey in unsafe boats. Moved by the Lampedusa tragedy in 2013 in



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© UNHCR/Giuseppe Carotenuto

which 366 people died at sea, Chris and Regina Catrambone founded MOAS in 2014, with their own personal funds. They purchased a rundown ship in Virginia which needed six months of repairs to be transformed into a seaworthy craft. The Phoenix rose, because that is what a Phoenix is meant to do – rise from the ashes.

The Phoenix was the first private rescue vessel to operate in the Mediterranean in 2014. The MOAS story is well documented on its website ([www.moas.eu](http://www.moas.eu)) which also acts as a platform to raise funds (MOAS operations cost around 1 million Euro each month). “We are on the frontline,” notes Franco Potenza, the Director of Operations with 35 years of experience in the Italian Navy.

Indeed, experience is crucial for such operations. Some of the crew onboard the Phoenix have worked for decades with the Maltese, Italian, and



© UNHCR/Giuseppe Carotenuto



US military forces. Others have vast experience in private industry, working on oil rigs and trawlers. From the captain to the steward, everyone's role is crucial for the success of the operations.

*When we started, everyone thought it was impossible. I thought that it couldn't be done.*

” Marco Cauchi,  
Director of the MOAS Search  
and Rescue Operations

Mimmo, as he is affectionately known by the crew, is a Maltese national who makes the first contact with the refugees and migrants during rescue operations. He has been directly involved in the rescue of over 25,000 people since 2014. His job is to drive the rescue RIB (rigid inflatable boat) and approach the distressed boat, providing life jackets and then taking them onboard, usually in waves of 25.

***“Some people might be fortunate to have the chance to save one life in their lifetime; I do it all the time.”*** says Mimmo proudly.



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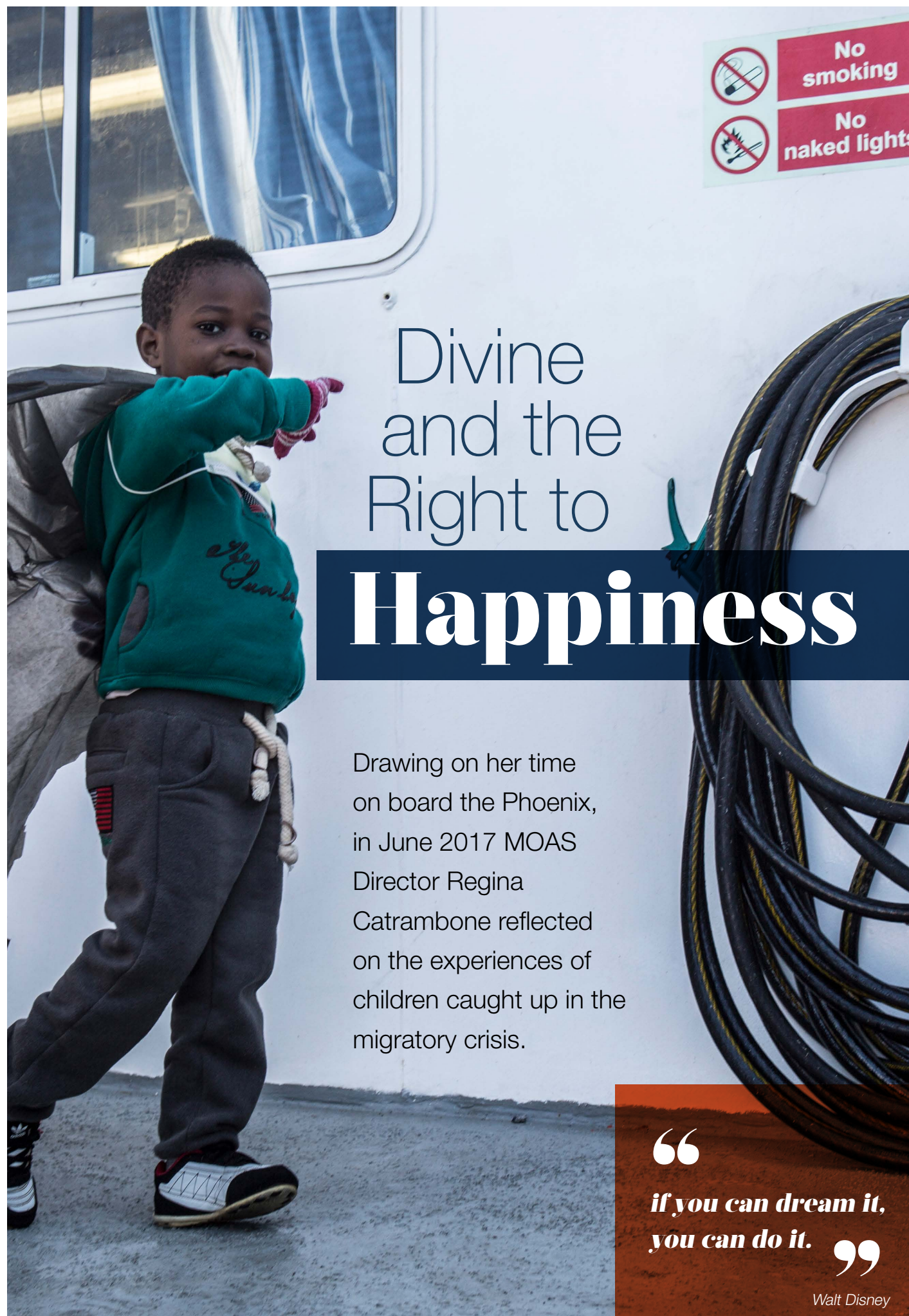
© UNHCR/Giuseppe Carotenuto

One evening I noticed Mimmo listening to a recording of one of his three children. He explained that the most touching and difficult moments in this job are those seeing children in such distress. “What is the difference between my children and these children?” he asks. “You try to give them that extra bit of love.”

As the Phoenix landed in Pozzallo near the southern tip of Sicily to disembark those it had rescued – including a mother and a child – I reflected on the extreme poles of humanity – the cruelty but also the abundance of love. And it was on the Phoenix that I saw these two faces of humanity fiercely collide together during a two hour rescue operation.

It is only fitting that the Phoenix's second life is dedicated to saving the lives of thousands in need at sea.





# Divine and the Right to Happiness

Drawing on her time on board the Phoenix, in June 2017 MOAS Director Regina Catrambone reflected on the experiences of children caught up in the migratory crisis.

“  
*if you can dream it,  
you can do it.*”

Walt Disney

**“A dream is a wish that your heart makes”...**

I used to sing this song as a child, I sang it to my daughter and still sing it on board to all the children we rescue.

This is Divine. Divine comes from Nigeria and he survived a terrible journey at sea on a boat that to him looked “bad, but not scary”. He was travelling with his mum and was rescued by the MOAS crew, whose members tried everything in their power to assist those on board.

Divine can fly and when he grows up, he wants to be like Superman to save his mum and whoever else is in a desperate situation like him. After being brought on board, he smiled and entertained everyone by imitating his favourite characters: he only needs a plastic bag and a small mask to become a superhero.

His smile and his naïve, childlike dreams alone would be enough for us to stay out at sea in order to prevent the smiles and dreams of other children like him being lost to the sea, only because they were born in places where peace and happiness are distant dreams.

Even if we often forget it, peace is a goal to achieve and a status quo to safeguard. Treaties, agreements, articles of national constitutions have been devoted to preventing the nightmare of war.

On the other hand, happiness appears to be a privilege, almost a luxury or something superfluous. It seems to be the exclusive prerogative of those who are born in the right place at the right time. Political instability, unemployment, corruption and issues of health play an important role in contributing to one's happiness - or lack of it.

On July 19th 2011 the UN General Assembly approved a resolution entitled “Happiness: Towards a holistic approach to development” and referred to the principles expressed in the Charter of the United Nations to promote economic development and social well-being for all peoples. The following year, the International Day of Happiness was proclaimed.

With a view to improving the general situation, it was decided to acknowledge “the pursuit of happiness

as a fundamental human right”, and Member States were invited to submit their own proposals to recognize and value the importance of happiness and well-being as guiding principles of national policies.

But, how can we apply this right to the current migratory crisis and casualties at sea, that often wipe out the lives of people wishing a better life? How can we accept that millions of children at a global level are denied the right to a happy childhood, while it is granted to others because they live in the right place at the right moment?

You do not have to be a child to dream and be happy. It is enough to live in peace, safe from violence, far from bombs, away from persecution. It is enough to not fear starvation, or dying because you don't have enough water. It is enough to not be forced to see your beloved ones killed or your house burning. It is impossible to consider our happiness a right, and the happiness of the others a negligible chance.

From the 40,000 people rescued and assisted by MOAS since its first SAR mission in 2014 we have heard stories of dreams and expectations, as well as the simple desire to be happy. To me this desire is no less important than the right to life itself.

Divine and his dream of being a superhero, despite having survived a hellish journey crossing the desert, Libya and the sea, gives me hope and I still believe in a fairer future. No child should be worried about his mother's life, but his candid desire to save her and others like her gives all of us at MOAS motivation to continue to support the most vulnerable in our society.

If we really want to implement the UN Resolution, we need both an individual and common commitment to restore the value of happiness at personal and social level.

None of us can be truly happy if just one person is trapped in a Libyan jail where the rule of law does not exist. None of us can be genuinely happy if adults or children are forced to board unsafe vessels in search of a better life.



## Become MOAS Patrons

In February 2017, MOAS was delighted to announce that Coldplay were becoming our first official patrons, supporting our humanitarian efforts as well as our campaign for the creation of safe and legal routes for migrants and refugees.

“ Every year, MOAS rescue thousands of people who risk death at sea while searching for a better life. But for an accident of geography, those people could be us and we could be them. For this reason, we’re proud to support MOAS’ life-saving work ”

Chris Martin



Shortly after announcing their patronage, in February Coldplay released a fundraising film entitled ‘Rescue Humanity’, which features Chris Martin singing an a cappella version of Coldplay’s ‘Don’t Panic’ over real footage from a MOAS rescue, filmed by artist Adam Broomberg. The film aims to give the viewer an immersive experience of a rescue and show the fear, hope and anguish experienced by the refugees and migrants MOAS rescue. It can be viewed on our website at [www.moas.eu/patrons](http://www.moas.eu/patrons).

In April, Coldplay and MOAS also collaborated on the creation of the ‘I AM YOU’ t-shirt, which is available for purchase from Coldplay’s online store. In July, a new single was released entitled **A L I E N S**, for which all proceeds are generously donated to MOAS.

*Coldplay’s music is a wakeup call to the world, bringing awareness to the plight of migrants and refugees. We need new and creative ways to educate people of the realities and pain that they have been through. Without empathy, we are lost*

” says Co-Founder Christopher Catrambone



You can listen to **A L I E N S** on Youtube.

As countless humanitarian crises continue around the world, MOAS and Coldplay believe it is more important than ever to stand up and support those most vulnerable among us.



# ART and MOAS

Art can be an incredibly powerful means to share ideas, inspire empathy, and forge connections between people. Throughout 2017, the humanitarian crisis in the Mediterranean inspired artists to support our work. Here we reflect on the various ways artists have engaged with us, how they have approached the subject of forced migration, and what this has meant to our organisation.



## ART AS PROTEST

Beyond art shown in more traditional spaces, MOAS has also been supported by artists who use their work as a form of protest. GOIN, a French street artist who uses the urban landscape as a backdrop for his political commentary, supported MOAS through the proceeds of a piece entitled 'Lady Refugee', in which he combined religious imagery with symbols of the crisis in the Mediterranean; a female refugee wearing a life jacket and a crown of barbed wire releases a dove of peace from her hands.

The original work was created in Grenoble, where its position in such a public space acted to bring the humanitarian crisis in the Mediterranean to the streets and daily lives of the people of the city, implying that the crisis is something that everyone should know - and care - about, using powerful imagery to protest against indifference.

## ART AS ADVOCACY

Through May to October, MOAS collaborated with the Tunisian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in their project 'The Absence of Paths'.

'The Absence of Paths' took the form of three 'checkpoints' dotted around Venice, from which visitors could apply for and be issued with a 'Freesa'. These faux travel documents – 'Free Visas' – were universal human passports which allow safe passage globally.

They were distributed from the checkpoints by Tunisian nationals who one day hoped to migrate themselves, and who were only allowed to stay temporarily in Italy thanks to the work visas they have been granted for the Biennale.

In imaging a world in which everyone can move, the project highlighted the ways in which people are prevented from legally migrating because of where they were born, even if they have no choice but to flee their homes and countries.



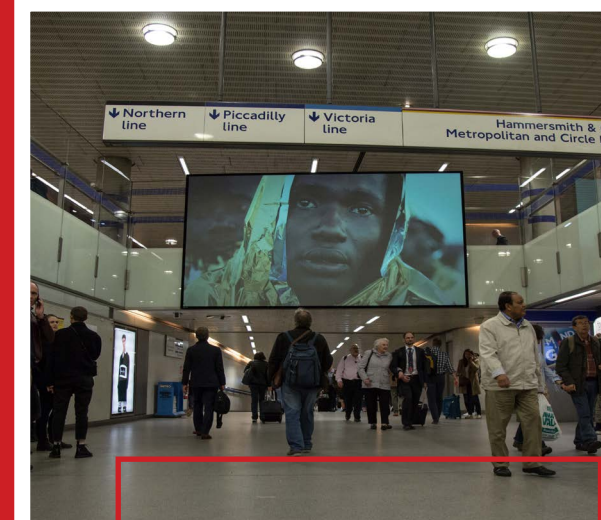
## ART AS INTERVENTION

In September 2017, Art on the Underground unveiled a new 12 minute film by renowned artists Broomberg and Chanarin at King's Cross St Pancras Station, London.

The film, *The Bureaucracy of Angels*, records the demolition of 100 migrant boats in Sicily and included footage shot by the artists onboard during MOAS rescue missions.

The film is narrated by the hydraulic jaws of the digger used to destroy the boats. It appears in the narrow corridors of the boat yard, on the open sea and in the midst of a rescue operation off the coast of Libya, as a Cantastoria or 'singing storyteller' recounting a Sicilian ballad about immigration to and from the territory over the last 150 years.

Broomberg and Chanarin have a long history of working in war-torn countries and areas of conflict. Their research on migration and movements of people led them to visit Sicily a number of times, where migrants arrive from perilous journeys across the Mediterranean.



*Placing a film into such an environment is challenging. Our goal was to gently disrupt the flow of people sleep-walking to work and back; confronting commuters with a very different kind of journey.*

” Broomberg and Chanarin





# MASS TRAGEDY

## in the Mediterranean

On 24th May 2017 the MOAS crews undertook one of the most challenging and harrowing rescues they had ever experienced. This is how that day unfolded.

The Phoenix departed Malta on the 23rd May 2017 fully stocked and crewed, heading towards our area of operations in the international waters north of Libya. On board were the MOAS SAR crew, the medical team, a Getty photographer, the MOAS operations team and Christopher Catrambone, MOAS' Co-Founder.

By the early morning of 24th May 2017, two large wooden boats had been spotted in distress by the MOAS SAR aircraft, and MOAS was tasked to proceed toward them.

The MOAS RHIBs (rigid hulled inflatable boats) were deployed from the Phoenix to

begin a rescue on a dangerously overcrowded wooden boat with approximately 750 people on board.

As the distribution of life jackets was completed, a sudden movement of the desperate people on board destabilised the boat, causing it to list heavily to one side. Around 400 people were thrown into the water, leaving hundreds still locked in the hull below deck.

In what had become a race for life, MOAS issued a MAYDAY to authorities and, joined in its efforts by a Spanish SAR aircraft, an Italian Coast Guard vessel and two merchant ships, began to desperately pull people from the water.

Meanwhile, two additional wooden boats had arrived in the area, rapidly increasing the number of people in need of assistance to around 1,500.

Thanks to the joint and coordinated efforts of all assets in the area, by late morning all survivors had been rescued from the water, and from the hold of the wooden boat once the locked trapdoor had been forced open. A total of 604 survivors were brought aboard the Phoenix, with approximately 81 having been taken on board a tug boat.

At this point the recovery operation for casualties began, with the Phoenix eventually embarking 32 bodies from the sea, including those of seven children, 14 women and 12 men. Many survivors were also in a critical state, with a nine-month pregnant woman (along with two family members), a man with two broken legs and another man with fractures being medevaced off the Phoenix by the Italian Military.

With exhausted and traumatised survivors needing medical care, sustenance and support, the importance of MOAS' role did not end when the rescues were over. Medical attention and psycho-social support were given to those on board as night fell. Despite the tireless efforts of the MOAS post rescue care team, one man eventually died of complications.

The next morning, the Phoenix headed north with its 598 survivors and 33 deceased on board, after another exhausting and unprecedented few days on the world's deadliest border crossing.

MOAS continues to call for the creation of the safe and legal alternatives so that needless tragedies like this can become a thing of the past.







# Death Cannot Be Measured by Numbers

As the MOAS crews continued their life-saving work, 2017 saw a growing tide of public hostility towards NGOs involved in Search and Rescue (SAR). As the year went on and the opposition mounted, it became increasingly difficult to continue our work.

**In May 2017, in response to the public criticism, MOAS Director Regina Catrambone published this piece.**

For a while now social media and the press have been busy with fake news attacking NGOs saving lives at sea and those who defend them.

The negative spotlight on NGOs operating at sea casts a dark shadow on their activities due to two main accusations: contacts or collusion with smugglers who force people to cross the sea in atrocious conditions, and unclear private funds. In light of this it is important that we clarify our truth to the public.

MOAS was created by my family in order to act according to our capacities and talents to mitigate the ongoing catastrophe at sea. Our hearts were moved and we decided to take action, rather than closing an eye to what was happening on our doorstep. If the international community had made rescuing people in distress at sea its priority, or if other humanitarian organisations had already been out at sea, our presence would have been redundant.

But this was not the case and we reacted with bravery and entrepreneurial spirit to inaction and indifference.

MOAS was initially conceived in the heart of my family, but the idea was then assessed by experts in the field of SAR at sea and became a feasible project.

Before we registered MOAS and started our rescue missions, we went through different stages, from searching for a vessel that met our requirements to refurbishing it in order to use drones. We also installed a clinic and hired a professional crew allowing us to rescue thousands of desperate people who would have died without our presence.

Since its first SAR mission, MOAS has rescued and assisted over 40,000 people.

But death cannot be measured by numbers. Neither can life.

Every person dying at sea is an unnecessary casualty, a life we could have safeguarded. In light of the almost forgotten kindness and humanity that people find on the Phoenix, we will not surrender to criticism and slanders.

Last but not least, it is worth remembering that rescuing people at sea is not an option to be assessed according to convenience. It is an obligation embedded in International Law, namely in the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNLCOS).

The fatal route across the Central Mediterranean has been in use for a long time, and has seen a dramatic increase in the number of crossings since 2014. Nevertheless, we are forced to keep using an emergency and disaster-relief approach.

NGOs should not have to be out at sea to rescue migrants in distress.

We should have to not wait for private citizens or humanitarian organisations to act in order to eradicate the current crisis at sea.



# CREW Reflections

In honour of World Humanitarian Day and MOAS' third anniversary, we sat down with the MOAS crew to discuss their experiences. We asked them to think about how they felt on their first mission and how they felt three years on, the moments and people that stayed with them, and how it felt to watch the people they have rescued disembark and begin a new life.

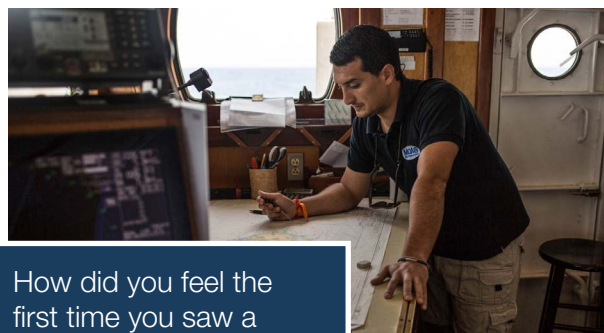


How did you feel on your first mission with MOAS?

**Paul,**  
Rescue Swimmer

Excited and nervous, all rolled into one. Excitement up until the point you know you've got to do something, and all of a sudden it becomes very real.

”

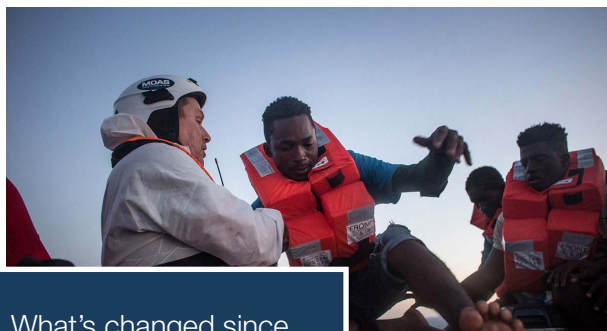


How did you feel the first time you saw a vessel in distress?

**Beppe,**  
Chief Officer

I was just surprised about how unseaworthy the vessel was itself. How the people were crammed into one very small space. You could see the distress in their faces. The way they screamed - I still remember the screams of the women, and the crying of the children.

”

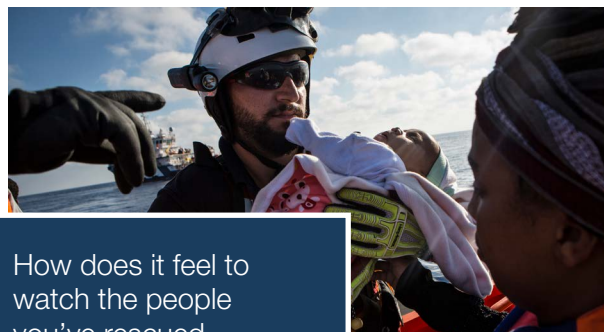


What's changed since your first rescue?

**John,**  
SAR Officer

At the beginning they were large wooden boats. After two years, it changed to rubber dinghies, which were getting more people on board: from a 120 person average, it went up to 130 to 140. The record number I have rescued from one rubber dinghy was 175.

”



How does it feel to watch the people you've rescued disembark?

**Joey,**  
Able Seaman

You have a sense of satisfaction that they've actually made it out alive, but you also have that lingering thought: what happens now?

”

A MOAS Documentary

## FISHERS of MEN



On the 19th of June the documentary film **Fishers of Men** was screened for the first time, as part of the Valletta Film Festival.

Fishers of Men is a documentary film that follows our founders, Regina and Christopher Catrambone, as they embark on the MOAS journey and gives an inside view into the work of the NGO throughout our time at sea. In it the crew reflect further on their experiences at sea.

You can watch the documentary online at  
[www.fishersofmenfilm.com](http://www.fishersofmenfilm.com)



# A NEW LIFE:

## Amira & Her Children

Amira and her two daughters, Ayesha and Aliah, from Sudan, were rescued by MOAS in 2016. One year later, we spoke with them to find out how they were, and how their new life in Italy was going.

**Ayesha:**

*Thank you to all of you who work there and who have helped us. School is going well, we're on holiday for now. I remember the people who rescued us, who were on the ship, they were very nice. I'd like to say thank you for your help.*

### **How is everything going?**

**Amira:** "We are good because of what you did for us! I wanted to say hello to all of you, you have been so important for us! Thanks to you we are alive. Our new life in Italy is good: the kids are very happy, they play, they are never anxious and they are going to school."

### **How did you feel during the rescue?**

**Amira:** "The rescue moment was something you can't forget, really, even the kids didn't forget it. I swear, the kids thought that it was the Libyan Coast guard and that they would take us back to Libya, to prison... so I told them: these are not Libyan boats, these are the rescue team from Europe! And they were no longer afraid."

### **Is there anything you would like to say to the people who rescued you?**

**Amira:** "May peace be upon them. I really want to thank them! Our situation was very bad before they rescued us...the boat was about to sink! They saved our lives, I thank them a lot."



# Leaving the Mediterranean

In August, the situation in the Mediterranean made it increasingly difficult for SAR NGOs to operate. Here, we reflect on our decision to shift operations in response to an urgent humanitarian crisis unfolding on the other side of the world.



As 2017 progressed, the geopolitical situation in Europe began to change, with rhetoric toward migration organisations becoming filled with baseless accusations and theories of conspiracy. This narrative played into a far-right agenda and the SAR environment became less and less permissive.

Throughout this challenging period MOAS consistently complied with the wishes of the relevant authorities and voluntarily agreed to sign a regulatory code of conduct with the Italian authorities to satisfy concerns over security. However, increased prioritising of border control over human life eventually led MOAS to question our presence in the Mediterranean. We knew that we could not become part of a mechanism where there was no guarantee of safe harbour for those being assisted and rescued at sea.

At the same time, another crisis was evolving in Southeast Asia. Since our mission in the Bay of Bengal in 2015/2016, MOAS had continued to monitor the persecution of the Rohingya Muslim minority of Myanmar. In August of 2017, a surge in extreme violence towards the community began to drive up to 20,000 people per day across the border into neighbouring Bangladesh.

With a history in the area and a mandate to reduce the suffering of those risking their lives in search of safety, MOAS made the decision to shift our operational focus towards Bangladesh. As a privately funded, civil society organisation MOAS has a duty to invest its resources wherever we think they will have most impact in supporting underserved, vulnerable communities, and so our mission in Bangladesh was launched with our first teams arriving on the ground by 3rd September 2017.

Christopher Catrambone, MOAS' Co-Founder, led the Operations and Logistics teams in the new mission, assessing the primary humanitarian needs among the refugee population, establishing ground networks throughout the region, and building the MOAS Aid Stations, from where vital medical care is provided.





# Far from “Our Sea”, but Close to Our Heart

**In September 2017, MOAS spoke out on the decision to move operations to South East Asia. In a region spanning between Myanmar and Bangladesh, the Rohingya, a little-known Muslim minority, was trying to survive amid hardship and violence, with borders acting once again as a barrier between safety and persecution.**

Our Rohingya brothers and sisters are from Rakhine State in the North of Myanmar. An estimated 1.1 million Rohingya are currently living in Myanmar, and since 1982 they have been denied citizenship. Being stateless and a target of persecution, their access to the health and education system is limited and they are exposed to arbitrary detention and arrests as well as forced labour.

Since August 2017, around 415,000 children, women and men have crossed the border to Bangladesh to seek sanctuary, and their living conditions are dire. Scared, hungry, thirsty and prevented from accessing basic medical care they settled in an area surrounding Cox's Bazar. In the same month, UNHCR deployed resources to assist a population which is often addressed as “one of the most persecuted around the world”, by providing tents and first-aid assistance. Following the latest developments in the

Mediterranean and Pope Francis' appeal, calling on the entire world to end violence against our Muslim brothers and sisters, at MOAS we decided to reposition our vessel, the Phoenix, which has become a symbol of universal brotherhood and hope to South-East Asia. On the third anniversary since our first Search and Rescue (SAR) mission, we decided once again to choose courage over fear; once again, Pope Francis' words gave us further motivation to react.

MOAS decided to provide humanitarian and medical aid and assistance in the field to help the Rohingya.

In 2015 we had already carried out research in the region; in May 2016 we published a report concerning the Rohingya's situation in Rakhine State and addressing the main problems of a minority which is deprived even of citizenship. Finally, in September

2017 MOAS decided to relocate to a region which is far from “our sea”; yet suffering and humanity have no borders, and can overcome any kind of geographic barriers and distance.

We want to keep hope alive where it is most needed while honouring our humanitarian principles.

It is fundamental to defend victims of abuse and violence and become a voice for the voiceless. We all share the same Earth and we cannot conceive of freedom as a private matter or think that someone else's pain has no consequences for the rest of us. A world which is unfair to some of its children is unfair to all, and when human rights and dignity are not respected we should all be filled with indignation. Having been born in the “right part” of the world, we have the duty to defend the freedom and life of those experiencing unspeakable suffering.

Despite our well-being and peace in our homeland, we should never turn a blind eye to such a grim reality. They should not become an argument for being indifferent to people's suffering. In our race against time to carry out our daily activities we should find the time to run the marathon of hope and be ready to react quickly to the challenges of the present world.

We should cultivate the delicate seeds of freedom, justice, and dialogue among religions, and commit ourselves on a daily basis to building a culture of human rights, respect and empathy, allowing us to overcome all differences.





Having arrived in Bangladesh on 3rd September, the MOAS team quickly realised that the most pressing need among Rohingya refugees was access to life-saving healthcare. In response, MOAS established two primary health centres, known as ‘Aid Stations’, where both Rohingya refugees and the local Bangladeshi population can access the services they need.

The first Aid Station was launched on the 14th October in the fishing community of Shamlapur, while the second, near the remote camp of Unchiprang, was launched on 10th November. The Aid Stations can see up to 300 patients a day and offer comprehensive services from triage to pharmacy, and are each staffed by a team of medics, pharmacists, cultural mediators and logistics personnel.

The Aid Station is made up of four main areas which serve different functions within the health centre: the waiting area, Tent 1, Tent 2 and the pharmacy.

A shaded waiting area with chairs, drinking water and ventilation serves as a waiting room. Once a patient has been assessed at triage, the ‘red’ patients (most urgent cases) are taken straight through to Tent 1 to see a doctor. Orange and green patients are given a number (depending on arrival and severity of complaint) and made comfortable in the waiting area.

Once in Tent 1, patients are seen by a doctor who takes a detailed history and assesses their complaints. From here, the patient may be referred to any one of the other services MOAS provides.

Should patients require no further services, they may be referred to MOAS’ free pharmacy for treatments and medications. The doctors limit the number of days’ worth of medicines and instructs them to



## MOAS Aid Stations:

## HOW THEY WORK

return for top ups to facilitate regular monitoring by our medics.

If a doctor believes a patient requires additional care they will be referred to Tent 2, where they may

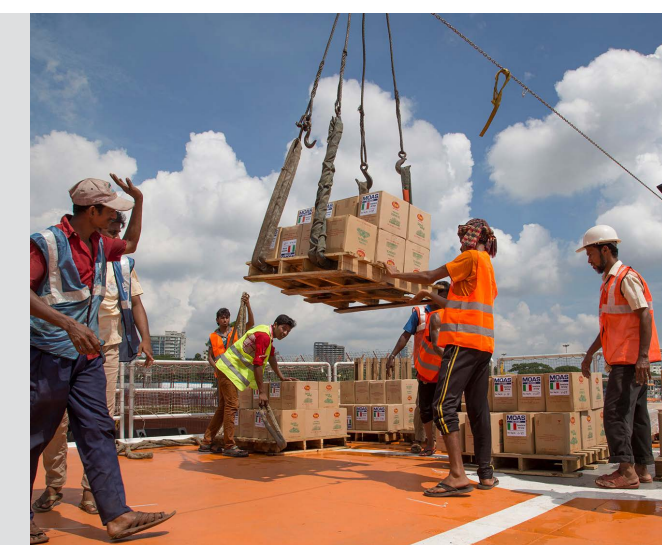
access either MOAS’ recovery suite (for fluids, IV medications or monitoring), the maternity room, where they are seen by a midwife and an OBGYN, or our surgical area where a surgeon can perform minor surgeries and trauma treatments in-house.

Should a patient’s condition be deemed urgent, or deteriorate while on site, the MOAS ambulance is on hand to transfer to the local hospital, with which MOAS has an ongoing relationship. For cases of malnutrition – of which there are sadly many – MOAS refers patients to a specialist service available in the region, while suspected cases of communicable disease are brought to the attention of centralized health agencies and the civil surgeon for monitoring and epidemiological awareness.

In addition to these medical services, MOAS Aid Stations also act as a place of rest and reflection. Many children visit the Aid Station during the days, waiting in the shade, drinking the safe water, and waiting for school to start. They are central and vital places for the community, where both Bangladeshi and Rohingya people can be heard, supported, treated and referred.

## Phoenix Aid Deliveries

Following a three-week journey from Europe, on 1st October the Phoenix arrived in Bangladesh, marking the launch of MOAS’ mission in the region. The vessel, which has come to be recognised as an international symbol of hope for migrants and refugees, supported the mission and transported aid shipments into Bangladesh. Across the next few months the Phoenix delivered over 40 tonnes of food aid to Bangladesh, up to 50,000 desperately needed individual rations.



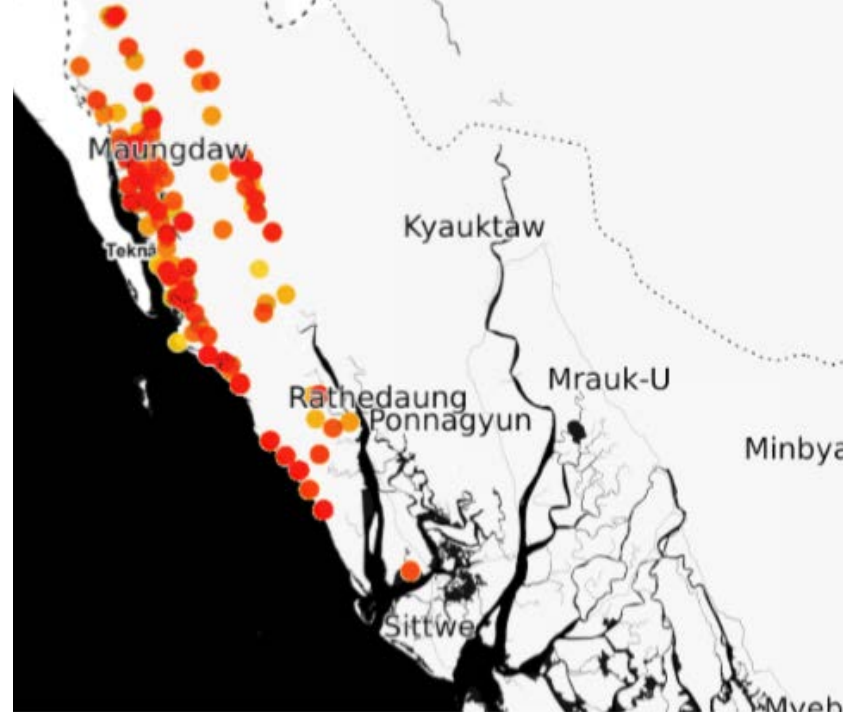


## X Change: Rohingya Survey 2017

As we moved our operations to Southeast Asia, our sister organisation Xchange conducted a survey on the experiences of Rohingya refugees seeking sanctuary in Bangladesh. Here is an insight into what they found.

In August 2017, a rapid mass migration of 600,000 Rohingya occurred from Myanmar to Bangladesh. The Xchange team sought to understand the journeys they had taken to reach safety, and to document the push factors that compelled them to leave. After conducting 1,360 surveys with Rohingya respondents between 15th September and 15th October, in seven different refugee camps in Cox's Bazar district, the team gained detailed insight into the types and extent of abuses the Rohingya were subject to that caused them to flee.

An overwhelming number of respondents (92%) either personally witnessed or directly experienced violence on or after 25 August. As such, there is strong evidence to suggest that violence targeting Rohingya communities has been both well-coordinated and systematic. In addition to this, the acts were usually committed by more than one group of perpetrators, almost always by the Myanmar military (96%), often in collaboration with civilian vigilante groups.



The most common category of incident reported in the survey was the destruction of property and mass-scale burning of villages (63%). By destroying Rohingya villages, perpetrators gave their inhabitants no choice but to flee. These attacks were often accompanied by indiscriminate heavy shooting (40%), resulting in mass fatalities and serious injuries. Other frequently recorded abuses were of a degrading and dehumanising nature, including sexual abuse committed against Rohingya women and girls (13%). These abuses acted to traumatise and create a culture of shame and stigma with an intent to break apart communities.

There were also multiple reports of the targeted murder of children and infants (5%). These reports appeared to demonstrate a total disregard for human life, as the security forces and civilian perpetrators stand accused of murdering babies and children by burning or drowning. The frequency with which such

*The military started fires in my village. They forcibly entered my house. They raped me and stabbed my husband in the stomach. My young child was taken away from me and thrown into the fire. When I started crying, they raped me again*

” Hala, 35,  
from Sein Hyin Pyar (Buthidaung)



incidents were reported may demonstrate an intent to eradicate younger generations.

The survey finished by asking if the respondents would consider returning to Myanmar in the future. Despite the atrocious incidents documented in this survey, 78% stated that they would willingly return if the situation improves; 16% had no desire to return; 6% would return unconditionally.

Though attitudes can change with time, these responses demonstrate that the Rohingya refugees would be open to returning to their homes if

conditions in Myanmar were to improve. The large number of respondents willing to return to Myanmar can, in part, be explained by the fact that there are very few opportunities for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. Generations of Rohingya refugees living in the camps following previous expulsions from Myanmar continue to live in poverty without access to adequate services and have limited mobility rights or opportunities for advancement.



You can read the full report at  
[xchange.org/reports/TheRohingyaSurvey2017.html](https://xchange.org/reports/TheRohingyaSurvey2017.html)





# Birth

## in the Midst of Crisis

When the MOAS medical team arrived in Bangladesh, we knew a focus on maternal health and paediatrics would be required. The refugee population is made up of 60% children, with over 55,000 pregnant and lactating women officially registered.

MOAS sees an average of 20 new pregnancy cases per week at each of our Aid Stations, most of whom have never seen a doctor for pre-natal care and advice, making each consultation uniquely challenging and delicate.

Deliveries in this context are not only made difficult by this lack of prenatal care but also by environmental factors. Incidences of violence while pregnant, lack of access to proper nutrition, and limited access to general healthcare are all vulnerability criteria when dealing with deliveries within refugee communities. It is for these many reasons that MOAS has invested widely in preparing to care for these women.

Based on this needs assessment, a separated maternity room exists in each MOAS Aid Station, providing privacy and dignity to the women and their families. These maternity rooms are serviced by a midwife and an OBGYN, meaning that women visiting any MOAS clinic receive specialist care from field professionals in as protected and caring an environment as possible.

On Sunday 12th November, our preparations were put to the test when the MOAS team delivered their first baby at the Shamlapur Aid Station. The baby was born to Nurunnahar and Shafiul, a Rohingya couple who were born in Bangladesh to refugee parents. They came to the Aid Station in the mid-



morning and the MOAS medical team sprang into action.

The family were monitored as labour progressed over the course of the coming hours. The MOAS Medical Lead was on hand to oversee treatment and assess the situation should Nurunnahar need to be transferred to the local hospital in the MOAS ambulance in case of complications. Thankfully, this was not needed and, through the diligent care and guidance of the MOAS medical team, a healthy baby boy was born to the happy couple at 1pm.

Shafiul, who works at a local shop in the Bazar, told us how relieved and delighted he was to see his newborn son and wife in perfect condition after delivery and how excited he is to introduce the new addition to the community.

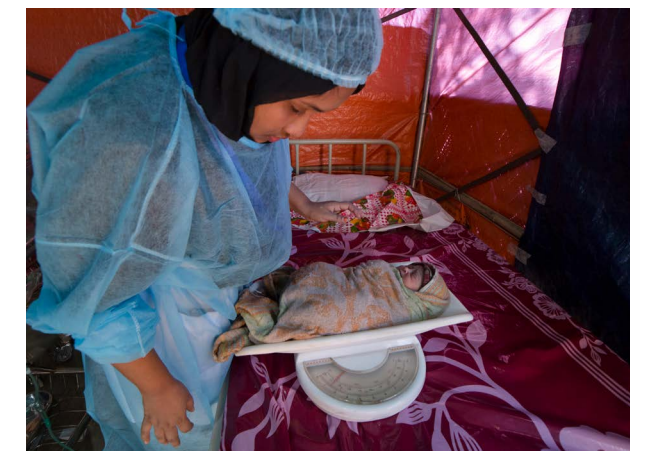
## A Christmas Baby

At 9am on 25th December, the MOAS team was overjoyed to welcome a healthy baby girl to the world. She was born to Ramida, a Rohingya refugee whose husband had been killed in Myanmar.

**As our Medical Director explained,**

*"The real aim of Christmas is not to say 'Oh, happy holidays, have a good time!' The real aim of Christmas is the nativity, the newborn, a new life. The thing we are trying to do here with MOAS is to give a new life - a new dignity - to all the people."*

As our work in 2017 drew to a close, our team were grateful that we could end the year with a new life and renewed commitment to our humanitarian work, and were reminded that none of it would be possible without the dedication and compassion of our donors and supporters.





# A Letter

## from Our Director to Millennials

Dear Millennials,

I am writing to you because you are the future and hope of this world and it feels like writing to my own daughter. I am writing to you because in a fast-changing world sometimes it is easy to get lost.

Since 2014, throughout our missions at sea with MOAS' crew, I have met many young boys and girls like you. So similar, but also so different. I have met thousands of adolescents, who had just become adults. Life has been less generous with them than with those of you who were born in the right part of the world. Most of the young people rescued at sea have been forced to become adults prematurely by the violence that has marked their body and soul. Nevertheless, they are not that different from you.

They dream of a peaceful life and the fulfilment of their dreams in the future, just like you. So, that's why I am writing to you, because you are often better than us, the adults, at putting yourselves in someone else's shoes.

*I have learned that a man has the right and obligation to look down at another man, only when that man needs help to get up from the ground*

” Gabriel García Marquez

The current fake reality we live in is often ephemeral and misleading, it is based on ostentation that makes us forget the value of small things. This outward image does not only permeate our daily life, but also reaches the homeland of most of the people we rescue at sea. No matter if they come from extremely poor areas in Africa and the Middle-East or war-torn regions, like Syria, when they talk about Europe, they all depict it in the same way: a rich and safe continent, granting human rights and a better future, as well as a place to study, to find a decent job and to build a family with no fear for their children.

However, we are not our bank accounts, we are not the cars we drive. Life cannot be measured by our belongings and possessions, that will end up possessing us instead, if we are not careful enough. The deeper sense of life and the intimate core of our humanity depends on our ability to serve those in pain and to share our success with them.

So, I ask myself and you: why don't we chose to use our talent to serve the most vulnerable part of our shared community? Why don't we spend our time and energy for a good cause instead of spending our money to buy pointless things, that do not grant happiness?

When my family and I started our adventure to create MOAS, we did it by following genuine values, by using talents and resources for those who had not been as lucky in life as us, and my daughter, who was 18 at that time, welcomed joyfully the idea of being at the forefront to save human lives.

Four years have gone by; four years of missions, that have led us far from home and often divided us even on holidays or celebrations. We have experienced sacrifices, physical and emotional

challenges alongside those who have worked with us. We have sailed against the tide with the ultimate goal to save people risking their lives to find a place of safety.

Undoubtedly, we have had ups and downs because sometimes we were tired, discouraged and without confidence. But, our reward after rescuing or treating a human being is an immense joy which erases worries or uncertainties. In fact, the real core of our humanity lies there: in giving a helping hand or a hug and in smiling to someone who has lost everything but hope.





## Canada

Sep 26th Toronto, Canada

6 Degrees Citizen Space: A Global  
Conversation on Citizenship and Inclusion

MOAS Director Regina Catrambone  
participated in the panel discussion focusing  
on 'Walls', in which she highlighted that the  
most difficult walls to overcome are often  
those within our minds. Among those on the  
panel were Ai Weiwei, artist, and Margaret  
Atwood, novelist.



## UK

June 25th London, UK

Refugee Week: British Museum Panel



## Belgium

Feb 23rd Brussels, Belgium

CEPS Ideas Lab: Reconstructing the Union



## Italy

Jan 24th Milan, Italy

Italian Remembrance Day, Gariwo

May 11th- 13th Syracuse, Italy

SABIR, Festival of Mediterranean Culture

"The lack of political solutions does not offer any  
alternative to the people who are forced to put  
their lives into smugglers' hands. NGOs only try to  
fill this political gap and decrease the number of  
people dying during the crossing."

Regina Catrambone  
MOAS Director



## US

26th July New York, US

NEXUS Global Summit



## Poland

July 7th Warsaw, Poland

Recipient of the Atlantic Council Freedom Award

The award recognizes extraordinary individuals and  
organizations that defend and advance the cause of  
freedom around the world. MOAS was recognised  
for our work saving lives at sea



## Israel

March 8th Wahat al Salam - Neve  
Shalom, Israel

International Day of the Rescuer



# AROUND MOAS THE WORLD

## Malta

March 20th, Malta

Women in Parliament

Meeting on maternal health and refugee women

March 27th Valletta, Malta

MOAS XChange 2017

Exploring safe and legal routes to protect  
vulnerable people

"Not one single human being should fear  
discrimination, or feel impaired to the enjoyment of  
our universal fundamental freedoms and rights"

H.E. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, President of  
Malta



## MOAS' Volunteers: Making a Difference

Volunteers have always been at the heart of  
MOAS' development. 2017 was no different,  
and MOAS was lucky enough to have volunteers  
working across all sectors, from operations to  
fundraising, communications to logistics.

Once again we had volunteers aboard Phoenix during  
our Mediterranean mission, from SAR personnel  
to chefs in our galley. We also had our first ever  
group of volunteers through the European Voluntary  
Service which saw 6 young graduates join our head  
office team working on PR, communications and  
fundraising.

We also owe a debt of gratitude to the people all over  
the world who expand MOAS' capacity and allow us

to engage with communities and represent our work on an  
international stage. Our dedicated volunteers from the US,  
UK, Canada, Germany, Italy, Spain and many more, allow  
us to advocate for our beneficiaries far more widely than  
we otherwise could.

We hope everyone who dedicates their time and skills to  
us understand the value of the impact they have on our  
projects. We owe them heartfelt thanks from our MOAS  
team and also from the beneficiaries they support with their  
generosity.







# MOAS

## Your Donation Saves Lives

If you would like support our humanitarian efforts, you can donate online at [moas.eu/donate](https://moas.eu/donate) or affect a bank transfer.

### EU

Beneficiary Name: **Migrant Offshore Aid Station**  
Bank Name: **Lombard Bank Malta plc**  
IBAN: MT15LBMA05000000000001180113787  
SWIFT Code: LBMAMTMT

### GERMANY

Kontoinhaber: **M.O.A.S.**  
Bank: **Hamburger Sparkasse**  
IBAN: DE48 2005 0550 1002 2118 01  
Kontonr. 1002 2118 01 BIC: HASPDEHHXXX

### ITALIA

Beneficiario: **MIGRANT OFFSHORE AID STATION ITALIA** Onlus  
Banca: **BNL S.p.A.**  
IBAN: IT02P01005033370000000003138  
SWIFT Code: BNLIITRRXXX

### USA

Beneficiary Name: **Global Impact – MOAS Fund**  
Bank Name: **Bank of America**  
Account Number: 435023384035  
SWIFT Code: BOFAUS3N