

Alarming Trend of Minor Migrants in Italy

Joelle Grosso (January 16, 2017)



Migrants under the age of 18 are currently flooding into Italy. This is becoming an ever increasing problem since the number of children has more than doubled since last year.

The number of minor migrants arriving in Italy has drastically expanded from 12,360 in 2015 to 25,800 in 2016. According to [UNICEF](#) [2], the majority of children seeking asylum are arriving from [Eritrea](#) [3], [Egypt](#) [4], [the Gambia](#) [5], and [Nigeria](#) [6]. Civil war, forced labor, and crimes against humanity are just some of the reasons people are fleeing their native lands. Although all European countries are receiving more migrants now more than ever, the situation in Italy is particularly unique because the majority of children arriving are unaccompanied or separated from their families.



This is disquieting not only because extremely vulnerable children are risking their lives to get to Europe but once they arrive, they have no where to go. [Lucio Melandri](#) [7], UNICEF Senior Emergency Manager, says that “current systems in place are failing to protect these children who find themselves alone in a totally unfamiliar environment.” Most of the minor migrants are boys from the age of 15 to 17 years old but the younger girls are the ones especially at risk for sexual exploitation and abuse by criminal gangs.

Melandri adds that “it is obviously clear that we have a serious and growing problem on our hands. Apart from addressing the factors that are forcing children to travel alone from their homes, a comprehensive system of protection and monitoring needs to be developed to protect them.”

In May 2016, UNICEF and the Government of Italy collaborated and signed a [joint declaration of intent](#) [8] which pledged to monitor reception standards to ensure that they are in line with the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) [9]. They also pledged to monitor reception centers and to integrate migrant and refugee children into Italian society. Even though these steps are still necessary, much more needs to be done since the number of minor migrants is now exponentially larger.

It is an uncertain time in Europe and the dangerous Central Mediterranean route from North Africa to Italy is only making matters worse. UNICEF and other organizations are working hard to ensure the safety of these young people but they also want to get to the root of the problem by resolving the issues that are happening in their home countries. This way their goal is to prevent these complications from ever arising in the first place. If you would personally like to help the cause, feel free to donate to UNICEF on their website.

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Links

[1] <http://www.iitaly.org/files/luciomelandrijpg>

[2] <https://www.unicef.org/>

[3] <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eritrea>

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[5] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Gambia

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[8] https://www.unicef.org/media/media_91249.html

[9] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Convention_on_the_Rights_of_the_Child