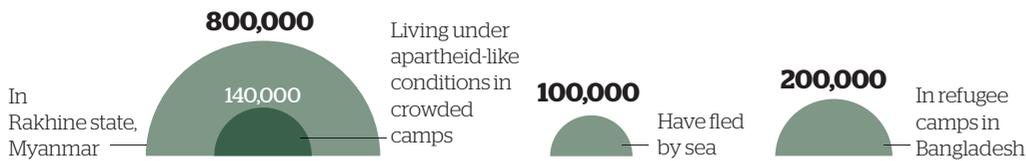
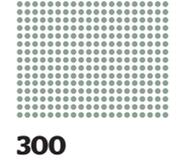


**Rohingya Muslim population**



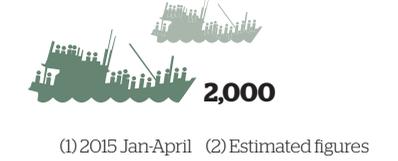
**Dead at sea (1)**



**Smuggler's camps (2)**



**Adrift on abandoned boats (2)**



# Rohingyas' painful exodus

More than 4,000 migrants from Bangladesh and Myanmar have landed on Indonesian and Malaysian shores in recent weeks. This exodus took place after Thailand launched a crackdown on human-trafficking gangs earlier this month, forcing the traffickers to abandon their human cargo on rickety boats off the coast of South-east Asia. TODAY looks at the typical journey and plight of a Rohingya migrant from Myanmar.

**1.** The United Nations said the Rohingya Muslims in predominantly Buddhist Myanmar are one of the most persecuted minorities in the world. Many want to seek asylum abroad



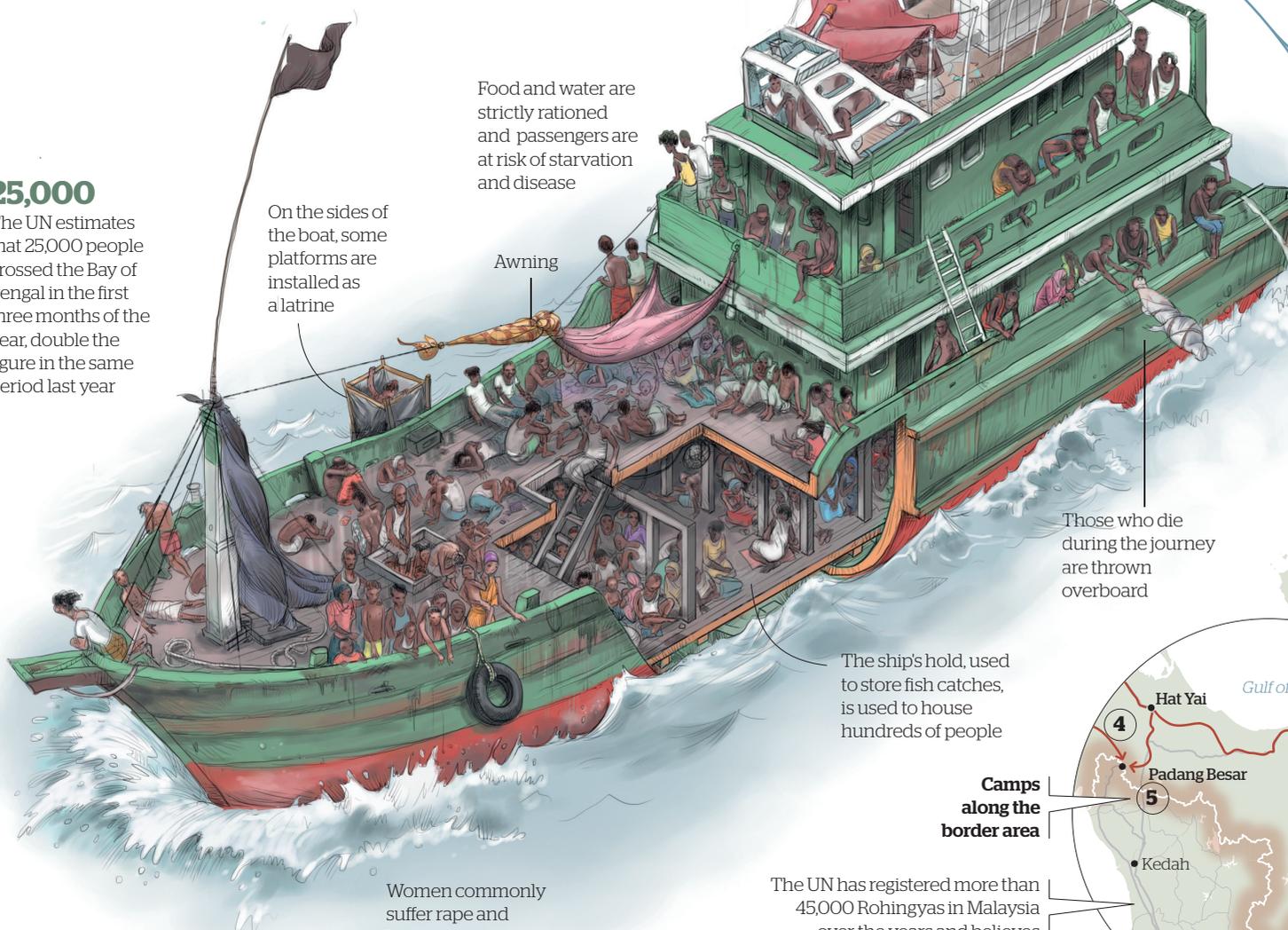
**2.** Some are enticed by offers from human traffickers of free rides on the boats. Others pay US\$100 (S\$135) to US\$200 for a journey to Malaysia, seen as a safe haven



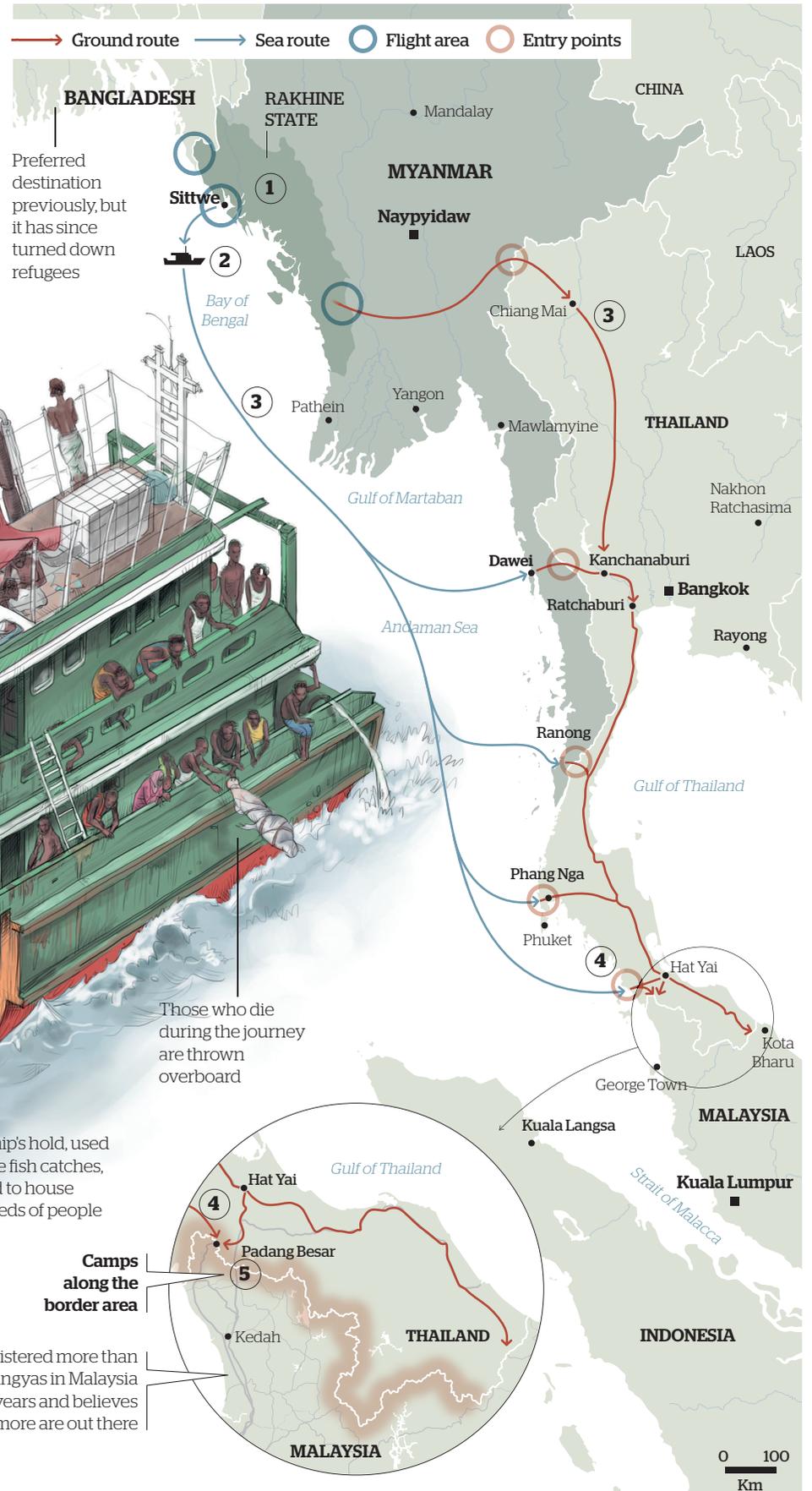
**3.** Rohingyas are shipped in cargo or fishing vessels to Thailand, as a transit point. But many are instead held in remote camps until a ransom is paid for their freedom. Smugglers also use other ground routes via truck or train

**25,000**

The UN estimates that 25,000 people crossed the Bay of Bengal in the first three months of the year, double the figure in the same period last year



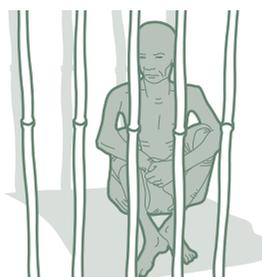
**Smugglers' routes**



**4.** After landing, they march long distances to transit camps deep in the jungle near the Malaysia-Thailand border



**5.** They are locked up in large cages resembling coops built by sticks on soft ground. They hardly get food and when it rains, the detainees are covered in mud. Many suffer from diseases, or die



Smugglers usually use clubs to hit the Rohingyas and threaten to kill them if their relatives do not pay money for their release



They are held, sometimes for months, until their families can raise enough money (usually US\$1,000 to US\$2,000) to pay for their freedom

Sources: Bangkok Post, El Mundo, The New York Times

Adolfo Arranz / TODAY