



## MONTHLY TREND REPORT

### COVERING MIXED MIGRATION TO, THROUGH & FROM NORTH AFRICA

**About:** MHUB is the regional knowledge hub and secretariat for the North Africa Mixed Migration Task Force, comprising of IOM, OHCHR, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC, DRC, RMMS, and save the children. It promotes a human rights-based approach to ensure the protection of people moving in mixed and complex flows to, through and from North Africa.

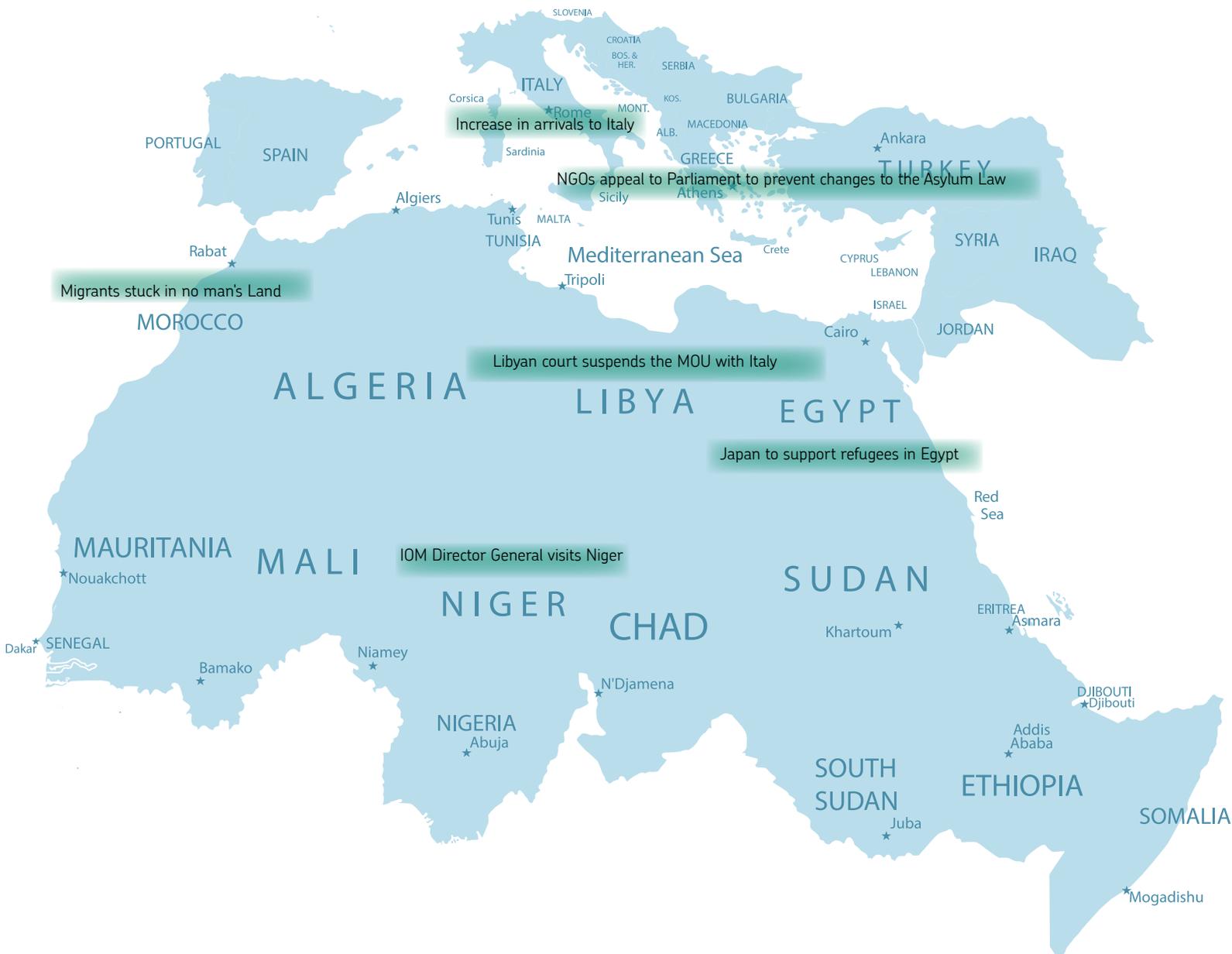
**Scope:** This bulletin covers mixed migration trends in Algeria, Egypt,

Libya, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Sudan, Tunisia, Greece and Italy.

**Terminology:** Throughout this bulletin the terms migrant, refugee and asylum seeker are used together to cover all those comprising mixed migration flows. If the original source specifies a particular category, the relevant term will be used.

**Sources:** Data is drawn from a wide variety of sources, including government, civil society and media.

## HIGHLIGHTS



### CONTACT

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For updates on the Horn of Africa, visit [RMMS](#)

## REGIONAL

**European Court of Justice rules that member states don't have to issue humanitarian visas**

- On 7 March, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) [ruled](#) that European Union states do not have to admit people based on humanitarian grounds. The ruling was made on a case involving a Syrian family who had applied for a visa to stay with acquaintances in Belgium last October. The Belgian authorities refused to issue the family the visa and the case was taken to the EU court for adjudication. The court in its decision stated that “Member States are not required, under EU law, to grant a humanitarian visa to persons who wish to enter their territory with a view to applying for asylum, but they remain free to do so on the basis of their national law.”. The court decision raised criticism from some politicians and NGOs for being against the EU's commitments to human rights.

**UN High Commissioner for Human Rights criticizes politicians and governments**

- On 8 March, Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein, the [UN High Commissioner for Human Rights](#), condemned the “chilling indifference” shown by European leaders to the deaths of thousands of refugees and those who have survived their risky journeys. Al-Hussein expressed his concern over the increasingly negative public narrative in Europe that aim to stir public fear and panic by creating misleading pictures of migrants and refugees as criminals. He shared his concern over calls to establish processing centres for asylum seekers in North Africa and “engage external actors in migration issues, with little regard for human rights” will put migrants at increased risk to violence. Furthermore, he stressed the importance of respecting the principle of not sending people back to countries where they may encounter torture, persecution or threats to their life.

**EU increases its long term budget**

- On 7 March, EU member states agreed on a slight [increase to the long-term budget of the bloc](#). The new agreement will increase the current EU 1-trillion-euros budget for the 2014-2020 period by 3.94 billion euros to be used for migration and border control activities. A further 2.08 billion euros has been earmarked to spur growth and create jobs.

**Relocation to EU countries**

- As of March, 14,439 people have been [relocated](#) from Greece and Italy to other EU member states under the [September 2015 scheme](#). On 21 March, the EU's top migration official, Dimitris Avramopoulos, [warned](#) member states against failing to host refugees and to respect the mandatory quotas agreed by the EU leaders to help alleviate the pressure on Greece and Italy.

**Cooperation between EU and IOM**

- On 9 March, Senior officials from the EU and IOM [met](#) in Brussels for the fourth annual “Senior Officials Meeting” to strengthen cooperation on addressing the challenges and discuss the opportunities related to global migration governance. The meeting focused on strategic and operational approaches to address global migration and forced displacement challenges towards sustainable and coherent approach to migrant protection, voluntary return, and reintegration. During the meeting, the implementation of recent global policy developments such as the 2016 New York Declaration for refugees and migrants and the Global Compact for safe, orderly and regular migration in relation to the European Partnership Framework with Third Countries, the Joint Valletta Action Plan, and the EU's new approach to foster self-reliance of forcibly displaced populations and to support their hosts were also discussed. Furthermore, the EU and the IOM agreed on increasing cooperation along the Central Mediterranean route, especially in Libya, to ensure protection for vulnerable groups.

**Turkey threatens to send 15,000 refugees a month to Europe**

- The diplomatic crisis between Turkey and the Netherlands and Germany following the refusal by Germany and Netherlands to allow Turkish ministers to campaign in a April 16 referendum on expanding President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's powers, further deepened following a statement made on 16 March by the Turkish Interior Minister, Suleyman Soylu [threatening](#) to send 15,000 refugees a month to EU territories. He also accused Europe of failing to help Turkey enter the bloc and to fight terrorism. This follows an [earlier statement](#) made by the Turkish Foreign Minister, Mevlut Cavusoglu, that Turkey is not longer applying the readmission agreement at the moment and is currently evaluating the refugee deal. On the other side, the EU mentioned that it expects Turkey to continue implementing the deal.

**Migrant Children are among the most vulnerable groups in Europe**

- On 22 March, the [watchdog](#) Council of Europe [reported](#) that migrant children who reach Europe are among the most vulnerable groups and encounter sexual abuse, forced labour and lack access to education or healthcare. The report reiterated that “[there are no circumstances](#) in which detention of a child for immigration purposes, whether unaccompanied or with family, could be in the child's best interest and asserted the need to find alternatives to detention. According to Eurostat, around 385,000 people younger than 18 years old applied for asylum for the first time in the EU last year.

**UNODC to organize a trans-regional workshop**

- From 9 to 11 May, UNODC will hold a trans-regional training workshop on strengthening international judicial cooperation against smuggling of migrants by sea in the Mediterranean in Malta. The workshop, funded by the United States and the European Union, will bring together judges, prosecutors and officials from central authorities responsible for mutual legal assistance from Algeria, Egypt, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey.

## ALGERIA

### Algeria and the EU adopt their shared partnership priorities

- On 13 March, Algeria and the EU adopted their [shared Partnership Priorities](#), renewing the framework for political engagement and enhanced cooperation. The partnership priorities covering several areas including migration and mobility as key priorities. These priorities form part of the technical and financial cooperation, to be implemented within the framework of the 2018–2020 financial programming.

### Training workshop for Judges and prosecutors

- From 28 to 30 March 2017, UNODC held a training workshop in Algiers targeting 25 investigative judges and prosecutors from several courts and tribunals in Algeria. The workshop, entitled “Prosecuting and adjudicating trafficking in persons: from theory to practice” focused on the presentation and discussion of real cases of trafficking in persons.

## EGYPT

### The court passes jail sentences to those involved in the Rashid Boat disaster

- On 26 March, an Egyptian court [sentenced 56 people to prison](#) terms of up to 14 years over the Rashid boat incident. The boat capsized on 21 September 2016 killing over 200 people while 169 were rescued. The incident is considered to be one of the deadliest disasters in the dangerous Mediterranean crossings of migrants to Europe.

### Japan to support refugees in Egypt

- On 28 March, Fard Foundation CEO, Rasha Maaty, and the Japanese Ambassador, Takehiro Kagawa, signed a grant agreement of \$213,983 to support refugees in Egypt. The grant is meant to improve standards of living of the most vulnerable refugees in Egypt by providing training opportunities in the fields of electricity, maintenance and carpentry.

## LIBYA

### Maritime incidents

- Around 1,480 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers were rescued off the coast of Libya in March across 13 separate incidents, bringing the total number rescued in 2017 to [3,682](#). In the month of March, 27 deaths were recorded. According to IOM Libya, despite the rough sea conditions, migrants continue embarking on the perilous journey across the Mediterranean Sea.
- In a separate incident, more than [1000](#) refugees were rescued off the Libyan coast. One woman who was found unconscious on one of the rescued vessels later died. According to Doctors without borders (MSF) and SOS Mediterranee, around 400 people were found and rescued from a wooden boat, while the others were rescued from huge dinghies.

### Returns from Libya

- On 7 March, [171](#) stranded Nigerian migrants, including 76 men and 95 women, received assistance to return home from Libya. On 9 March, [141](#) stranded Gambians were assisted to return home to Banjul. On 14 March, 98 stranded Guinean migrants, including 96 men and 2 women, received assistance to return to Conakry from Libya. On 21 March, 151 stranded Ivorian migrants, including 131 men and 20 women, followed by 155 stranded Nigerian migrants on 23 March were assisted to return home.

### Libyan court suspends the MOU with Italy

- On 22 March, the Tripoli Court of Appeals [suspended](#) the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between Libya and Italy in an effort to tackle the increasing flows of migrants to Italy. The [local authorities](#) criticized the MOU and claimed that it will turn Libya into a hosting country of irregular migrants.

### 22 migrants die in fight between rival people smuggling gangs

- On 7 March, 22 people were killed and more than 100 injured during [a fight](#) between people smuggling gangs on the Libyan coast. According to IOM, the people who were killed are sub-Saharan Africans and are most probably migrants and not smugglers.

### IOM Director General visits Tripoli

- On 22 March, IOM Director General, William Lacy Swing, [visited Tripoli](#) to meet with Libyan authorities and partners to discuss the complex migration and displacement situation within the country. During his visit, Ambassador Swing sought to raise the profile of the magnitude of the needs of people in Libya, including migrants and Libyans impacted by the conflict and discussed with the Libyan authorities how IOM can strengthen its support to these communities within Libya.

### Collaboration with IOM

- On 7 March, 22 participants from the Libyan Coast Guard, Port Security, Libyan Directorate for Combating Illegal Migration (DCIM) and the Libyan Red Crescent received the first course of three First Aid training courses organized by IOM for government and non-government organizations involved in saving lives at sea operations. The training focused on improving and enhancing the capacities of the personnel to provide emergency response to migrants following rescue at sea operations.
- The Protection Unit visited Triq Al Sekka and Triq Al Shook detention centres where protection interviews and family tracing procedures of 26 cases were conducted. Around 15 unaccompanied migrant children in detention were provided an opportunity to call their families in their countries of origin. Another 15 unaccompanied migrant children were released from detention and returned back home to Mali, Nigeria and Gambia.

## MALI

### Two Malian farm workers die in a fire in Italy

- On March 3, a [fire broke out](#) in a camp for farm workers in the Southern Italian region of Puglia killing two Malian refugees. Investigators suspect that the fire was caused by a faulty portable stove, which may have been left on as a source of heat. Two other fires have broken out in the camp in

recent years. The camp hosts migrant farm workers who often work under slave-like conditions and are controlled by local organised crime groups.

# MOROCCO

## Migrants stuck in no man's Land

- Thirty four migrants, including 12 minors, from Mali, Guinea, Senegal, Cameroon and the Ivory Coast [were reported to be stuck](#) on a land between Morocco and Algeria. According to the anti-racism and pro-migrant group Gadem, the migrants were arrested in the northeastern Moroccan border town of Oujda between March 2 and 10 and were moved to the other side of the border. The Gadem spokesperson also claimed that the migrants were beaten by Moroccan border officials.

## UNODC to organize training for NGOs

- In April 2017, UNODC will organize a training in Oujda, for

local NGOs from the North Eastern region in Morocco, on identification of and assistance to human trafficking victims. The three-day event aims to set standards on identification and share good practices on the role of civil society in identification and assistance in TIP. Fifteen NGOs operating in the North Eastern region in Morocco as well as concerned officials such as the Regional Council for Human Rights, the National Solidarity and the Unit for the protection of Childhood are expected to attend.

# NIGER

## Visit of IOM Director General

- On 11 March, [IOM Director General, William Lacy Swing](#), visited Niger where he met local and regional authorities, and visited transit centres for migrants in the capital, Niamey, and the desert city of Agadez. During his official meetings, Ambassador Swing reiterated the need for creating a shared sense of responsibility among everyone from countries of origin, destination and transit. Ambassador Swing also visited IOM's open information centres, where returned migrants receive support, and he assured the migrants that IOM is doing everything possible to support them.

## Crisis simulation exercise held

- On 14 March, more than 400 participants representing communities, authorities, civil society and security forces participated in [a crisis simulation exercise](#) organized by IOM Niger. The exercise was held as part of the ongoing project "Engaging Communities in Border Management" in Niger.

# SUDAN

## Criticism of the EU support of RFS

- Enough Project [criticized](#) EU support for the Sudanese Rapid Support Forces (RFS) and stated that this support can worsen the flows of irregular migration to Europe. This criticism came after the EU announcement of assisting the RSF and

other relevant agencies with the construction of two camps with detention facilities for migrants through the EU funding packages. The RFS has in the past been accused and criticized for committing various abuses targeted at civilians.

# TUNISIA

## Returns from Tunisia

- On 7 March, [61 stranded migrants](#) from Senegal, Guinea, Chad and Côte d'Ivoire received assistance to return home from Tunisia. The migrants arrived at the southern border of Tunisia after they fled the harsh conditions and insecurity in Libya. Many of the migrants reported that they encountered physical and psychological abuse, labor exploitation and discrimination while in Libya. According to [a statement](#) issued by IOM in Tunisia, 128 migrants "stuck" in Tunisia have been assisted to return home since the beginning of 2017.

## UNODC supports the implementation of anti-trafficking law

- UNODC organized a three-phase technical support programme throughout March 2017 to support the implementation of Law no. 61/2016 on the Interdiction and The Combat against Human Trafficking, and to assist the National Commission develop national strategy and action plan to combat human trafficking.

- UNODC delivered an in-depth training on the identification and investigation of human trafficking cases to 50 Tunisian law enforcement officers from 13 to 16 March 2017. The training covered topics such as the identification of fraudulent documents, investigation techniques, risk assessment and mitigation, financial investigations, money-laundering and the recovery of assets, interview techniques, crime scene management and cyber-criminality.
- UNODC organized various training sessions in March and April 2017 for law enforcement officers and criminal justice practitioners in Sousse, Tabarka, Djerba, Tozeur and Hamammet to ensure that all regions of Tunisia were targeted in an integrated manner. These 2-day training workshops raised awareness on Law no. 61/2016 and its implementation and aimed at reinforcing close cooperation between law enforcement and the Judiciary.

# GREECE

## Returns to Greece

- On 12 March, 28 Syrians [voluntarily returned](#) to Greece from Gevgelija camp, in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). This return follows the voluntary return by 42 Syrians and seven Iraqis from the second FYROM camp in Tabanovce on 9 February. According to the article, some migrants and refugees in Serbia could also be voluntarily returned to Greece via FYROM in the coming days.

## Relocation from Greece

- Between 1 - 17 March 2017, [367](#) people were relocated from Greece to Belgium, Estonia, Germany, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain, bringing the total number of people relocated from Greece to other EU countries since the start of the EU relocation programme to 10,004.

### Sea arrivals to Greece increased compared to February figures

- 1,244 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers arrived by sea to Greece in the month of March, representing a 20% increase on the February figure of 1,029. During March, there were 11 recorded fatalities along the Eastern Mediterranean route, compared with the one death recorded on the route in February.

### Lack of clarity on status of 50 million euros EU pledge to Greek Islands

- On 9 March, the mayors of Lesbos, Chios, Samos, Leros and Kos [announced](#) that they have managed to secure a pledge of 50 million euros in emergency assistance from the European Union during their recent trip to Brussels. They reported that the 50 million euros will be distributed equally between the five islands to help them alleviate the effects of overcrowded camps and new arrivals.
- On the other side, European Commission spokeswoman, Natasha Bertaud, mentioned on 14 March that there was [no discussion for providing additional funds](#) to the Greek islands of the Eastern Aegean held during the visit of the five island mayors. She noted what was discussed was actually the possibility of organising a visit of European Commissioner for Regional Policy, Corina Creţu, to the islands to look at what is possible under the European Social Fund.

### NGOs appeal to Parliament to prevent changes to the asylum law

- On 9 March, 13 non-governmental organizations sent an [urgent appeal](#) to the Greek Parliament asking the parliament to reject any changes to the Greek asylum legislation based on the European Commission's Joint Action Plan for the EU-Turkey agreement. [According to the NGOs](#) such changes will remove safeguards for vulnerable people and families. The NGOs called on parliament to ensure that most vulnerable people as well as those eligible for family reunification under the Dublin Regulation are exempted from accelerated admissibility procedures aimed at sending them back to Turkey.

### The police raided two buildings used by migrants

- On 13 March, the Greek police [raided](#) two buildings in central Athens being used as "squats" by migrants and refugees. According to the Greek national news agency ANA-MPA, 127 individuals from Syria without proper documents were found in one of the buildings. However, after the identification procedures, it was found that most of them had applied for asylum and were legally in the country. It was also reported that [37 minors](#) were among those found in the two buildings. The Greek authorities mentioned that one of the buildings belongs to the Red Cross and was to be used by the IOM to accommodate unaccompanied minor refugees.

### Greece's highest administrative court is to decide whether Turkey can be considered a "safe country" for refugees

- On 10 March, the Greek Council of state looked at [a case](#) of two Syrian asylum-seekers who are at risk of being sent back to Turkey under the EU-Turkey exchange deal. The two Syrian asylum seekers brought a challenge to the notion that Turkey could be considered a "safe third country" or a "first country of Asylum". Prior to June 2016, Greek asylum appeal committees consistently ruled in favour of the asylum seekers that Turkey was not a safe country. However, these committees' members have since been replaced by judges more likely to rule the opposite. The decision by the Greece highest administrative court has the potential to derail the EU-Turkey exchange deal.

### Children suffer from stress and frustration in Greek camps

- A press release by [UNICEF reported](#) that while the overall number of children on the move to Europe decreased following the EU-Turkey statement, there has been reported increases in the rate of threats encountered by refugee and migrant children. The statement underlined that despite some improvements to the living conditions of unaccompanied children in shelters, many children continue to suffer psychosocial distress. UNICEF warned that prior experiences of war, destruction, the death of loved ones and a dangerous journey and exacerbated by poor living conditions in camps around Greece or the lengthy registration and asylum procedures, can trigger post-traumatic stress disorders. [Another report by Save the children](#) found that more than 5,000 minors are living in dire conditions in Greece and such conditions are contributing to a growing mental health crisis. The report found that such conditions are leading to situations where children as young as nine are self harming and 12 year olds are attempting suicide. The report highlighted a surge in alcohol and drug abuse by refugee and migrant children who are exploited by dealers in the camps. Save the Children reported that some unaccompanied children now live in "24-hour survival mode" and sleep in shifts to try to stay safe.

### UNODC holds anti-trafficking in persons trainings in Greece

- The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), in partnership with Greece's National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings, held, two national anti-trafficking in persons training workshops from 3 to 7 April 2017. The aim of the two workshops, held in Athens (3-4 April) and Thessaloniki (6-7 April) was to strengthen coordination and referral procedures among all stakeholders providing assistance and protection services to victims or potential victims of trafficking, and those responsible under the Greek legislation for their identification, including law enforcement as well as government and non-government entities involved in the reception, screening and interviewing of asylum seekers.

Arrivals by Sea, Greece  
January - March 2017



**Arrivals increase from February figures**

- March saw the arrival of 9,679 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers by sea to Italy, representing a 7% increase on February arrivals (8,966). The total number of arrivals as of March 2017 (23,125) is also higher than the total number of arrivals during the same period in 2016 (15,275). The top five countries of origin arriving in Italy for 2017 are Guinea, Nigeria, Ivory coast, Bangladesh, and Gambia.

**Italy hosts meeting to discuss strengthening support to Libya's fight against irregular migration**

- Italy hosted a [meeting](#) of interior ministers from eight European Union countries, including Germany and France, to strengthen support for last month's agreement with Libya. The officials said they are ready to send equipment and economic aid to Libya to help it fight people smuggling as per the request for more funds and equipment made by Chairman of the Presidential Council of Libya and prime minister of the Government of National Accord of Libya, Fayez al-Seraj, who spoke to the group behind closed doors.

**Italian chief prosecutor accuses NGOs of undermining the fight against smugglers**

- On 22 March, the chief prosecutor of the Sicilian port city of Catania, Carmelo Zuccaro, [claimed](#) that humanitarian ships operating off the coast of Libya were undermining the fight against people smugglers. He said that he suspected there

may be direct communication between smugglers in Libya and members of humanitarian rescue vessels. Last month the Catania court set up a task force to investigate possible financial ties between smugglers and NGOs. According to Zuccaro the court so far found no proof to support such claims. On the other side, NGOs denied the claims made by the chief prosecutor and mentioned that they were working to save the lives of people who take the risky trip through the mediterranean.

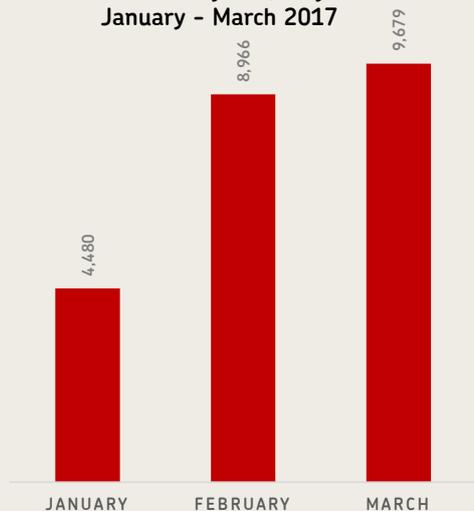
**Maritime incidents**

- On 29 March, over [480](#) migrants, including a four-day old baby, were rescued by the Spanish NGO Proactiva Open Arms that operates in the central mediterranean sea. The migrants were found in two rubber boats that had departed from Libya. The rescued migrants were from North and Central Africa, Sri Lanka, and Yemen.

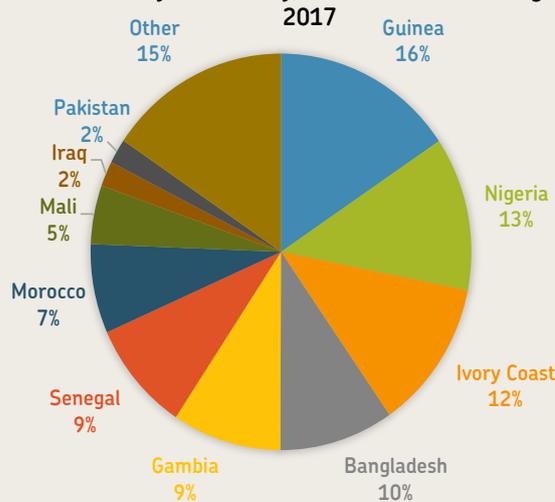
**Italy tries to reach a deal with Niger**

- On 7 March, the Italian Foreign Minister Angelino Alfano, mentioned that the Italian government is working on [a deal](#) with Niger as the main transit country of migrants coming from sub Saharan Africa. The Minister mentioned that this effort follows the deal Italy reached with Libya in efforts to tackle migration flows to Italy through the Mediterranean.

Arrivals by Sea, Italy  
January - March 2017



Arrivals by Sea to Italy, Main Countries of Origin  
2017



**RESEARCH OF INTEREST**

**[International Dialogue on Migration No. 26 : Follow-up and review of Migration in the Sustainable development Goals- IOM](#)**

This publication provides the report and complementary materials of the two workshops held in 2016 under the overarching theme "Follow-up and Review of Migration in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)".

**[RMMS February Summary - RMMS](#)**

Summary of mixed migration events, incidents, and trends in West Africa in February 2017

**[In Focus: Questions and Answers- MHub](#)**

An MHub publication addressing some of the most pressing questions and misconceptions on mixed migration in Northern Africa.

**[EU-Turkey Statement: One Year On - European Commission](#)**

The report provides a one year review and summary update on the effects of the EU-Turkey statement.

[A Tide of Self-harm and Depression: The EU-Turkey Deal's devastating impact on child refugees and migrants-Save the Children.](#)

The report outlines the impact of the EU-Turkey Deal on the mental health and safety of child migrants.

## MULTIMEDIA OF INTEREST

[Clinic Finder- Clinic Finder](#)

This website helps refugees, migrants to find information about free, non-government, healthcare and medical services.

[The migrants 'trapped' on the Greek island of Chios- BBC](#)

A video on the conditions of the trapped migrants in the island of Chios in Greece.

[The Smuggling Game: Playing with life and death to reach Europe - Thomson Reuters Foundation](#)

A multimedia article looks at the risks encountered by migrants during their journey to Europe especially, dealing with smugglers.

[Sharing Spaces- IOM](#)

A multimedia article looks at stories of Nigerians sharing their homes with displaced families across the northeast.