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 DRC, IOM, OHCHR, RMMS, Save the Children, UNHCR, UNICEF and UNODC. 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

- Attempted departures from Algeria
- Decreasing flows through Niger
- Increase in immigration detentions in 2016
- Germany pledges support to Mali
- Sudan requests support to combat trafficking
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- NATO increases involvement in Aegean anti-smuggling efforts
- Increase in arrivals to Italy
- Increase in immigration detentions in 2016

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REGIONAL

Relocation and resettlement
- Between 28 September and 8 November, 1,212 people were relocated from Greece (921) and Italy (291) to other EU Member States under the September 2015 relocation scheme. A further 24,000 individuals in Greece and 20,400 in Italy are eligible for relocation. Under the July 2015 resettlement scheme, a total of 11,852 of the 22,504 allotted spaces (52%) had been filled by 7 November. Additionally, as of 9 November, 2,217 Syrians had been resettled from Turkey to Greece under the EU-Turkey deal.

Germany seeks to limit migration from Africa
- With continued arrivals to Europe and upcoming elections in Germany, Chancellor Angela Merkel has come under increasing pressure to curb migration flows from Africa. Chancellor Merkel visited Mali, Niger and Ethiopia in early October in hopes that pledging new EU investment in development and security initiatives will help limit migration from the continent.
  - It was reported on 6 November that the German Interior Ministry proposed migrants intercepted at sea be returned to the African continent in order to await asylum processing. Opposition politicians reportedly condemned the plan, noting that it marked a further degradation of the right to asylum.

NATO steps up involvement in anti-smuggling operations in the Aegean
- On 27 October, NATO agreed to strengthen its cooperation with the European Union in counter-smuggling efforts in the Aegean Sea. The Turkish government remains opposed to the mission, arguing that there is no need for warships to continue to patrol the Turkish coastline, given the decline in numbers attempting to cross to Greece. NATO also announced it would increase its involvement in anti-smuggling activities in the Mediterranean by providing support to the EU’s Operation Sophia.

Report reveals majority of migrants abused, exploited or trafficked on their way to Europe
- According to a report by IOM, more than 70% of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers traveling overland through North Africa to Europe were victims of abuse, exploitation, or practices that may amount to human trafficking. The IOM spent 10 months gathering data from more than 9,000 migrants along the central and eastern Mediterranean routes. Half of those surveyed said they had worked without pay, and 49% of all respondents reported being held in a location against their will. The report also reveals a positive correlation between time spent in transit and the risk of being trafficked and exploited.

UN report: restrictive migration policies may damage state security
- A new report by the UN Special Rapporteur on counter-terrorism and human rights revealed that overly restrictive migration policies - including the building of fences, criminalisation of irregular migration and push-back operations - may in fact create conditions conducive to terrorist activity. These findings come amid reports that EU member states were in favour of extending emergency border checks inside the European free travel zone after its expiration in mid-November. The Schengen zone had been partly suspended last year due to the influx of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers on the continent.

ALGERIA

Attempted departures from Algeria
- Between 25 and 26 October, it was reported that 76 people were intercepted off the coast of Annaba, Algeria in three makeshift boats. The individuals reportedly received medical attention before being taken to court to face criminal proceedings for attempted illegal migration. These incidents come amid reports that suggest Algeria is increasingly the favoured destination and transit hub for migrants - namely those from sub-Saharan Africa - as the route via Libya becomes more risky due to deteriorating conditions in the country.

EGYPT

Migration governance
- In mid-October, the Egyptian government launched its “National Strategy on Combating Illegal Migration”. The strategy, which will be implemented over the next decade, includes an Action Plan that will be updated biannually. During the same month the Egyptian Parliament also passed landmark anti-smuggling legislation, criminalizing smuggling of persons and issuing imprisonment and fines for smugglers and accomplices.

Detention of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers
- It was reported that five foreign nationals were detained in a single incident in the month of October for attempting to depart irregularly by sea from Egypt’s North Coast. This represents a significant reduction as compared to the September total of 874. This reduction may be due to the poor conditions at sea and the beginning of the winter months, which often bring about a reduction in departure numbers. Reportedly, the total number of foreign nationals detained in 2016 as of the end of October is 4,985 people across 121 incidents, representing a 38% increase on figures recorded during the same period in 2015. The total number of foreign unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) detained in 2016 remains at last month’s figure of 440, indicating that none of the five detained in October were UASC. Nonetheless, UASC account for 54% of 822 detained children in 2016 as of 31 October, compared with 26% of 543 detained children in all of 2015.
**LIBYA**

**Maritime incidents**
- More than 2,000 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers were rescued off the coast of Libya in October in over 75 incidents, bringing the total number rescued by the Libyan Coast Guard in 2016 to 12,726. In the same period, 390 deaths were recorded along the Central Mediterranean route from Libya.

**IOM supports voluntary repatriation**
- On 10 October, 154 Nigerian migrants - including 98 women, one infant and three children - were provided with voluntary repatriation from Libya on 27 October. Additionally, on 1 November, 167 Nigerien migrants - including 48 women and 40 children - were assisted to voluntarily repatriate from southern Libya to Niger.

**MALI**

**Malian refugees and returnees**
- As of 31 October, there were 135,985 Malian **registered refugees in the region**, indicating a slight increase on numbers reported at the end of September (134,814). Of those registered, 60,823 are residing in Niger (44.7%); 42,867 in Mauritania (31.5%); and 32,295 in Burkina Faso (23.7%).

**SUDAN**

**North Darfur requests support to fight trafficking**
- On 23 October, the Governor of North Darfur met with the U.S. envoy for Sudan and South Sudan, as well as five UN ambassadors. The Governor requested support from the international community to stem trafficking at the borders between Darfur, Chad and Libya. According to the Governor, the conflict in Libya has led to an increased flow of weapons and drugs, as well as human trafficking and infiltration of extremist groups, which could cause unrest in Sudan.

**US Special Envoy meets camp leaders in South Darfur**
- On 22 October, the US Special Envoy to Sudan and South Sudan met with community leaders in Kalma camp in South Darfur. The displaced population expressed that they were not able to return to their places of origin due to continued attacks on villages by militia and government forces. The camp - which hosts 128,000 displaced - is now experiencing deterioration of health and education services. The US government has reportedly urged the African Union to join Sudan’s National Dialogue Conference in order to bring an end to Sudan’s numerous crises.

**MOOROCCO**

**Morocco and Germany seek to increase cooperation in migration governance**
- On 12 October, the Moroccan Interior Minister held talks with his German counterpart in Berlin in order to discuss cooperation in security and migration management. The Moroccan minister affirmed that Morocco would step up efforts to facilitate the return of irregular Moroccan migrants from Germany.

**IRREGULAR MIGRATION**

**Europe**

**EU boosts support to Egypt**
- On 11 October, Egypt received EUR 129 million in financial assistance from the EU to boost its socio-economic development, including in migration management.

**Egypt, Greece, Cyprus discuss cooperation in migration**
- On 11 October, a tripartite summit was held in Cairo among the leaderships of Egypt, Greece and Cyprus to discuss cooperation in curbing irregular migration. The three leaders discussed opportunities for enhancing strategic relations and finding alternative solutions to security measures and deportation.

**NIGER**

**Decreasing flows through Niger**
- According to data collected by IOM’s Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), fewer migrants, refugees and asylum seekers transited through Flow Monitoring Points (FMPs) along key migratory routes in Niger during October. Outgoing flows towards Libya and Algeria decreased by 61.5% from 32,861 in September to 12,234 in October as part of efforts to stem the flow of migrants from North Africa.

**Migrants wait weeks and sometimes months at the short-stay refugee camp near Melilla waiting for their chance to make the crossing to Europe.**

**African continent. Mahatma called for a “Marshall Plan” to promote development and curb migration, noting that the EUR 1.8 billion in EU funds earmarked for transit and origin countries was not sufficient. Merkel however emphasised the need to ensure EU funds are funneled efficiently. She has stressed the importance of improving educational standards across the continent, calling on the government of Niger to use European aid to finance schools and training schemes to provide more incentives for people to stay in Nigeria rather than migrate.**
TUNISIA

Tunisia begins negotiations with the EU on readmission and visa facilitation

- On 12 October, the European Union and Tunisia began negotiations on an agreement to establish procedures for the readmission of irregular migrants from Tunisia, as well as an agreement on short-term visa facilitation. Certain requirements of the EU Visa Code may be relaxed or eliminated for Tunisians under the visa facilitation agreement, while the readmission deal would see procedures put in place in order to speed up and simplify cooperation on the issue between the two sides. Funding for the implementation of these agreements will be sourced from the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa.

GRECE

Sea arrivals to Greece continue to decrease

- 2,070 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers arrived by sea to Greece in October, representing a 3.6% decrease on September figures (3,080). Arrivals to Greece for 2016 reached 169,901 by 2 November, a significant decline on the Jan-Oct 2015 figure of 587,939. There were two fatalities recorded along the Eastern Mediterranean route this month, compared with 27 in September. The top five nationalities of arrivals in October were Syrians, followed by Iraqis, Afghans, Iranians and Pakistanis.

Migrants seek alternative routes

- On 5 October, it was reported that 214 Syrian refugees were arrested while attempting to cross the Evros River dividing Greece and Turkey. In the week prior, 107 refugees were apprehended at the same border, suggesting that alternatives to the Aegean sea crossing are being used in the aftermath of the EU-Turkey deal.

Returns from Greece to Turkey

- According to reports, 65 people of different nationalities were returned from Greece to Turkey on 5-6 October. On 13 October, 58 individuals were sent back to Turkey under either the Greece-Turkey Readmission Protocol of 2002, the EU-Turkey Readmission Agreement of 2014, or the EU-Turkey deal.

Sea arrivals to Italy continue decrease

- In efforts to improve the living conditions of unaccompanied migrant and refugee youth, the Greek government announced on 19 October the opening of a new reception centre near Athens for unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) in a collaborative effort with Save the Children and the European Union. Those residing in the facility will receive skills training, medical care and psychological support, among other services. As of 16 October, it was estimated that Greece was hosting up to 2,500 UASC. On 10 October, 15 schools across Greece for the first time admitted refugee and migrant children from nearby camps.

Negative reports on treatment of migrants

- Reports of brachts and protests on the islands of Chios and Lesbos continued to surface in late October.

Poor camp conditions

- Rights groups continue to draw attention to the substandard living conditions and unmet protection needs of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers residing in Greece. At Diavata camp near Thessaloniki, a sexual assault case and stabbing incident worried aid workers and camp residents, who claimed that police do not intervene when problems arise.

Climate-Induced Migration and Displacement: Closing the Policy Gap - Emily Wilkinson, Amy Kirbyshre, Leigh Mayhew, Pandora Batsa & Andrea Milan

This briefing explores climate-induced migration and displacement, recognising that existing policies both on the international and national levels are yet to make the link between climate change and human mobility.

Towards a Whole-of-Society Approach to Receiving and Settling Newcomers in Europe - Demetrios G. Papademetriou and Meghan Benton

This report assesses where integration has worked in Europe and analyses the likely outcome for new arrivals of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms While Countering Terrorism - UN

Migrant Smuggling Data and Research: A Global Review of the Emerging Evidence Base - IOM
A review of knowledge being collected globally on migrant smuggling and what can be done to further build upon the evidence base.

MULTIMEDIA OF INTEREST

Stepping Over the Dead on a Migrant Boat - The New York Times
A photographer captures the scene of a search and rescue mission in the Mediterranean.

“The Road Most Travelled: Smuggler’s Role in Migration” - The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime
An infographic video on the smuggler’s role in migration.

Raising Barriers: A New Age of Walls - Samuel Granados, Zoeann Murphy, Kevin Schaul & Anthony Faiola
A media series examining divisions between places and people.