



## 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.

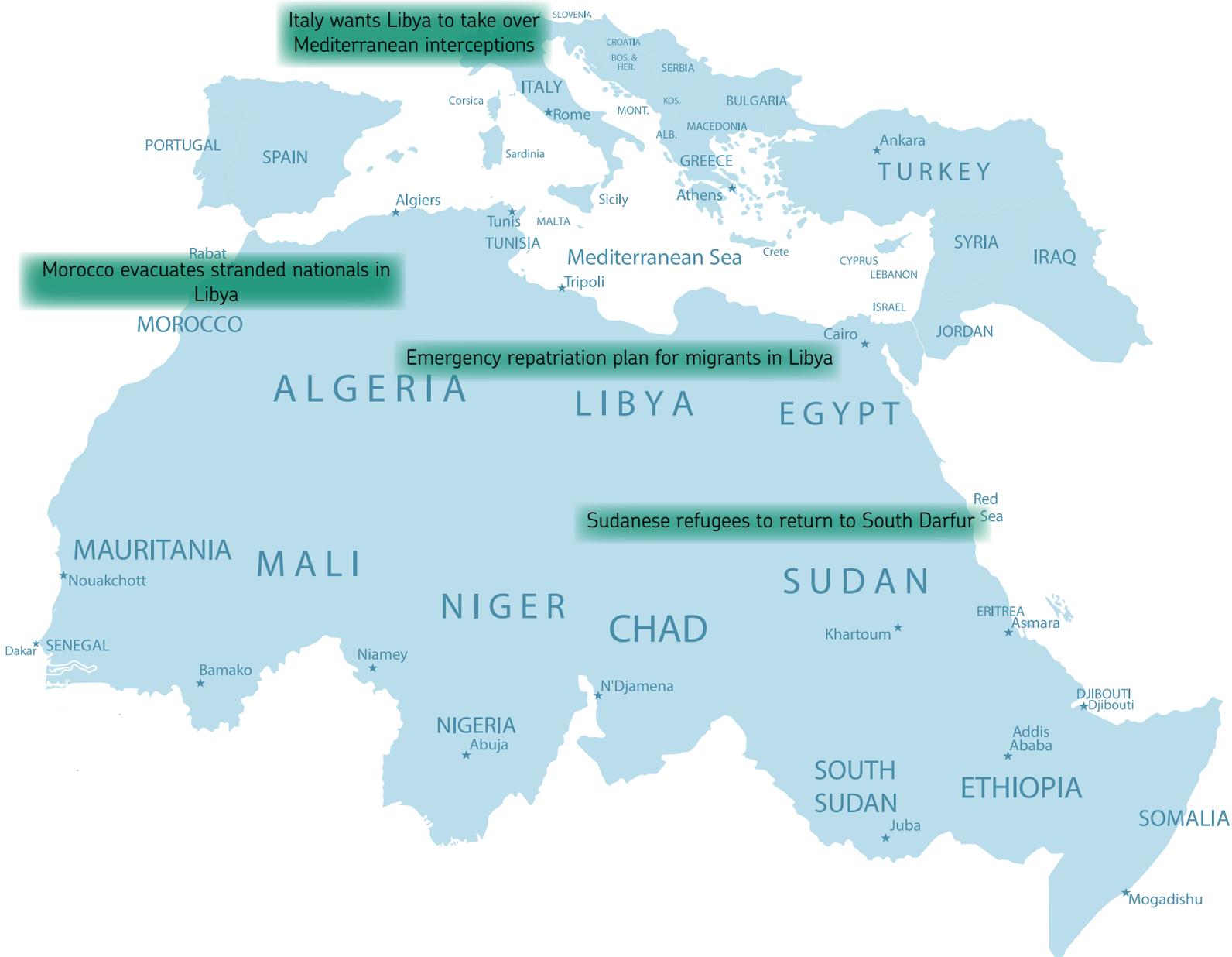
## HIGHLIGHTS

Italy wants Libya to take over Mediterranean interceptions

Morocco evacuates stranded nationals in Libya

Emergency repatriation plan for migrants in Libya

Sudanese refugees to return to South Darfur



### CONTACT

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## REGIONAL

**UN Security Council condemns slave trade of migrants in Libya**

- The United Nations Security Council [condemned](#) the slave trade of Sub-Saharan migrants in Libya as “heinous human rights abuses which may also amount to crimes against humanity”. In a statement read out by Council President for December Ambassador Koro Bessho the Council expressed “grave concern” at reports of migrants being enslaved and emphasized that all migrants should be treated with humanity and dignity. The Council urged Libyan authorities to reinforce cooperation with international organizations and UN agencies and to grant full humanitarian access to detention centers. The Council welcomed the statement by the Presidency Council of the Government of National Accord of Libya denouncing trafficking in persons, including for the purpose of slavery. The Council also welcomed statements by the African Union calling for an end to such practices.

**UNICEF calls for making migration safe for every child in 2018**

- Ahead of International Migrants Day on 18 December, UNICEF said 2018 could be a [landmark year](#) for migrant children if countries follow best practices to ensure their safety and wellbeing. 2018 will see the adoption of the Global Compact for Migration, for which UNICEF has called on Member States to include the rights, protection and wellbeing of uprooted children. It is estimated that around 50 million children worldwide are on the move, approximately 28 million of whom have been driven from their home by conflict. Ted Chaiban, UNICEF Director of Programmes reiterated “.. There is another reality for millions of children for whom migration is highly dangerous and not by choice. The Central Mediterranean route is a case in point where thousands of vulnerable children risk their lives every year to reach Europe because safe and regular migration pathways are not available to them.”

**Tensions rise between EU Council President and Commissioner for Migration**

- EU Commissioner for Migration Dimitris Avramopoulos [described](#) European Council President Donald Tusk’s proposals on migration as “unacceptable” and “anti-European” after Mr. Tusk in a [letter](#) sent ahead of the EU leaders’ summit criticized the mandatory quota system for refugees as “divisive” and “ineffective”. “ The Greek commissioner added that “it ignores all the work done over the past years” and “undermines one of the main pillars of the EU project”.

**EU proceeds with court case against Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary**

- The EU Commission [announced](#) on 7 December that it will proceed with legal case at the European Court of Justice against the states of Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic for their noncompliance with the EU relocation scheme. The move is the latest in a string of measures and countermeasures undertaken by the EU and the three states to resolve differences over the scheme. The Commission had [launched](#) infringement proceedings in June 2017 against the three state in response to their refusal to comply with the mandatory emergency relocation scheme. The scheme was devised to ease pressures on the EU’s countries of first arrival and assist in the provision of international protection to those in need of it. The Court of Justice has previously ruled on the validity of the scheme by [rejecting](#) challenges brought against it by the governments of Hungary and Slovakia in September 2017. In response to the latest events, Poland’s Deputy Foreign Minister, Konrad Szymanski, [said](#) “Poland is ready to defend its position in the Court. No one will lift the duty of providing public safety from the Polish government.” Poland’s governing, right-wing Law and Justice (PiS) party has cited security concerns for its refusal to admit asylum seekers.

**New EU programs to address migration challenges in North Africa**

- The EU Commission [reported](#) that it has bolstered its ongoing efforts to strengthen the protection of migrants and to support assisted voluntary return and sustainable reintegration efforts through the adoption of three programs worth €29.6 million. The programs will be implemented within the framework of the EU Trust Fund for Africa. Speaking about the latest programs, Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, said “With these new programmes, we will step up our commitments, save lives, guarantee the respect of human rights and of international standards, provide alternatives to those wishing to return to their homes and support to host communities.” Of the three programs to be implemented in North Africa, one (€10 million) will support assisted voluntary return and reintegration efforts in the region, another (€15 million) will focus on dismantling regional criminal networks involved in smuggling and human trafficking and the third (€4.58 million) will focus on supporting the resilience and protection of migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and host communities in Morocco. The EU has furthermore [released](#) one-year-on results fact sheet highlighting the results of the joint EU-IOM initiative established in 2016 under the Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF).

**IOM and UNAIDS sign new cooperation agreement**

- IOM and UNAIDS [signed](#) a new cooperation agreement on 8 December that aims to ensure migrants, refugees, mobile populations and persons affected by humanitarian emergencies have access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services. Speaking at the signing, IOM Director General William Lacy Swing said, “Migrants and mobile populations are exposed to a unique set of factors that render them more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS, including limited access to health services and information as well as exposure to environments that are conducive to engaging in high-risk behavior.” Under the agreement, both IOM and UNAIDS will encourage States to respond to vulnerabilities to HIV and specific health care needs of migrant and mobile populations, as well as by refugees and crisis-affected populations. IOM and UNAIDS will also promote access to tailored comprehensive HIV prevention services for all women and adolescent girls, migrants and key populations. The joint efforts will look at ways of addressing sexual and gender-based

violence by working to ensure access to sexual and reproductive health-care services. For his part, Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of UNAIDS, said “Migrant and refugee populations must be supported and enabled to exercise their right to health which is why we are strengthening our partnership with IOM to ensure they are not left behind.”

### First meeting of the ‘Refugee Coalition for Europe’

- The Refugee Coalition for Europe [held](#) its first ever meeting between 13 and 15 December in Italy. The meeting was supported by the Municipality of Milan in partnership with UNHCR and Independent Diplomat, a non-profit diplomatic advisory group. The Coalition aims to bring together representatives from various refugee communities in Europe as a means to give voice to their concerns and views regarding policies and decisions that impact their lives. The meeting was attended by 15 refugee representatives originating from Afghanistan, Algeria, Ethiopia, Iraq, Nigeria, Russia, Somalia and Syria and from diverse socio-demographic backgrounds. Pascale Moreau, the UNHCR Director of the Bureau for Europe, underscored the importance of the Coalition and said, “This initiative will help increase refugees active participation in decisions reacting to their situation and needs, and ensure that such decisions are relevant, effective and well-targeted.”

### Migration among 2018 priorities, says UN General Assembly President

- Safe migration, conflict prevention and sustainable development [will be priorities](#) of the 72nd General Assembly for 2018, said Miroslav Lajčák, President of the 193-member UN General Assembly. “We will continue our work on the [Global Compact](#) for safe, orderly and regular migration,” Mr. Lajčák told a press conference at UN Headquarters. He noted that he will hold a parallel meeting on safe migration with key actors from academia, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

### Pope Francis makes strong statements about migration

- Pope Francis has been a vocal proponent of welcoming and supporting migrants, refugees and asylum seekers who have made arduous journeys to Europe and has most recently used the [Christmas Eve](#) and [New Year’s Day](#) Masses to reaffirm those views. While delivering his Christmas address on 25 December, the Pontiff likened those fleeing war, poverty and persecution to Mary and Joseph. He said, “So many other footsteps are hidden in the footsteps of Joseph and Mary. We see the tracks of millions of persons who do not choose to go away but, driven from their land, leave behind their dear ones.” He also used his address on 1 January, marking the Catholic calendar’s “World Peace Day”, to reinforce his earlier statements by saying, “It is important that everyone, civil institutions, educational and welfare organizations, and ecclesial realities are committed to ensuring refugees, migrants and everyone a future of peace.”

## ALGERIA

### Algeria to probe death of asylum seeker in Spanish facility

- The Algerian government has [opened](#) an investigation into the death of 36 year-old Mohamed Boudarbala, an Algerian national who Spanish authorities say was found hanged in his cell in a detention facility. The investigation comes amid concern by members of Boudarbala’s family and civil society organizations

over claims of police brutality. Boudarbala was held in a Spanish facility that houses asylum seekers while their applications are processed.

## EGYPT

### Government meets with EU Commissioner for Migration

- Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry and Minister of Immigration Nabila Makram [received](#) European Union Commissioner for Migration, Citizenship and Home Affairs Dimitris Avramopoulos on Saturday December 16. During the meeting, Sisi stressed the need to combat the root causes of irregular migration through settling regional disputes, pushing for development and raising the standards of living for those affected by crises. Additionally, the Egyptian President emphasized that Egypt has no place for refugee camps and that refugees are enabled to integrate into society. On his part, Avramopoulos stressed the EU’s commitment to strengthen cooperation and coordinate efforts to combat irregular migration. During discussions with Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry, the EU Commissioner for Migration [confirmed](#) that the EU will be providing Egypt with \$60 million to aid efforts to tackle the ‘migration crisis’. Meanwhile, Shoukry affirmed that Egypt has been successful in dealing with irregular migration, pointing to a sharp decline of Egyptian migrants crossing the Mediterranean.

### Cairo hosts “Spread no hate” symposium against anti-migrant hate speech

- The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) [held](#) a symposium titled ‘Spread no Hate: A Global Dialogue on Hate Speech against Migrants and Refugees,’ marking the fifth edition of the symposium since 2015. The event hosted a panel of media icons from all over the world who discussed portrayals of ‘the other’. “The world has witnessed the largest wave of mass migration since World War II,” explained Nihal Saad, chief of cabinet and spokesperson of the high representative of UNAOC, highlighting the global efforts made by the United Nations to emphasize that “diversity enriches every society.”

### UNODC conducts training on investigating migrant smuggling crimes

- UNODC organized a training workshop between 11 to 14 December to strengthen the capacity of Egyptian prosecutors to investigate and prosecute the crime of migrant smuggling. The workshops were attended by 18 participants in Hurgada and 20 in Fayoum.

### Maritime incidents

- 883 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers were [rescued](#) off the coast of Libya across 9 different incidents, bringing the total number of those rescued by the Libyan Coast Guard in 2017 to 20,335 (as of December 29). In the month of December, one death was recorded.

### UNHCR calls for resettlement places for vulnerable refugees in Libya

- On 8 December, UNHCR [announced](#) an urgent appeal for at least 1,300 resettlement spots by March 2018 for vulnerable refugees who are currently stranded in perilous conditions in Libya. Volker Türk, UNHCR's Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, issued the urgent appeal in response to the deplorable and deteriorating conditions facing refugees in Libya. The Protection Chief said, "This is a desperate call for solidarity and humanity. We need to get extremely vulnerable refugees out of Libya as soon as possible." UNHCR has already begun the evacuation of especially vulnerable refugees to neighboring Niger where they will await resettlement. Those evacuated include unaccompanied children, single female parents, women-at-risk, people with serious medical conditions and people who have been severely tortured or ill-treated during their journey to or in detention in Libya.
- While resettlement was the focus of [UNHCR's Flash Appeal](#), Mr. Türk also underscored the importance of exploring all possibilities for extracting vulnerable individuals from Libya and added, "Given the seriousness of the situation for refugees in Libya, we need to explore all sorts of solutions, including resettlement, family reunification, evacuation to UNHCR-run emergency facilities in other countries, or voluntary return." In further statements, UNHCR's Representative in Libya, Robert Mignone [said](#) "In 2018, we will try to send between 5,000 and 10,000 of the most vulnerable refugees to third countries. We can't give an exact number as it will depend on how many refugees can be taken in by European countries, Canada or others."
- The first group of 20 refugees were resettled from Libya to France via Niger on 18 December while another group of [162 refugees](#) from Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia and Yemen were resettled directly from Libya to Italy. This group of refugees, who arrived at an Italian airbase near Rome on 22 December, are the first to have been resettled directly from Libya to a European country.

### Emergency repatriation plan for migrants in Libya

- The EU's Foreign Policy Chief, Federica Mogherini, has [said](#) that around 15,000 migrants in vulnerable situations will be repatriated from Libya in the months of January and February 2018 under an emergency plan to extract persons facing abuse and serious violations in Libya. Speaking ahead of an EU Summit, Mogherini said, "In only two months we hope and we expect to manage to assist the voluntary return of 15,000 people." The plan includes close cooperation between the EU, the AU and IOM.

- In related news, the AU-EU-UN Task Force to Address the Migration Situation in Libya [met](#) in Brussels on 14 December to discuss recent developments and efforts to offer protection to those in vulnerable situations in Libya. Among the topics discussed was the emergency voluntary humanitarian return (VHR) operation that began as a result of previous talks in Abidjan. 3,100 persons were returned through the operation between 28 November and 14 December with more repatriations planned for 2018 as explained by Mogherini.

### Libya and Italy agree to set up a joint operations room to tackle smuggling

- Libya's UN-backed government and Italy [agreed](#) on 9 December to establish a joint operations room to tackle smuggling and trafficking. The agreement followed a meeting between the head of Tripoli's Government of National Accord (GNA), Fayez al-Sarraj, Libyan Minister of Interior Aref Khodja and the Italian Minister for Interior Marco Minniti. The initiative will reportedly bring together "representatives from the coastguard, the illegal migration department, the Libyan attorney general and the intelligence services, along with their Italian counterparts."

### Libya rejects Amnesty International's report on the effects of EU-Libyan cooperation on migrant wellbeing

- The Libyan government has [released](#) a statement decrying a [report](#) by Amnesty International that claimed EU countries were complicit in the torture and abuse of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in Libya. Responding to the allegations, the GNA's Foreign Minister, Mohamed Taher Siala, said, "The situation on immigration in Libya is very complicated" and added that the Tripoli-based government is grateful for the support provided by Italy. The report claimed that Europe's efforts to thwart migrants, refugees and asylum seekers from leaving the North African country and by their support of Libya's interception of and detention of people on the move is tantamount to collusion in abusive practices.

### 36,000 children in need in Libya

- UNICEF and IOM have joined efforts on the occasion of International Migrants Day on 18 December to draw attention to the dire conditions facing 36,000 child migrants in Libya. Figures released by the agencies show that out of the estimated 400,000 migrants in Libya, nine percent are children and around 15,000 are unaccompanied. UNICEF and IOM have developed a joint action plan to increase support to children focusing on child protection, and access to water, sanitation, education and health. Speaking about the latest efforts, UNICEF Special Representative in Libya, Abdel-Rahman Ghandour reiterated, "Migrant children are some of the most vulnerable people in Libya and today's agreement with IOM is essential in our work to reach them and uphold their rights. We will be able to collectively work to ensure that all children, no matter their status, are able to gain an education, be protected and receive the basic services they deserve."

**Western Mediterranean Route**

- [1,908](#) migrants, refugees and asylum seekers have crossed from Morocco to Spain by sea in the month of December bringing the total arrivals by sea for this year to 22,103. An additional 465 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers crossed from Morocco into Spain via their shared land borders during the month of December, bringing the total number of persons making the land crossing this year to 6,246. 193 migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers were reported dead or missing along the Western Mediterranean Route in 2017.

**Morocco stops 55,000 irregular migration attempts in 2017**

- The Moroccan Interior Minister [claimed](#) that the government stopped at least 55,000 attempts to smuggle irregular migrants in 2017, and dismantled around 100 smuggling networks. “The new national strategy for migration and asylum, which was approved by the government in 2015, focused on the human and rights dimensions in managing the migrant portfolio,” Minister of Interior Nouredine Boutayeb told Parliament. “The country’s strategy did not overlook the security dimension of the migration file, though, given the growing international and regional smuggling activities,” he added. Security measures to combat human smuggling included securing borders and beaches to limit the possibilities of boats being used for smuggling of migrants. Morocco launched its second regularization campaign for undocumented migrants at the end of 2016 and in 2017, nearly 26,000 requests were made.

**Morocco to host inter-governmental conference on international migration**

- The UN General Assembly announced that Morocco will be [hosting](#) the inter-governmental conference on international migration this year. The conference is expected to lead towards the adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The event will also serve as a significant opportunity to improve the governance of migration as well as boost the contribution of migrants and migration on sustainable development.

**Morocco evacuates stranded nationals in Libya**

- Morocco [evacuated](#) 235 stranded Moroccan nationals from Libya in its second repatriation operation in 2017. The operation was announced after videos of Moroccans detained in Libyan prisons went viral on social media. Following the videos, families of the detained migrants [protested](#) in front of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs headquarters in Rabat, calling for the government to repatriate their relatives. According to the Moroccan authorities closely [monitoring](#) the situation, the mission was conducted in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, through the Consular and Social Affairs Directorate. The first operation was conducted in August 2017 and repatriated 200 nationals in two private aircrafts.

**Germany to construct youth centers in Morocco**

- The German government has started [constructing](#) two youth centers in northern Morocco to house ‘street children’ as well as unaccompanied Moroccan minors who have been deported by Germany. The pilot project will allow Germany to start deporting child migrants whose asylum applications have been rejected. According to a statement by the Interior Ministry, the shelters “will be open to those under 18 returning voluntarily, as well as forced deportees, especially youths convicted of crimes.” Since 2015, Germany has not deported any unaccompanied minors. According to Germany’s Interior Ministry, the two shelters will each house 100 youths and will provide social assistance, counseling and access to educational opportunities for the youth. [European Council Directive 2008/115/EC](#) requires authorities of member states to be satisfied that an unaccompanied minor will be returned to a member of his or her family, a nominated guardian or adequate reception facilities in the State of return, before removing them from their territory.

**NIGER**

**IOM and UNHCR evacuate migrants, refugees and asylum seekers from Libya to Niger**

- IOM and the Government of Niger [welcomed](#) the first group of 504 people from Libya initiating a mass voluntary evacuation operation of nearly 4,000 migrants.. “After the discussions at the [African Union-European Union] summit in Abidjan, the government has demonstrated its commitment to making this evacuation a priority and a reality,” said Alberto Preato, Migrant Resource and Response Mechanism (MRRM) Programme Manager at IOM. The operation was organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Niger and under the initiative of President of Niger Mahamadou Issoufou and Prime Minister Brigi Rafini and allowed migrants to register for voluntary return at the Nigerien embassy in Tripoli. Meanwhile, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) [evacuated](#) 74 vulnerable refugees, the majority of whom are children and women from Eritrea and Somalia. “I am happy to report that a group of 51 children, 22 women and one man have been successfully evacuated from Libya and are now safe in Niger. Less than 24 hours ago they were still detained in Libya, but they can now hope anew,” said Vincent Cochetel, UNHCR’s Special Envoy for the Central Mediterranean Situation.

**France promises €400 million in aid to Niger**

- During a visit to Niger, French President Emmanuel Macron [announced](#) more than €400 million in aid to the country over a four year period (2017-2021). Macron met with Nigerien President Issoufou Mahamadou to discuss the fight against terrorism, migration and development in Niger. President Mahamadou said that the root causes of migration are poverty, insecurity and democratic deficit and announced that a development plan is being drafted. “If we manage to respond to this and we succeed in reducing rural poverty... If we manage to fix it in the villages, we could manage to bring a substantive solution to the question of migration and Niger is determined to pursue these efforts,” he said.

## SUDAN

### IOM and Sudan's Ministry of Labor collaborate over migration workshop

- IOM and Sudan's Ministry of Labor and Administrative Reforms jointly [organized](#) a two day workshop and one day training event on labor migration policy. The event was organized with funding and support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. The objective of the workshop was to assess and identify gaps in Sudan's labor migration policy and to assist relevant ministries, government bodies and NGOs in order to address said gaps. Speaking at the opening session, Sudan's Minister for labor and Administrative Reforms, Amna Dirar, said, "We cannot neglect the opportunities of labour migration which [if adequately managed] has educational, economic and social benefits for both countries of origin as well as the destination countries."

### Sudanese refugees to return to South Darfur

- A total of 1,500 Sudanese refugees who had fled to Central African Republic (CAR) in 2007 are expected to voluntarily [return](#) to South Darfur in the coming months. A total of 3,500 refugees had fled the conflict a decade ago. The first group of 45 returnees arrived in Nyala Airport on 12 December and were hosted at a transit center for 3 days in South Darfur before being transported to their village of return. "UNHCR welcomes the voluntary return of these refugees from CAR," said Ms. Noriko Yoshida, Representative of UNHCR in Sudan. "With the governments of Sudan and CAR we are assisting the returnees with transportation and return packages."

## TUNISIA

### Germany to support securing Tunisia's eastern borders

- Germany is funding and [supporting](#) the setting-up of advanced electronic surveillance systems across Tunisia's eastern borders with Libya in an effort to thwart irregular border crossings. The new surveillance system is reportedly a response to increased security concerns particularly following the 2015 terrorist attack on a Tunisian resort. The measures are expected to also feed into efforts to curtail irregular migration across the Mediterranean. Michael Henjes, a spokesperson for the German Ministry of Defense, said that Germany will provide \$21.3 million for permanent radar systems along the Tunisian borders in addition to the \$18.8 million worth of mobile observation technology it supplied last year.

### Consultations on national strategy to combat trafficking in persons

- Tunisia's National Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons on 15 December organized a consultation on the national strategy to prevent and combat trafficking in persons with the support of UNODC. During the consultation, 30 representatives of International organizations and Tunisian NGOs provided comments on a preliminary national strategy. The comments will serve in the revision and finalization of a final version to be sent to the Tunisian government for approval and official launch and implementation.

## GREECE

### Arrivals to Greece

- 2,574 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers arrived to Greece by sea in the month of December representing an approximate 16% decrease in the number of arrivals from the previous month (3,070). This brings the total number of arrivals in 2017 to 29,595. As of 20 December, no deaths were recorded along the Eastern Mediterranean Route.

### Returns from Greece to Turkey

- 16 persons were [returned](#) to Turkey during the month of November under the EU-Turkey Statement. This brings the total number of persons returned in 2017 to 684. The figures for December represent a substantial decrease of 78% from November figures.

### EU leaders pledge asylum and border support to Greece

- During a meeting between EU leaders on the ongoing 'migration crisis', German Chancellor Angela Merkel and European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker [pledged](#) to bolster Greek efforts to accelerate the processing of asylum applications in addition to helping Frontex, the EU's border monitoring agency, increase its presence along Greece's borders with Turkey and Bulgaria. "Supporting the southeastern borders is important for the security of the EU and the management of migrant flows, of the people who want to enter the EU," said Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras.

### Government to draft law on expedited asylum procedures amid poor conditions on Aegean islands

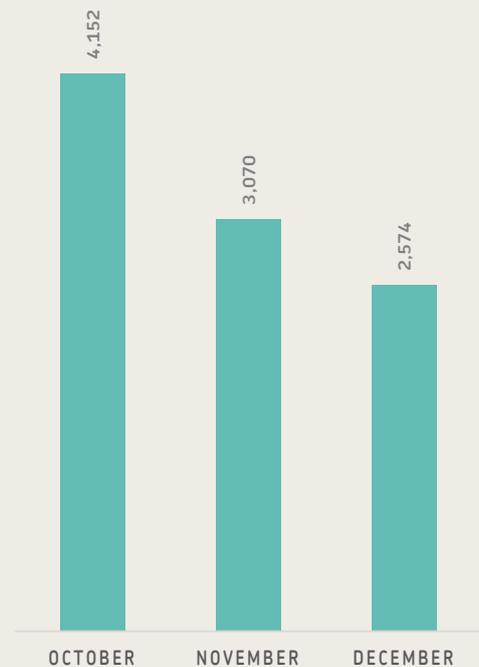
- The Greek government is drafting a law to [accelerate](#) the process of granting asylum to refugees in a bid to ease pressure on overcrowded refugee camps on Greece's eastern Aegean islands. The drafting of the law comes at a time when humanitarian groups are [warning](#) of a looming emergency on the islands. "In Lesbos, entire families who recently arrived from countries including Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq are packed into small summer tents, under the rain and in low temperatures struggling to keep dry and warm," said Aria Danika, MSF's project coordinator on the island. The island of Lesbos is currently housing more than 7,000 persons in facilities with a capacity of 2,300. Mayors from the Aegean islands said in a proclamation addressed to the Migration Minister, Ioannis Mouzalas, that Athens' containment policies had turned their communities into "island prisons". In attempts to alleviate the situation, the government has been transferring asylum seekers to the mainland since mid-October 2017. Mouzalas [visited](#) the refugee camp of Moira in Lesbos saying "We are making a huge effort to improve conditions. The current situation is of course not what we want, but we believe that we will succeed, and I believe that by the end of January the situation in Moria will tend to normalize." However, UNHCR [expressed](#) its concern over the 10,000 asylum seekers who remain crammed into government-run facilities on the islands and has called on

the Greek government to continue easing pressure on Lesbos, Chios and Samos by further expediting transfer procedures for those eligible to move as well as improving conditions for those remaining on the islands.

### Greek court sentences alleged smugglers to prison

- A court in northern Greece [sentenced](#) 23 persons to prison terms ranging from eight to 1,489 years for smuggling Iraqi and Syrian refugees from the Turkish border in 2015 and 2016. The court handed the longest sentence to a Greek man convicted of running a smuggling network that arranged the transport of more than 500 migrants, asylum seekers and refugees in 43 separate cases. In a separate case, two Syrian men were [arrested](#) in northern Greece on charges of smuggling 21 migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, including ten minors. Police said the men may be members of a wider smuggling network.

Arrivals by Sea, Greece  
October–December



## ITALY

### Arrivals to Italy

- 2,268 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers arrived to Italy by sea between 29 November and 31 December. This roughly represents a 60% decrease in the number of arrivals from the previous month. This brings the total number of arrivals in 2017 119,310, which is a 34% decrease in the figure from the year total for 2016. 29 deaths were recorded along the Central Mediterranean Route between 29 November and 20 December.

### Italy wants Libya to take over Mediterranean interceptions

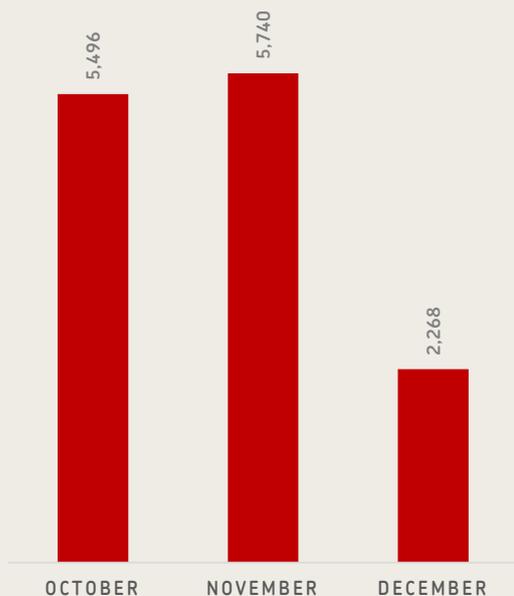
- It has been [revealed](#) that Italy wants the Libyan coastguard and authorities to fully takeover and undertake migrant, refugee and asylum seeker interception operations in about a tenth of the Mediterranean by 2020. The plan was presented by Italy's coastguard at a conference organized by the EU's anti-trafficking operation, Sophia, and attended by various Mediterranean navy and EU representatives as well as non governmental organizations. According to the plans, Italy is going to invest €44 million in Libya's coast guard. The Libyan coastguard has already expanded its operations in terms of territorial scope with zones extending from 90 to 200 miles from Libyan shores. Rights groups and NGOs have voiced grave concerns over Italy's plans and have questioned the Libyan coastguard's ability to participate in search-and-rescue and interception operations without placing migrants, refugees and asylum seekers at even greater risk. They also pointed to the dismal conditions awaiting those intercepted at sea when they arrive on shore. Nicola Stalla, Search-and-Rescue Chief for SOS Mediterranean said, "From the testimony we hear from the

migrants, we know that people intercepted at sea have then re-entered the circle of violence and imprisonment and abuse that they were fleeing."

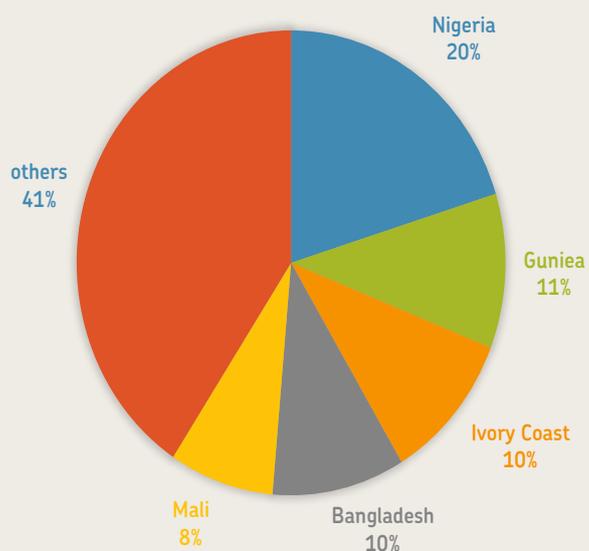
### Hundreds march to allow migrants, refugees and asylum seekers into France from Italy

- A group of 500 people representing charities, human rights groups and migrant rights advocates [marched](#) along the French Riviera on 16 December to demand that migrants, refugees and asylum seekers stranded at the borders of Italy and France be allowed to cross. Those marching expressed solidarity with persons who have continued to risk their lives to cross from Italy to France by sea or across dangerous highways. Speaking about the march, Rene Dahon, a member of Roya citizens association said, "We know the human impact, throughout their (the migrants') route. But the impact near the borders, we estimate around 20 people have perished, either by drowning near Ventimiglia, or by getting hit by a truck on the highway or by a train in a tunnel, or by climbing over trains and in finding a hiding place near the electric system, they died from burning. So this is why we are here today."

Arrivals by Sea, Italy  
October - December 2017



Arrivals by Sea to Italy, Main Countries of Origin  
January - December 2017



## RESEARCH OF INTEREST

### [Gender Equality Promising Practices - UNHCR](#)

Report highlights gender equality practices that are part of UNHCR's response to the Syria crisis in the Middle East and North Africa.

### [Migrant Vulnerability to Human Trafficking and Exploitation: Evidence from the Central and Eastern Mediterranean Migration Routes - IOM](#)

Report examines migrants' vulnerability to human trafficking and exploitation through evidence collected by IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) in 2016.

### [Libya's Dark Web of Collusion: Abuses against Europe-bound Refugees and Migrants - Amnesty International](#)

Report investigates the abuses migrants, asylum seekers and refugees face on their way to Europe and the complex ways different actors contribute to their vulnerability.

### [Story of a journey across Europe: From first reception to integration of migrants - Solidar](#)

Report provides an assessment of reception services in Greece and Italy and the integration of youth migrants, asylum seekers and refugees in Germany.

### [Mixed Migration Monthly Summary November 2017 - MMP](#)

The report provides insights on the current migration trends in the Middle East during the month of November 2017.

# MULTIMEDIA OF INTEREST

## [Evacuation from Libya gives refugees new hope](#) - UNHCR

An editorial and video covering the evacuation of vulnerable refugees from Libya.

## [The refugee families living among filth and faeces in camp in Greece](#) - Sky News

An editorial and video looking into the dire conditions facing refugees at a camp in Lesbos.

## [Ad of the Day: Beautiful animation calls attention to plight of refugees](#) - The Drum

An animated video hoping to bring greater awareness and attention to the global refugee crisis. The video is the product of a collaboration between Iranian refugee artist, Majid Adin, and Help Refugees, an organization working on refugee issues.

## [Angry about the slave trade in Libya? Spare some anger for Europe](#) - Washington Post

A video providing an overview of the latest revelations about 'slave markets' in Libya and how EU policies contribute to migrant, refugee and asylum seeker vulnerability.

\*MHub does not vouch for the accuracy or reliability of articles in its Monthly Bulletin.