



MONTHLY TREND REPORT

COVERING MIXED MIGRATION TO, THROUGH & FROM NORTH AFRICA

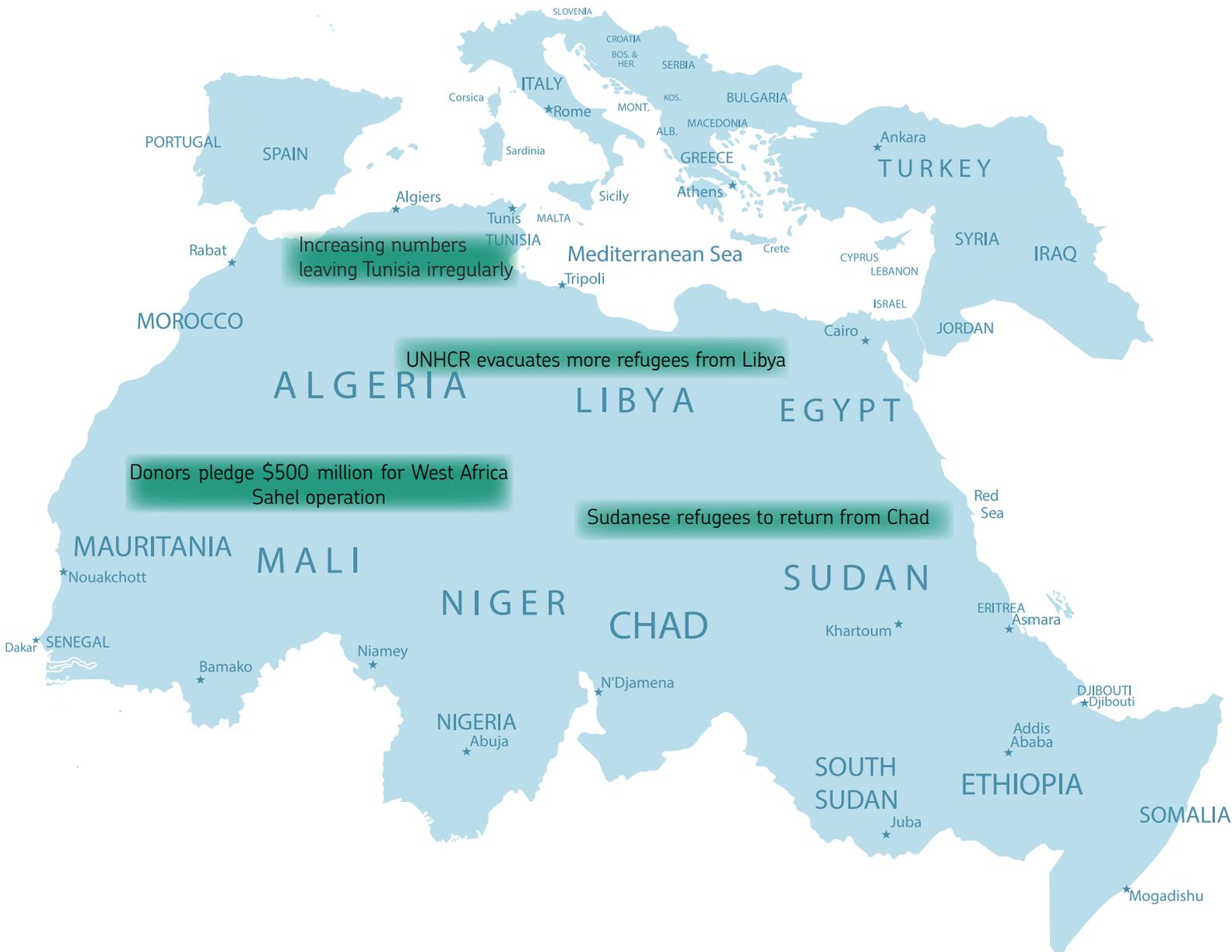
About: MHub is the regional knowledge hub and secretariat for the North Africa Mixed Migration Task Force, comprising of DRC, IOM, OHCHR, RMMS, Save the Children, UNHCR, UNICEF and UNODC. It promotes a human rights-based approach to ensure the protection of people moving in mixed and complex flows to,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



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REGIONAL

Hungary appeals to Bulgarian EU presidency to change migration policy

- Hungary's Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán, [used](#) a recent visit to Sofia to urge the Bulgarian Prime Minister, Boiko Borissov, to reconsider the current EU migration policy and to express his continued opposition to the refugee relocation scheme. Bulgaria currently holds the rotating presidency of the EU Council which changes every six months. Prime Minister Orbán said that a new migration policy should focus on strengthening the EU's external borders rather than on relocation programs. He further added that whilst some may see migration as something positive, "we [Hungarians] do not think that it is, it is dangerous."
- Prime Minister Orbán's visit to Bulgaria came only a day after his [calls](#) for a 'global alliance against migration' at an event launching his right-wing, Fidesz party's campaign for an 8 April election. In his controversial address, Prime Minister Orbán said, "Christianity is Europe's last hope" and that immigration can "our worst nightmares can come true. The West falls as it fails to see Europe being overrun."
- Prime Minister Orbán usually couples his anti-immigration rhetoric with strong anti-Brussels sentiment. This is exemplified in Hungary's refusal to comply with the EU relocation scheme which has led the EU to [launch](#) infringement proceedings against Hungary (as well as the Czech Republic and Poland, which also rejected the relocation scheme) in June 2017. The EU Commission further [referred](#) the case to the EU Court of Justice in December 2017.

UNHCR, UNDP and OCHA call for support for Syrians, refugees and host communities

- On 23 February, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, the UNDP Administrator, Achim Steiner, and Emergency Relief Coordinator Mark Lowcock jointly [briefed](#) UN member states in Geneva on the humanitarian crisis and ongoing conflict in Syria. The UN chiefs further called for greater support to those displaced by the conflict in the region and the countries that host them. They said, "Now more than ever, it is critical to sustain and reinforce international support to the neighboring countries and communities hosting some 5.5 million Syrian refugees in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt. They continue to provide a profound service to humanity at a time when inside Syria, inhumanity seems to be prevailing." The UN principals highlighted how, despite efforts to cater to the needs and vulnerabilities of those displaced, millions of refugees as well as members of host communities continue to barely survive on or below the poverty line. They further added, "It is vital for the international community to continue to support Syrian refugee families whose needs and challenges increase with every passing day, week, month and year in displacement."
- The [2018-2019 Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan in Response to the Syria Crisis \(3RP\)](#) released by UN agencies, along with 270 NGO partners in December 2017 has called for \$4.4 billion in order to support 5 million refugees and 3.9 million member of host communities in the region.

France proposes tougher migration policies

- Emmanuel Macron's government [proposed](#) tighter immigration and asylum [policies](#) that aim to speed up deportations, double the amount of time authorities can detain rejected asylum applicants to 90 days and halve the time applicants can appeal decisions. "It's a well-balanced law, in line with European law above all, and it is absolutely necessary that countries like Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Sweden have the same type of procedures," said French Interior Minister Gérard Collomb. The bill has been criticized by members of Macron's La République En Marche party, NGOs, lawyers and employees, some of whom staged a protest against the bill. Amnesty International said that it would press lawmakers to amend the proposal which is set to be debated in April 2018.

Donors pledge \$500 million for West Africa Sahel operation

- International donors [pledged](#) \$500 million for a multinational military operation in West Africa's Sahel region. The pledge was made for the G5 Sahel force which aims to improve regional security, consisting of troops from Mali, Niger, Chad, Burkina Faso and Mauritania, during a [conference](#) that brought together 50 countries. The pledges should allow the force to be fully operational this year. The G5 Sahel operation is expected to expand to 5,000 personnel and will also carry out humanitarian and development work. Niger's President Mahamadou Issoufou said that many young people in the Sahel felt they had only two options: to die in the Mediterranean while attempting the crossing to Europe or to die at the hands of militants. "We have to act resolutely to change the face of the Sahel region or risk seeing this region of the world fall irreversibly into chaos and violence," President Issoufou told the conference. France is set to spend 1.2 billion euros on development in the region over the next five years, a 40 percent increase over current levels, while other countries are expected to provide more aid for farmers, schools and water projects.

UN rights expert warns that migration policies can amount to ill-treatment

- UN Special Rapporteur on Torture Nils Melzer [told](#) the UN Human Rights Council that increasingly obstructive migration laws, policies and practices have pushed migrants, refugees and asylum seekers towards irregular pathways and methods where they are exposed to the risks of torture and ill-treatment. Melzer said some policies and practices used by governments to deter or prevent the arrival of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers could themselves amount to torture or ill-treatment. "States are increasingly depriving people of their liberty as a routine or even mandatory response to irregular migration. However, the systematic and open-ended detention of people simply because they are migrants has nothing to do with legitimate border protection but amounts to arbitrary deprivation of liberty," he said. Melzer urged States to stop basing their migration policies on deterrence, criminalization and discrimination saying,

“The only way to end the horrendous suffering caused by migrant trafficking, abusive smuggling and arbitrary detention is to provide migrants with safe and regular migration pathways, and to ensure the effective protection of their human rights not only in theory, but also in practice.”

ALGERIA

Algeria to increase number of border posts with Morocco

- The Algerian government has [announced](#) plans to increase border security measures along the country's borders with Morocco. The latest measures will come in the form of ten additional border surveillance posts to augment the 14 existing security surveillance posts along the border. According to Akhbar el-Yom newspaper, Algerian military authorities said, “the Algerian border posts will be supported by military engineering equipment and about 33 border surveillance cameras, and they will be tasked to track smuggling networks and ISIS's terrorist groups and cover the large border crossings with surveillance devices that will be functional 24 hours a day non-stop.” The new posts are expected to become operational by April 2018.

Rights organizations decry violations of migrants' rights in Algeria

- Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have launched scathing criticisms of Algeria's treatment of migrants and refugees. Amnesty International's castigation comes in the organization's annual report on the state of human rights in

the world for 2017-2018. The report refers to the mass expulsion of 6,500 Sub-Saharan migrants in 2017 and to an [incident](#) where Algerian authorities denied entry to 25 Syrian refugees (including 10 children) stranded in the buffer zone with Morocco. Amnesty had previously [reported](#) on Algeria's racial profiling and deportation practices in October 2017.

- Human Rights Watch (HRW) released a [statement](#) condemning the continuing use of force and intimidation and the absence of due process for migrants rounded up by Algerian authorities since the beginning of 2018 and expelled to Niger. While figures have not been released so far, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) estimates that as many as 3,000 persons, including women and children, have been expelled since the beginning of the year. Speaking of the latest events, Sarah Leah Whitson, Middle East and North Africa director at HRW said, “Algeria is rounding up and deporting migrants in a degrading way and depriving them of the right to have their cases reviewed on an individual basis.”

EGYPT

Organ traffickers arrested in Cairo

- The Ministry of Interior [arrested](#) two people for purchasing and selling human organs via a social media group allegedly called “Kidney donors with material compensation”. The Ministry said the pair bought kidneys for \$8,000 and would sell them for \$11,000. In 2010 Egypt passed legislation to crack down on human trafficking. The law imposes prison terms and fines on those found guilty of trafficking in persons. The law also makes provision to protect the rights of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers to access healthcare and legal assistance.

Egyptian government claims no irregular migration by sea since 2016

- Minister of Local Development Abu Bakr el-Gendi [said](#) that no boats have left Egyptian shores irregularly since 2016. Gendi stressed, during the meeting of the ninth session of the Euro-Mediterranean Association, that Egypt has adopted a comprehensive strategy to combat irregular migration on the legal, military and cultural front. The Minister also suggested that countries expand legal pathways for youth seeking education.

Foreign Minister affirms Egypt's commitment to refugees

- The Egyptian Foreign Minister [affirmed](#) Egypt's moral commitment towards refugees during his meeting with Filippo Grandi, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. “The foreign minister expressed appreciation for the role of the UNHCR office in Cairo, highlighting the history of cooperation between Egypt and the organisation since 1954,” said a statement by Egypt's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Ahmed Abu Zeid. Shoukry also stressed the need to increase UNHCR allocations to aid Egypt's efforts in hosting refugees. On his part, Grandi expressed his appreciation for the efforts and services provided to refugees, particularly Syrians, in Egypt, describing the country as a “role model for many countries”.

UNODC events in Egypt

- UNODC organized a training seminar in collaboration with the National Coordinating Committee on Preventing and Combating Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling and the National Center for Judicial Studies between 6 and 8 February. The workshop was held for 27 senior judges from Upper Egypt and Cairo, including two military judges from Aswan.
- UNODC organized a four-day workshop between 17 and 20 February for 20 Egyptian prosecutors on how to investigate and prosecute cases of migrant smuggling. The event was organized in collaboration with the National Coordinating Committee on Preventing and Combating Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling and the International Cooperation and Human Rights Division in the Office of The Egyptian Prosecutor General.

Maritime incidents

- 375 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers were rescued off the coast of Libya across 4 different incidents in the month of February, which is 78% less than the rescue figures for February 2017. There were 34 recorded deaths during the month of February, which represent a sharp increase from the 3 recorded deaths in the previous month of January.

Returns from Libya

- The Nigerian National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) has [assisted](#) 2,114 Nigerian nationals to return home from Libya since January. The NAPTIP launched the largest evacuation operation for its citizens stranded in Libya earlier this year. A further 61 Malian nationals [returned](#) to Mali via the IOM's Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) program. Those returned to Mali had been held at a detention center in Libya.

Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers dead and injured in truck accident

- At least 19 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers were [killed](#) and a further [80](#) were injured in a road accident near the Libyan town of Bani Walid on 14 February. The accident happened around 3 am local time, when the vehicle used to transport the migrants, refugees and asylum seekers struck a ditch and toppled over. There were approximately 180 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers crowded into the truck's cargo containers at the time of the accident. Of the 19 confirmed dead, four were children, one was a woman and the rest, adult men. Some sources indicate that the actual number of those killed may be [22](#) or [25](#). Those injured were transported to a local hospital while those severely injured and requiring specialized care were transferred to a hospital in Tripoli. Bani Walid hospital manager Mohamed al-Mabrouk said, "We did not receive the driver (at the hospital), and we don't know what has happened to him. Most likely he's survived otherwise he would be brought here." There are reports that many of the migrants who were involved in the accident and survived were taken to an unknown location by smugglers. In a statement following the accident, IOM Libya Chief of Mission, Othman Belbeisi, said, "Our priority needs to be protecting these migrants and others throughout the country, while making migration through Libya safe and regular. One death, whether in the desert or at sea, is one too many."

Three day workshop on labor migration in Libya

- The Libyan Minister of Labor and Capacity Building, in coordination with IOM, [hosted](#) a three-day workshop between 11 and 14 February in Tunis on developing Libya's labor market and fostering youth empowerment. The event brought together Libyan government officials from the Ministries of Planning, Education and Health and representatives from the private sector to discuss the role of labor in development and youth empowerment. The event served as a first step towards elaborating a Libyan labor migration strategy. As the culmination of the workshop, a working session was held between IOM and the heads of the main directorates of the Ministry of Labor on 14 February in Tripoli to identify national priorities and develop a strategic workplan on labor migration management.

AU-EU-UN tripartite meeting in Tripoli

- The AU-EU-UN tripartite committee on irregular migration [convened](#) a meeting in Tripoli on 22 February to discuss recent developments and to explore ways the international community can support Libya and end the 'crisis' of irregular migration. The meeting brought together Libyan Foreign Minister Mohammed

Sayala, the African Union's Social Commission Head Amira Al-Fadel, the European Union Delegate to Libya Bettina Muscheidt, representatives from the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) and other Libyan and European officials. At the meeting, Minister Sayala said he [hoped](#) the EU would help Libya develop electronic monitoring systems to secure its borders as well as invest in development projects in countries of origin in order to stem the flow of migrants. He further added, "Libya has provided all the requirements and continues to provide assistance needed by the migrants in the reception centers, despite lack of any international support for Libya in this regard. Libya has nothing to hide from the international community on illegal immigration. The reception centers are open to all regional and international organization (sic)." Those assembled agreed to provide a support package to the Libyan Directorate for Combating Illegal Migration (DCIM) and to train its staff on how to create a database for tracking migrants and their countries of origin in order to facilitate repatriation operations.

- The AU-UN-EU released a joint statement following their representatives' visit to Libya where they [reaffirmed](#) their commitment to providing greater support to Libya and to enhance cooperation with the UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) in areas of migration and protection. The statement also called for improved conditions in Libyan detention centers, to ensure the release of vulnerable persons and to provide unhindered access to UN agencies and humanitarian organizations.
- To that end, the European Commission [announced](#) on 26 February that it was adopting three new programs under the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF) to follow up on commitments made by the AU-EU-UN Task Force to address the migrant, refugee and asylum seeker situation in Libya. The funds will be directed towards the return and reintegration of migrants stranded in Libya and the resettlement of vulnerable refugees. Speaking about the new programs, the EU Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven Mimica, said, "The EU stands by the many African migrants and refugees in need. With these new measures worth over 150€ million we continue to save and protect lives and tackle the root causes of migration. Because we also want to support people in improving their lives in their home countries and look into the future with hope."

UNHCR evacuates more refugees from Libya

- UNHCR has continued [evacuating](#) vulnerable refugees as part of the Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM) from Libya that was initiated in November 2017. Over 1,000 refugees have been evacuated from Libyan detention centers since the beginning of the operation. Those evacuated were taken to Niamey in Niger and to Rome in Italy. Two flights carrying 128 and 150 refugees respectively departed Tripoli for Niger on 13 and 14 February. Those relocated to Niger were transported to guesthouses where they received psychosocial support and assistance. Over 700 refugees have been relocated to Niger so far pending resettlement to a third country or other durable solutions.
- Additionally, 150 highly vulnerable refugees were evacuated directly to Italy in the second of such operations. Those evacuated to Rome included children and women who were held in captivity for long periods of time. The first such group of refugees was [evacuated](#) to Italy in December 2017 and was hailed as a landmark operation. Speaking about the ETM, UNHCR's special Envoy for the Central Mediterranean, Vincent

Cochetel said, “These evacuations are the best example of the impact that international solidarity can have on refugees themselves; however, much more needs to be done. Only 16,940 resettlement places have been received so far for the 15 priority countries of asylum along the Central Mediterranean route, including Libya and Niger. We call on all countries to come forth with additional places that will provide a tangible solution for many more refugees who are still in Libya.” It is expected that thousands more to will be evacuated in 2018.

Libya Migration Working Group meets in Tripoli

- The Libyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and IOM [co-chaired](#) the second Migration Working Group meeting in Tripoli on 26 February. The Migration Working Group is one of six such working groups operating under the Coordination Framework

for International Technical Cooperation with the State of Libya. This coordination framework is developing actionable tools and solutions to support effective Libyan migration governance that respects the human rights of persons on the move whilst reducing and mitigating the effects of irregular migration. Speaking about the Working Group, Louai Turjiman, Director of European Affairs, Ministry of the Foreign Affairs and the chair of the meeting, said, “This second meeting is a crucial step in cementing the way forward through the finalization of membership and terms of reference. Through this strengthened partnership with IOM, we hope to develop migration management policies that ensure any planned action is fit to the context on the ground and addresses the needs of those vulnerable. We see the Migration Working Group as the main body for coordination with partners on migration.”

MALI

Increase in numbers of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

- IOM [announced](#) that the numbers of those internally displaced in Mali has surged again after a drop in figures at the end of 2017. This comes amid reports of resurgent communal violence and armed conflict in February 2018. The number of IDPs had dropped to 38,172 persons at the end of December 2017 from 40,743 in October of that year. That figure has now jumped to 46,336. The additional numbers of IDPs have been registered in the regions of Mopti, Menaka, Timbuktu and Gao in Northern Mali.

Mauritanian authorities introduce birth certification of Malian refugees

- Mauritanian authorities have [launched](#) a birth certification campaign for Malian refugee children in Mbera camp in mid-February. As of September 2017, there were [52,000](#) Malian

refugees living in Mbera camp. Mauritanian authorities have already began issuing birth certificates to the 7,600 Malian children born in the camp to date. They have also introduced a new system whereby newborns can be immediately registered. UNHCR has welcomed the ground-breaking effort in a briefing by UNHCR spokesperson Cécile Pouilly at the Palais des Nations in Geneva on 23 February. Ms. Pouilly said that birth certification will help fight early marriages of which 97 cases were recorded by UNHCR in 2017. She further added that it would play an important role in the eventual voluntary return of refugees.

MOROCCO

Western Mediterranean Route

- [1,102](#) migrants, refugees and asylum seekers have crossed from Morocco to Spain by sea in the month of February bringing the total arrivals by sea for this year to 3,700. February’s figure represents a 21% drop from the figure for January but is 105% higher than arrival figures for February of last year. It is also worth noting that there has been a drop in arrivals between January and February in all years since 2014.
- An additional [416](#) migrants, refugees and asylum seekers crossed from Morocco into Spain via its land borders with Morocco (through Ceuta and Mellila) during the month of February, bringing the total of number of persons making this crossing this year to 1,198. The number of land crossings have dropped by 48% from January to February and this month’s figure is 65% lower than that for the February last year.

Spanish court acquits father who smuggled son in a suitcase

- A court in the Spanish enclave of Ceuta [acquitted](#) an Ivorian man of charges of human trafficking and child endangerment following the smuggling of his eight-year-old son into the enclave in a suitcase in 2015. The man, who arrived in Spain in 2006, spent years struggling to secure a residency permit, stable income and job in order to bring his wife and children over. He was able to bring his wife and daughter to Spain regularly but authorities refused visa requests for his son because his income, they said, was insufficient to support the family. The father paid smugglers €5,000 to transport the boy but was unaware of their methods. The man was acquitted of the charges but fined €62 as the court was satisfied that he was unaware of the hazardous manner with which his son would be transported.

Morocco to boost border security

- Morocco [announced](#) that it will bolster border security by building ten new surveillance centers along its borders with Algeria. These latest additions will use sophisticated military equipment and will be fitted with 33 security cameras. Moroccan authorities explained that these latest measures are an attempt to curb smuggling activities and to deter Islamist militants.

Misconceptions may be increasing arrival of migrants and refugees to Niger

- There have been [reports](#) that there has been a recent surge in the numbers of migrants and refugees arriving to Agadez and some humanitarian professionals are speculating that a fundamental misunderstanding of recent interventions may be to blame. Louise Donovan, a field officer working for the UNHCR in Niger has said, “We have had an increase in the numbers of Sudanese asylum seekers and refugees coming from Libya to Agadez. All of them say that they’ve been experiencing situations of extreme violence there.” Some attribute this increase in figures to misconceptions about recent refugee evacuation operations from Libya with some assuming this implies the existence of a safe passage to Europe via Niger. Ms. Donovan further added, “There’s a huge amount of word-of-mouth. Most people have a mobile phone now; you can easily get onto the internet and read all kinds of things. So some people have indeed told us that they heard of this gossip, but by far not everybody.”

IFRC President’s visit to Agadez

- The President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Francesco Rocca, [visited](#) Agadez in February in his first official trip in the role. President Rocca said he had decided to make Niger his first official visit because of the central role it plays as a migrant and refugee hub and transit point for those on the move. He heavily criticized policies that promote migration control at the expense of safety and dignity and called for an increased humanitarian role in Niger with a focus on local capacity-building efforts. Speaking at the end of the four-day visit, he said, “It’s not a choice between security and dignity. We have to reject, absolutely, the idea that the decision by governments to reduce or constrain migration can ever justify the increased suffering of migrants.” President Rocca further highlighted the innumerable deaths in the Sahara and added, “People in Agadez told me that the Sahara is just as deadly as the Mediterranean. The difference is that we don’t know how many people have died there, or what inhumanity they have faced.”

SUDAN

African intelligence agencies meet in Khartoum

- The Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA) [met](#) in Khartoum on 26 February to discuss irregular migration, human trafficking and people smuggling. The meeting, which brought together 17 Intelligence services from the continent, aimed to develop comprehensive, practical solutions to end irregular migration and human trafficking. Speaking at the opening session of the meeting, Jalal al-Din al-Skeikh al-Tayeb, the Deputy Director of Sudan’s National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) said the intelligence service had dispatched teams to Libya and Niger to better understand the phenomena and the transnational criminal networks that play a central role in them. Executive Secretary of CISSA, SHEMELES SIMAI, said, “24 million of migrants fall victims for human trafficking, half of them are children and the majority are African girls between ages of 5 to 15 years.” He further added that criminal organizations spend around \$35 million to facilitate the transport of trafficking victims through the region.

Sudan expects influx of South Sudanese refugees

- Al-Tayeb Mohamed Abdallah, Secretary-General of the White Nile State government and Chairman of the technical coordination committee for refugee affairs, [said](#) that the state was preparing for a surge of South Sudanese refugees. He further added that refugees were arriving via Al-Kuwaik, Al-Migaines and Joda border crossings and that the state

currently hosts nearly 150,000 South Sudanese refugees. the returnees with transportation and return packages.”

Chadian refugees return home from Darfur

- Over 270 Chadian refugees have been [repatriated](#) to Chad from Um Shalya camp in the last week of February. Sudan, Chad and UNHCR signed two separate tripartite agreements in May of last year to facilitate the return of Chadian refugees from Sudan and Sudanese refugees from Chad. The first group of 301 refugees to return to Chad left Sudan on 18 December 2017. Sudanese President, Omar Al Bashir, has previously [instructed](#) the Interior Minister to accelerate the operations of return of both Sudanese and Chadian refugees.

UNODC training for journalists

- UNODC held a three-day training workshop in Khartoum between 27 February and 1 March to strengthen the capacity of Sudanese journalists to report on cases of trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants. The workshop trained a total of 29 journalists from Khartoum based newspapers. In addition, 3 representatives of the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking also attended the workshop. The workshop was funded by GIZ (financed by the European Union) and was implemented in the framework of the project Better Migration Management programme (BMM).

TUNISIA

Increasing numbers leaving Tunisia irregularly

- Increasing numbers of Tunisians have been [embarking](#) on irregular journeys to reach Europe with many attributing the rising numbers of Tunisian migrants to worsening economic conditions and soaring of unemployment. More recently, the number of those leaving Tunisia irregularly had spiked in 2011 at the height of the period of popular uprisings that toppled many Arab leaders. In the second half of 2017, however, the numbers of those attempting to reach Europe began increasing once more with 1,400 Tunisians arriving in Italy in September

alone as compared to the 1,350 that arrived in the eight-month period leading up to September. This trend shows no signs of abating with Italian Ministry of Interior figures showing that the number of Tunisians arriving in the month of January jumping from 16 to 611 from January 2017 to January of this year.

The US to invest in greater border security in Tunisia

- The US Department of Defense will [provide](#) Tunisia with roughly \$20 million in high-tech sensors along its borders with Libya to bolster border surveillance and security. The Pentagon notified Congress of the latest measures in a letter last month and explained that they would support Tunisia's efforts to tackle migrant smuggling, human trafficking and extremist threats. In his letter to Congress, Assistant US Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense, Kenneth Rapuano, wrote, "The funds will enhance the capacity of the government of Tunisia to detect and respond to threats posed by the trafficking of illicit materials." The US had previously allocated roughly \$24.9 million towards the construction of a 125-mile border fence along the Tunisian-Libyan border in 2016. The measures will be drawn from a joint fund by the US and Germany and comes at heel of an [announcement](#) by the German Ministry of Defense that they will fund more electronic surveillance systems along the same border.

UNODC organizes training and workshop on trafficking in persons

- UNODC organized a training session on trafficking in persons and migrant smuggling for 150 magistrates in partnership with the Magistrate Training Institute and the National Committee against Trafficking in Persons on February 18. During the session, UNODC launched the updated version of its Manual for Tunisian judges on trafficking in persons and migrant smuggling.
- Between 26 February and 1 March UNODC organized a workshop on the critical role of the judiciary in combating trafficking in persons. The workshop aimed to train magistrates who are focal points at the Tunisian National Committee against Trafficking in Persons and included sessions on the international and national legal frameworks against trafficking in persons and protection of trafficked persons and their rights as victims as well as witnesses. The workshop brought together 28 Tunisian prosecutors and investigative judges, along with 5 Moroccan magistrates.

GREECE

Arrivals to Greece

- 1,185 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers arrived to Greece by sea in the month of February representing an approximate 21% decrease in the number of arrivals from the previous month (1,501). This figure is also a 54% drop from the figure for December. These changes can be attributed to seasonal conditions as travel along the Eastern Mediterranean Route (EMR) is known to [spike](#) in the third quarter of the year between the months of July and September.

Returns from Greece to Turkey

- 23 persons were [returned](#) to Turkey during the month of February under the EU-Turkey Statement.

Refugees dead and missing at Greek-Turkish border

- Turkey's Disaster and Emergency Organization (AFAD) [announced](#) on 13 February that they had recovered the bodies of three refugees from the site of a capsized refugee boat in the Maritsa River that runs between Greece and Turkey. AFAD added that the search was ongoing for another four who have gone missing in the accident. Officials further added that two of those confirmed dead were children, aged roughly 12 and 4 years-old. Local residents had heard the screams of those on board and called the Turkish Gendarmerie.

Amnesty International issues strong criticism of Greece

- Amnesty International has [delivered](#) a searing critique of Greece's treatment of refugees and asylum seekers in its annual [report](#) on the state of human rights in the world for 2017-2018. The report lists a considerable number of concerns in relation to refugee and asylum seeker rights, conditions in camps, racism and police brutality. For example, the report states that the expectation that all those arriving would be subject to return to Turkey "continued to condemn many to extended asylum procedures while being stranded in appalling reception conditions on the island." The report particularly takes the Greek government to task over the deplorable conditions in reception centers where overcrowding, squalor, insufficient access to services are combined with threats to the physical safety of refugees, particularly in the form of sex and

gender based violence (SGBV). Many news organizations and human rights actors have previously and repeatedly [covered](#) and [called](#) on Greece to end the prison-like and 'abysmal' conditions in island 'hotspots'.

Thessaloniki court sentences man for smuggling

- A court in Thessaloniki has [sentenced](#) a Palestinian man to 13 years in prison on 20 February for running a major people smuggling ring at the height of the 'refugee crisis' between July 2014 and December 2015. The 29-year-old man was arrested in the UK following a request by Greek authorities and was extradited to Greece last year after the UK rejected his asylum claim.

Change of Greek migration minister

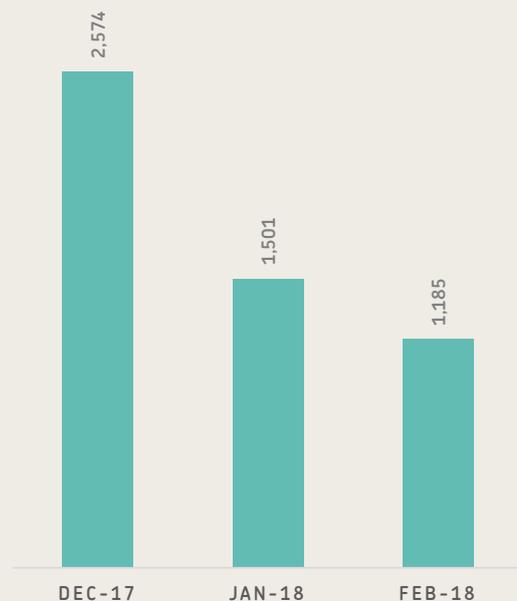
- Greek Prime Minister, Alexis Tsipras [replaced](#) the country's migration minister, Yannis Mouzalas with former deputy defense minister Dimitris Vitsas during a cabinet reshuffle on 28 February. A spokesperson for the Greek government said Prime Minister Tsipras "warmly thanked Mouzalas for his contribution." [Speaking](#) at the official handover ceremony, the incoming minister expressed his commitment to placing solidarity with refugees at the core of Greek migration policy. He said, "We all have to stick to our humanity first of all. This is the fundamental issue here. There will be no major changes in the ministry's policy in general, because this is the government's policy." Speaking at the same event, the outgoing minister said, "At the end of the day we made it... We implemented a rule which in my opinion is the rule which helped our country and refugees and migrants, and is the key also for the future. We tried to achieve a balance of rights."

Greece refuses to take back refugees from Germany

- Greece has so far [refused](#) to take back refugees from Germany in contravention of the Dublin Regulation, according to German newspaper Passauer Neue Presse. The Dublin Regulation states that countries of first arrival in the EU should be responsible for examining the asylum claims of newly arrived asylum-seekers. According to the German Agency for Migration and Refugees, 2,735 refugees currently residing in

Germany should return to Greece where their asylum claims should be processed and the German Ministry of Interior has further added that Greece has so far refused 95% of the cases.

Arrivals by Sea, Greece
December 2017 - February 2018



ITALY

Arrivals to Italy

- 991 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers arrived to Italy by sea in the month of February. This represents an approximate 77% decrease in the number of arrivals from the previous month (4,256) but is 93% lower than the figure of arrivals for February 2018. 101 deaths were recorded along the Central Mediterranean Route during the month of February.

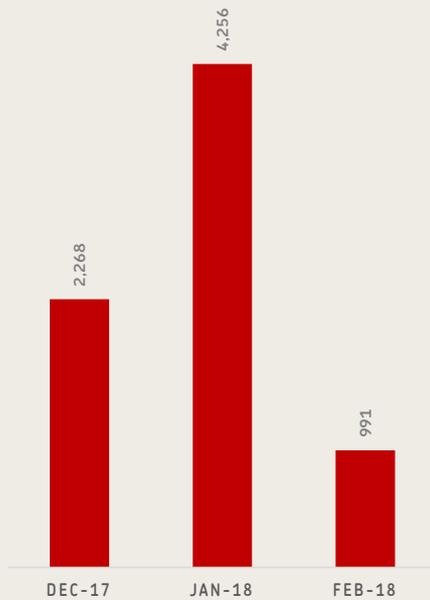
Migration at the forefront of Italian elections

- The Italian electorate went to the polls on 4 March to [elect](#) their parliamentary representatives amid increasingly hostile rhetoric towards migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. The results of the election have stoked fears of a hung parliament with many voters rejecting the political establishment, splitting the vote between competing movements and voting for populist parties. In a particularly concerning development, the right-wing, anti-immigration party, Lega (Northern League), [jumped](#) ahead in the polls leading commentators to worry about the role their agenda will play in the national policies.
- The run-up to the elections had seen the Northern League party [issue](#) increasingly hostile and xenophobic statements about migrants, refugees and asylum seekers with the party head, Matteo Salvini, promising voters the mass deportation of around 400,000 African migrants. Former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi also issued similar statements, [saying](#), "These 600,000 people, we will pick them up using police, law enforcement and the military." Speaking about the party's promises, Riccardo Fabiani, an analyst with the Eurasia group, said that such promises would be incredibly difficult to fulfill. He added, "Sure, you can send police in and arrest 5,000 migrants in a specific place, and present this to your voters as if you are doing something, but this has no real impact. The process of

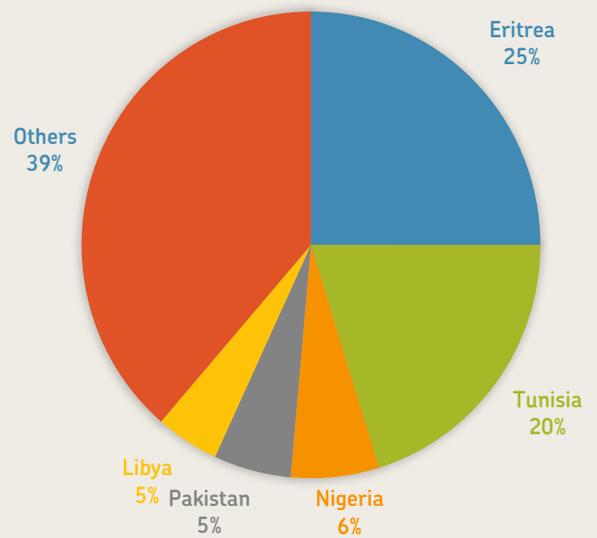
expelling migrants is costly and difficult, and internationally a [mass deportation] would be hugely controversial in Europe."

- While this may in fact be the case, such rhetoric and [misconceptions](#) regarding migration are already damaging in a climate where anti-immigrant sentiment is on the rise. Leaders in one Italian town have recently decided to commemorate and 'celebrate' the fact that 200 migrants had been expelled from their town with cake. In a more disturbing case, an Italian man in the Italian city of Macerata [opened](#) fire on sub-Saharan migrants in the street earlier this month wounding eight of them. In the run-up to the election political leaders have worryingly sought to stoke and capitalize on this anti-immigrant sentiment.
- Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in Italy are apprehensive about the future and what this latest election means for their well-being in Italy. One Moroccan migrant, Ibrahim, speaking to Reuters [said](#), "I really hope they don't make it even more horrible to stay in this country. I want to stay here."

Arrivals by Sea, Italy
December 2017 - February 2018



Arrivals by Sea to Italy, Main Countries of Origin
December 2017 - February 2018



RESEARCH OF INTEREST

[“Out of sight”: Second edition - MSF](#)

The second report in a series on the informal settlements and marginalization of refugees and asylum-seekers in Italy.

[MMP Note on the Zero Draft of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration - MMP](#)

The Mixed Migration Platform's (MMP) commentary on the zero draft of the GCM.

[Report of the Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment - OHCHR](#)

Report by OHCHR on the prevalence and characteristics of migration-related torture and ill treatment.

[Mixed Migration Flows in the Mediterranean: Compilation of available data and information - IOM DTM](#)

Report based on data gathered through DTM's flow-monitoring activities in the Mediterranean region.

[Mixed Migration Monthly Summary January 2018 - MMP](#)

The report provides insights on the current migration trends in the Middle East during the month of January 2018.

MULTIMEDIA & EDITORIALS OF INTEREST

[Award-Nominated Film Spotlights Trauma of Calais 'Jungle' Kids](#) – VOA

An editorial about the Calais 'Jungle' that focuses on an award-nominated film based on one of the young boys in the Calais camp titled 'Aamir'.

[Rescuing Migrants Fleeing Through the Frozen Alps](#) – New York Times

A multimedia feature about a volunteer who spends his evenings rescuing migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers attempting to cross into France through the Alps.

[Eritrean Artist Draws Hope from Evacuation to Europe](#) – UNHCR

An article and video about an Eritrean refugee artist with disabilities who was evacuated from Libya to Italy.

[Detained Migrants In Libya Have A Choice: Buy Your Way Out Or Be Sold Into Bondage](#) – NPR

An interview with migrants, refugees and asylum seekers who escaped modern-day slavery in Libya.

[Child-friendly Information: Migration](#) – Council of Europe

A video based on a Council of Europe [project](#) on child-friendly information for children in migration.

[Sex, Drugs & Refugees: Syrian teenagers in Athens resort to prostitution for survival](#) – RT

A video looking into the lives of young refugees who have had to resort to sex work in Greece.

[Follow the Money: What are the EU's migration policy priorities?](#) – Deutsche Welle

An editorial that analyzes how EU funding operates to achieve migration related objectives and policies.

[African Migration to Europe Is Not a Crisis. It's an Opportunity](#) – Center for Global Development

An editorial attempting to reframe large-scale migration as an opportunity rather than a cause for concern.

[At French Outpost in African Migrant Hub, Asylum for a Select Few](#) – New York Times

An editorial that offers a critical look at the creation of asylum processing 'hotspots' in Niger.

[From Periods to Pregnancy: the sexual health crisis for Calais refugees](#) – The Guardian

An article on the sexual and reproductive health needs of refugees in Calais and the volunteers from Gynaecology Without Borders providing them with urgent care.

[Algeria and Morocco's Migrant Policies Could Prevent Violent Extremism](#) – Institute for Security Studies

An editorial focusing on the role that liberalization of migration policies can play in fighting extremism and radicalization.

[Niger: Thousands of migrants trapped in Agadez face a bleak future](#) – IFRC

An article looking at the plight of migrants trapped in Agadez.

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