



## monthly trend report

### covering mixed migration to, through & from **NORTH AFRICA**

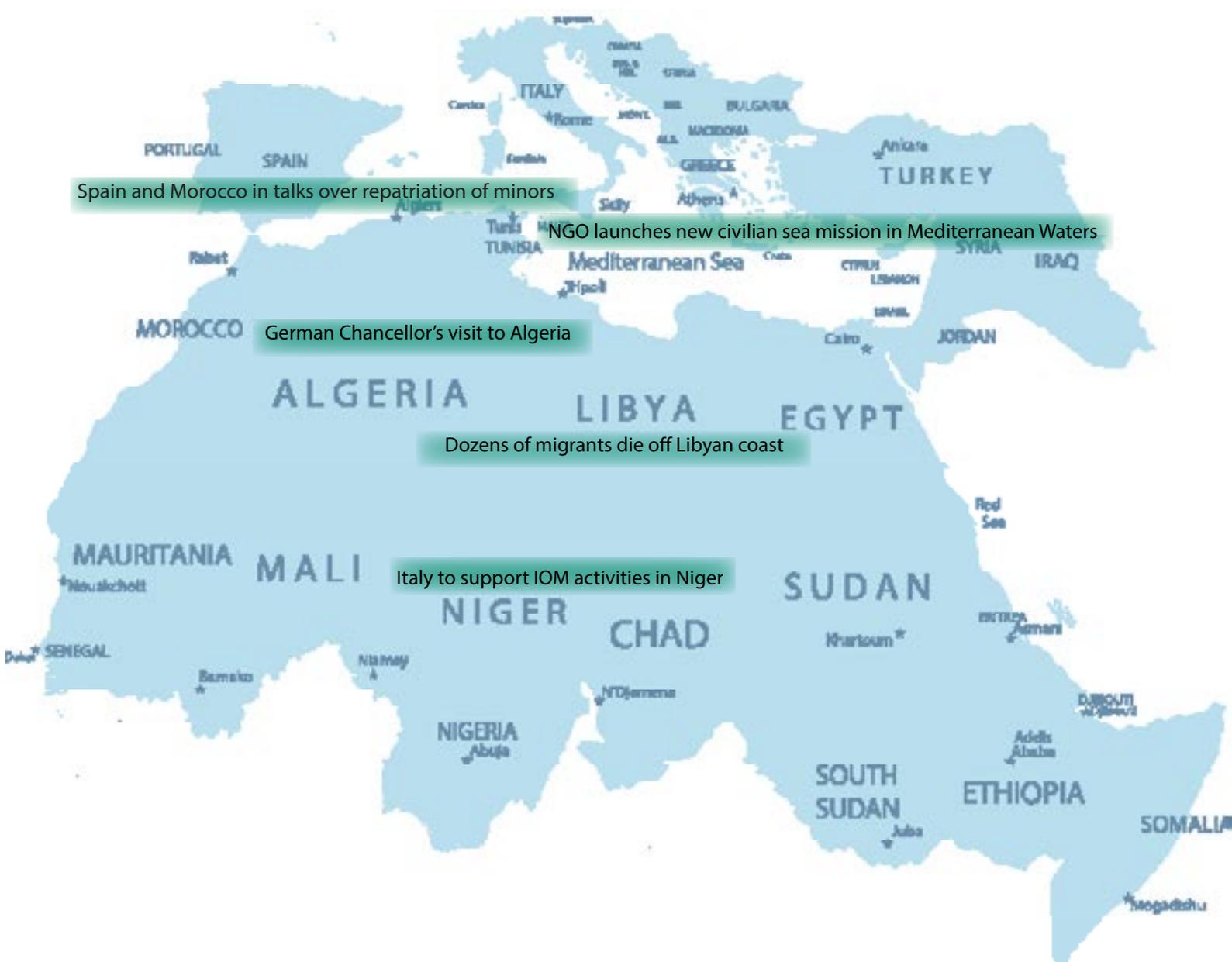
About: MHub is the regional knowledge hub and secretariat for the North Africa Mixed Migration Task Force, comprising of DRC, IOM, OHCHR, RMMS, Save the Children, UNHCR, UNICEF and UNODC. It promotes a human rights-based approach to ensure the protection of people moving in mixed and complex flows to,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

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.

Scope: This bulletin covers mixed migration trends in Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Sudan, Tunisia, Spain, Greece and Italy.

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

## HIGHLIGHTS



Spain and Morocco in talks over repatriation of minors

NGO launches new civilian sea mission in Mediterranean Waters

German Chancellor's visit to Algeria

Dozens of migrants die off Libyan coast

Italy to support IOM activities in Niger

## REGIONAL

No NGO rescue boats currently in central Mediterranean, agencies warn

- Rescue ship missions have reportedly [stopped](#) operating in the central Mediterranean waters since 26 of August. Activists have claimed that Italy and Malta are refusing to let rescue boats into their waters or allow any of the rescue boats to dock in their ports. The refusals have caused vessels operating by the “Open Arms NGO” to stop working in the central Mediterranean waters. The “Aquarius” which was previously forced to detour to Spain after being refused entry by Italy and Malta is due to restart operations from France. Its operators have said that they cannot guarantee its constant presence in the sea. This is not the first-time central Mediterranean waters are without any rescue ships. Two months before this stop, rescue ships had stopped operating between June 28th to July 8th of 2018. During those 10 days, more than 300 migrants are estimated to have lost their lives. Despite a relative decline in the numbers of arrivals to countries as Italy, the rate of deaths is much higher when compared to the number of arrivals in 2016 and the death rate in the same year.

Charities plea for help after Aquarius migrant rescue ship’s flag revoked

- Charities announced that the Panamanian Maritime Authority under pressure from the Italian government has [revoked](#) the flag of the migrant rescue ship “Aquarius”. The charities which included the MSF have asked European governments to intervene and regulate the status of the ship or give it a new flag to be able to register. The allegations were denied by the Italian interior minister Matteo Salvini in a move described as “strange” by the Spokeswoman of SOS Méditerranée since Matteo Salvini’s name wasn’t mentioned in the original pledge. The MSF head of emergencies said that what happened to the Aquarius reflect the double standards of European politics “For the past two years, European leaders have claimed that people should not die at sea, but at the same time they have pursued dangerous and ill-informed policies that have brought the humanitarian crisis in the central Mediterranean and in Libya to new lows.”

After Standoff, “Aquarius Migrants” Finally Disembark in Malta

- Malta [allowed](#) the Aquarius to finally dock in its port and disembark the 58 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers on board. This decision came after other EU countries agreed each to take a number of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. In the agreement, France accepted to take 18, Germany and Spain will each take 15 and Portugal will take 10 migrants. The 58 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers on the Aquarius among whom 35 were women and children, were rescued in the sea from two boats. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi stated, “Reinforcing search and rescue capacity on the central Mediterranean and disembarkation in places of safety, has to be everyone’s goal.”

UN extends mandate to fight people-smuggling off Libya’s coast

- The UN security council [has extended](#) Operation Sophia with an aim to fight smuggling boats off the coast of Libya. The programme allows EU naval forces to search the Mediterranean waters and stop vessels contributing to human trafficking. The proposed extension of programme submitted by the UK was supported by 15 members states and will be effective until 3 October 2019. This resolution aims to tackle the increasing death toll in the Mediterranean since the rate of death has increased despite drop in arrivals.

Protesters in Paris support migrant rescue ship Aquarius

- Hundreds of demonstrators [gathered](#) in Paris on Saturday 6 October wearing orange vests to protest the revocation of the flag of the Aquarius migrant rescue boat operated by SOS Mediterranee. The protestors waved signs such as “Saving lives: A duty not a crime” and “Save the Aquarius”. Further demonstrations also took place in other French cities such as Marseille and in the northern city of Lille. The Aquarius is still waiting for its status to be resolved as it is now operating without a flag, which prevents it from docking and disembarking migrants, refugees and asylum seekers it rescues.

NGO launches new civilian sea mission in Mediterranean waters

- The humanitarian group Mediterranea [launched](#) a new migrant rescue ship bearing the name ‘Mare Jonio’ to operate in the Mediterranean. The vessel a former tug boat was bought by the humanitarian group to help rescue migrants, refugees and asylum seekers and started operations on 3 October. The vessel’s mission will be to identify boats struggling while carrying migrants, refugees and asylum seekers and provide civilian presence in the areas where the Libyan coast guard and international military vessels are failing to rescue people. Lawmaker Nicola Fratoianni whose party is one of the political parties backing the ‘Mare Jonio’ said that the vessel is not to oppose the policies of the Italian government but rather to fill a gap left after many rescue ships were stopped from operating in the Mediterranean.
- It is important to note that Minister Salvini [declared](#) that Italian ports will be closed off to any non-Italian rescue ships after he took office. Therefore, the launch of Mare Jonio off the Libyan coast is considered a challenge to Salvini’s policies since the boat is carrying an Italian flag. This will make it tougher for the Italian minister to prevent the ship from docking in Italy.

## Vienna and Rome in clinch with UN over migration policy

- The UN has [criticized](#) the EU's handling of its migration policy whilst singling out some countries such as Italy, Germany and Austria. The UN Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, mentioned the three countries in her first speech as commissioner saying that Austria, Germany and Italy are prioritizing the return of the migrants over respect for their human rights obligations. The UN commissioner leveled accusations against Austria in particular for failing to take measures to meet its human rights obligations. Bachelet also criticized the Italian government's handling of the issues of migration and its stance towards rescue operations.

Commissioner Bachelet also criticized the prevalence of xenophobic hate speech in Germany and Hungary and the criminalization of those assisting asylum seekers. Austria's Chancellor Sebastian Kurz responded to the allegations by saying, "You will quickly realize that we have taken in the second-highest number of people in Europe per capita. It will soon become clear that our welfare state is so strong and the living conditions for migrants are better than in any other country in the world. The review is also an opportunity to correct prejudices and targeted misinformation about Austria." Italy responded to the criticisms by threatening to withdraw funding from the UN.

## ALGERIA

### German Chancellor's visit to Algeria

- German Chancellor Angela Merkel [made](#) a one-day visit to Algeria on 17 September during which she [met](#) with Algerian Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia and Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika. During Chancellor Merkel's meeting with President Bouteflika, the two heads of state discussed irregular migration and the situation in neighboring Libya. The visit is hoped to boost increased German investment in the North African country. At a joint press conference following the meetings, Chancellor Merkel and Prime Minister Ouyahia confirmed plans to speed up the repatriation of Algerians residing irregularly in Germany. Speaking about the plans, Chancellor Merkel said, "we talked about how to make more efficient that those who have no right to stay will be returned," while Prime Minister Ouyahia added, "I confirm that Algeria will

bring its citizens back, whether it's a matter of 3,000 or 5,000 (people)." The Algerian PM further added that repatriations are currently conducted via Air Algerie flights but that the process could be accelerated if Lufthansa could be convinced to fly Algerians back on their regular flights. There are approximately 3,700 Algerians residing irregularly in Germany and PM Ouyahia said that the cases of 700 of those are already being processed for repatriation. PM Ouyahia also took the opportunity to highlight what he saw as Algeria's vital role in stemming further irregular migration to Europe by preventing thousands of irregular migrants, refugees and asylum seekers from crossing into Algerian territory. Nevertheless, Algeria's efforts at combatting irregular migration have drawn severe criticism from the world community in the past few months.

## EGYPT

### EU to deepen cooperation with Egypt on migration

- At an EU summit that concluded on 20 September in Salzburg, EU leaders [agreed](#) to enter into formal talks with Egypt to explore how Egypt can help stem irregular flows across the Mediterranean. European Council President, Donald Tusk, and Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz, who currently holds the EU's rotating presidency, had met with Egypt's President Abdel Fattah el Sisi the previous week in Egypt. EU leaders are particularly impressed with Egypt's successful efforts at halting all irregular departures from its shores and are hoping to increase cooperation with Egypt in the service of Egypt's continued vigilance as well as its support in replicating its perceived successes across the region. Speaking about the talks, an EU diplomat said, "This is the first country in north Africa willing to talk to us about the fight against illegal migration. This is something new and potentially rewarding." While another [said](#) of Egypt's role, "This is a partner which is taking its responsibility seriously, a partner we can work with in the context of migration even more."

4-6 September 2018: Training Workshop on Combating Crimes of Irregular Migration and Trafficking in Persons. Held in Cairo, Egypt:

- Under the umbrella of the XMEX 19 project in Egypt, UNODC organized training workshop with the collaboration of the National Coordinating Committee for combating and preventing illegal Migration and Trafficking in Persons (NCCPIM& TIP) and the Administrative control authority in Egypt. The training included 18 participants from different

admiration. The workshop tackled mainly the below topics:

-The International and Regional Legal Frame: (United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) – Protocol of Combating Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children - Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land and Air - Indicators of Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants)

-The National Legal Frame for Combating Human Trafficking: (Law no. 64 of 2010 for Combating Human Trafficking– a brief on the relation between human trafficking and smuggling of migrants (national reality) - determinants of national investigations)

- Introduction to Electronic Investigations in Human Trafficking, irregular migration and uses of Cybercrime.

24-27 September: Training of Trainers for Law Enforcement Officers in the topic of Anti- Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants (ToT phase II) Held in Cairo, Egypt

- Under the umbrella of the XMEX 19 project in Egypt, UNODC organized training workshop with the collaboration of the National Coordinating Committee for combating and preventing illegal Migration and Trafficking in Persons (NCCPIM& TIP) and the Egyptian Homeland Security. The training included 20 participants from different administrations. The workshop tackled mainly the below topics:
  - The International and Regional Legal Frame: (United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) – Protocol of Combating Trafficking in

Persons, especially Women and Children - Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land and Air - Indicators of Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants)

- The National Legal Frame for Combating Human Trafficking: (Law no. 64 of 2010 for Combating Human Trafficking– a brief on the relation between human trafficking and smuggling of migrants (national reality) - determinants of national investigations)
- Introduction to Electronic Investigations in Human Trafficking, irregular migration and uses of Cybercrime
- It is worth noting that this training was conducted by the trainers who were trained in the ToT phase I that took place in August.

## LIBYA

Dozens of migrants die off Libyan coast

- A boat [sank](#) off the Libyan coast causing the death of more than 100 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in the beginning of September. According to MSF, two rubber boats left Libya carrying a large number of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers of different African nationalities on 1 September. One of the two boats was carrying 165 persons among whom were 20 children. 270 survivors were taken by the Libyan Coast Guard to the port of Khoms where they were being held in a detention center. MSF expressed concern about the hygiene and the medical care provided in the detention center especially given that pregnant women, children and people with serious medical conditions were among those detained.

Human Traffickers impersonate UNHCR staff

- UNHCR [warned](#) that human traffickers were impersonating UNHCR staff to gain access to migrants in Libya. The impersonators use items such as vests bearing the logo of UN agencies at disembarkation points. According to the UN, “the reports of criminals impersonating UNHCR staff come as the situation for refugees and migrants detained or living in the Libyan capital, Tripoli, has dramatically deteriorated.”

Security Council Renews Authorization for States to Inspect Vessels Suspected of Smuggling Migrants off Libya’s Coast, Adopting Resolution 2437

- The Security Council [took](#) extended the authorization for member states to inspect vessels off the coast of Libya (resolution number 2437 ) by one year. Under the authorization, member

states can check suspected ships if they have strong suspicions of human trafficking or migrant. This resolution comes after the 15 member-state council expressed concern about human trafficking activities affecting the stabilization of Libya.

- Negotiations within the security council on the resolution proposed by the UK [caused](#) disagreement with the US wanting to revise or remove some paragraphs that it deemed too “permissive for migration.”

Evacuation of refugees and migrants out of Libya is urgently needed

- MSF [is calling](#) for an immediate evacuation of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in detention centers close to the frontline of fire in the event of agreement over a ceasefire. The MSF’s head of mission, Ibrahim Younes said that centers had run out of food and water supplies and were relying on ad hoc supplies. Medical care has also suffered since NGOs that usually provide such care were forced to suspend their activities. Access to detention centers during the first days of clashes was barred preventing migrants, refugees and asylum seekers from accessing assistance and support, especially centers in the middle of hostilities. Some detention centers such as the Ain Zara center were evacuated with migrants, refugees and asylum seekers moved to centers some kilometers away. MSF criticized the manner of evacuation however, with MSF’s Head of Mission saying, “Transferring detainees from one detention centre to another within the same conflict zone cannot be described as an evacuation and it is certainly not a solution.”

## MOROCCO

UN High Commissioner for Refugees lauds Morocco’s migration and asylum policies

- Speaking at a UNHCR executive committee meeting in Geneva on 2 October, the High Commissioner, Filippo Grandi [praised](#) Morocco’s immigration and asylum policy and added that it sets a positive example for the region. The High Commissioner also lauded the level of cooperation between the Moroccan government and UNHCR.

Morocco rejects the idea of migrant centers for EU

- Morocco’s Minister for Foreign Affairs, Nasser Bourita, has [reiterated](#) Morocco’s rejection of EU plans for off shore migrant

centers in North African countries during an interview with the German paper Die Welt. Morocco, along with many other prospective countries for the location of such centers, had [previously](#) rejected such plans in June of this year. Speaking with Die Welt, Minister Bourita [said](#), “Morocco is generally opposed to all kinds of centers. This is part of our migration policy and a national sovereign position.” He further added, “The EU can’t ask Morocco to help with migration and the fight against terrorism and treat the country like an object.” Minister Bourita also blamed in-fighting among EU states and European political divisions for blowing the issue of migration out of proportion.

### Moroccan navy fires at migrant boat, killing one

- Members of the Moroccan navy [opened](#) fire at a speedboat carrying migrants across the Mediterranean on 25 September, killing 22-year-old Hayat Belkacem and injuring three others. According to Moroccan authorities, the boat was thought to be traveling in a suspicious manner and refused to comply with warnings. A source also [told](#) AFP that the boat had adopted a 'hostile attitude' and was performing "dangerous maneuvers that could have caused a collision that was narrowly avoided." The Spanish captain of the boat was unharmed and arrested by authorities. Despite Moroccan authorities' explanations for the incident, rights groups have sharply criticized the Moroccan navy's response and called for swift investigations into the incident. Speaking about the incident, Sarah Leah Whitson, Human Rights Watch's Director for Middle East and North Africa said, "There is no evidence at all to suggest that the passengers were a security risk to anyone - the only legal justification Morocco might have had to fire on them." Human Rights Watch also called for an immediate and transparent investigation into the incident and for the responsible parties to be brought to justice, calls that were [echoed](#) by Amnesty International. The tragedy of Belkacem's death has captured the hearts of many Moroccans with many sympathizing with the young student's hopes for a better future for herself and her family. In a statement released by the Moroccan Association of Human Rights in the city of Nador, the organizations said, "Moroccan civilians are killed in cold blood just because they want to leave this country of social disparities, poverty and repression." While football fans [took](#) to the streets of the city of Tetouan to mourn Belkacem's death and call for justice for her death.

### Dozens of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers feared dead off coast of Morocco

- According to reports from the Spanish NGO Walking Borders and the Moroccan Navy, 34 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, including two children, [are](#) feared dead off the coast of Morocco after they waited around 36 hours for help. On 2 October the Moroccan Ministry of Interior said that 11 bodies were recovered from the water in relation to the incident. Walking Borders founder Helena Maleno, who is a Morocco-based Spanish activist, said that those aboard the half-sunken

vessel were repeatedly appealing for help from Spanish and Moroccan authorities for nearly 12 hours on 1 October until their phones ran out of battery. 26 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers were rescued from the sea in relation to the incident. An 18-year-old Malian teenager who was said to be skipping the boat was arrested by authorities. It is however important to note that smugglers sometimes select members of a group of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers at random to take charge of commanding the boat.

### Moroccan authorities rescue migrants, refugees and asylum seekers

- Moroccan authorities [rescued](#) 37 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers off the coast of Tangier on 2 October. According to authorities, the group of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers were rescued from a partially-inflated boat that was struggling in unfavorable weather conditions, they further added that the boat sank shortly after the rescue operation.
- Traffic along the Western Mediterranean Route has spiked quite considerably since the beginning of the year and Moroccan government sources [reported](#) that they stopped 54,000 attempts at irregular crossing to Europe since the beginning of the year. Authorities further added that they dismantled 74 criminal people smuggling networks and seized 1,900 vessels over the same period.

### The Kingdom of Morocco has set up a network of prosecutors of Court of Appeal

- With the support of UNODC, the Kingdom of Morocco has set up a network of prosecutors of Court of Appeal to strengthen the prosecution of human trafficking cases and the implementation of Law 24-14 of 2018.
- 44 prosecutors of the 22 Courts of Appeal have been trained on the international and national legal framework on trafficking, investigation techniques and measures to protect the victims. A first training session took place in Tangier 24-26 of July and a second in Casablanca 24-26 of September. Members of the network are expected to work together and share information, good practices and expertise on cases via formal and informal communications.

## NIGER

### Over 400 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers rescued from Nigerien desert

- According to IOM, over 400 West African migrants, refugees and asylum seekers were [rescued](#) from the desert in Northern Niger over the course of two days. The two groups were found near the Nigerien border town of Assamaka. IOM said that they found the first group of roughly 347 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers on 3 September after they had arrived on foot overnight and that the second group of roughly 92 persons were found then next day on 4 September.

### Nigerien Foreign Minister addresses UN General Assembly

- Addressing the UN's General Assembly on 30 September, Niger's Foreign Minister, Kalla Ankourao, [told](#) leaders that Niger was suffering from the effects of climate change, migration, terrorism and poverty and that the UN is the only body that can resolve these issues. Addressing the assembled world leaders, Minister Ankourao said, "My country gives

the choice spot to the multilateralism and federating role of the UN." Minister Ankourao also welcomed the upcoming Marrakesh meeting for the adoption of the GCM and said, "As the prime example of a transit country, Niger will be there."

### Italy to support IOM activities in Niger

- The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation has [announced](#) €2.5 million in funding to support IOM's activities in Niger and Egypt via the Africa Fund with €1.5 million of the funds earmarked for the "Direct Assistance to Abandoned Migrants" project to be implemented in Niger. The project aims to boost IOM presence in the north-eastern regions of Niger bordering with Algeria to provide migrants with emergency services and medical aid as well as to support voluntary repatriation activities.

# SUDAN

Sudan calls for the confiscation of human trafficking proceeds

- The Sudanese government has [called](#) for the creation of an international agreement that would allow states to confiscate the proceeds from human trafficking and crimes related to irregular migration. The calls came during a speech delivered by Sudan's Attorney General, Omer Mohamed Ahmed, at the first ever regional conference of the prosecutor-generals and general attorneys of Africa and Europe in Egypt. Mr. Ahmed further called for an international agreement to exchange information on transnational trafficking and smuggling networks. Finally, Mr. Ahmed underscored the need to address the root causes of irregular migration through development, job creation and poverty reduction.

Sudanese authorities rescue minors from trafficking

- Sudanese authorities [rescued](#) almost 100 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers from a human trafficking and migrant smuggling network in the Sudanese capital Khartoum. 85 of the 94 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers rescued by authorities are minors. They were forced into intensive labor with many put to work in gold mines located east of Khartoum. Sudanese police arrested twelve women and two men in connection with the operation and seized \$20,000. The revelations came in a [statement](#) made by Interpol on 10 September. Speaking about the incident, Tim Morris, Interpol's Executive Director of Police Services, said, "One consistent aspect arising from our operations against human trafficking is the abuse of the inherent vulnerability of the victims, and perilous conditions they are made to work in for profit." Mr. Morris further added, "The diversity of nationalities among those rescued shows how human trafficking and people smuggling is a truly transnational problem which requires

a coordinated international response in which police and stakeholders share information and best practices."The majority of the victims came from Chad, Eritrea, Niger, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and South Sudan.

Sudan militia prevent the smuggling of over 100 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers to Libya

- Sudan's main paramilitary unit, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), has [thwarted](#) an attempt to smuggle 154 male migrants, refugees and asylum seekers to Libya in the first week September. Speaking about the operation, Col. Osman Abulgasem, Director of the RSF Guidance and Services Department, said that most of those stopped are Sudanese and most were between the ages of 22 and 26. The group was transferred to a military camp near Khartoum. Col. Abulgasem also alleged that the young men were aligned with terrorist and/or 'negative movements' through development, job creation and poverty reduction.

Awareness raising workshop for parliamentarians was organized in Khartoum

- On 11-12 September an awareness raising workshop for parliamentarians was organized in Khartoum. The objectives are to increase awareness and understanding of trafficking in persons (TIP) and smuggling of migrants (SOM), and to present and discuss Sudan's existing responses to TIP and SOM, including the policy and legal framework. The workshop was attended by 21 participants, 12 male and 9 female. It was under the Better Migration Management project (BMM) funded by EU and GIZ.

# SPAIN

Western Mediterranean Route

- [8,114](#) migrants, refugees and asylum seekers have crossed from Morocco to Spain by sea in the month of September bringing the total arrivals by sea for this year to 39,354. September's figure represents a 27% increase from the previous month of August and the highest figure of monthly arrivals for the year so far. According to IOM data, there were 50 migrant, refugee and asylum seeker deaths recorded along the Western Mediterranean between 2 and 30 September, almost five times as many deaths as those recorded for a similar period the previous month. The numbers of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers using the WMR in 2018 have far surpassed those for previous years with the Spanish Maritime Rescue Service [announcing](#) that it rescued 447 migrants refugees and asylum seekers from 15 vessels on 22 September alone and a further [405](#) over a two-day period between 29 and 30 September alone.
- An additional [454](#) migrants, refugees and asylum seekers crossed into Spain via its land borders with Morocco (through Ceuta and Melilla) during the month of September, bringing the total number of persons making this crossing this year to 4,837. September's figure is a 26% decrease from that of August's which was also a 43% decrease from that of the previous month of July.

Spain and Morocco in talks over repatriation of minors

- Spain and Morocco have [begun](#) talks over the repatriation of approximately 7,000 unaccompanied Moroccan minors

during bilateral meetings in Essaouira on 14 September. Speaking about the talks, Spain's Migration Minister, Consuelo Rumi, said that there was a perceived willingness on the part of the Moroccan government to take back unaccompanied minors who had arrived irregularly to Spain but added, "There is no concrete plan yet, this is part of negotiations, of a diplomatic process." There are currently an estimated 10,000 unaccompanied child migrants in Spain and they are under the care of the regions or cities where they arrived.

Spain faces criticism over conditions in migrant holding centers

- In a communique [sent](#) to the Spanish government on 6 September, the European Council criticized conditions in Spanish migrant holding centers. The European Council's Special Representative on Migration and Refugees, Tomas Bocek, visited Spain in March earlier this year and concluded that facilities were overcrowded and posed a risk to vulnerable migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. In the communique, Mr. Bocek wrote, "Spanish authorities should guarantee that every person arriving in Spain, including those jumping the border fences in Melilla and Ceuta, should be protected against refoulement and collective expulsions with a real possibility to have access to an effective and fair asylum procedure." He further added that, "Dozens of unaccompanied children in Melilla and Ceuta have fallen out of the protection system, living in the streets and trying to get on board ferries heading to the mainland."

# TUNISIA

## Tunisian fishermen charged with facilitating irregular migration cleared

- Six Tunisian fishermen who were [charged](#) in Italy with facilitating irregular migration were cleared of all charges in the last week of September. The men had come across a vessel left adrift after its engine had failed in the waters between Tunisia and Italy while carrying 14 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. After failing to convince the migrants, refugees and asylum seekers on board of the struggling vessel to return to Tunisia they towed the boat closer to Italy where it would be rescued by the Italian Coast Guard. The ruling was welcomed by the community of Tunisian fisherman and activists who had protested the men's arrests. Speaking about the ruling, Anis Alsouei, the secretary of the Association of Fishermen in Zarzis, said, "We are very happy with the ruling" and added that the incident "will not stop our fishermen from saving people's lives at sea and help them to get to the nearest port when their lives are at risk."

## Italian Interior Minister Matteo Salvini visits Tunisia

- The Italian Minister of Interior, Matteo Salvini, [made](#) an official visit to Tunisia on 27 September to discuss areas of cooperation between the two countries on migration, security, counter-terrorism and development. During his visit, Minister Salvini met with the Tunisian President, Beji Caid Essebsi, as well as other members of the Tunisian government, such as the Director-General for International Cooperation at the Tunisian Interior Ministry, Ezzedine El Amri. Minister Salvini later said that the meeting was 'fruitful' despite the fact that the Tunisian government did not agree to the increase in repatriations the Italian government was hoping for. The Tunisian government did however pledge to increase bilateral engagement and cooperation between the two countries and to ramp up its efforts to stop irregular migration from its shores. The Italian government for its part promised increased economic aid and training. Following the meeting, President Essebsi [said](#), "the friendship and close collaboration between Italy and Tunisia are a great resource that must be harnessed to continue to work at further diversification in areas of bilateral cooperation." In a statement posted to his Facebook page, the

Tunisian President further added, "challenges that threaten security and stability of Mediterranean countries and the region, and hinder their development efforts, require a closer coordination and closer cooperation to overcome them."

## Increase in number of Tunisians making Mediterranean crossing

- The Tunisian Forum of Economic and Social Rights (FTDES) has [drawn](#) attention to the increase in the number of Tunisians making the irregular journey to Europe. Using figures from IOM and UNHCR, the organization said that 3,811 Tunisians made the journey to Italy in the first eight months in 2018, a marked increase from the 1,721 who undertook the journey during the same period last year. Masoud Romdhani, President and founding member of FTDES, blamed social and economic difficulties, despair and a lack of confidence for the increase in young Tunisians making the dangerous journey. Mr. Romdhani called on all relevant parties to develop a comprehensive plan to address the social inequality and the pressing need for economic growth.

## Workshop for Libyan criminal justice practitioners in Tunisia

- From 3 to 5 September 2018 UNODC/ROMENA organized a workshop in Tunisia for Libyan criminal justice practitioners. This activity is part of an Italian funded project entitled, 'Strengthening the Transnational Response to Smuggling of Migrants and Maritime Crime in West, North and East Africa' jointly implemented by UNODC/ROSEN, UNODC/ROMENA and UNODC/ROEA. Twelve police officers and eight prosecutors participated in the workshop which aimed at enhancing the knowledge and skills for international cooperation in investigation and prosecution. During the event the UNTOC provisions on international cooperation were thoroughly discussed. The workshop used the mock investigation/mock trial modality developed by UNODC and adopted to the Libyan context. Additionally, participants were trained by UNODC legal experts on drafting mutual legal assistance requests to authorities in other countries for information and potential actions with regard to transnational trafficking in persons cases.

# GREECE

## Sea arrivals

- 4,442 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers arrived in Greece by sea between 2 and 30 September which represents a 67% increase from a similar period in the previous month of July. According to IOM figures, there were 12 recorded deaths along the Eastern Mediterranean Route between 2 and 30 September.

## NGOs release statement urging action on migrant camps on Greek islands and authorities begin transfers to the mainland

- On 13 September, nineteen NGOs [released](#) a [joint statement](#) decrying and condemning the deleterious living conditions in camps housing migrants, refugees and asylum seekers on Greek islands. Oxfam, Action Aid, Caritas, Terre des Hommes and the Greek Council for Refugees were among the organizations to sign and endorse the statement. The statement said that, "Over 17,000 people remain crammed in Greek island reception centers with a total capacity for only 6,000, living in desperate conditions which do not meet humanitarian standards." The statement also criticizes Greece's Minister of Migration Policy, Dimitris Vitsas, for his failure to fulfill promises he had previously

made regarding the creation of spots for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers on the Greek mainland in order to ease congestion on the islands by September. The organizations used the statement to "urge authorities to engage in the creation of sustainable solutions for the decongestion of the islands and to immediately improve reception conditions for refugees." Drawing attention to some of the issues facing island camps, the statement says that at Moria camp in Lesbos, "The sewage system does not work and filthy toilet water reaches the tents and mattresses where children sleep despite funds for sewage system improvement having been approved for some time. The Statement also said that reports of sexual violence and abuse are also on the rise."

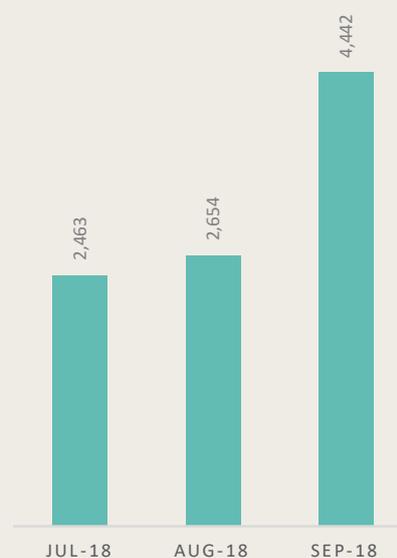
- Several days prior to the release of the statement on 10 September, Regional Governor Chrisinana Kalogirou [issued](#) a notice to Greece's migration minister and Moira camp's director threatening the closure of the camp unless improvements are made within a 30-day period. The notice came after local health inspectors visited the camp and deemed it "dangerous for public health and the environment." In addition to broken sewage pipes and an "uncontrollable amount of waste" the inspectors concluded that there was also a high risk of transmission of disease due to overcrowding. Workers at Moria also [announced](#) they were going to strike over conditions at the camp and, among other things, demanded better police protection for both staff and residents. In a statement released by the workers they had said that residents are forced to endure "tragic life conditions unworthy of a European country."
- Following the release of the statement, on 21 September, camp officials [said](#) that Greek authorities had begun transferring hundreds of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers to the mainland. Speaking about the transfers, an official from Moria camp said, "A hundred people were transferred Friday morning from Moria camp on Lesbos and another camp on that island to that of Filippiada at Ipiros, in the mainland's northwest, with a view to transferring a total of 2,000 people by the end of next week, 500 on Monday (24 September)."

#### Conference on women and girl migrants, refugees and asylum seekers

- The European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity of the Council of Europe (North-South Centre) [held](#) the "Conference on Migrant, Refugee and Asylum Seeking Women and Girls in the Euro-Mediterranean Region" in Athens between 3 and 4 October. The event brought together representatives from parliamentary bodies, governments, civil society and local and regional authorities from a number of European and southern Mediterranean countries in order to discuss various issues affecting women

and girls on the move and/or seeking asylum. Among the many topics discussed were; gender-sensitive asylum procedures, integration of women through education, the mobility of refugee and asylum-seeking girls and women in Africa and the Middle East. The conclusions of the conference were jointly presented by Michail Angelopoulos, the Vice President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and alternate Spokesperson on the South-Med Partnership, and Abdelkader El Khissassi, civil and social affairs expert from the Union for the Mediterranean.

Arrivals by Sea, Greece  
July 2018 - September 2018



## ITALY

#### Sea arrivals

- 1,167 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers arrived in Italy by sea between 1 and 30 September, which represents a 5% decrease from figures for August. September's figures bring the total number of arrivals this year to 21,041. There has also been an increase in the number of deaths recorded along the CMR with 130 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers losing their lives over the same period.

#### Italian government approves Salvini bill targeting migrants

- The cabinet of Giuseppe Conte [agreed](#) to a set of measures that intend to abolish forms of protection for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in an attempt to facilitate the deportation from Italian territories. The decree was drafted by Matteo Salvini the interior minister who through this decree wants to suspend the refugee application of some migrants who he said can be "socially dangerous". Salvini added that the decree strengthens the fight against mafia and trafficking groups through giving more powers to the police. The humanitarian protection granted to migrants

non-eligible for seeking refugee status but who cannot for various reasons be sent home will be replaced by a special permits system which will only be given to certain types of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers suffering from severe illness or escaping natural disasters. This decision might impact thousands of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in Italy since most of the migrants, refugees and asylum seekers who landed in the country in recent years were granted Humanitarian protection valid for two years which afterwards they can apply for residency. Christopher Hein a professor of immigration policy says that this kind of measures could lead to an increase in the number of irregular migrants since denying them the humanitarian protection status or the refugees status does not mean they will immediately leave the country. "The ultimate aim is to have no refugees at all in Italy through a combination of efforts...it is a deterrent measure." Said Hein.

Mayor of Italian town famous for welcoming migrants arrested for allegedly aiding irregular immigration

- The Famous Mayor of the Italian city "Riace" Domenico Lucano [was placed](#) under house arrest for helping migrants and encouraging irregular migration. Domenico known as Mimmo is appreciated for his efforts during the last 20 years by accepting refugees in his town and integrating them to fight the depopulation in his city. His example was taken as a model for integration that many experts in migration were interested to study. The Italian mayor was accused of facilitating arranged marriages between Italian men and migrant women to help them legally reside in the country and bypassing public tender procedures and directly assigning rubbish collection services to two organizations created by migrants. The decision of arrest was met by outrage from Italians who launched a hashtag on Twitter #iostoconMimmoLucano to support Domenico and condemn the allegations pointed at him as well a call for holding demonstration in the city of Riace.
- The investigations [started](#) a year ago but more serious accusations were added recently. These allegations come after a series of anti-migration measures were announced by Salvini who is intending to cut funds for integration and reception of migrants. The arrest of Lucano was expected by migrant rights defenders in Italy. As per the writer Gioacchino Criaco "rules on the reception and management of migrants are too tangled, and often administrators can find themselves caught in a dilemma between a humanitarian choice and a legal one".

Report: One in Five Perish on Libya-EU Migration Route

- The latest numbers from UN [revealed](#) that the rate of deaths in the Mediterranean route is the highest recorded since accurate record keeping on the death rate started. Currently, one in five migrants, refugees and asylum seekers is reported dead. Researchers in the Italian think tank ISPI suggested that this high rate is due to the decisions taken by the Italian government to decrease the number of rescue ships operating in the Mediterranean and the replacement of the Italian vessels charged of the rescue operations by the Libyan coast guard. They also think that the numbers are underestimated as not all parts of the Mediterranean near the Libyan shores are covered and the number of casualties that are not counted is more likely to be higher than the numbers in place.

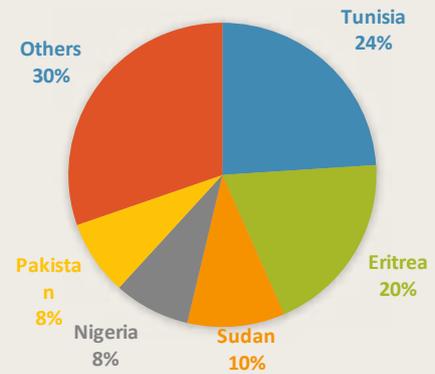
Italian extremist given 12-year sentence for gun attack on migrants

- Italian man [accused](#) of committing an extremist attacks against migrants was sentenced to 12 years in prison. The man called Luca Traini shot at six African migrants and was arrested after the shooting that took place in the main square of Macerata. Traini targeted black African migrants while driving around Macerata but fortunately no one died from this attack. This shooting came after a teenager was killed near Macerata and a Nigerian migrant was accused of the killing of the teenager.

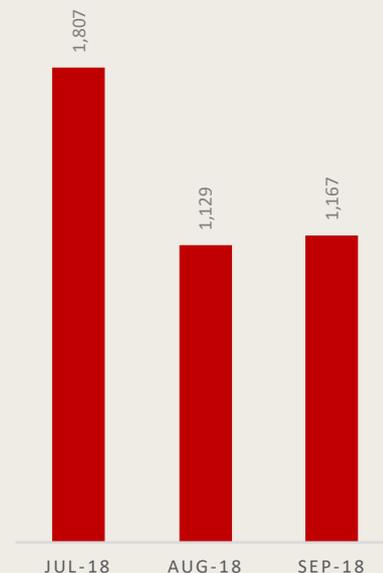
Alleged migrant traffickers arrested at Italy-France border

- Italian police [stopped](#) 5 Bangladesh human traffickers who belong to a criminal group. They were in charge of an organization that was trafficking people between the French and the Italian borders. According to investigations, each migrant, refugee and asylum seeker was asked to pay between 100 and 500 euros and they are taken from the Italian city of Ventimiglia by car across the French borders to nearby cities such as Mentone or Marseille. Investigations started a year ago after the arrest of a Bangladesh smuggler carrying 9 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in his car. This arrest uncovered a rooted smuggling group operating in Ventimiglia as well as in Turin and Milan. A raid on the 27th of September was launched to arrest the 5 smugglers who were taken to custody and were charged of facilitating irregular migration.

Arrivals by Sea to Italy, Main Countries of Origin  
January 2018 - August 2018



Arrivals by Sea, Italy  
July 2018 - September 2018



# RESEARCH OF INTEREST

[The shrinking space for solidarity with migrants and refugees: how the European Union and Member States target and criminalize defenders of the rights of people on the move](#) - TNI

This research paper discusses the measures the EU and member states are taking against activists, NGOs and humanitarian actors in efforts to “externalize” the migration crisis and outsource it to countries such as Turkey and North Africa.

[Recommendations to improve the mental health of asylum seekers on Lesbos](#) - International Rescue Committee

This paper focuses on the situation of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in the reception and identification center of Moria on the island of Lesbos and the Mental health condition of migrants due to deteriorating living conditions.

[Advancing the impossible? progress of the joint african, european and international response to the migration crisis in Libya](#) - ECPDM

This paper evaluates the work of the joint Task Force established by the European Union, the African Union and United Nations to face the migration crisis in Libya

[Offshoring Asylum and Migration in Australia, Spain, Tunisia and the US: Lessons learned and feasibility for the EU](#) - CEPS

This report studies the feasibility of offshoring the processing of asylum and migration management for the EU based on compared cases from countries as Australia, Spain, Tunisia and the US.

[Experiences of female refugees & migrants in origin, transit and destination countries. A comparative study of women on the move from Afghanistan, East and West Africa](#) - Mixed Migration Center

This report examines women’s migration experiences in origin, transit and destination countries from Afghanistan, East and West Africa.

# MULTIMEDIA & EDITORIALS OF INTEREST

[‘Better to Drown’: A Greek Refugee Camp’s Epidemic of Misery](#) - The New York Times

This editorial highlights how The poor conditions, the long awaited time and the EU hardened policies against migration are turning the Moria camp in Greece to a miserable place where people try to end their lives.

[Short-term Wins, Long-term Risks: Human Trafficking and People Smuggling in the Mediterranean Area](#)- ReliefWeb

This short study analyses the short and long-term effects of the EU efforts in tackling human trafficking and people smuggling in the Mediterranean.

[Italy: From desperate emigrants to staunch anti-migrant leaders](#)- InfoMigrants

This editorial draws a comparison between the current situation of migration in Italy and between the situation in the past where Italians were migrants themselves.

[Europe migration: ‘Horrible experiences’ on the crossing from Libya](#) - BBC News

Video from BBC showing the hardships migrants, refugees and asylum seekers go through in their journey from Libya to Europe.

[Jobs aren’t the main reason young people migrate to Europe | View](#)- Euronews

This study conducted by Mercy Corps and the think tank Samuel Hall sheds light on the main drivers of migration which are not necessarily always economic reasons but as the study highlights linked to security and exposure to violence

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