



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

Two-year humanitarian protection ends for asylum seekers

Spanish police dismantle people-smuggling network

GCM formally adopted in Marrakesh

UN calls on EU to re-examine cooperation with Libya

Niger adopts law to protect displaced people



REGIONAL

EU leaders fail to agree on EU asylum reform and external border governance

- EU leaders [met](#) in Brussels mid-December for the final EU summit of 2018. The meeting highlighted continuing deep divisions within the bloc over EU [asylum reform](#) and migration. It appears that talks have once more stalled over how best to reform the EU's asylum system and, more specifically, on the issue of compulsory relocation of asylum seekers within the bloc. The continuing stalemate prompted the EU Commission's President, Jean-Claude Juncker, to issue a sharply worded rebuke of EU member states and highlight hypocrisy over calls to beef up external border measures.

European Parliament committee votes to establish humanitarian visas

- On 3 December, the European Parliament's Civil Liberties Committee [voted](#) to request that the European Commission prepare a legislative proposal establishing a European Humanitarian Visa. The Commission will have until the end of March 2019 to prepare the proposal which will then be submitted to the full house of representatives for a vote in the coming December's plenary session. According to the envisaged proposal, asylum seekers would be able to request such visas at EU embassies and consulates abroad. The visa would then allow the person in question to travel to the EU to lodge a formal request for international protection. Civil Liberties MEPs hope that such a visa would reduce the number of fatalities due to irregular migration. MEPs cited reports that found that 90% of those granted asylum in the EU arrived via irregular channels.

Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) formally adopted in Marrakesh

- The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) was formally [adopted](#) by 164 member states at an intergovernmental conference in Marrakesh on 10-11 December. The adoption came after months of negotiations and regional and international consultations that have [made](#) the first-ever global framework on a common approach to international migration a reality. Speaking at the opening session of the conference, the UN's Secretary General, António Guterres, said that the compact rests on two simple yet fundamental ideas, "Firstly, that migration has always been with us, but should be managed and safe; second, that national policies are far more likely to succeed with international cooperation." Seeking to dispel widespread misunderstandings of and myths surrounding the compact, Secretary-General Guterres, reiterated that the compact does not seek to infringe upon any nation's sovereignty or upon its ability to devise national migration policies. Instead, it aims to foster a global and cooperative approach to one of the most challenging political and humanitarian issues of our time.
- Speaking at the closing session, Louise Arbour, the UN Special Representative for International Migration, reiterated the points made by Secretary General Guterres and [said](#) that the compact, "is designed to enhance safety and order in migration management, and reduce recourse to dangerous, chaotic migratory routes." She further added that it, "reinforces, unambiguously, the fundamental principle that migrants everywhere should be treated with dignity and fairness."

UN General Assembly affirms Global Compact on Refugees

- On 17 December, 181 member states [adopted](#) the Global Compact on Refugees, which seeks to strengthen the international response to large-scale movements of refugees and their protracted situations. Only two countries, the US and Hungary, opposed the compact while the Dominican Republic, Eritrea and Libya abstained from voting. Speaking about the Global Compact on Refugees, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, said, "In this world of ours, which often turns it back to people in need, that has shamefully politicized even the pain of exile, that has demonized and continues to demonize refugees and migrants and sometimes even just foreigners, this compact, in synergy with the other compact, the compact on migration, can really represent tangibly, a new commitment to international cooperation."

EUTF migration-related programs in North Africa

- The EU Trust Fund for Africa has [announced](#) the adoption of new migration-related initiatives in North Africa totalling €115 million. The newly announced programs aim to assist vulnerable migrants, foster labour mobility, and contribute to improving the capacity of Morocco and Libya to manage their borders. One of the initiatives (€15 million) is regional in scope and will promote labour mobility between North Africa, its southern neighbours and the EU. The programs implemented in Morocco, accounting for €48 million of the total announced, focus on improving Morocco's border management systems and facilitating the integration of migrants living in Morocco as well as on the positive contribution of Moroccans living abroad or returning to Morocco. The programs to be implemented in Libya accounting for €52 million of the total amount, aim to improve and support Libya's border management activities and expand the EU Commission's support to Voluntary Humanitarian Return and Reintegration operations in Libya.

International Migrants Day

- On the occasion of the UN's International Migrants Day on 18 December, IOM's Director General, António Vitorino, [issued](#) a statement reiterating and highlighting the absolute need to treat all migrants with dignity. In his statement, Director General Vitorino said, "Dignity is at the core of our mission. Treating all migrants with dignity is the fundamental requirement we face before anything else we attempt on migration—a troubling issue coming at a troubling time for the world community—because our future depends on it. So, too, does our present."

- Also on the occasion of International Migrants Day, the World Health Organization (WHO) [released](#) a technical guidance series on the health and well-being of migrants and refugees. Each of the products in the series addresses one aspect of migrant and refugee health and provides case studies, tools and guidelines to inform policies and practices. Five publications are available dealing with, children's health, health promotion, healthy aging, maternal and new-born health and mental health. The series was produced in collaboration with the European Commission and complements an upcoming report titled, "Report on the health of refugees and migrants in the WHO European Region".
- Amnesty International [used](#) the occasion of International Migrants Day to draw attention to the gaps in the protection of migrants across the MENA region. In particular, Amnesty accused governments in the MENA region of continuing to fail migrants in their countries through policies that leave them vulnerable to abuse, labour laws that leave them unprotected and through campaigns of forcible deportation. Speaking about the situation, Philip Luther, Amnesty International's MENA Research and Advocacy Director, said, "While pressure on governments in the Gulf is in some cases forcing reforms to legal frameworks for migrant workers, they need to do much more to improve protection in practice. Meanwhile, North African governments should be facing more heat for their discriminatory crackdowns to stem irregular migration that have seen tens of thousands arbitrarily rounded up, detained in often horrific conditions and sometimes unlawfully expelled en masse."

Irregular migration to EU drops to lowest level in five years

- On 4 January, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, Frontex, announced that the number of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers that arrived in Europe via irregular channels in 2018 represents the lowest total since 2013. The agency further added that the total figure for 2018 is a 92% drop from 2015 figures, the height of the 'migration/refugee crisis'. While there has been a significant drop in total figures, arrivals in Spain via the Western Mediterranean Route have spiked in recent years, with arrivals doubling for the second year in a row. It is important to note however that while EU policies and interventions in the Mediterranean have successfully reduced the number of arrivals into Europe, that they have nonetheless made the Mediterranean increasingly unsafe for those attempting the crossing.
- Despite this significant drop in figures, a recent [Eurobarometer poll](#) found that migration [tops](#) the list of concerns for an increasing number of respondents with 40% of respondents saying that the issue of immigration is the most pressing one facing the EU in the three most recent polls.

Aquarius ends operations in the Mediterranean

- On 6 December, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) [announced](#) that it will be suspending the operations of its search-and-rescue vessel 'Aquarius'. Aquarius was the last NGO vessel operating in the Mediterranean. The ship, which MSF was operating in partnership with SOS Méditerranée, was moored in the port of Marseille for two months after its Panamanian flag was [revoked](#). MSF blamed the end of operations on a malicious and sustained campaign to thwart and vilify the activities of charities in the Mediterranean, one that was spearheaded by the Italian government and supported by other EU states. "Coupled with the EU's ill-conceived external policies on migration, this campaign has undermined international law and humanitarian principles," read the strongly worded statement. Speaking about the decision, Nelke Manders, MSF's General Director, said, "This is a dark day, not only has Europe failed to provide search and rescue capacity, it has also actively sabotaged others' attempts to save lives. The end of Aquarius means more deaths at sea, and more needless deaths that will go unwitnessed." There were around ten NGO search-and-rescue vessels operating in the Mediterranean at the end of 2017.

ALGERIA

- Algeria calls for strategy to address illegal immigration
- Algeria has [called for a new strategy](#) to address illegal immigration, in response to a recent increase in illegal immigration from countries of the sub-Saharan African region. The Director of Migration Operations at the Algerian Interior Ministry highlighted the role of the Algerian army in securing borders and emphasized that the strategy to be adopted must consider both humanitarian and security challenges to deal with illegal immigration.

- UNHCR advocates for access to refugees stranded on Algeria's southern border
- UNHCR has contacted Algerian authorities to advocate for [access to persons of concern](#) from a group of approximately 120 Syrian, Palestinian and Yemeni individuals who were detained at the Tamanrasset Centre in southern Algeria and subsequently transported to an area near the Guezzam border post in December 2018.

EGYPT

- Austrian Chancellor and Egyptian President discuss migration control at Africa-Europe Forum in Vienna
- Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi [discussed](#) migration control at the Africa-Europe Forum, despite the latter being focused on 'digital policy cooperation'. Egypt and Morocco are ostensibly the North African countries that have been most willing to cooperate with the European Union regarding migration control.

- Increased cooperation between IOM and Egypt to combat illegal immigration
- The Director General of the International Organization for Migration expressed his [willingness](#) to strengthen bilateral relations with the Egyptian government to combat illegal immigration. The Egyptian Minister of Interior explained in December last year that training programs were organized by the ministry to help African countries in combating illegal immigration.

LIBYA

- UN calls on European Union states to re-examine cooperation with Libyan authorities
- The UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) and the UN Human Rights Office released a [report](#) addressing severe violations against migrants in Libya, as well as the efforts needed by EU states to [re-examine cooperation](#) with Libyan authorities on the issue of migration. The report addressed automatic and arbitrary detention of migrants and refugees in irregular situations, torture and ill-treatment, sexual violence and forced labour in detention, as well as collective expulsion and refoulement.

Migrants dead after boat capsizes off Libyan coast

- Fifteen migrants who had attempted to reach Italy [died](#) after the boat transporting them capsized. Ten survivors from sub-Saharan Africa, Algeria and Egypt suffered injuries and dehydration after spending 11 days at sea with no food or water.

IOM supports the voluntary return of 193 immigrants from Nigeria

- IOM [assisted](#) 193 Nigerian irregular migrants under its Assisted Voluntary Return program to return to Nigeria. IOM highlighted that the return took place with the support of the European Union Trust Fund.

Libyan Navy Force spokesman highlights drop in numbers of migrant arrivals to Europe

- Ayoub Qassim, spokesman for the Libyan Navy Force, has attributed the [drop](#) in migrant arrivals to Europe to cooperation between Libyan coastguards and Italian authorities, specifying that the real number of migrants in 2018 did not differ from previous years. He furthermore highlighted European and Libyan action against international NGOs working off the Libyan coast.
- Despite a decrease in the number of arrivals of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in Italy throughout the month of December, the number of deaths more than doubled along the CMR in comparison to the previous month.

Alternatives to Detention workshop held by IOM in Libya

- The International Organization for Migration office in Tripoli organised a workshop on alternatives to detention last month. The [workshop](#) "Practices and Procedures of Alternatives to Detention" was organized with technical support from the International Detention Coalition. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss rights-based alternatives to detention in Libya to allow for early identification and protection of vulnerable migrants, more specifically unaccompanied and separated children.

MALI

140 migrants returned to Mali from Libya

- On 20 December 2018, 140 beneficiaries of the IOM Assisted Voluntary Return program [arrived](#) in the Malian capital from Tripoli. They were welcomed by Moussa Aliou Koné, Chief of Staff of the Ministry for Malians Abroad and African Integration, Bakary Doumbia, IOM Chief of Mission, Idrissa Sidibé, General Delegate of Malians from Abroad, and other personalities. The Chief of Staff reiterated the government's solidarity with stranded migrants in Libya.

International Migrants Day: Six million Malian migrants worldwide

- On the occasion of International Migrants Day, it has been reported that approximately six million Malians [reside abroad](#), most notably in African and European countries. Among the most prominent issues facing Malian migrants is repatriation operations, such as those conducted by the Angolan government against all nationalities. Since January 2018, 3200 Malian migrants were reportedly repatriated by the Algerian government. According to IOM, on 30 September 2018 68,978 migrants had been voluntarily returned to Mali.

MOROCCO

Morocco's Minister of Foreign Affairs addresses issues of migration in BBC interview

- Morocco's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nasser Bourita [discussed](#) African migration with BBC's Said Shehata, following the opening sessions of the intergovernmental GCM conference on 10 December. Minister Bourita sought to dispel many of myths and misconceptions surrounding migration generally, and African migration more specifically. Minister Bourita began by saying that migration was both 'natural and universal' and that it is wrong to criminalize migrants. With regards to African migration, Minister Bourita said that one of the most common misconceptions surrounding the movement of people in and from Africa is that it "is a raid from the south toward the north, or that Africa is the primary source of irregular migrants." He

underscored that out of a total of 256 million international migrants globally, only 36 million are from African countries of origin and added that the vast majority (80%) of those migrate regionally within the continent. He further said that of the 6 million that migrate beyond Africa, only 0.1% are irregular migrants. Minister Bourita also sought to highlight the strides Morocco has made towards a more humane and human rights-based migration policy, saying that "in 2016-2017, Morocco approved 50,000 of 60,000 requests from migrants wishing to improve their situations, especially in the case of women, children, and people with special needs."

SUDAN

Sudan's deputy consul in Libya discusses situation of Sudanese migrants

- Sudan's Deputy Consul to Libya [discussed](#) the situation of Sudanese irregular migrants in Libyan detention centres with the director of Libya's Anti-Illegal Immigration Agency (AIIA). The discussions came following reports by the AIIA that it had arrested 120 Sudanese and Chadian migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in the Al Wahat region. According to media sources, the Deputy Consul reviewed the living and health conditions of those held in detention.

IOM Sudan celebrates EU-IOM Joint Initiative Program

- IOM Sudan [celebrated](#) the second anniversary of the [EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in the Horn of Africa](#) at their offices in Khartoum in mid-December. The event was attended by a number of representatives from the EU delegation in Khartoum, Sudanese returnees from Libya and representatives from the Nigerian, Ethiopian and

Eritrean migrant communities in Sudan. Speaking at the event, IOM Sudan's Chief of Mission, Catherine Northing, said, "With the funding from the EU, IOM in close partnership with the Government of Sudan will continue to provide sustainable reintegration to migrants in Sudan and dignified and safe return of migrants to countries of origin." The formal launch of the joint initiative in Sudan was held earlier this year in June. The program has thus far helped 208 non-Sudanese migrants to travel back to their countries of origin and has provided economic reintegration assistance to 207 Sudanese returnees.

TUNISIA

Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers rescued off the coast of Tunisia

- On 31 December, the Tunisian Ministry of Interior [announced](#) that 45 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers were rescued off the coast of Kerkennah in southeast Tunisia. The boat had set off from the Libyan town of Zuwara and carried six women, two of whom were pregnant, among those on board. Another boat carrying five migrants, refugees and asylum seekers was intercepted off the coast of Nabeul the previous day, on 30 December.

Tunisian authorities register alarming numbers of victims of trafficking

- A number of Tunisian officials from relevant national bodies have [reported](#) that Tunisia registered an alarming number of victims of trafficking in 2017. The president of the Tunisian National Agency for the Fight Against Human Trafficking (INLCTP), Raoudha Laabidi, has said that the agency assisted 742 survivors of trafficking in 2017, 70 of whom were minors and 100 of whom were migrants. Speaking at a conference in December, Ms. Laabidi said that most of those survivors were subjected to "domestic slavery and forced labour" and "economic and sexual exploitation."

- Additionally, the country's general delegate for the protection of children's rights, Mehyar Hamadi, reported that a record number of cases involving children who are survivors of trafficking were reviewed in 2017. Mr. Hamadi said that a total of 1,480 cases involving children were reviewed, 1,087 of which involved sexual exploitation, 308 involved economic exploitation, and 86 of the children were victims of organised crime.

Tunisia rejects forced repatriation policies

- The Tunisian Minister for Social Affairs, Mohamed Trabelsi, [told](#) attendees at a seminar on migration in relation to sustainable development goals that Tunisia "categorically refuses forced expulsions of its irregular migrants from their respective hosting countries." Mr. Trabelsi explained that Tunisia advocates for the provision of basic services to all migrants in host societies. He further estimated that there are currently 200,000 Tunisian nationals residing irregularly abroad. Minister Trabelsi also announced that national strategy on migration will be presented to the Tunisian parliament in 2019.

SPAIN

Arrivals to Spain

- [5,086](#) migrants, refugees and asylum seekers have crossed from Morocco to Spain by sea in the month of December bringing the total arrivals by sea for this year to roughly 59,705. December's figure remains quite similar to the previous month's figure. Despite similar figures for both months, arrivals have [remained](#) quite high given the perilous conditions at sea in the winter months. In one incident, the Spanish search-and-rescue vessel Open Arms [brought](#) over 300 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers to the port of Algeciras on 28 December, a week after rescuing them from the waters off Libya. According to IOM, there have been 91 recorded deaths along the Western Mediterranean Route between 28 November and 31 December.

crossed into Spain via its land borders with Morocco (through Ceuta and Melilla) during the month of December, bringing the total number of persons who made this crossing this year to 6,622. December's figure is a roughly 27% decrease from that of the previous month's figure.

Two migrants discovered in mattresses in attempt to cross into Spain

- Two migrants were [discovered](#) hiding in mattresses as they attempted to irregularly cross into the Spanish enclave of Melilla. Members of the Spanish Guardia Civil made the discovery at a check point along the Moroccan-Spanish border. The migrants told police they each paid the smuggler €4,500 to secure the crossing. The driver of the vehicle fled the scene on foot when border guards began their inspection.

- An additional [472](#) migrants, refugees and asylum seekers

Moroccan navy rescues migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in the Mediterranean

- The Moroccan navy [announced](#) that it rescued 367 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers from a number of boats on 27 December. According to the statement, there were many women and children among those rescued and all were transferred to nearby ports of safety.

King Mohammed VI addresses GCM conference

- King Mohammed VI of Morocco [addressed](#) world leaders gathered in Marrakesh for the formal adoption of the GCM on 10 December via a statement read by his head of government, Prime Minister Saad Eddine El Othmani. In his statement, King Mohammed underscored the need for coordinated, responsible solidarity that addresses the needs of states whilst fully respecting the rights of migrants and people on the move. Speaking about Morocco's migration policies, he [said](#), "The Kingdom of Morocco's interest in migration is neither recent nor incidental. Quite the contrary. It reflects a longstanding, voluntary commitment expressed through a policy which is humane in its philosophy, global in its substance, pragmatic in its methodology and responsible in its approach." He then went on to affirm the importance of devising a holistic approach to migration governance, one that does not reduce migration to an issue of security but acknowledges its social and developmental dimensions.

- King Mohammed also [used](#) his address to highlight the upcoming work of the newly established African Migration Observatory whose headquarters agreements were [signed](#) during the conference. Speaking about the observatory which will be based in Rabat, King Mohammed said, "The

African Agenda has dedicated a fully-fledged institution to migratory dynamics, the African Observatory for Migration and Development, which will have its headquarters in the Kingdom of Morocco, and which is explicitly mentioned in the Compact." He further added that he hoped that the work of the observatory will be enhanced through networking with similar institutions globally.

European Commission announces additional programs and funding for Morocco

- The European Commission [announced](#) additional funding and programming for Morocco on 14 December, bringing total migration-related assistance to Morocco to €148 million for 2018. Speaking about the EU's increased and continuing support for Morocco, the EU Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, Johannes Hahn, said, "The EU and Morocco need to tackle the current challenges together; together we can fight smugglers, save lives, and support people in need. But our cooperation goes far beyond migration: we are working to strengthen our partnership via socio-economic development, decentralisation and integration of the youth - to the benefit of the people in Morocco and in Europe." While EU Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship, Dimitris Avramopoulos, explained that "Morocco is under particular migratory pressure with flows along the Western Mediterranean increasing. This is why we are intensifying and deepening our partnership with Morocco and increasing our financial support." The EU has recently committed a further €182 million package in support of inclusive development objectives in Morocco.

notably in regions affected by violence in neighbouring countries, as well as climate change.

52,000 displaced due to violence in west Niger

- Violence by jihadist incursions in west Niger has resulted in the [displacement](#) of more than 52,000 people from January to December 2018. Attacks on villages, killing and abduction of civilians, burning of schools, as well as looting of homes, businesses and livestock have reportedly been taking place. Residents of the Tahoua and Tillaberi border regions have been affected. Humanitarian workers have furthermore been unable to reach all communities in need of assistance.

NIGER

Doctors Without Borders (MSF) in Niamey assists migrants from West Africa

- According to MSF, "migrants have a hard time receiving adequate medical assistance when they reach Niamey." The organization has [assisted](#) those expelled from Algeria or are returning from Libya. Nonetheless, medical treatment is not always adequate, due to the requirement that to receive assistance, or undergo voluntary return, migrants must not intend to pursue further migration plans or seek international protection. An increase in voluntary repatriation programs has followed efforts by European countries to reduce the number of asylum-seekers, refugees and migrants reaching Europe.

Niger adopts law to protect displaced people

- Niger became the first African country to [adopt a national law](#) providing protection to people fleeing violence, floods, and droughts. The adoption of the law was based on the increasing number of displaced people in the country, most

Spanish police dismantle people-smuggling network

- Spanish police [announced](#) on 17 December that they had captured members of a people smuggling organization that managed to smuggle roughly 600 Moroccans into Spain this year. They arrested seven leaders of the organization, including its Morocco-based head, who was charged with enlisting would-be migrants from Morocco. According to

details released by the Spanish authorities, the ring recruited migrants from the city of Larache in northern Morocco. They charged each person roughly €2,500 for the crossing as well as their accommodation in 'safe houses' upon arrival in Spain and for their onward transportation to their desired final destination within Spain.

GREECE

Sea arrivals to Greece

- 3,083 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers arrived in Greece by sea between 28 November and 31 December; this represents a roughly 81% increase from a similar period in the previous month of November. According to IOM figures, there have been no recorded deaths along the Eastern Mediterranean Route during this reporting period.

Greece accused of pushbacks at Turkish border

- A [report](#) published on 12 December by the Greek Council for Refugees, ARSIS and Human Rights 360 [claimed](#) that the Greek government has been illegally pushing back migrants, refugees and asylum seekers arriving in Greece from Turkey via the Evros River. In the introduction to the study the NGOs write, "The testimonies that follow substantiate a continuous and uninterrupted use of the illegal practice of push-backs. They also reveal an even more alarming array of practices and patterns calling for further investigation; it is particularly alarming that the persons involved in implementing the practice of push-backs speak Greek, as well as other languages, while reportedly wearing either police or military clothing."

Greek Prime Minister addressed intergovernmental conference in Marrakesh

- Greece's Prime Minister, Alexis Tsipras, [addressed](#) leaders gathered in Marrakesh in December for the formal adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. In his address, Prime Minister Tsipras underscored the need for global solutions to address the global phenomenon of migration. Addressing those assembled, he highlighted the importance of "getting beyond different approaches, as was clear in the negotiations, and acknowledging that we have one obligation, but also the right to manage the phenomenon at the national level."

Syrian refugee criticizes Greece over her detention

- Sarah Mardini, a young Syrian refugee who first gained prominence when she pulled a boat carrying migrants, refugees and asylum seekers to safety in 2015, has [hit](#) back against her detention in Greece in late 2017 for aiding and abetting 'illegal migration'. Ms. Mardini was released on bail at the beginning of December and has since returned to Berlin. Speaking about her arrest, she said, "I'm in shock about the situation and how fast everything happened. They arrested me because I've been accused of smuggling migrants... and for being part of a criminal organization." Ms. Mardini was volunteering with the Emergency Response Centre International (ERCI) on the Greek island of Lesbos when she was arrested in August. Sarah's arrest, along with another volunteer from ERCI, has been seen as part of wider EU efforts to criminalize and demonize the activities of humanitarian

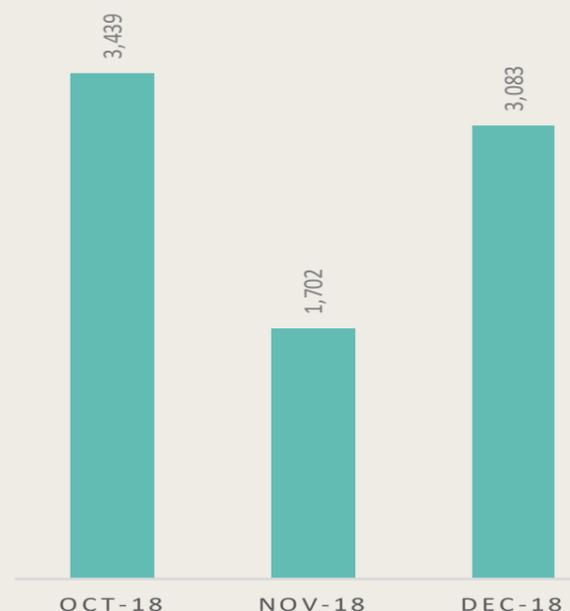
and relief organizations working in the field of migration.

Greece marks International Migrants Day

- Greece [marked](#) the UN International Migrants Day on 17 December with a series of events, speeches and exhibitions. Greece's Ministry of Immigration Policy and the Special Secretariat for Communication Management of the Ministry of Digital Policy, Telecommunications and Information organized an event titled "Dreams do not have a homeland". The event, which was attended by Greece's Minister of Immigration Policy, Dimitris Vitsas and UNHCR's Representative to Greece, Philippe Leclerc, brought together Greek officials, members of local and international NGOs, representatives from migrant and refugee communities in Greece and migrant and refugee children enrolled in Greek schools.

- While many Greek officials took the opportunity to commend Greece on its response to the 'refugee crisis', the Communist Party of Greece, Kommounistikó Kómma Elládas (KKE), released a strongly worded statement criticizing Greece's treatment of migrants. "The SYRIZA - ANEL government, which supposedly prides itself on humanitarian by dealing with the immigration issue, is failing in that role. It maintains and increases discrimination against economic immigrants and immigrant children, even though they live and work for many years in Greece or have been born here," read the statement.

Arrivals by Sea, Greece
October 2018 - December 2018



ITALY

Sea Arrivals to Italy

- 361 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers arrived in Italy by sea between 28 November and 31 December, which represents a 57% decrease from figures for a similar period last month. The number of deaths more than doubled however with 28 deaths of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers recorded during the same reporting period along the CMR bringing the total number of fatalities this year to 1,306.

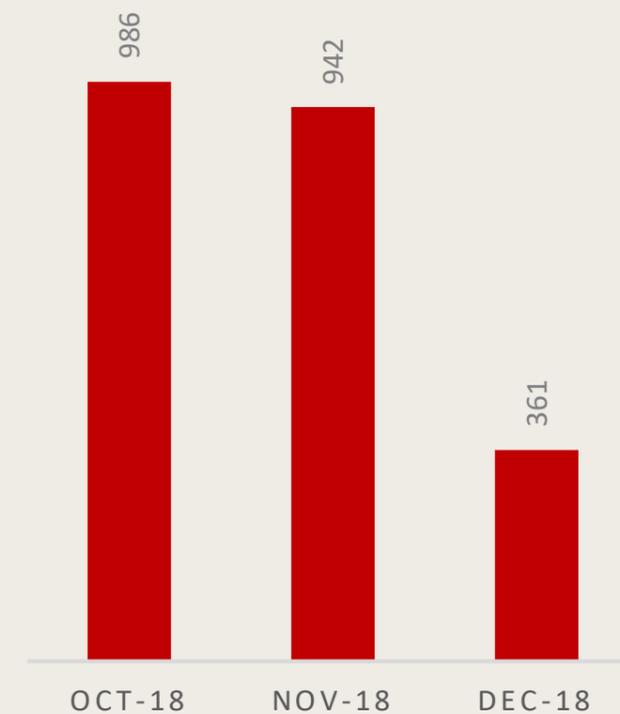
Two-year humanitarian protection ends for asylum seekers

- The two-year humanitarian protection for asylum seekers was [canceled](#) after the signing of a new law by President Sergio Mattarella. Asylum seekers were previously hosted in one of two levels of reception camps. The second tier helped asylum seekers and refugees to integrate into Italian society through the provision of training for work and help in finding employment opportunities, whereas the first level only aims to meet basic needs. Humanitarian protection was introduced to facilitate the process of obtaining a work permit for those who had 'integrated' successfully. The 'special permits' that are currently being issued cannot always be converted to work permits, placing migrants at increased risk of deportation. The new regulations have moreover increased homelessness. Claudia Monti, legal assistant and expert of migration policies, stated that "Not only will this prevent people from being able to live fulfilling lives in Italy, many could be forced to return to their home countries. Since the Italian government will not provide an effective return policy home, many of them will become irregular migrants."

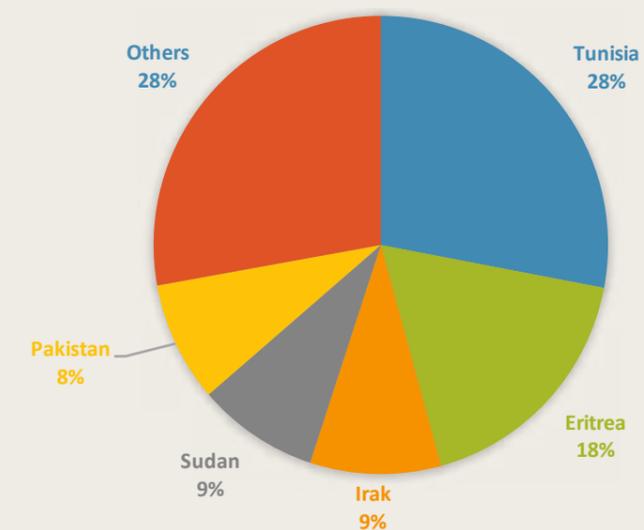
Tensions within populist coalition over migrant rescue ships

- Asylum seekers on two rescue boats have not been allowed to land at Italian ports, causing [tensions](#) within Italy's populist coalition. Interior Minister and anti-migrant League leader Matteo Salvini's approach to the refugee crisis has been described by the Catholic church as anti-humanitarian. The [dispute](#) has reflected the drawbacks of the ad hoc system of redistributing migrants arriving at European shores.

Arrivals by Sea, Italy
October 2018 - December 2018



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



RESEARCH OF INTEREST

[ILO Global Estimates on International Migrant Workers – Results and Methodology](#) - International Labour Organization

The International Labour Organization published a report on global estimates on international migrant workers for the year 2017. The report stipulates that there were 258 million international migrants worldwide in 2017, including 19 million refugees, and that 234 million were of working age. Estimates reflect a high number of migrant workers, both male and female, in high-income countries. The regions with the highest concentration of migrant workers were Northern America (23%), Northern, Southern and Western Europe (23.9%), and Arab States (13.9%).

[Desperate and Dangerous: Report on the human rights situation of migrants and refugees in Libya](#) - United Nations Support Mission In Libya and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

This report, published by the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), sheds light on the culture of impunity in Libya in relation to the grave human rights violations committed against migrants and refugees. It includes findings from approximately 1,300 first-hand accounts and other information collected by UNSMIL. Libyan authorities have demonstrated inability or unwillingness to address violations against migrants and refugees by members of armed groups, State officials, smugglers and traffickers. Violations include unlawful killings, torture and other ill-treatment, arbitrary detention and unlawful deprivation of liberty, rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence, slavery and forced labour, extortion and exploitation.

[Trafficking in persons in the context of armed conflict – 2018](#) - United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

A study conducted by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) uses extensive literature review, a review of case narratives from international tribunals and interviews with personnel from United Nations peacekeeping operations to link trafficking in persons to armed conflict, exploring how the latter contributes to different forms of exploitation by traffickers. State collapse and the deteriorating rule of law, forced displacement, humanitarian need and socioeconomic distress, as well as social fragmentation and family breakdown are factors that contribute to trafficking in persons during armed conflict. The study additionally discusses the way in which armed conflicts in Libya, Afghanistan, Central Africa, the Middle East, as well as other past and present armed conflicts, have contributed to trafficking in persons.

[Bilateral Agreements: Implementing or Bypassing the Dublin Regulation?](#) - European Council on Refugees and Exiles

The European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) published a Policy Paper on bilateral agreements between EU Member States that facilitate the transfer of asylum seekers. Such agreements do not all abide by the Dublin system and can sometimes solely aim to expedite transfers, pending the yet uncertain reform of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS).

[The State of Humanitarian Shelter and Settlements 2018 - Beyond the Better Shed: Prioritizing People](#) - Global Shelter Cluster

The Global Shelter Cluster (GSC) published a report for use by humanitarian policy makers, donors, governments, academics and senior managers of humanitarian agencies and institutions, to shed light on the humanitarian shelter and settlements sector. The report calls for more efficient collaboration between shelter specialists and other sectors, with an aim of improving responses to the needs of people affected by disasters and conflict.

MULTIMEDIA & EDITORIALS OF INTEREST

[The United Nations Migration Compact: In Context](#) - CATO Institute

This editorial provides a contextual and historical analysis of the GCM via an analysis of national immigration policies.

[Global Compact on Refugees: How is this different from the migrants' pact and how will it help?](#) - UN News

An in-depth look at the UN Global Compact on Refugees.

[The global migration pact isn't what populists say it is](#) - Washington Post

An editorial that seeks to dispel and counter many of the myths and misunderstandings surrounding the GCM.

[International Migrants Day](#) - International Organization for Migration

This page dedicated to the UN International Migrants Day features IOM's Director General's official statement marking the day and a number of videos centred around the lives of migrants.

['It's an Act of Murder': How Europe Outsources Suffering as Migrants Drown](#) - New York Times

This short documentary and associated feature reconstruct a tragedy at sea that left at least 20 migrants dead and offer a scathing rebuke of European policies in the Mediterranean.

[The Complex Effects of Development Aid on Migration](#) - News Deeply

This editorial provides a thoughtful analysis of how aid and development can affect migration.

[Greece: A tale of two migration stories](#) - LSE Blogs

A short piece looking at contradictions and tensions within Greece's migration policies.

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