



## 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, MMC, 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



## REGIONAL

### UNODC MENA and EU partnership to target human trafficking in North Africa

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa and the European Union have [launched](#) a multi-year project aimed at supporting Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia in dismantling migrant smuggling and human trafficking criminal networks operating in North Africa. The EU has earmarked €15 million for the project, which is expected to be implemented over a three-year period within the framework of the North Africa Window of the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa. UNODC will work closely with the governments of North African states to improve the detection and interception capacities of frontline officers and agencies, strengthen their capacities to identify and investigate migrant smuggling and human trafficking cases, while protecting victims, build the skills and knowledge of law enforcement agencies and strengthen the skills criminal justice practitioners in cases of migrant smuggling and human trafficking.

### UNHCR's Refugee Zakat Fund raises \$38.1 million in six months

UNHCR has released a [report](#) detailing the activities of a newly restructured Refugee Zakat Fund. The fund raised \$38.1 million in the first half of 2019 and has thus far supported 111,209 refugee and IDP families (648,476 individuals) *with multi-purpose cash assistance* in Jordan, Lebanon, Yemen, Iraq, Egypt, Mauritania and Bangladesh. Of those supported by \$15.9 million 64,357 families were in Yemen, 2,546 in Egypt, 1,650 in Jordan, 1,387 in Lebanon and 230 in Iraq. The remaining funds will be distributed in the second half of 2019 and UNHCR has revised its target for 2019 to \$44 million.

## EGYPT

### Egyptian ministry of immigration and expatriate affairs establishing an international unit

The Egyptian Ministry of Immigration and Expatriate Affairs [announced](#) on 13 August that it is selecting international partners for a new unit for coordinating international projects. The unit aims to develop and implement international migration-related programming and development projects involving Egyptian expatriates. The unit also aims to establish and expand a roster of international experts to build upon capacities without increasing pressures on the state budget. The unit is established following an agreement with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) signed in April 2019.

### Egypt among top of countries receiving remittances

A recent publication by the Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (KNOMAD) and the World Bank Group has [listed](#) Egypt as the fifth top recipient of remittances globally with remittances totalling \$28.9 billion in 2018. Remittances remain a vital and critical resource for the economies of countries with high numbers of expatriates. Officially recorded global remittances reached \$529 billion in 2018 and are set to increase by an additional \$21 billion in 2019 to reach \$550 billion.

# LIBYA

## Maritime updates

According to IOM data , 5,869 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers were rescued and returned to Libya between January and August 2019. Of those who were rescued so far in 2019, 5,249 were male, 370 were female and 250 were children. 73 bodies were retrieved from the Mediterranean in the first eight months of the year while 203 migrants have gone missing in the waters off the coast of Libya over the same period.

Two large-scale, maritime incidents occurred in the Central Mediterranean in the last week of August. It was [reported](#) on 21 August that over 100 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers were feared dead after a Libyan fisherman contacted the NGO Alarmphone's distress hotline. Three survivors reported that over 100 migrants were aboard the overcrowded vessel when it sank. The incident could not be immediately verified but drew attention to the scale of undocumented tragedies in the Mediterranean. In a statement to a news outlet, Alarmphone said, "It can be presumed that many tragedies go unnoticed." While IOM, along with many other agencies and NGOs, are attempting to limit the suffering the Mediterranean and provide more accurate data on the true scale of maritime tragedies, incidents such as these highlight the difficulty of responding to all incidents in the Mediterranean.

The second large-scale maritime incident [occurred](#) on 27 August when roughly 40 migrants went missing off the coast of Libya. 65 migrants were rescued in the same incident, but search efforts were halted without any further survivors.

## Ocean Viking refused refueling off coast of Malta

Ocean Viking, a search and rescue vessel operated by SOS Mediterranee and MSF and which operates in the waters off the coast of Libya, was [denied](#) permission to refuel by Maltese authorities in August. In what is standard practice in the Mediterranean, the ship planned to refuel off the coast of Malta as it made its way to the waters of the Central Mediterranean. Maltese authorities, however, informed the vessel that it had no authorization to enter Maltese waters.

# MOROCCO

## Royal Navy rescues over 100 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers

The Royal Moroccan Navy [rescued](#) 156 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers from the waters of the Mediterranean on 29 August. Those rescued included 15 women and three children. It was reported that the majority of those rescued were of sub-Saharan origin and that many were in poor health. The royal navy provided necessary medical assistance to those rescued and returned them to Moroccan shores.

## Morocco's director of migration and border surveillance discusses Morocco's policies

Khalid Zerouali, director of migration and border surveillance at Morocco's Ministry of Interior has recently [discussed](#) the Kingdom's migration policies and its cooperation with Spain in the fight against trafficking and criminal organizations with the Spanish news outlet [Eldiario.es](#). Mr. Zerouali lauded Moroccan-Spanish cooperation efforts to tackle irregular migration and described the relationship as 'exemplary' and 'a model of cooperation between the south and the north'. Speaking about those joint efforts, Mr. Zerouali said, "we work with mixed maritime patrols between the Royal Gendarmerie and the Civil Guard, air and land and cooperate in the exchange of information to fight against [criminal] networks." Mr. Zerouali further explained that while the €140 million in funds provided by Europe to assist Morocco's efforts is welcome gesture, they cannot nevertheless solve the problem of irregular migration entirely. It was [announced](#) later in the month, on 23 August, that the Spanish government will providing Morocco with an additional €32 million to support its efforts to curb irregular migration, address human trafficking and dismantle criminal smuggling operations.

During his interview, Mr. Zerouali also highlighted Morocco's efforts to regularize the statuses of thousands of irregular migrants, providing them with greater security and granting them access to much needed services. Speaking about Morocco's achievements in relation to migration Mr. Zerouali said, "50,000 who have a residence card are entitled to free health same as Moroccans...we have hosted 9,000 to 10,000 children and about 1,200 regularized migrants are studying vocational training courses," he further added, "we have granted between 7,000 and 8,000 university scholarships, and we collaborate with many NGOs that work in immigrant insertion."

## NIGER

### **IOM Niger and Terre Solidali hold education and entrepreneurship trainings for migrants**

In order to mark International Youth Day, IOM Niger, along with its partner Terre Solidali [organized](#) five training sessions for 250 migrants and local communities in three cities in Niger in the beginning of August. The training sessions are part of IOM's "Initiatives for the Development of Enterprise" (IDEE) project, an initiative that seeks to promote and support youth entrepreneurship as a means to tackle unemployment and poverty, two of the main reasons that many youths choose to migrate. This project also aims to develop sectors of migrants' local economies of origin through innovative enterprise. In the lead-up to International Youth Day, local entrepreneur Rachidatou Abdou delivered a two-day training on homemade skincare products between 6 and 7 August to more than 40 girls and women at IOM's transit center for migrant women in Niamey while 30 unaccompanied migrant children at the same center received a one-day training on textile printing from Digital Mind, a local communications agency. Additional training sessions were provided in Karadjé on the outskirts of Niamey, Tahoua and Zinder. Speaking about the initiative's latest events, Barbara Rijks, IOM's Chief of Mission in Niger, said, "The five training sessions organized this month highlight this year's theme for International Youth Day, Transforming Education," adding, "Youth today are our leaders of tomorrow, and thus it's crucial to encourage them to acquire new skills or showcase the ones they have already."

## TUNISIA

### **Tunisian navy rescues migrants, refugees and asylum seekers**

The Tunisian Ministry of Defence [announced](#) on 26 August that the Tunisian navy had rescued 18 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers off the coast of the coast of Tunisia, roughly 50 kilometres southeast of the city of Zarzis. The migrants in question had reportedly departed from Libya.

On 25 August, another statement by the Tunisian Ministry of Interior reported that authorities stopped two separate irregular migration attempts off the coast of Sfax, 94 migrants were reportedly arrested in relation to those incidents.

### **Tunisia top country of departure for migrants arriving in Italy**

According to figures [released](#) by the Italian Ministry of Interior on 19 August, the majority of migrants arriving irregularly in Italy are departing from Tunisia. Italy reported that 36.8% of migrants departed from Tunisia, 22.3% from Libya, and 21% from Turkey.

### **Reports of Ivorian migrants abandoned at Tunisian-Libyan border**

The UN [expressed](#) concern on 7 August over reports that 36 Ivorian migrants, including women and children were turned back by Tunisian authorities along Tunisia's border with Libya on 4 August. The group of migrants [shared](#) a video on social media on 4 August explaining how they were returned to an inhospitable desert area along the Tunisian-Libyan border without adequate access to food, water and other supplies. In the video, one migrant explains, "We were getting ready to celebrate Independence Day for our country, the Ivory Coast. [A group of Tunisians] came, they took us [arrested] and they sent us to the desert. They brought us to the border. They know that Libya is a dangerous country." Another migrant is seen on the video adding, "We don't have anything to eat [...] Our children don't have water to drink. Have pity on us." Commenting on the incident, IOM in Tunisia reportedly said that Tunisian authorities had not followed proper procedure and should have referred the migrants to the Tunisian Red Cross, which is supported by IOM.

## GREECE

### Arrivals to Greece by sea

8,270 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers arrived in Greece by sea in August. This represents a roughly 52% increase on figures from a similar period the previous month.

### Arrests of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers

Greek authorities reportedly [arrested](#) around 100 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in raids on squats occupied by migrants in Athens' Exarcheia neighbourhood. The raids were a large-scale operation involving dozens of police officers. Greece's incoming, conservative Prime Minister, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, had previously promised to bring 'order' to the neighbourhood, which has been the site of many confrontations between anarchists and Greek authorities over the last few years.

### Clashes at Moria reception centre on Lesbos

A 15-year-old Afghan migrant was [killed](#) in clashes involving other migrants at Moria on the Greek island of Lesbos at the end of August. The young migrant was killed during an altercation involving another three minors, two of whom were also injured. Authorities have reportedly arrested one of those involved in relation to the killing. UNHCR's representative to Greece, Philippe Leclerc, expressed his shock and concern over the news and reiterated once again that "The Greek government must take urgent measures to ensure that these children are transferred to a safe place."

Moria has been the site of many such incidents and clashes with centre staff and personnel over overcrowding and appalling living conditions. Currently, roughly 10,000 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers are housed at Moria despite the centre only being designed for 3,000 occupants. Clashes [erupted](#) once more in the first week of September when roughly 100 unaccompanied child migrants, refugees and asylum seekers protested against restrictions on their movement. The clashes came a day after 1,500 migrants were transferred to the Greek mainland to ease overcrowding and tensions. In the wake of the clashes, Mr. Leclerc [urged](#) European member states to accept asylum seekers from countries of first arrival, such as Greece, which are currently placed under enormous strain. Speaking with a Greek media outlet, Mr Leclerc explained, "Greece's reception system is at its limits. The UNHCR has repeatedly emphasized that countries such as Greece, located at the external borders of the EU and accepting the largest number of arrivals, need practical solidarity from other European states."

## ITALY

### Arrivals to Italy by sea

1,268 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers arrived in Italy by sea in August, which represents a roughly 16% increase from the previous month of July. This figure is also roughly 3% higher than arrival figures for August of last year.

### Hundreds of migrants stranded at sea following rescue

There have been several high-profile incidents in August of rescue vessels being denied permission to dock in Italian ports to disembark rescued migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. Open Arms, a search and rescue vessel operated by a Spanish NGO of the same name, [refused](#) to leave Italian waters on the 19 August after spending nearly a week stranded at sea. The refusal came as Spain offered to allow the vessel to dock in Algeciras. Open Arms refused the Spanish invitation because the long voyage to Spain would place additional strain on 98 migrants aboard the vessel. Speaking about the situation, Open Arms' director and founder, Oscar Camps, told news outlets, "We have exhausted physically, morally and technically the few resources that this organisation has in this moment." Open Arms was eventually allowed by Italian courts to dock on 21 August.

At the time that Open Arms was docking in the port of Lampedusa, Ocean Viking, a vessel operated by SOS Méditerranée and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) was still [stranded](#) at sea with 356 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers still aboard. Those aboard had been rescued in operations between 9 and 12 August. Ocean Viking was eventually [given](#) permission to dock in Malta on 23 August after EU states such as Germany, France and Portugal offered to take in those aboard.

These incidents prompted UNHCR to release a statement on 13 August [urging](#) immediate action to help those aboard. Referring to those rescued and stuck aboard those vessels, the statement said, "Many are reportedly survivors of appalling

abuses in Libya and are from refugee-producing countries. They are in need of humanitarian assistance and some have already expressed an intention to seek international protection,” it further added, “To leave people who have fled war and violence in Libya on the high seas in this weather would be to inflict suffering upon suffering. They must be immediately allowed to dock and allowed to receive much-needed humanitarian aid.”

UNHCR has also [gone](#) on the record to oppose and criticize a newly amended law that aims to deter NGOs from rescuing refugees and migrants in distress at sea. The new law was proposed by then Italian Minister of Interior, Matteo Salvini, and would impose fines of up to \$1.1 million on NGO vessels and impound said vessels. Speaking about the law, Charlie Yaxley, a spokesperson for UNHCR said, “NGOs play an invaluable role in saving the lives of refugees and migrants attempting the dangerous sea crossing to Europe,” Yaxley said. “Their commitment and humanity should not be criminalized nor stigmatized. Likewise, NGO and commercial vessels must not be requested to transfer rescued people to the Libyan Coast Guard or be directed to disembark them in Libya.”

## SPAIN

### Arrivals to Spain by sea

2,228 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers have crossed from Morocco to Spain by sea in August, which represents a roughly 6% decrease from the previous month of July and an approximately 65% decrease from figures for the same reporting period or August last year.

### Arrivals to Spain by land

350 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers have crossed into Spain via its land borders with Morocco (through Ceuta and Melilla) in August, a 34% drop in figures from the previous month of July. It should be noted that the figure for July was already roughly 38% lower than that for the month of June. In the most high-profile, large-scale [crossing](#) event so far this year, 150 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers crossed into Ceuta on 30 August.

# MULTIMEDIA & EDITORIALS OF INTEREST

## [Despite Tighter Security, Migrant Smuggling Thrives between Sudan, Egypt – Asharq Al-Awsat](#)

This editorial provides an insight into the migrant smuggling movements between Egypt and Sudan especially in light of increased security and border surveillance.

## [Germany's Refugees Are Starting to Pay Off – Bloomberg](#)

This piece refutes many predominant preconceptions about migrant and refugees' contributions to receiving countries' economies.

# RESEARCH OF INTEREST

## [Human Rights and International Solidarity](#) – Human Rights at Sea

This briefing note reviews the report of the UN Independent Expert and special rapporteur on human rights and international solidarity with implications for human rights at sea.