



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.

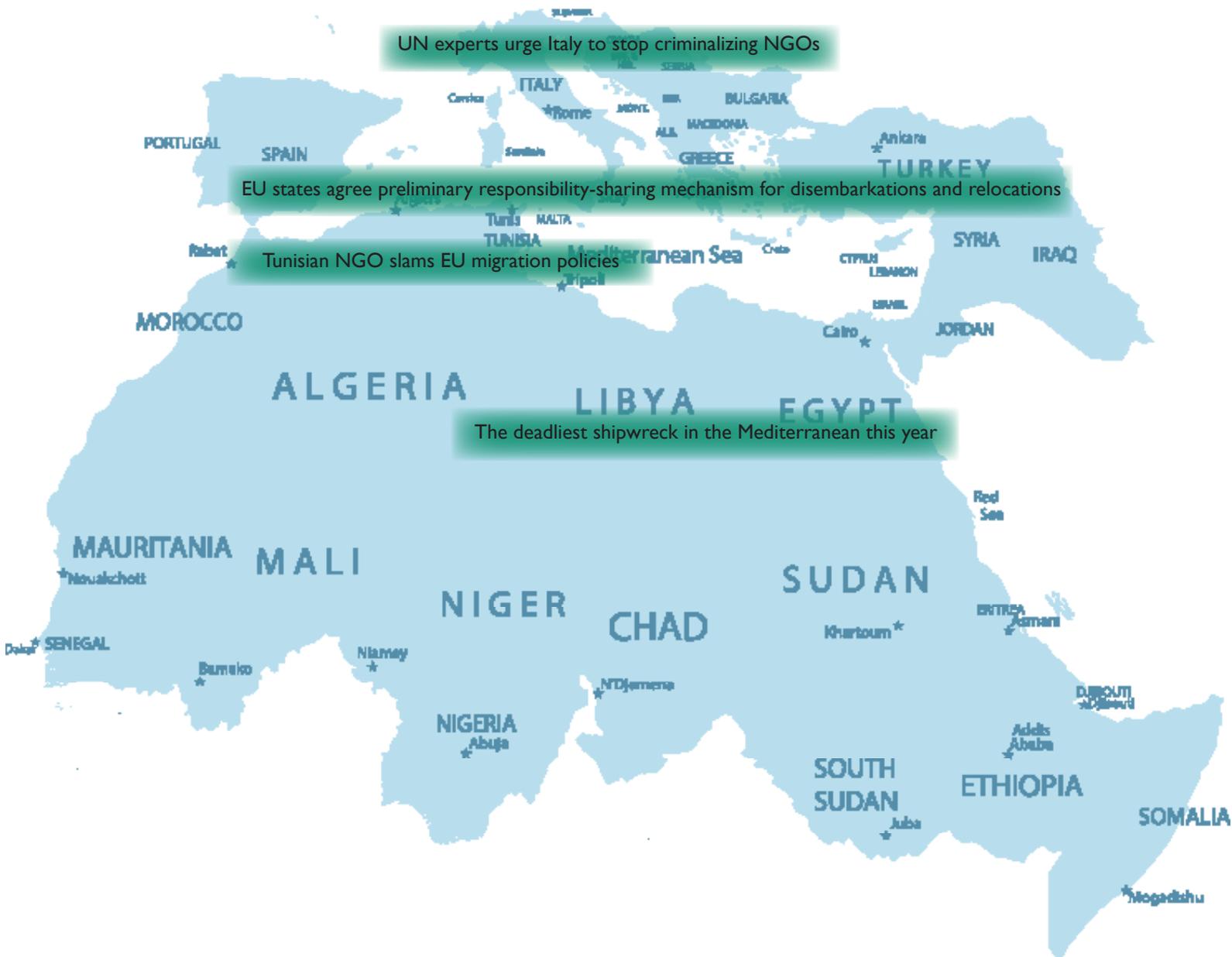
HIGHLIGHTS

UN experts urge Italy to stop criminalizing NGOs

EU states agree preliminary responsibility-sharing mechanism for disembarkations and relocations

Tunisian NGO slams EU migration policies

The deadliest shipwreck in the Mediterranean this year



REGIONAL

EU states agree preliminary responsibility-sharing mechanism for disembarkations and relocations

Fourteen EU states have [agreed](#) 'in principle' to a [French-German proposal](#) for a "temporary solidarity mechanism" to guide the disembarkation of migrants and refugees at the closest ports of safety and the relocation of migrants and refugees rescued in the Mediterranean. The preliminary agreement came after a meeting of foreign affairs and interior European ministers in Paris at the end of July. Speaking about the initiative, President Emmanuel Macron said that the mechanism would be 'quick' and 'automatic'. The draft agreement is a ten-point commitment to address the uncertainties surrounding sea rescues, disembarkation, responsibility-sharing and asylum and returns that have been the source of great humanitarian concern as well as interstate political turmoil. While the agreement is a much-welcomed initiative, much remains unclear about the implementation of the very broad commitments laid out in the proposal. A follow up meeting scheduled for September of this year in Malta will, it is hoped, provide greater clarity. Another area of concern for the mechanism moving forward is Italy's opposition or presumed opposition to the agreement. Italy's Deputy Prime Minister, Matteo Salvini, turned down an invitation to the meeting and later warned his French counterpart, Christophe Castaner, about the effects of decisions taken solely in Paris and Berlin. More publicly, Mr. Salvini [claimed](#) that the agreement expects that Italy will "continue to be the refugee camp of Europe".

EGYPT

IOM lauds Egypt's efforts to combat trafficking in persons

Laurent De Boeck, IOM Egypt's Chief of Mission, [lauded](#) Egypt's efforts to tackle the scourge of human trafficking at a ceremony held by the Egyptian National Coordinating Committee for Preventing and Combating Illegal migration and human trafficking (NCCPIMTIP) on 30 July. In his speech, Mr. De Boeck thanked Egyptian President Abdelfattah El Sisi for the tremendous effort to tackle the problem and highlighted the importance of international cooperation in addressing trafficking in persons.

Six defendants referred to criminal court for people smuggling

Public Prosecutor Nabil Sadeq has [referred](#) six defendants in a case dubbed 'the illegal migration gang' to criminal court for immediate trial. The persons in question along with others reportedly formed a criminal enterprise to smuggle persons out of Egypt. The defendants were in the process of smuggling a large group of Egyptians, including minors, when they were apprehended. The would-be migrants in question were reportedly being held in a property in Cairo while awaiting transportation to another location in Alexandria. The defendants were reportedly paid between 60,000 and 65,000 (approx. \$3,600 and \$3,900) Egyptian pounds by each of the migrants to be smuggled to Italy. The men are accused of endangering youths by making them reside in a unsuitable place, endangering the lives of the migrants in question by smuggling them in a fishing boat, and defrauding them by claiming they would secure them jobs in Italy.

Campaign to promote social cohesion in Egypt

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, with the support of the Egyptian Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Youth and Sport, and in partnership with IOM has [launched](#) a clickfunding campaign that aims to improve social cohesion, promote the integration of migrants in Egypt and highlight the benefits of migration. The campaign was developed by an Egyptian social start-up and the investor of clickfunding called Bassita. The campaign, titled "let's complete each other", was released in the form of an online video that brings together migrants from 15 different nationalities and Egyptians in a social experiment that seeks to highlight similarity over difference. The online campaign encourages interactions on social media and once the campaign reached 250,000 interactions on social media platforms IOM will commit to implement entrepreneur training sessions for both migrants and Egyptians.

MSMEDA to receive funding

The head of the human and community development sector at Egypt's Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency (MSMEDA) has reportedly [said](#) that the agency is expected to sign an agreement with the EU in August to tackle irregular migration from Egypt through local development. Under the terms of the agreement, MSMEDA will receive €27 million (approx. \$30 million) to create roughly 320,000 day-labour jobs in the eleven Egyptian governorates with the highest rates of irregular migration; Fayoum, Assiut, Luxor, Minya, Kafr El-Sheikh, Menoufia, Qalyubia, Gharbiya, Dakahlia, Sharqiya, and Behira.

The deadliest shipwreck in the Mediterranean this year

[An estimated](#) 150 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers lost their lives off the coast of Libya on 25 July, in the deadliest shipwreck in the Mediterranean so far this year. The migrants in question were part of a group of roughly 300 who embarked on two separate boats from Western Libya, near the Libyan capital Tripoli. According to Ayoub Gassim, a spokesperson for the Libyan Coast Guard (LCG), the boats capsized 120 kilometres off the Libyan coast. The LCG was only able to rescue 137 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers and return them to shore. As of 27 July, only 55 bodies had been [recovered](#) from the sea. The tragic incident prompted further expressions of concern and outrage from humanitarian and rights groups and organizations. Speaking about the incident, Charles Yaxley, a spokesperson for UNHCR, said, "This horrific event highlights once again the dire need for a shift in approach to the Mediterranean situation. Urgent action is needed to save lives at sea and prevent people from getting on these boats in the first place by offering safe, legal alternatives." While Judith Sunderland, the associate director for Europe and Central Asia at Human Rights Watch (HRW), said, "What's always so horrifying about these relentless tragedies is that they should be preventable. Instead of conducting European search and rescue in the Mediterranean, the EU has pulled its forces out. Instead of supporting non-governmental rescue operations, EU countries have thrown every obstacle in their way. Instead of taking responsibility themselves, EU countries have been propping up the Libyan coastguard without the resources or dedication to save lives at sea."

Libya to shut down a number of detention centres

The Libyan Government of National Accord (GNA) [announced](#) in the first week of August that it plans to close down three of its biggest detention centres after international outcries over conditions at the centres and an airstrike that left 53 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers dead on 2 July. The affected centres are located in Tajoura, Misrata and Khoms. Humanitarian and rights groups have warned that the closure of those centres may in fact lead to further overcrowding at other centres. It is believed that there are a total of 12 detention centres being operated by the GNA in Western Libya. The airstrike on the Tajoura detention centre further highlighted the need for action over the detained migrants and refugees, particularly those in areas affected by fighting. A week after the airstrike, migrants in Tajoura [launched](#) a hunger strike to demand immediate evacuation from the centre. They reportedly slept outside following the attack fearing further strikes. On 8 July, 38 Libyan rights groups [called](#) for the evacuation of migrants and refugees still held in detention centres in Tajoura and the surrounding areas. As mentioned earlier however, the closure of some centres and the relocation of those detained does not necessarily mean the end of the plight of thousands and could spell further problems for other centres.

IOM seeks to dispel myth that all migrants in Libya want to get to Europe

Federico Soda, IOM Italy's Chief of Mission, has [sought](#) to dispel the myth that all migrants in Libya want to get to Europe. Speaking with the German Die Welt newspaper, Mr. Soda said that not all of the 650,000 migrants in Libya have any plans to migrate onwards to Europe and added that a few tens of thousands are entitled to international protection and that those are the ones that are in desperate need of immediate evacuation. Mr. Soda further highlighted that such evacuations need not be to Europe but that other countries, such as Canada, have offered to resettle vulnerable refugees.

NGOs resume rescue operations

On 21 July, the humanitarian organizations SOS Méditerranée and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) [announced](#) that they will be resuming rescue operations in the central Mediterranean. Rescue operations were suspended in December 2018 after pressure by European states and confrontational incidents with the European backed Libyan Coast Guard. The NGOs will be conducting rescues with the Norwegian-flagged Ocean Viking. A statement announcing the move citing deteriorating conditions in the Mediterranean, escalating conflict in Libya and the dearth of humanitarian rescue and assistance in the Mediterranean as reasons for the resumption of operations. Speaking about the decision, Joanne Liu, International President of MSF, said, "We are returning to sea because people are drowning. We are returning to sea as a humanitarian act aimed at saving lives. We are returning to sea as conflict rages in Tripoli and ever more migrants and refugees are losing their lives in Libya."

MALI

Initiative to better inform youth on migration

On 25 July, the UNESCO Office in Mali, in collaboration with the Ministry of Communication in charge of Relations with the Institutions, Spokesperson of the Government [launched](#) an initiative to empower youth to make better informed decisions about migration. The initiative, titled “Empowering young people in Africa through the media and communication”, is a three-year project that aims to improve young people’s access to information about migration in eight West and Central African countries; Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Niger, Nigeria, Guinea, Mali, and Senegal. Speaking at the project launch, the Minister of Communication, in charge of Relations with the Institutions, Yaya Sangaré, explained that the project is needed to, “properly inform our youth, so that the decision to migrate is the result of a free and responsible choice, not a necessity.” He further added, “together we will build a well-informed youth composed of enlightened, critical citizens who are able to participate actively in the life of their community and the country.”

MOROCCO

Moroccan navy rescues hundreds of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in one day

The Moroccan royal navy has announced that it rescued 242 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers who were attempting to cross from Morocco to Spain on 26 July. The migrants, refugees and asylum seekers were attempting to make the crossing on several dinghies but faced difficulties in the Strait of Gibraltar. 50 women and 12 minors were among those rescued by the royal navy.

Authorities arrest Spanish man for people smuggling

Authorities in Nador arrested a Spanish national on 1 August on charges of people smuggling. The man in question was driving a Spanish-registered transport truck and was transporting a migrant to Spain in the vehicle. The migrant was hidden somewhere in the vehicle and experienced breathing difficulties, prompting him to contact his family for help. The migrant’s family were able to contact local authorities who were then able to identify and locate the vehicle. Investigations found that the driver had transported two other migrants via similar means, receiving 10,000 Moroccan Dirhams (roughly \$1,040) for each. The suspect was reportedly working with another suspect who acted as middle-man, who in turn also received 60,000 Moroccan Dirhams (roughly \$6,270) for each crossing.

NIGER

MSF warns of dangers awaiting migrants in the Nigerien desert

Aiva Noelsaint, a project coordinator with MSF, who has been [running](#) a project providing medical and humanitarian assistance in Niger’s Agadez region has recently re-highlighted the risks to the safety and well-being of migrants and refugees traveling to or transiting through Niger. Speaking about the current situation in Niger, she said, “Far from stopping the flow of people, the recent criminalization of migration by both European and non-European governments has significantly increased the vulnerability of people on the move, whether they are migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, traders or seasonal workers.” She further added, “Imagine being dumped in the middle of nowhere with no food or water. You don’t understand the local language and have never been to Niger – or to any desert area. Imagine that before being dropped at the border you were held in a detention center with no information. Imagine that you saw your relatives, friends or travel companions die on the journey – like the person who told us that 25 of his 30 travel companions had died after the truck that was transporting them broke down and nobody could help them in time. This kind of experience can leave people scarred for life, no matter how resilient they are.”

First centre for trafficking survivors opens in Niger

IOM and Niger’s National Agency for the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons (ANLTP) [opened](#) the first reception centre for survivors of human trafficking in Niger on 19 July. The centre was built as part of a project titled ‘Enhancing Capacities to Fight Trafficking in Persons in Niger’, that is expected to run till January 2020 and that is in alignment with the National Action Plan on Trafficking in Persons (NAP) and its priorities, and with support from the US Department of State’s Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (J/TIP). The centre is equipped to identify and adequately assist victims of trafficking through medical, psychosocial, legal and administrative services as well as provide socioeconomic assistance to those in need. The Zinder centre is the first of three to be opened in Niger under this project with a further two opening soon in Agadez and Niamey.

TUNISIA

Tunisian NGO slams EU migration policies

The Tunisian NGO Tunisien pour les Droits Economiques et Sociaux (FTDES) has recently [released](#) a report that heavily criticizes the EU's migration policies in the southern Mediterranean, especially in Tunisia. A researcher with FTDES, Mohamed Limem, has criticized the EU for not respecting migration rights "because visas have become, for them, a tool for exclusion that integrates a lack of respect for human rights." During the presentation of the findings, participants highlighted the need for better Tunisian migration governance policies to address migration to and through Tunisia.

GREECE

Arrivals to Greece by sea

4,540 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers arrived in Greece by sea between 1 and 29 July. This represents a roughly 52% increase on figures from a similar period the previous month. This figure also represents a roughly 84% increase on figures from a similar reporting period for July of last year.

Frontex supplies Greece with blimp to monitor migration

The European Border and Coast Guard Agency, Frontex, has [supplied](#) the Greek Coast Guard with a blimp to track irregular migration from Turkey to Greece. The blimp will be used for an initial four-week trial to test and its effectiveness. The blimp will be tethered on the Greek island of Samos and will fly at an altitude as high as 1,000 meters. It is equipped with radar and a thermal camera that will scan the surrounding waters 24-hours a day.

Greek Prime Minister highlights priorities in relation to migration

Greece's Prime Minister, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, has [highlighted](#) six priorities in relation to migration after meeting with EU Migration Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos on 15 July. Prime Minister Mitsotakis announced the priorities during a meeting with cabinet ministers later that very same day. The cabinet members present at the meeting were Citizens' Protection Minister Michalis Chrysochoidis, Alternate Migration Policy Minister Giorgos Koumoutsakos and Shipping and Island Policy Ministers Yiannis Plakiotakis. Topping the list of priorities is the immediate improvement of conditions at Greek reception centres, which have drawn repeated criticism from concerned rights and humanitarian groups. The second priority outlined by Mr. Mitsotakis is the protection of Greece and the EU's external borders, followed by the overhaul of the Greek asylum system, followed fourthly by the implementation of the EU-Turkey agreement over returns. The fifth priority is to address overcrowding at reception facilities on Samos and finally, the six area of concern is the adoption of EU regulations relating to citizens' security.

Arrest of staff at reception centre for falsifying medical claims

A doctor, two medical staff members and a translator were [arrested](#) on Samos over suspicions that they falsified medical documents for migrants in order to help them avoid deportation. The suspects reportedly charged migrants €300-500 (approx. \$335-560) for falsified medical notes for non-existent conditions that would allow them to travel to the Greek mainland and avoid deportation. The persons in questions are facing charges of fraud, bribery, breach of duty, and membership of criminal organization.

Greek authorities [arrested](#) a further six people on the island of Kos on suspicion of facilitating migrant smuggling from the island to other European countries. The persons in question included an official working at Kos airport. According to the charges against them, they falsified travel documents to allow migrants to travel and reportedly charged each migrant €6,000 (approx. \$6,700) for their services.

Arrest of migrants over residence permits

Greek authorities have stepped-up efforts to detain migrants without valid residence permits. Authorities in the northern city of Thessaloniki [arrested](#) over 60 migrants on 30 July for failing to present the necessary documentation when prompted. The arrests followed reports of violent clashes near the city's main train station.

ITALY

Arrivals to Italy by sea

1,088 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers arrived in Italy by sea in July, which represents a roughly 11% decrease from the previous month of June. This figure is also roughly 40% lower than arrival figures for July of last year.

Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers allowed to disembark in Italy

Italy's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Matteo Salvini, [announced](#) on 31 July that Italy would allow 131 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers to disembark from the Italian coast guard vessel Bruno Gregoretti after allowing it to dock on 28 July but not allowing those aboard, including crew, to disembark. The announcement came after a deal that would allow those disembarked to be relocated to other European countries.

UN experts urge Italy to stop criminalizing NGOs

On 18 July, a number of UN experts [called](#) on Italy to reconsider its approach to NGO rescue operations. The statements came after the arrest of Sea-Watch's captain, Carola Rackete, for docking at the port of Lampedusa without authorization. Captain Rackete had been in international waters for two weeks with over 50 vulnerable migrants, refugees and asylum seekers on board. Sea-Watch was denied permission to dock in both Italy and Malta. Captain Rackete was arrested and placed under house arrest following the incident but a judge dismissed the charges against her on 1 July. In their statement to Italy, the team of UN experts expressed "grave concern over the detention and criminal proceedings in Italy against the German captain of the migrant rescue vessel Sea-Watch 3." They further added, "Rescuing migrants in distress at sea is not a crime. We urge the Italian authorities to immediately stop the criminalisation of search and rescue operations." Whilst the charges relating to unauthorized docking have been dismissed, Captain Rackete is still under investigation over allegations relating to endangering the lives of police officers and facilitating illegal migration. Captain Rackete called upon the EU to end stand-offs over migrant rescues and allow those rescued to disembark at the nearest ports of safety. "I hope that the European Commission, after the election of the new parliament, will do its best to avoid this kind of situation and that all the countries will accept migrants saved by civilian rescue ships," she said.

SPAIN

Arrivals to Spain by sea

2,362 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers have crossed from Morocco to Spain by sea between 1 and 25 July, which represents a roughly 42% increase from figures for a similar reporting period the previous month of June but an approximately 73% decrease from figures for a similar reporting period in July of last year.

Arrivals to Spain by land

538 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers have crossed into Spain via its land borders with Morocco (through Ceuta and Melilla) in July, a 38% drop in figures from the previous month of May. This figure represents a roughly 44% decrease from land arrival figures for July of last year.

MULTIMEDIA & EDITORIALS OF INTEREST

[“Imagine being dumped in the desert, in the middle of nowhere, with no food or water” - MSF](#)

This editorial by MSF attempts to provide an overview of the conditions facing migrants and refugees in Niger, with a special focus on their increased vulnerability and their current humanitarian needs.

[Spain has figured out how to save the lives of migrants at sea. The rest of the EU should follow](#) – UN Dispatch

This editorial lauds Spain’s approach to rescuing migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in the Mediterranean and calls upon other EU countries to follow suit in order preserve the lives of those attempting the journey.

[One Month Since Libya’s Migrant Tragedy, Detentions Continue](#) – Inter Press Service

This editorial provides an overview of the current situation in Libyan detention centres, particularly in light of last month’s airstrike on Tajoura which lead to the deaths of tens of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

RESEARCH OF INTEREST

[EU-Egypt Migration Cooperation: At the expense of human rights](#) – Euromed Rights

This study takes a critical look at the EU's cooperation with Egypt on migration and the ways in which it impacts the rights of migrants and refugees in Egypt.

[Quarterly Mixed Migration Update: North Africa](#) – MMC

This report by MMC provides a quarterly update on trends and migration-related updates in Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia.