



Monthly Trend Report

Covering mixed migration to, through & from **NORTH AFRICA**

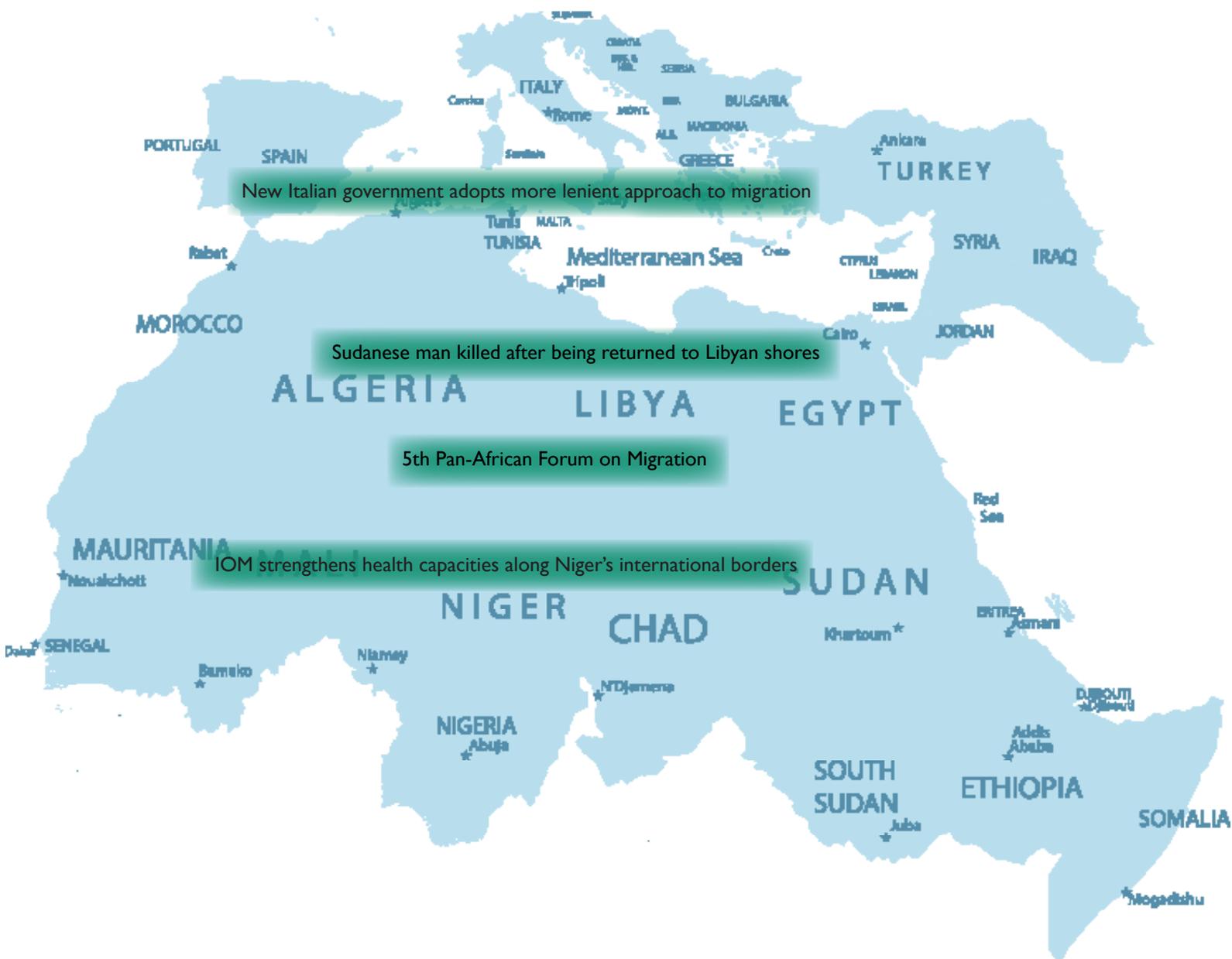
About: MHub is the regional knowledge hub and secretariat for the North Africa Mixed Migration Task Force, comprising of DRC, IOM, OHCHR, MMC, Save the Children, UNHCR, UNICEF and UNODC. It promotes a human rights-based approach to ensure the protection of people moving in mixed and complex flows to,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

5th Pan-African Forum on Migration

The [5th Pan-African Forum on Migration](#) was held in Cairo between 14 and 16 September under the theme, “Strengthening Migration Data and Research for evidence-based policy development and implementation towards effective migration governance in Africa.” The Pan African Forum on Migration (PAFoM) is a continent-wide interregional forum on migration established in 2015, bringing together continental Regional Economic Commissions (RECs), the African Union and AU Member States to promote and deepen inter-State dialogue and intra/inter-regional cooperation on migration. The forum tackles migration issues of mutual interest and concern to African governments as well as joint strategies and approaches for the implementation of future continent-wide migration policy. PAFOM 5 brought together all AU Member States, AU RECs, IOM, UNECA and other relevant stakeholders, with the aim of providing policy guidance and prescriptions on how the continent can strengthen migration statistics for effective migration governance at national, regional and continental levels.

EGYPT

Egypt to host forum on migration data

Ihab Fawzy, Egypt’s Assistant Foreign Minister for Multilateral Affairs and International Security, has recently [reiterated](#) that Egypt will be hosting the second international forum on migration statistics (IFMS) in January 2020. The announcement came during the fifth Pan-African Forum on Migration, held in Cairo in September. The forum will be organized by IOM, OECD and UN DESA and aims to offer a space for dialogue for a broad range of actors, from national and regional authorities, NGOs, international agencies and the private sector. Speaking about the forum, Mr. Fawzy said that he hoped it would be an opportunity to advance safe, orderly and regular migration throughout the African continent.

LIBYA

Maritime updates

According to IOM data, 1,283 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers were rescued and returned to Libya in September. Of those who were rescued in September, 72 were female, 1,126 were male and 85 were children. 3 bodies were retrieved from the Mediterranean off the coast of Libya in the month of September.

Returns from Libya

According to IOM figures, 620 migrants returned voluntarily to their countries of origin from Libya in September via IOM’s Voluntary Humanitarian Return program. Of those returned via the VHR program, 181 were female, 439 were male and 5 were unaccompanied migrant children (UMC). The latest return operations bring the total number of migrants assisted by the VHR program so far in 2019 to 7,759.

Sudanese man killed after being returned to Libyan shores

A Sudanese man was [shot](#) and killed on 19 September after being returned to Libya by the Libyan Coast Guard (LCG). The incident occurred after the LCG had returned 103 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers to Libyan shores, according to UN staff present at the disembarkation point, armed men began shooting live ammunition as some migrants attempted to run away from guards in order to avoid being sent to detention centres. The man in question was struck in the stomach and succumbed to his injuries despite receiving medical assistance by an IOM doctor. In a statement about the incident, Leonard Doyle, a spokesperson for IOM said, “This was tragedy waiting to happen. The use of live bullets against unarmed vulnerable civilians, men, women and children alike, is unacceptable under any circumstances and raises alarms over the safety of migrants and humanitarian staff.” While Charles Yaxley, a spokesperson for UNHCR said that the incident made it “irrefutably clear that refugees and migrants must not be returned to Libya after being rescued at sea.”

UNHCR warns of overcrowding in its Gathering and Departure Facility (GDF) in Tripoli

UNHCR has [warned](#) on 3 September that its Gathering and Departure Facility (GDF) for vulnerable refugees in Tripoli is severely overcrowded. According to a statement by UNHCR, there are currently 1,000 refugees being housed in a facility built to house only 700 individuals. “The infrastructure and services at the GDF (Gathering and Departure Facility) are stretched thin, with deteriorating living conditions that may lead to an unsustainable situation,” UNHCR said in a statement. UNHCR further called for more spots for resettlement and evacuations in order to ease overcrowding and to remove vulnerable refugees from harm’s way. The GDF was set up in December 2018 to house the most vulnerable among the refugee population in Libya whilst they await transfer to other, safer locations.

Rwanda provides second site for refugee transit mechanism

UNHCR, the Government of Rwanda and the African Union [signed](#) a memorandum of understanding on 10 September to set up a transit mechanism for the evacuation of vulnerable refugees from Libya. According to the terms of the agreement, Rwanda will host and protect refugees in need of evacuation from Libyan detention centres. Once in Rwanda, some refugees will be resettled in third countries, while others will be helped to return to countries where they have previously been granted asylum or, if it is safe to do so, return to their countries of origin. Some refugees may also be given permission to remain in Rwanda. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, [welcomed](#) the agreement and urged more countries to take similar steps to assist vulnerable refugees. Speaking about the agreement, Mr. Grandi said, “At this critical time where people are being caught in the escalating conflict inside Libya and many endure appalling conditions in detention, refugees and asylum-seekers need hope and concrete solutions. We urgently need other countries to step forward to help in getting people out of harm’s way and offer solutions.” He further hailed Rwanda and Niger’s efforts to provide safety and hope to refugees trapped in precarious situations saying, “Rwanda, and Niger – where a centre for evacuated refugees from Libya has been operating for almost two years, helping us to secure solutions, including resettlement, for several thousand vulnerable people – are quietly demonstrating real responsibility sharing through the actions they are taking to protect people in great need. They offer hope to refugees, and should be inspiration to us all.” Mr. Grandi also called for the release of all refugees and migrants currently in detention in Libya in an orderly manner.

The first group of sixty-six refugees were [released](#) from Libyan detention and transferred to Rwanda on 24 September under the terms of the new agreement. Among those transferred to Rwanda were 26 children, almost of whom were unaccompanied. The refugees in question were transferred to a transit centre 60 kilometres south of Kigali upon arrival in Rwanda. According to a UNHCR spokesperson, “A team of nine health professionals, including a psychologist, will work alongside counselors specialized in working with children and survivors of sexual violence to provide health care and assist evacuees who survived torture, sexual violence and human rights abuses during their time in Libya.”

Direct humanitarian evacuation from Libya

A group of 98 refugees were [evacuated](#) from Libya to Italy on 12 September in the third direct humanitarian evacuation operation so far this year. The group of evacuees included Eritrean, Somali, Ethiopian and Sudanese refugees and 52 unaccompanied children. Speaking about the operation, Jean-Paul Cavalieri, UNHCR Chief of Mission for Libya, said, “Today we have taken 98 people to safety, but this is still only a small number of the thousands who need such help. There are still some 3,600 refugees in detention centres. We urgently need to find solutions for them, as well as thousands more vulnerable refugees living in urban areas.”

MOROCCO

Arrests in case of kidnapped migrant

The Moroccan General Directorate of National Security [announced](#) on 7 September that authorities had arrested 9 African migrants accused of kidnapping and holding for ransom another migrant. Authorities did not immediately release information regarding the specific nationalities of those involved but the group accused of kidnapping are reportedly of sub-Saharan African origin and include two women and a girl.

NIGER

IOM strengthens health capacities along Niger's international borders

IOM has recently [announced](#) the progress made towards improving health capacities along Niger's borders with Libya and Algeria. Last year, IOM launched its Immigration and Border Management (IBM) project titled 'Strengthening Health Capacities at the Borders with Assamaka and Séguédine.' To improve existing health facilities in Assamaka, IOM's IBM team in Niger constructed several Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) infrastructures such as a water tower, latrines and sinks. New facilities were also constructed to supply the town with drinking water, and medical equipment was provided to Assamaka's new health centre. IOM also constructed a new health centre in Séguédine and installed solar panels to power the centre with sustainable, renewable energy. Speaking about the project, Barbara Rijks, IOM's Chief of Mission in Niger, said, "These newly built infrastructures represent a much-needed addition for both migrants and community members. Seeing how many of these people often find themselves stranded in the desert under extreme temperatures, we hope that these improvements will facilitate their recovery and at times, even save lives."

SUDAN

IOM responds to flooding in Sudan

IOM Sudan [announced](#) in the third week of September that it has assisted 2,513 households in North Darfur, South Darfur, West Darfur and South Kordofan following floods that devastated several states in Sudan. Roughly 346,300 people were reportedly affected by floods due to heavy rainfall in 16 states in Sudan which destroyed 41,514 homes and damaged a further 27,742. IOM responded by providing core relief items and shelter for the households mentioned earlier as well as hygiene and sanitation items for thousands of those affected. IOM also conducted hygiene and health promotion campaigns and conducted rehabilitation work to two water pumps to ensure access to clean water. Speaking about IOM Sudan's response, Catherine Northing, IOM Sudan's Chief of Mission, said, "IOM Sudan is mobilized. Since June 2019, we have provided assistance to a total of 11,304 beneficiaries by responding to some of the most critical water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) gaps and needs in Tawilla, North Darfur, and across various locations in South Darfur." Ms. Northing further added, "Using funds from the UN CERF and OFDA of the United States we will respond to some of the needs in Ardamata IDP camp in West Darfur, but unfortunately the needs are greater than our resources to respond."

TUNISIA

Boat sinks off the coast of Tunisia

A spokesperson for Tunisia's National Guard [reported](#) that two migrants died and fourteen were still missing in an incident off the coast of Sfax on 17 September. Nine persons were reportedly rescued from the boat but authorities have not released further information regarding the incident. Houssameddine Jbabli, the spokesperson for the National Guard reported that authorities had detained 192 would-be migrants and stopped 10 boats from traveling to Europe between 15 and 17 September only. According to the latest figures available through IOM's Missing Migrants Project, the official death toll has now climbed to three but the number of missing has been reduced to four, the number of survivors has remained the same.

IOM-led initiative to help Tunisian youth find jobs in Tunisia

IOM, with support from the Belgian government, [launched](#) in March of last year a "labor migration" initiative linking Tunisia and Belgium. The initiative provided 31 graduates from Tunisia with the opportunity to develop their work skills and find jobs back in Tunisia through internships in Belgium. The 20-month project which is expected to end in October 2019 is titled "Enhancing Tunisian youth employability through vocational apprenticeships and professional internships in Belgian companies" and has thus far been a tremendous success with 80% of participants finding jobs in Tunisia since their return. According to IOM, the initiative hopes to tackle the "dual challenge of the high rate of unemployment among young Tunisians and the persistent risk of youth resorting to dangerous, irregular migration."

Reports of increase in ‘phantom’ arrivals from Tunisia to Italy

An Italian prosecutor has reportedly [claimed](#) that there has been an increase in undetected ‘phantom’ arrivals from Tunisia to Italy in recent months. Agrigento prosecutor, Salvatore Vella, was speaking with a local news outlet when he reported that there has been an increase in migrants making their way autonomously from Tunisia to Italy without needing assistance and, importantly, without being detected. Speaking about the change in arrivals, Mr. Vella said, “We are starting to see not just Tunisians but also sub-Saharanans on the boats that arrive autonomously,” adding, “We think that there are new routes, no longer from Libya but from Tunisia, where the sea crossing is easier because it is shorter and you can do it in small boats, with minimal risk.”

GREECE

Arrivals to Greece by sea

10,367 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers arrived in Greece by sea in September. This represents a roughly 25% increase on figures for the previous month of August.

Greece unveils new plans to tackle overcrowding on Greek islands

Following a four-hour cabinet meeting chaired by the Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis on 30 September, Greece’s government [announced](#) new plans to tackle dangerous overcrowding in island reception centres. In a statement following the meeting, Greek officials said that they planned to deport 10,000 migrants by the end of 2020 and move thousands more to the Greek mainland in order to ease tensions on the islands. The new government plans to distribute migrants, refugees and asylum seekers across 13 regional authorities, mostly on the Greek mainland. The statement also highlighted how Greece had already increased naval patrols in the Aegean, closed down centres for rejected asylum seekers and announced plans to overhaul the entire Greek asylum system.

The Greek government had previously [announced](#) that it will be opening two new ‘transit centres’ on the Greek mainland in order to speed up transfers of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers from Greek islands. The Greek Citizen Protection Ministry has insisted that the transit centres are only a temporary mechanism to allow for the efficient and timely transfer of migrants and refugees from severely overcrowded facilities and are not intended as permanent installations.

The situation on Greek island reception centres has been a cause for concern and outrage for many humanitarian actors in recent years and months with a fire in the Moira camp on Lesbos killing a woman and a child and injuring seventeen others on 29 September. The situation on the Greek islands has [prompted](#) the director of the think tank the European Stability Initiative (ESI), Gerald Knaus, to comment that the situation was insupportable and unsustainable for migrants and refugees and the Greek government.

ITALY

Arrivals to Italy by sea

2,498 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers arrived in Italy by sea in September, which represents a significant 100% increase from the previous month of August. This figure is also 114% higher than the figure for arrivals in September 2018.

New Italian government adopts more lenient approach to migration

Italy's incoming new government has, in many ways, [signalled](#) a definite shift from its hard-line stance on migration, championed by outgoing Minister of Interior Matteo Salvini. The Italian government has allowed NGO ships to dock and disembark vulnerable, recused migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. In a first for 2019, the Italian government [allowed](#) the rescue vessel Ocean Viking to dock in the port of Lampedusa and disembark 82 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. The decision was a much-welcome change in approach by the Italian executive.

Italy, France, Germany and Malta propose new deal to distribute rescued migrants, refugees and asylum seekers

The interior ministers of Italy, France, Germany and Malta have [devised](#) a proposal for a temporary emergency mechanism to relocate and distribute newly rescued migrants, refugees and asylum seekers among EU states willing to offer shelter. The proposal seeks to end political standoffs over disembarkation that have left hundreds of migrants stranded on rescue vessels in the Mediterranean over the past few months. The situation had been exacerbated by Italy's then hard-line policies on NGO rescue operations, barring many vessels from docking in its ports. The voluntary plan will be presented to the remaining EU's 24 interior ministers in a meeting in Luxembourg in October. Speaking about the proposal, Maria Ohisalo, the interior minister of Finland, said, "I find it crucial that we move away from ship-by-ship arrangements towards a more predictable solution." She further added that it is crucial that as many EU states participate in the voluntary scheme in order to ensure the mechanism operates smoothly.

Arrest of traffickers in Italy

Authorities in Agrigento in Sicily have [arrested](#) three men suspected of raping and torturing migrants, refugees and asylum seekers at a detention centre in Libya. The arrests came after asylum seekers recognized their former captors at a migrant registration centre in Messina. The three men, a 27-year-old Guinean and two Egyptians are accused of torture, kidnapping and human trafficking. In a press release about the case, Luigi Patronaggio, the chief prosecutor of Agrigento, wrote, "This investigation confirms the inhumane living conditions within the so-called Libyan detention centres, and the need to act at international level for the protection of human rights and for the repression of these crimes against humanity."

SPAIN

Arrivals to Spain by sea

3,037 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers have crossed from Morocco to Spain by sea in September, which represents a 36% increase from figures for August but is approximately 62% lower than figures for a similar reporting period in September of last year.

Arrivals to Spain by land

677 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers have crossed into Spain via its land borders with Morocco (through Ceuta and Melilla) in September, a 93% increase in figures from the previous month of August. In related developments, Spain's acting Interior Minister, Fernando Grande-Marlaska, has [announced](#) the removal of concertina barbed wire coils atop the fences separating Ceuta and Melilla from Morocco. The barbed wires have caused injuries, some serious, to migrants, refugees and asylum seekers attempting to scale the fences.

MULTIMEDIA & EDITORIALS OF INTEREST

[Migrants stuck on rescue ship suicidal](#) - Reuters

A video giving some insight into the mental state of Tunisian migrants stranded aboard a rescue vessel.

[Europe Keeps Asylum Seekers at a Distance, This Time in Rwanda](#) – The New York Times

An editorial that casts a critical look on the temporary emergency mechanism set up to remove refugees out of harm's way in Libya.

[Shipwreck survivor rescues migrants trying to reach Europe](#) – AP

A photo-editorial about a migrant who was once rescued from the Mediterranean who now participates in rescue operations.

RESEARCH OF INTEREST

[Greece: Stranded in Aegean Limbo](#) – Global Detention Project

This report looks at the policies of 'geographical restriction' limiting the movement of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers on Greek islands.

[As Lesbos Battles Migration Crisis Fatigue, the Value of Centralized Migration Decision-Making Is Questioned](#) – Migration Policy Institute

An in-depth look into the structural mechanisms for decision-making in Greece's responses to migration influxes.