



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



Italy urged to reform citizenship law for migrant children

Shipwreck off Moroccan coast

Global Migrant Deaths Decline, but Tragedies Continue Worldwide



REGIONAL

Global Migrant Deaths Decline, but Tragedies Continue Worldwide

According to the International Organization for Migration, the number of deaths of migrants crossing borders irregularly [decreased](#) significantly in 2019, when they amounted to at least 3,170. This figure represents a 34% decrease from 4,800 fatalities during a similar period in 2018. In the Mediterranean, the lowest number of deaths was recorded since 2014. Nonetheless, Mediterranean routes remain to be the deadliest worldwide, with the Central Mediterranean Route being the world's deadliest sea crossing.

Migration to Europe in 2019

Over 120,000 irregular migrants [arrived](#) in Europe in 2019. The number of arrivals in Greece increased significantly, while the number of arrivals in Italy and Spain decreased, reflecting an increase in arrivals via the Eastern Mediterranean Route and a decrease in arrivals via the Central and Western Mediterranean Routes. Most arrivals were via Mediterranean crossings. More than 20,000 land arrivals were recorded, reflecting approximately one fifth of the total number of arrivals.

UN experts emphasize the importance of human rights in public policies and debates on migration

To commemorate International Migrants Day, UN human rights experts [emphasized](#) the importance of human rights in public policies and debates on migration, and the need to combat hate speech. Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, Felipe González Morales, and Chair of the UN Committee on Migrant Workers, Can Ünver, explained that the criminalization of migrants and those trying to support them is wrongly based on security concerns. The experts furthermore highlighted that “It is essential for the Global Compact to be fully implemented, which can only be achieved if States cooperate with each other, with the support of the UN, civil society and other relevant groups. One important objective of the Global Compact that clearly needs more attention is working towards alternatives to immigration detention.” States were also urged to ratify the Convention on Migrant Workers.

EGYPT

IOM APA Sign MoU for Cooperation in the Fight Against Smuggling of Migrants and Trafficking in Persons

A Memorandum of Understanding was [signed](#) between the Africa Prosecutors Association (APA) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) at the 14th Africa Prosecutors Association conference and annual general meeting in Kigali, Rwanda. The MoU aims to enhance cooperation and joint initiatives to enhance technical capacities and cross-border cooperation. It furthermore aims to increase knowledge sharing and the exchange of best practices in the fight against smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons, through trainings and the provision of technical support to the APA for its online knowledge management platform. IOM Egypt Chief of Mission Laurent De Boeck stated that “Today marks an important day in formalizing the excellent partnership between our two organizations and I am confident this will lead to a consolidated partnership in the fight against smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons with a focus on protection of vulnerable migrants.”

IOM Egypt Holds an Intensive Informational Event for Migrants in Alexandria

An awareness-raising event for migrants in Alexandria was [organized](#) by IOM Egypt at the Jesuit Cultural Center. The event presented the services provided by IOM, including educational, housing, medical and cash assistance as well as Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration. It additionally addressed risks related to irregular migration and highlighted best practices for counter-trafficking. First-aid kits, T-shirts, water bottles for children and baby boxes for pregnant women were distributed at the event. The Arab Council Supporting Fair Trial and Human Rights (ACSFT) participated in the awareness-raising event, to discuss the rights of migrants in Egypt and provide information on registering newborn babies, rental contracts and residency.

LIBYA

Maritime updates

According to IOM [data](#), 612 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers were rescued and returned to Libya in December. Of those who were rescued in December 60 were female, 218 were male and 8 were children.

Returns from Libya

According to IOM [figures](#), 852 migrants returned voluntarily to their countries of origin from Libya in December via IOM's Voluntary Humanitarian Return (VHR) program. Of those who returned, 500 were female and 352 were male. The latest return operations bring the total number of migrants assisted by the VHR program in 2019 to 9,798.

Migrant Vulnerability and Humanitarian Needs Assessment

IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix Flow Monitoring Surveys and Mobility Tracking Multisectoral Location Assessments on migrant vulnerability and humanitarian needs in Libya were [conducted](#). Quantitative interviews were conducted with migrants between January and August 2019, and key informant interviews between June and July 2019. According to this assessment, the countries of origin of migrants in Libya vary. However, most migrants present in Libya come from neighboring countries. The primary drivers of migration to Libya include a lack of job opportunities as well as insufficient income. Female migrants, unemployed migrants, and migrants who had recently arrived in Libya were found to be at increased risk.

MOROCCO

Shipwreck off Moroccan coast

On 16 December 2019, a boat that had [attempted](#) to cross from Morocco to Spain sank. Seven migrants reportedly died and 70 were rescued before being returned to the city of Nador. According to IOM's [Missing Migrants Project](#), the number of migrant fatalities along the Western Mediterranean Route in 2019 was 477.

NIGER

Short Film Competition and Workshops at Transit Centers Boost Filmmaking in Niger

IOM's second edition of the short film competition '48H Plus Tard' was [launched](#) on 8 December 2019 as part of the Global Migration Film Festival. Participants, who included film students and professional filmmakers, produce short films in less than 48 hours. Barbara Rijks, Chief of Mission of IOM Niger, said that "Uniquely placed to tell stories on migration, the goal of these trainings was to strengthen the migrants' voices and to let them work on their own stories with the support of film professionals." Twelve films were selected around 48 hours later and screened at the Centre Culturel-Franco Nigérien Jean Rouch (CCFN) in the Nigerien capital Niamey.

TUNISIA

Overview of Mixed Movement Profiling

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [published](#) an Overview of Mixed Movement Profiling provides figures on entry points to Tunisia, countries of origin of migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers, referrals to UNHCR and IOM, vulnerability and demographic profiles, transiting through Libya, and future migratory intentions at the time of profiling.

GREECE

Arrivals to Greece by sea

6,217 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers [arrived](#) in Greece by sea in December. This represents a decrease of 22.9% on figures for the previous month of November, and an increase of 57% from a similar reporting period in December 2018.

Two asylum-seekers commit suicide in Greece

One asylum-seeker from Afghanistan and another from Iraq [committed suicide](#) in the Greek village of Mouries. Both had been living in a hotel with up to 400 refugees. The recent and significant increase in arrivals in overcrowded island camps in Greece has [led](#) to considerable mental health issues among migrants who remain to be 'trapped'. It is reportedly the case that camps on Greek islands currently hold over 40,000 asylum-seekers, a large number of whom are children at heightened risk. Despite the transfer by the Greek government of thousands of migrants from Greek islands to mainland Greece, they nonetheless face considerable hostility from the local population.

ITALY

Arrivals to Italy by sea

589 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers [arrived](#) in Italy by sea in December. This figure represents a 44.3% decrease in arrivals by sea from the previous month of November, and a 64% increase from a similar reporting period in December last year.

Italy urged to reform citizenship law for migrant children

Save the Children [emphasized](#) the need to reform Italy's citizenship law for migrant children, in accordance with the Italian constitution and UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Children who were born and raised in Italy have not been allowed to become Italian citizens. With the increase in arrivals in Italy, there has been a [debate](#) regarding the citizenship rights of migrant children born in Italy.

162 migrants and refugees rescued off Libya land in Taranto, Italy

On 20 December 2019, SOS Mediterranee [rescued](#) more than 160 migrants and refugees who had been on two different boats off the coast of Libya. The group was subsequently allowed to disembark in Taranto, Italy. SOS Mediterranee highlighted that adverse weather conditions would have resulted in fatalities, if the rescue operation had not taken place. The Memorandum of Understanding between Libya and Italy on "development cooperation, countering illegal migration, human trafficking and smuggling and reinforcing security at the Libya-Italy border" was [renewed](#) in November 2019.

Up to 200,000 undocumented domestic workers in Italy

The number of non-EU citizens in Italy without a valid stay permit at the end of 2018 was reportedly 530,000, of which 200,000 were domestic workers. Migrant domestic workers with a valid permit [constituted](#) approximately 70% of domestic workers in Italy. Commenting on the need for more migrant workers in the country, Vice President Andrea Zini of Assindatcolf, the Italian employers of domestic workers association, stated that "We need to start planning for non-EU worker entrance flows, which have been halted since 2011." Zini added that the Italian government "cannot pretend not to notice that about 200,000 non-EU citizens working in the domestic sector without stay permit, and thus without working papers, are already in Italy."

Migrant arrivals halved in 2019

Data from the Italian interior ministry [revealed](#) that the number of migrant arrivals in Italy were half the number of arrivals in 2018. Most migrants were from Tunisia. However, large numbers of migrants arrived from Pakistan and the Ivory Coast. Municipalities within the network of the system of protection for persons who have been granted international protection as well as unaccompanied children and youth remain to be financially supported by the interior ministry. The purpose is to assist those who have been granted humanitarian protection after 31 December 2019 and until 30 June 2020.

SPAIN

Arrivals to Spain by sea

2,137 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers [arrived](#) in Spain by sea in December, which represents an increase of 20.5% from figures for November.

Arrivals to Spain by land

601 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers [crossed](#) into Spain (primarily via its land borders with Morocco) in December, a decrease of 23.2% in figures from the previous month of November.

300 migrants rescued off Spain over two-day Christmas period

On 26 December 2019, approximately 100 migrants and refugees were [rescued](#) off the coast of Spain. The group included those who were rescued off the Costa Blanca, Torrevieja, Xabia, Cabo de Gata, as well as in the Motril area, where one man is believed to have drowned. One day before, on Christmas Day, around 200 others were rescued off the coast of Spain and Morocco.

EDITORIALS OF INTEREST

[Christmas on the Mediterranean – a month on a migrant rescue ship](#) – The Irish Times

This piece sheds light on perilous Mediterranean crossings, particularly along the Central Mediterranean Route, as well as search and rescue operations.

[These were the largest migrations of the 2010s](#)– Quartz

A piece discussing the main drivers of migration over the past decade.

RESEARCH OF INTEREST

[What makes refugees and migrants vulnerable to detention in Libya? A microlevel study of the determinants of detention](#) – Mixed Migration Centre

Based on surveys with migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers, this research examines determinants of detention in Libya.