



Monthly Trend Report

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

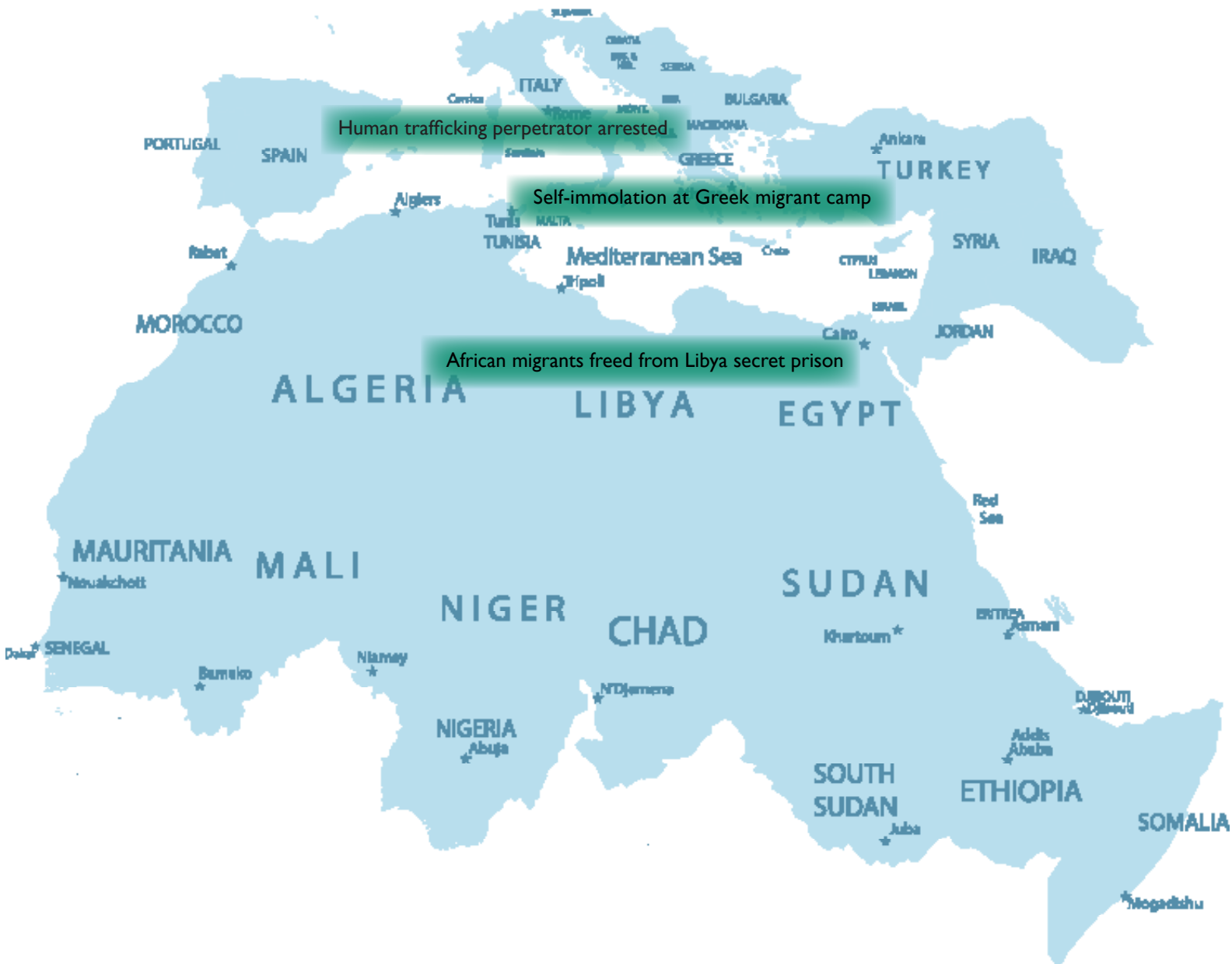
About: MHUB is the regional knowledge hub and secretariat for the North Africa Mixed Migration Task Force, comprising of DRC, IOM, OHCHR, MMC, Save the Children, UNHCR, UNICEF and UNODC. It promotes a human rights-based approach to ensure the protection of people moving in mixed and complex flows to,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

Busy weekend in the central Mediterranean

The Spanish rescue organization Open Arms said that it had picked up 146 [migrants](#) in two separate rescue operations; the Italian authorities gave Open Arms permission to land in Sicily. According to the UN refugee agency UNHCR, 2,206 migrants have already arrived in Italy by sea between the beginning of 2021 and by February 9. This year, the majority of those arrivals come originally from Eritrea, with Guineans making up the second largest nationality, people from Ivory Coast make up 9% of those who have arrived since the beginning of January and Tunisians 8%. 67% of migrants who have arrived in Italy in 2021 up until February 7 this year are men, with 9% women, 5% accompanied children and 19% unaccompanied minors. Meanwhile, the Tunisian navy said that it had picked up 25 from a shipwreck, with one person confirmed dead and about 22 missing.

LIBYA

Maritime updates

According to IOM [data](#), 3,484 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers were rescued and returned to Libya in February. Of those who were saved in February, 239 were female, 2484 were male, and 181 were children.

Libya remains one of the most important transit areas for migrants on their way to Europe

More than 1,000 people have tried to leave [Libya](#) in boats during the past 24 hours¹. The UN migration agency says most were intercepted and returned to detention. As 116 more were rescued off Libya, a humanitarian group said that it was 'one of the busiest days' in the central Mediterranean. Libya remains one of the most important transit areas for migrants on their way to Europe. The journeys in small boats across the Mediterranean are highly dangerous. In 2020, there were 381 recorded deaths and 597 went missing on the Central Mediterranean route, according to UN figures.

African migrants freed from Libya secret prison

Some 350 African [migrants](#), including over 100 children, have reportedly been freed from a secret prison in southeast Libya. The UN migration agency, IOM, said many of them were malnourished and had been abused. After receiving health assistance, they were taken to the detention center in Kufra, where they were given food, clothes and blankets, said IOM spokesperson Safa Msehli. According to Msehli, the vast majority of the migrants are from Eritrea and Sudan while around 60 are from Somalia and Chad.

GREECE

Arrivals to Greece by sea

269 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers [arrived](#) in Greece by sea in February. This figure represents an increase of 43.1% in arrivals by sea from the previous month of January.²

Self-immolation at Greek migrant camp

A heavily pregnant Afghan [asylum seeker](#) was released from hospital after setting fire to herself at a migrant camp on the Greek island of Lesbos on Sunday. She was reported to have mental health issues, while the suicide attempt was blamed on a "misunderstanding." According to information from the hospital, the eight-months pregnant woman was reported to be suffering from mental health issues after having had her request to be relocated to Germany refused. However, a government source said that this had been a misunderstanding: Authorities had actually asked her to stay in Greece until her child was born, which according to the source quoted by the AFP news agency the woman had not understood correctly.

¹ 05.02.2021

² Last seen the 10.03.2021

First flight of vulnerable persons from Greece to Germany arrives

42 additional [refugees](#) arrived in the German city of Hanover from Greece on Wednesday, February 3. The group is part of a contingent of 1,553 vulnerable persons that Germany agreed to take from Greece after the fire in the Lesbos migrant camp Moria last September. The flight carrying 42 refugees from Greece to Germany is the first arrival this year, confirmed the German interior ministry. The group includes children with medical needs and their families as well as people whose refugee status has already been recognized. According to the UN refugee agency UNHCR's latest figures, there are presently some 18,100 refugees, asylum seekers and migrants on the Aegean islands in Greece. About 77% of those or 14,000 of those are staying in permanent or temporary reception and identification centers.

ITALY

Arrivals to Italy by sea

4,264 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers [arrived](#) in Italy by sea in February. This figure represents an increase of 247.5% in arrivals by sea from the previous month of January.³

Migrant abuse and exploitation in Tuscany

“Police in the town of Prato in the [Tuscany](#) region served warrants to three Chinese nationals on Tuesday. Two of them were placed under house arrest, one of them received a residency ban.

The three allegedly exploited at least 30 workers, most of whom were migrants from Bangladesh and Pakistan. An Afghan citizen and a Chinese national were also among the allegedly exploited workers. Police had conducted a ten-month investigation into a local clothing firm. The company employed about 30 men without working papers who were reportedly in dire financial need. Investigators say that the workers worked seven days a week, 12 to 14 hours per day. The workers were allegedly required to continue working even during coronavirus lockdown periods.

Illegal migration abettors arrested in Italy

Three people were [arrested](#) on Monday, February 15 by Italian police for aiding and abetting illegal migration after about 100 undocumented migrants were found in the country's northeastern Friuli Venezia Giulia region. Those found included 11 women of different nationalities. The investigation was coordinated by the local prosecutor's office and it became clear during it that the three alleged people smugglers had already planned another trip to bring numerous asylum seekers into Italian territory.

Human trafficking perpetrator arrested

Police in northern Italy have [arrested](#) a woman who recruited young Nigerian women into forced prostitution. The woman has been sentenced to more than eight years in prison. Human trafficking affects 40 million victims globally, according to the 2020 immigration report published by Catholic charity Caritas last October. 60% of victims are sexually exploited, the report found. One-third are minors and seven in 10 are women or girls. The US State Department estimates that the number of victims in Italy are between 25,000 and 30,000, mainly hailing from Nigeria, Russia, Ukraine, Albania, Romania, Bulgaria and Moldavia. Italy is often the first destination country for people trafficked from Africa -- with people being sent across the Mediterranean from Libya.

Arrivals to Spain by sea

5,210 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers arrived in Spain by sea in February, which represents an increase of 26.5% from figures of January.⁴

Arrivals to Spain by Land

96 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers arrived in Spain by land in February, which represents an increase of 67.2% from figures of January.⁵

Migrants attempt to reach the Spanish mainland

Spanish police in the northern African enclave of [Melilla](#) have discovered migrants hiding in waste containers in an attempt to reach the Spanish mainland. Melilla and Ceuta are two small Spanish territories in northern Africa. Large numbers of migrants have tried to enter the fortified territories – often climbing fences or hiding under vehicles and among cargo – in the hope of reaching mainland Spain. So far this year, Guardia Civil says it has identified 1,781 migrants in the security area of Melilla port, while 11,669 migrants were found in 2020, according to news agency reports. Border security measures have been stepped up significantly in recent years, resulting in a drop in irregular crossings into the Spanish enclaves. Instead, Spain's Canary Islands in the Atlantic Ocean have become the main landing point for people fleeing northern and western Africa to Europe. Last year, around 23,000 people reached the archipelago, most of them rescued by Spain's Maritime Rescue Service, and more than 500 died or disappeared in the attempt.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

MULTIMEDIA & EDITORIALS OF INTEREST

[Regional solutions: Regulating recruitment and protection of African migrant workers in the Gulf and the Middle East](#) - ECDPM

This paper provides an overview of the status of labour migration from the African continent to the Gulf and Middle East countries. It identifies the regional measures taken by African governments to improve conditions for the recruitment and protection of African migrant workers in destination countries. The paper argues that the African Union and regional economic communities – ECOWAS, IGAD and EAC – can play an important role in closing the regulatory gap in the recruitment and protection of low-skilled migrant workers from sub-Saharan African countries. It explores the options available to regional organisations and proposes a number of practical steps towards achieving regional responses.

[Wars Trigger Record Levels of Internal Displacement in Middle East, North Africa](#) - VOA

A new report finds internal displacement in the Middle East and North Africa has reached unprecedented levels a decade after the so-called Arab Spring triggered a political upheaval across the region. Over the past decade, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center reports the number of internally displaced people in the region has more than tripled from 3.5 million to 12.4 million. During the same period, it says 7.8 million refugees and asylum seekers fled to other countries in search of safety.

RESEARCH OF INTEREST

[The impact of COVID-19 on refugees and migrants on the move in North and West Africa](#) - MMC

This paper offers expert insight and analysis on mixed migration trends that have emerged over the course of 2020 in North and West Africa, grounded in existing literature and MMC's unique primary data on people on the move. The aim of this paper is to raise awareness and strengthen policymakers' understanding of the challenges and risks refugees and migrants are facing since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in North and West Africa, as well as to promote policies and debate based on data, with the voices and human rights of refugees and migrants at the center.

[Middle East and North Africa — Monthly Regional Update \(November - December 2020\)](#) - IOM

The DTM Monthly Regional Update contains consolidated summary updates and highlights from DTM field operations. This document covers updates from the regional network of flow monitoring of migrants, as well as the tracking and monitoring of internal displacement in the countries. It is published on a monthly basis and covers the Middle East and North Africa Region (November-December 2020)

[A Gateway Re-opens: the growing popularity of the Atlantic route, as told by those who risk it](#) - MMC

The research for this paper was undertaken with the intention of rapidly bringing together information and analysis related to the Atlantic route towards the Canary Islands from the coast of West Africa, in the context of an increase in departures and arrivals to the Canary Islands since late 2019.