



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, RMMS, 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, Greece and Italy.

Sources: Data is drawn from a wide variety of sources, including government, civil society and media.

HIGHLIGHTS



EU says it won't reply to Italy's 'threats' over migrants

Rescue vessel Aquarius allowed to dock in Malta

Morocco launches anti-smuggling operation

Armed Clashes in Tripoli Take Heavy Toll on Migrants

REGIONAL

Cyprus rejects the idea of controlled processing centers

- Cypriot officials have [rejected](#) the idea of setting up migrant processing centers in Cyprus. The proposal had come in a concept paper circulated by the EU presidency and based upon conclusions of the European migration summit in June. The paper proposed the creation of 'controlled centers' in EU member states along the Mediterranean to process newly arriving migrants, refugees and asylum seekers and to determine if they qualify for international protection in an efficient manner. Cypriot officials said that Cyprus already hosts 15,000 asylum seekers and expressed fears that centers could turn into long-term detention facilities. Speaking with a local media outlet, Minister of Interior, Constantinos Petrides, advocated for the creation of an automatic mechanism for redistributing newly arriving migrants, refugees and asylum seekers and further added, "We have serious reservations regarding the operation of large centres in Europe, especially in the absence of this mechanism. There must be a holistic approach and not one that deals with the issues in piecemeal fashion."

Rival protests in Germany's Chemnitz

- Rival groups of protestors [took](#) to the streets of the German city of Chemnitz in their thousands on 1 September to protest for and against immigration. The protests came after days of violence and unrest following the stabbing of a young German man and the arrest of an Iraqi and a Syrian on suspicion of murder. In the days leading up to the protests, groups of right-wing extremists launched attacks on persons they suspected to be foreign. The incident and its aftermath have once again brought deep divisions with regards to immigration policy in Germany to the fore. German Minister of Foreign Affairs, Heiko Maas, expressed the government's support for the pro-migration rally and its opposition to xenophobic right-wing rhetoric with a tweet that read, "The Second World War started 79 years ago. Germany caused unimaginable suffering in Europe. If once again people are parading today in the streets making Nazi salutes, our past history forces us to resolutely defend democracy."

Rescue vessel Aquarius allowed to dock in Malta

- On 15 August, the search-and-rescue vessel Aquarius was [allowed](#) to dock and disembark 141 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers at the Maltese port of Valetta following a five-day standoff between Italy and Malta. The situation was resolved after Spain brokered a deal that would see those rescued, as well as a further 114 rescued by Maltese authorities on 13 August, distributed between Spain, Portugal, France, Germany and Luxembourg. On 14 August, Spain's Prime Minister, Pedro Sanchez, [tweeted](#), "Spain has coordinated a pioneering agreement with 6 countries to distribute the reception of #Aquarius people. It has been possible thanks to the path that we undertook in June, promoting a common and supportive response to the migratory flows. Spain will welcome 60 people." According to the terms of the deal, Portugal will take in 30 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers while France, Germany and Luxembourg will take in the remaining 51.
- UN agencies, human rights and humanitarian organizations have [welcomed](#) the deal and Malta's decision to allow the ship to dock but have also warned of the dangers posed by continued standoffs involving boat landings and disembarkations. Speaking about the incident, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi [said](#), "UNHCR welcomes the end to the deadlock around the Aquarius and the fact that 141 children, women and men are no longer stranded at sea. But the situation should never have come to this in the first place. It is wrong, dangerous and immoral to keep rescue ships wandering the Mediterranean while governments compete on who can take the least responsibility." Mr. Grandi further added, "There is an urgent need to break away from the current run of impasses and ad-hoc boat-by-boat approaches on where to dock rescued passengers."
- On a related story, staff from SOS Mediterranee, which operates Aquarius, [revealed](#) that those rescued had said that five ships had passed them at sea without offering them assistance and blamed obstacles placed by European countries for the ships' refusal to assist. A spokesperson for the NGO said, "This could be due to the high risk of being stranded and denied a place of safety."

German Chancellor promises to speed up removal of failed asylum seekers

- German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, vowed to [take](#) action on failed asylum seekers following calls for her removal by right-wing groups over her migration policy. Chancellor Merkel said that she will increase efforts to expedite the removal of persons whose applications for asylum were rejected. Speaking on 16 August, she said, "I made clear that we have a situation now where not all problems have been solved, especially deportations are still a big problem. The federal government will assume more responsibility here, especially by helping to procure the needed documents." German authorities have said that the difficulty in deporting failed asylum seekers stems from their lack of travel documentation and countries' reluctance to issue provisional identification documents for them. of a repeat of the 2015 'migration crisis'. 500 police officers and 220 soldiers participated in this border exercise. The exercise was conducted under the supervision of the Austrian defense and interior ministers. The exercise was conducted to improve Austria's readiness in the face of large-scale movements even though there are currently barely any crossings across the Austrian border. Austrian officials feared a knock-on effect from a possible German decision to close Germany's borders.

EGYPT

Egyptian president, Italian deputy PM discuss ties, Libya, migration

- Egyptian president Abdel Fattah el-Sisi [met](#) with Italian Deputy Prime Minister Luigi Di Maio to discuss Egyptian-Italian relations, progress on irregular migration and the situation in Libya. Both parties agreed on the necessity to strengthen bilateral relations especially in the economy and trade in the

wake of the recent gas field discoveries in Egypt. The situation in Libya was also an important point discussed during the meeting. President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi stressed the importance of finding a solution for the Libyan crisis and rebuilding a government. Migration was a main topic for both sides with Italian minister talking about the growing flows arriving at

LIBYA

Militias evict and disperse 1,900 displaced people in Libya

- UNHCR has [expressed](#) their concern about the forced eviction of almost 2,000 internally displaced people (IDP) by militias from a settlement near Tripoli. The settlement, which was established in 2011 and called Triq Al Matar, is considered the biggest settlement of IDPs near Tripoli and was hosting 370 families. According to witnesses, residents were forced to flee after militias engaged in three nights of raiding and arbitrary arrest. Women and girls were also threatened with rape during the three-night onslaught. The IDPs are now dispersed in various location with some staying with relatives while others still are living out of vehicles. UNHCR is concerned that they may be at risk of further eviction and displacement and is calling for urgent action to safeguard those already vulnerable from further harm, UNHCR is closely monitoring the situation in order to ensure the main needs of IDPs are met.

Ministry of Health warns of non-endemic disease outbreak

- The Libyan Ministry of Health [issued](#) warnings on 16 August about the increase in non-endemic diseases such as tuberculosis in Libya. The ministry claimed that the surge was a result of migration. The Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health, Issa Alemyani, made the comments in relation to a recently completed survey on the effects of migration on public health. The team tasked with conducting the survey proposed several recommendations based upon their findings; one of which is the creation of a centre for tropical disease that would provide a wide spectrum of health services to both migrants and local communities alike. The team also recommended a review of policies and administrative procedures with regards to labour migration and the creation of health standards for migrant shelters and detention centres.

«Critical worsening» of conditions for migrants detained in Libya: UNHCR

- In a statement released on 24 August, UNHCR [expressed](#) great concern about the deterioration of living conditions in detention centres in Libya. According to UNHCR, there are currently more than 8,000 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers held in detention centres linked to the UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA). UNHCR has warned that overcrowding and worsening conditions are leading to severe frustration among detainees which can create potentially volatile situations. UNHCR's statement warned, "In recent weeks, UNHCR has witnessed critical worsening in conditions in detention centers, due to the increasing overcrowding and lack of basic living standards. As a consequence, riots and hunger strikes by refugees inside detention centres are taking place, demanding a resolution to their bleak living conditions. This has led to a number of serious security incidents, where UNHCR front line staff have been placed at physical risk."

Armed Clashes in Tripoli Take Heavy Toll on Migrants, Refugees

- Clashes between rival armed groups that erupted on 26 August have [resulted](#) in the deaths of 18 civilians, including four children. The Government of National Accord's (GNA) Ministry of Health said on 31 August that a total of 39 persons were killed and 119 injured in the clashes. The fighting had broken out between two rival armed factions that are linked with the GNA's interior and defence ministries and who were fighting over territory and vital institutions in the Libyan capital. Human rights and humanitarian organizations have expressed concern for the safety and wellbeing of civilians as well as 8,000 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers who were trapped in the crossfire. IOM and UNHCR evacuated 600 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers on 28 August from two detention centres in areas affected by the fighting. IOM did however release information that seven migrants, refugees and asylum seekers were still being held in a centre in one of the affected areas on 30 August and that their status was unclear but added that Libyan authorities had released 290 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers when clashes erupted. IOM further [added](#) that 5,800 persons have already been displaced by the clashes.
- Speaking about the situation in Libya at a press briefing in Geneva on 4 September, a UNHCR spokesperson [said](#) UNHCR spokesperson appealed to all parties involved to safeguard the safety of civilians caught up in the clashes, to spare civilian infrastructure and to allow safe passage to those seeking to flee the fighting. The spokesperson further added that among those displaced and affected by the violence were 27 families who sought refuge in a school and that UNHCR, along with other humanitarian organizations had provided them with support. UNHCR, along with WFP and the Libyan Ministry of Interior, delivered food for a week to 2,450 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers held in the government detention centres of Triq Al Matar and Qaser Ben Ghasheer.

U.N. says has reached ceasefire for Libyan capital as jailed migrants escape

- After a long week of clashes between militias fighting in Tripoli, a ceasefire [was agreed](#) between the clashing armed groups on 4 September. The UN Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) released a statement about the ceasefire. The agreement included the opening of Matiga airport which is the only airport operating in Tripoli. With the absence of some of the commanders of the militia groups, it is not clear yet how the ceasefire will be applied since militias had already received calls from the UN to stop the fighting but had not responded to them. "Today does not aim to fix all the Libyan capital's security problems; it seeks to agree on a broader framework on the way to start addressing the issues," as UN special envoy said in a statement given to UNSMIL.

IOM voluntary humanitarian returns continue in Libya

- In August, IOM [released](#) figures of those who were assisted through the Voluntary Humanitarian Return (VHR) programme between January and July 2018. Of the 10,950 migrants assisted to return home during that period 9,636 returned to countries of origin in Central and West Africa while 325 returned to East Africa and the Horn of Africa. The return operations were conducted through chartered flights with close cooperation between IOM, Libyan authorities, embassies and consulates in countries of return along with IOM country offices and other international organizations.

Divisive Aquarius ship resumes migrant rescues off Libya: NGOs

- The rescue ship "Aquarius" has [recommenced](#) operations in the waters off the coast of Libya after a halt in operations since June 2018. 140 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers were rescued by the Aquarius in two different operations on Friday 10 August 2018. The halt of rescue operations happened between 9 and 10 June after the Aquarius was barred from entering Italy after rescuing more than 600 stranded migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. The Aquarius was at the time allowed to disembark the 600 rescued in Spain.

Libya refuses to take migrants rejected by Italy

- The Libyan government has [refused](#) to take back migrants, refugees and asylum seekers who were stranded on the Italian vessel "Diciotti" off the coast of Italy. The Italian Minister of Interior, Matteo Salvini would not allow the 177 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers aboard the vessel to disembark in Italy and had threatened to return them to Libya unless other European countries stepped in to take them in. Mohamed Siala, the GNA's Foreign Minister responded by saying, "Libya does not accept this unjust and illegal measure because it already has more than 700 000 migrants." He further added that the international community should place pressure on countries of origin to repatriate their citizens.
- Salvini during his standoff asked Malta to take the migrants, refugees and asylum seekers since they were saved in Maltese rescue waters so Malta should take their responsibility. But Malta refused arguing that the ship was not "In Distress" and they refused a rescue call. The claimed that the rescue operation was done in Maltese water with no coordination with the Maltese forces. "An interception of a boat that exercises its right to free navigation in the high seas is not considered a rescue operation,". The refusal of the Italian request made the Italian interior minister angrier that he [called](#) the EU to apply sanctions on Malta for breaking laws.

- On the other hand, Italy was asked to finish this standoff and allow the migrants, refugees and asylum seekers to disembark after 7 days on the board of the Diciotti. Humanitarian organizations as UNHCR, MSF and Save the children [said](#) it was important for the stranded migrants, refugees and asylum seekers to disembark since among the 177 people among whom exist around 30 children. Italian authorities finally [accepted](#) for the migrants, refugees and asylum seekers to land in Catania in Sicily. "The Diciotti ship will dock in Catania," Transport Minister Danilo Toninelli said. "Now Europe must hurry to do its part."

African migrants rejected by Italy claim they were beaten, tortured and raped in Libya

- Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, [held](#) on the Italian vessel who was not allowed to disembark in Italy, said they were subject to mistreatment, torture and rape when they were in Libya. The UN reported that these migrants were held by smugglers for two years and they came mainly from Somalia and Eritrea. Testimonies were collected from the migrants, refugees and asylum seekers on board of the vessel by IOM. "In Libya they complained that many had been beaten and tortured by smugglers and traffickers seeking ransom money from their families in their countries of origin," says Reuters reports.

MALI

Malian migrants return home from Libya

- Libyan authorities reported that 124 Malian migrants were voluntarily [returned](#) to Mali on 28 August with assistance from IOM. A statement from the Libyan migration agency said, "Some 124 illegal immigrants from the state of Mali returned to their country via a flight from M'etiga international airport in Tripoli to the capital Bamako."

Morocco launches anti-smuggling operation

- On 30 August, a Moroccan official [confirmed](#) the launch of an operation to tackle and fight people-smuggling networks operating in the country. The operation, launched earlier in August, [saw](#) the relocation of between 1,600 and 1,800 irregular migrants, refugees and asylum seekers from camps and homes in northern Morocco to other regions. According to the official's statement, "The aim is to take them out of the hands of the mafia gangs which have developed in the country." The operation has come under [criticism](#) from human rights organizations with Omar Naji, from the Moroccan Human Rights Association, saying, "These arrests are illegal because they are without judicial warrants." Moroccan officials, however, contend that the operation is vital to thwarting the activities of organized criminal networks. Moroccan officials also held information meetings with African and European ambassadors in Rabat to keep them apprised of the operation.
- Furthermore, a spokesperson for the government, Mustapha El Khalfi, [defended](#) the operation on 30 August by saying, "Morocco has taken another step of transferring migrants to other cities, and this is not a deportation operation outside the national territory." He further reiterated the operation's aim of fighting organized smuggling networks. Mr. El Khalfi also added that Morocco thwarted 65,000 attempts of irregular migration during 2017, which he argues highlights the need for continued action against irregular migration. Towards that end, Morocco has continued to deepen its partnership with Europe in order to stem irregular migration flows with Morocco and Spain reactivating a 2002 agreement that would allow Spain to return irregular migrants to Morocco.

Experts claim Morocco is using migrants as leverage

- Morocco has [come](#) under suspicion of using migration as leverage in talks and negotiations with European counterparts. According to claims, Moroccan authorities eased border checks and deterrence protocols in the run-up to talks over a fisheries agreement and EU funding to Rabat earlier this year. Gonzalo Fanjul, an investigator at porCausa, said, "It is more difficult to say with absolute certainty, but several observers I trust suggest that Morocco, as it has done in the past, is using as part of the negotiation on very sensitive issues such as the fisheries

agreement, or in the negotiation of the aid that the EU will give the country to manage these [migration] flows." Mr. Fanjul further added, "Traditionally, the Moroccan state security forces squeeze or raise their hands depending on the circumstances. One of the elements that makes us think that this is a factor is that among the flows that are coming there are many Moroccans, and these immigrants are not displaced from Libya."

- A recent report by Spain's Ministry of Interior has [drawn](#) attention to an 'alarming' increase in the number of Moroccans making the journey to Spain since 2016 with an estimated 10,104 irregular Moroccan migrants, refugees and asylum seekers purportedly make the journey since then. Spanish authorities have also said that Moroccan's accounted for roughly 20% of all arrivals to Spain this year, 3,403 persons.
- The European Commission has however denied accusations that Morocco was easing restrictions to influence talks and has said that there is no evidence that Morocco used such tactics in the run-up to negotiations. Francesca Fabbri, an expert on Morocco at the European Policy Center (EPC), has also questioned the accuracy of the claims and said, "Morocco has relaxed border controls for political leverage in the past, but it doesn't seem the case to me at the moment as the country is in a process of improving its relations with Europe and the other African countries."

Stable Libya key to ending migration to Europe: Niger

- President of Niger Mahamadou Issoufou in an interview with Reuters [said](#) the situation in Niger and the numbers of migrants leaving Niger depends on the stability of the situation in Libya. He said that Niger is considered a transit country for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers and that the stability of the surrounding countries and the main key for the EU countries to stop the influx of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers arriving from the African continent and leaving the shores of Libya is to find a solution for the unstable situation of Libya.
- This interview comes before talks with Angela Merkel in which the Nigerien President said he will demand European assistance on security and development. "On Libya for example, I expressed my wish that the chancellor support us so that together we can quickly find a solution to get out of the crisis in Libya because as long as Libya remains in the current chaos, the stability and the security of the Sahel countries is at stake," Issoufou has already paid 3 visits to Germany to meet with Angela Merkel to discuss the migration situation in his country.

SUDAN

Refugee representatives set to meet South Sudan peace talk parties

- On 4 September, UNHCR [brought](#) together South Sudanese refugee representatives and key parties involved in negotiations over a peace deal to end the civil war. The meeting was an effort to ensure that refugee voices are heard and taken into account in peace negotiations. The sixteen refugee representatives who participated in the meeting were flown in from various African countries such as Congo and Kenya to share their hopes, expectations and aspirations for peace. Speaking about the event, Arnauld Akodjenou, the Special Adviser to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees on the South Sudan Situation said, "The talks mark a significant moment in the long quest for lasting peace for the people of South Sudan. It is critical to have refugee voices heard, peace building efforts cannot afford to ignore them."
- The final text of South Sudan's revitalized peace agreement is [expected](#) to be signed in the second

half of September in Addis Ababa. The signing will be preceded by meetings that will allow opposition groups to express their concerns about and views on the deal.

129 Sudanese Migrants Return Home from Libya under EU-IOM Joint Initiative

- 129 Sudanese nationals [were brought back](#) to Sudan from Libya on the 8th of August 2018 with the help of IOM. This came in the frame of the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for migrant protection and reintegration. A welcoming was organized by the secretariat of the Sudanese working abroad and IOM and a medical check was done by IOM health team. The returnees will receive counselling to determine their needs and possible economic and psychological assistance they require. "We welcome these migrants back home. Head of IOM Sudan Migration Management and Development Unit, Mr Andrew Gray said, "As they begin a new chapter in life, IOM and its partners will work tirelessly to provide the required assistance to support their return home."

SPAIN

Western Mediterranean Route

- [6,406](#) migrants, refugees and asylum seekers have crossed from Morocco to Spain by sea in the month of August bringing the total arrivals by sea for this year to 31,240. August's figure represents an 18% decrease from the previous month during which the highest number of arrivals for 2018 so far were recorded. Spain has seen a substantial increase in the number of arrivals by sea this year with the Western Mediterranean Route overtaking the Central Mediterranean Route in terms of numbers so far in 2018. Sea arrival figures for August of this year are almost three times as many as those for August of last year. Speaking about the increase in arrivals along the Western Mediterranean route (WMR), IOM's spokesperson Joel Millman [said](#) the nationalities of those arriving in Spain now mirror those that used to arrive to Italy from Libya which "...indicates that probably West African migrants who were using the Sahara route up to Agadez into Tripoli have realized that the expense, the danger, the risk and then what happens to them in Libya all combine to make that a less attractive route than what had been an older route up along the coast into Morocco. So, they seem to be returning to that route." According to IOM data, there were 6 migrant, refugee and asylum seeker deaths recorded along the WMR between 1 and 29 August.
- An additional [616](#) migrants, refugees and asylum seekers crossed into Spain via its land borders with Morocco (through Ceuta and Melilla) during the month of August, bringing the total number of persons making this crossing this year to 4,383. August's figure represents a 43% decrease from that of July's.

German Chancellor meets with Spanish Prime Minister

- German Chancellor Angela Merkel [met](#) with Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez on 11 August in a show of increased cooperation and warming bilateral ties. The meeting came weeks ahead of an EU summit in Austria and on the day that a newly minted migration deal between Germany and Spain came into force. According to the terms of the deal, Spain would accept asylum seekers rejected by Germany within 48 hours if they have previously applied for asylum in Spain. While both leaders discussed EU economic and defence reform, migration was undoubtedly the central topic of

discussion. According to a statement released by the Spanish government following the meeting, "Spain and Germany share the same goals on migration and are committed to a global approach that combines solidarity and responsibility based on three principles: dialogue and cooperation with countries of transit; boosting development cooperation in countries of origin, and respect for the rights of refugees and migrants." Chancellor Merkel and Prime Minister Sánchez agreed to increase support to and cooperation with North African countries such as Morocco and Tunisia in order to tackle migration with Mr. Sánchez saying, "While there are just 14 kilometers separating Spanish, and therefore European, coasts from North Africa, there is a highly important distance of economic, social, human rights and political stability. The greater the gap the more travesties there will be in our Mediterranean waters. So, trying to close that gap of inequality must be one of our main goals in the present European Union."

Spain returns over a hundred migrants to Morocco

- Spain has [come](#) under criticism after returning 116 migrants back to Morocco on 23 August, a day after they crossed irregularly into Ceuta. A total of 118 migrants had crossed into Ceuta on 22 August but two minors were allowed to stay in the enclave. Spanish authorities said that migrants were provided with adequate medical and legal services before being returned to Morocco. A spokesperson for the Spanish government further added that they were all given the option of applying for asylum but none chose to do so. Spain has come under criticism for the speedy manner with which the returns were implemented with Amnesty International questioning whether the migrants were given adequate support. A statement by Amnesty International said, "Due to the speed at which it is carried out, it is difficult to guarantee access to a personalized procedure with full guarantees." Walking Borders, a Madrid-based advocacy group and Proactiva Open Arms also [criticized](#) the move and questioned its legality. The Spanish Deputy Prime Minister, Carmen Calvo, however has [defended](#) Spain's actions and, speaking at a press conference, said, "Legally, it is very different to save someone at the sea, in a situation of humanitarian emergency, and expel someone who is violently attacking your borders."

Spain arrests ten in migrants in relation to last month's incident at Ceuta crossing

- A spokesperson for Spain's Guardia Civil [announced](#) the arrest of ten migrants in relation to events that transpired on 26 July along Ceuta's border fence during which over 600 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers stormed through the heavily fortified fence. The accused were arrested at a migrant holding center in Ceuta and are charged with belonging to a criminal organization, assaulting police officers and causing damages.

Spanish authorities arrest people-smugglers at Melilla border post

- Spanish authorities [arrested](#) three Moroccan people-smugglers at the border post between Morocco and the Spanish enclave of Melilla. The arrest came during a routine customs inspection where the officers believed the driver and two passengers of the vehicle were behaving oddly and performed a more thorough examination of the car. During the examination they found a migrant who was being transported under the car's dashboard. Firefighters had to

be called to the scene in order to free the man out of the enclosed space. The migrant was transported for medical treatment and to a temporary immigrant housing facility.

Report by Guardia Civil details how groups organize migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in coordinated jumps of border fences

- The Spanish newspaper El País [reported](#) that it had seen a report prepared by the Spanish civil guard that details how gangs organize migrants, refugees and asylum seekers into coordinated jumps of the border fences at Ceuta and Melilla. According to the report, gangs charge migrants, refugees and asylum seekers the equivalent of €18 to partake in organized jumps. Gang leaders collect the money, resolve disputes between migrants and decide on the day and time of the jump as well as the point at which the jump will occur. Those who have not paid the gangs are not permitted to jump. If those attempting the crossing fail in their attempt they are required to wait another month for the next attempt and are expected to pay another €18 to partake in the jump.

TUNISIA

Authorities arrest owner of migrant boat factory

- Tunisian authorities announced the [arrest](#) of an owner of a shipbuilding factory that reportedly supplied boats for the purposes of irregular travel across the Mediterranean. According to the Tunisian Ministry of Interior, the owner, Bhar Lazrag, admitted to 'illegally' selling a boat for the purposes of irregular migration. The ministry also added that three unregistered boats awaiting purchase were impounded by authorities. Tunisian authorities have stepped-up efforts to thwart irregular departures from the country's shores in recent months with officials thwarting one such attempt on 14 August and arresting seven persons in relation to the incident. A spokesperson for the Tunisian National Guard also said that they have foiled 2,659 attempts at irregular migration in the first six months of 2018.

Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers die following clashes with Tunisian authorities

- Eight migrants, refugees and asylum seekers [died](#) off the coast of Tunisia following clashes with Tunisian authorities on 17 August. According to a statement by Tunisian National Guard spokesperson, Colonel Houssemeddine Jebabli, authorities had intervened to thwart the attempt at irregular migration from Sfax but were met with resistance from the boat with migrants, refugees and asylum seekers reportedly throwing

Molotov cocktails at the Tunisian authorities. Following the confrontation, those aboard the boat set fire to it and attempted to flee the scene. The bodies of those that died were recovered in the days following the incident while a further 14 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers were arrested.

Shows of support for Tunisian fisherman arrested in Italy

- OSeveral persons have [spoken](#) up in support of a group of six Tunisian fishermen who were arrested in Italian waters for people-smuggling. The fishermen had reportedly come across a boat in distress carrying 14 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in the Mediterranean and decided to tow the boat to safety in Italian waters. According to Italian authorities, a Frontex plane had monitored the situation and informed authorities once the boat was released from the fishing trawler. The captain of the fishing vessel, Chamseddine Ben Ali Bourassine, is a well-known and well-respected member of the community in Zarzis and hundreds of local residents gathered in town to protest his arrest. Mr. Bourassine is well-known for saving lives at sea and bringing back bodies found at sea for decent burials on shore. The Tunisian Fishermen Association of Zarzis sent a letter to the Italian embassy in Tunis saying, "Captain Bourassine and his crew are hardworking fishermen whose human values exceed the risks they face every day. When we meet boats in distress

GREECE

Sea arrivals

- 2,654 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers arrived in Greece by sea between 1 and 29 August which represents an 8% increase from the figures for July. There has been a drop in the number of deaths recorded along the Eastern Mediterranean route with 10 recorded deaths in the month of August.

Greece and Germany sign deal on asylum seekers

- Greece has [signed](#) a deal with Germany that would allow Germany to return asylum seekers back to Greece if they have previously applied for asylum there. In return, Germany has

agreed to process a backlog of family reunification applications from Greece by the end of 2018 and to reconsider cases it has previously disputed. Speaking about the deal, Germany's Interior Minister, Horst Seehofer, said, "The signature of an administrative agreement with Greece is a further step on the way to more orderly conditions in European migration policy."

Greece arrests Syrian refugee credited with saving lives in 2015

- On 31 August, a lawyer for Sarah Mardini, one of two Syrian refugee sisters who saved over a dozen refugees in 2015 when they pulled their sinking boat to Greece, [said](#) that she was

- arrested in Greece for people smuggling. Ms. Mardini was arrested along with [two](#) other aid organization workers while she was volunteering on the Greek island of Lesbos with Emergency Response Centre International. Greek authorities are accusing those arrested of joining a criminal organization, money laundering, espionage, violating state secrets, counterfeiting and offences against the immigration code and electronic communication legislation. The defendants vehemently deny all accusations levelled against them.

Protests in Athens over treatment of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers

- Dozens of people, including rescue workers and refugees, [staged](#) a protest in central Athens to object to the criminalization of rescue activities and the anti-migrant sentiments and policies sweeping through Europe. Many of the protestors dressed in orange to call to mind the life jackets migrants, refugees and asylum seekers wear on their journeys across the Mediterranean. The event in Athens was only one in a series of events planned across Europe by the international movement Seebrücke which calls for greater protections for refugees, safe harbors and an end to the criminalization of rescue activities.

Officials from Aegean islands call for action on island overcrowding

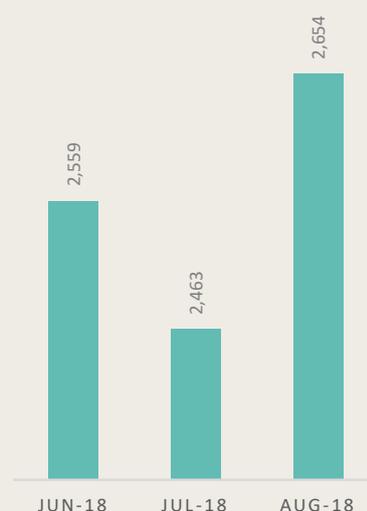
- Governors from the North-Eastern Aegean islands of Lesbos, Chios and Samos have [made](#) fresh calls for immediate action by the central government to ease overcrowding on the islands. Greece's Migration Policy Minister Dimitris Vitsas had previously vowed to reduce numbers on the islands to just 10,000 by September but by the end of August numbers were still around the 16,000 mark. Regional officials have repeated their calls to relocate migrants, refugees and asylum seekers to the mainland and urged the government to stand by its promises. Speaking to reporters, Christina Kalogirou, the Regional Governor of the North Aegean, said, "Is this what the government promises look like? We cannot stress enough how vital it is for the quick decongestion of the islands - there is already a heavy burden on the local economy and society, as well as the fact that this has been going on for three years."
- Spyros Galinos, Lesbos' mayor, also [petitioned](#) Minister Vitsas in an open letter, saying, "The daily arrivals of refugees and migrants are continuing at rapid speeds and my concerns, as well as those of the local community are intensifying - instead of reductions we are seeing an increase in the number of asylum seekers coming. With over 10 000

asylum seekers here now, it is imperative that the transfer of people from Lesbos, which hosts a much larger population than all the other islands, happens immediately. I hope that your promise will not go along with all the other unfulfilled promises that our fellow citizens have heard from both our European officials and your predecessors."

Greek authorities rescue stranded migrants, refugees and asylum seekers stranded on highway

- Greek authorities [reported](#) that they rescued 60 Iraqi migrants, refugees and asylum seekers along a stretch of highway near Thessaloniki on 4 September. According to reports, the group of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, which included 27 children, were smuggled across the border in a truck but were abandoned far from their destination. They had each reportedly paid \$2,000 for the trip.

Arrivals by Sea, Greece
June 2018 - August 2018



Sea arrivals

- 1,229 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers arrived in Italy by sea between 1 and 29 August, which represents a 39% decrease from figures for July. August's figures bring the total number of arrivals this year to 19,874, which is 80% lower than the total number arrivals for the same period last year. There has also been a drop in the number of deaths recorded along the CMR with 19 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers losing their lives over the same period. Despite the drop in recorded deaths, UN agencies have [warned](#) that a larger proportion of those attempting the crossing are now losing their lives in the process with 1 migrant, refugee and asylum seeker losing their life for every 18 who make it safely across.

10,000 Nigerians forced into prostitution yearly in Italy –NAPTIP DG

- The Director General of the agency for the prohibition of trafficking in Persons, Dame Julie Okah-Donli [says](#) that more than 10,000 Nigerian nationals were forced into prostitution in Italy and they are mainly victims of human trafficking or irregular migration. Miss Okah-Donli said that the numbers are based on the figures of IOM. According to Okah Donli, awareness should be raised among parents and stakeholders for them to educate young Nigerians not to be involved in irregular movements that can lead them to be used in illegal activities in the countries of arrival as Italy. "The task of ensuring adequate protection of our children from trafficking and illegal migration rests on all of us; we must all rise up to support initiatives and efforts geared making our country safe" says the NAPTIP DG.

EU says it won't reply to Italy's 'threats' over migrants

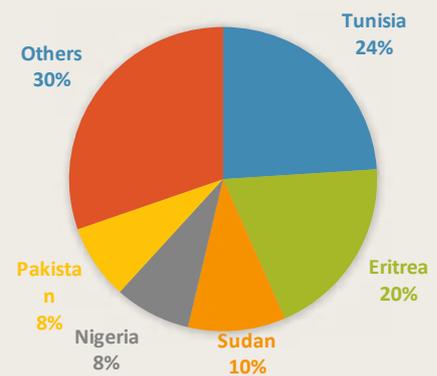
- Matteo Salvini threatened the EU commission that he will suspend Italy's contribution to the EU budget if no interference from the EU took place in regard of the distribution of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers that arrived at Lampedusa on the Diciotti vessel. The EU Commission [refused](#) the threat and said through spokesman Alexander Winterstein that the EU doesn't function on threats but through rules. Italian Deputy Prime Minister Luigi Di Maio asked that an answer to the request of sharing the responsibility of migrants be discussed at the EU commission meeting to be held on the 27th of August 2018 or else the funding of Italy to the EU will stop. But the EU commission explained that the meeting was to discuss different topics and that most importantly the safety of migrants should be taken into consideration.
- Another [threat](#) was done by Italian government to EU countries as Spain and France who were asked by Italy to open their ports and share receiving migrants, refugees and asylum seekers from the rescue vessel the Diciotti. Italy threatened to pull out of the EU rescue mission Sophia if their responsibility wasn't shared. EU's High representative of Foreign affairs Federica Mogherini commented on the request saying it didn't have enough backing from other EU countries. "Today ... it was for me and some ministers around the table, not least the Italian one, to check if there was a political will to guarantee the continuation of the operation and it is definitely the case," said Mogherini. migrants should be taken into consideration.

- [The proposal](#) of modifying the rules of the Sophia mission was done by Italian defence minister, Elisabetta Trenta during a meeting of EU defence ministers. The meeting was mainly about Western Balkan and EU defence integration and Italy wanted an immediate response on their proposal which is not planned to be discussed by the EU until the Sophia mission will be ending.

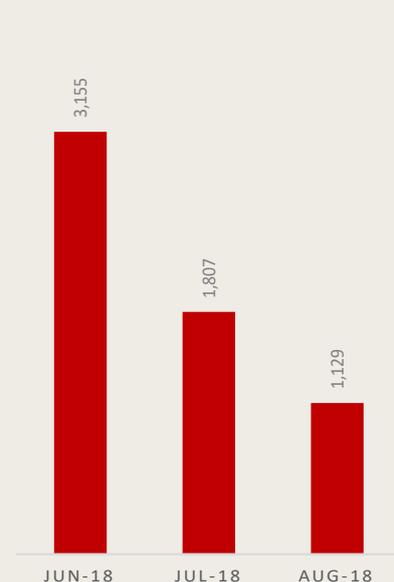
Salvini facing investigation as migrants in Italy finally allowed to disembark

- Salvini [is](#) facing the risk of an investigation concerning his government's refusal to allow the Italian Coast Guard ship Ubaldo Diciotti to disembark after rescuing 170 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers the Italian island Lampedusa. the investigation concerns possible violations committed against article 5 of the European convention of human rights that states a release is necessary when migrants, asylum seekers and refugees are held for more than 48 hours and should be given the right to apply for refugee status. Italian prosecutors headed by Italian prosecutor of Agrigento [will lead](#) the investigation.

Arrivals by Sea to Italy, Main Countries of Origin
January 2018 - August 2018



Arrivals by Sea, Italy
June 2018 - August 2018



RESEARCH OF INTEREST

[Deciding which road to take: Insights into how migrants and refugees in Greece plan onward movement](#)- Migration Policy Institute
A study that sheds light on Greece position as a transit point for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers and reasons for their onward movement.

[Between The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea: Europe Fails Refugees And Migrants In The Central Mediterranean](#)- Amnesty International
Amnesty International reports on the increase of death toll along the central Mediterranean route for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers and Europe's role in contributing to it.

[Desperate journeys: refugees and migrants arriving in Europe and at Europe's borders](#) - UNHCR
This UNHCR report provide insights and updates on migrants, refugees and asylum seekers arriving to Europe since the beginning of the year.

MULTIMEDIA & EDITORIALS OF INTEREST

[Europe Hardens Its Borders and Deepens the Migrant Crisis at Sea](#) - The Nation
This opinion piece discusses the solutions the EU is offering for the migration issue and how these proposed solutions may exacerbate the situation.

[Why the EU can't outsource its migration crisis](#)- Politico
This article discusses Europe's proposed disembarkation centers.

[Malta's History of Failed Migration Deterrence](#) - News deeply
Opinion piece about Malta's migration policy and position on the current refugee situation in the Mediterranean.

[Europe Benefits by Bankrolling an Anti-Migrant Effort. Niger Pays a Price](#) - The New York Times
This editorial presents how the EU's migration policy is affecting Niger's economy and security.

[Is there really a 'migrant crisis' in Spain?](#)- TRTWorld
Opinion article discussing the migration situation in Spain.

[Meeting Spain's new migrants](#)- BBC News
A video by BBC reporting the arrivals of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers to Spain and their onward movement.

[Smuggling of Migrants in Libya: A Journey of Torment, Forced Labor, Death](#)- Asharq Al-Awsat
This article reports on the experience of being smuggled through Libya.

[Prevention Is the Best Migration Cure](#)- Project Syndicate
This article promotes tackling the root causes of migration as a solution to large-scale irregular movement and highlights the importance of prevention in finding a real solution to the migration crisis.

[Khaled Hosseini: Refugees are still dying. How do we get over our news fatigue?](#)- The Guardian
This article by Khaled Hosseini, Goodwill Ambassador for the UN and acclaimed author, tackles the death toll in the Mediterranean.

[ANALYSIS: Why Italy's standoff over migrants is a problem for the whole EU](#)- The Local
The article analyses the Italy's position regarding rescue missions and the standoff over migrants between EU member states.