



MONTHLY TREND REPORT

COVERING MIXED MIGRATION TO, THROUGH & FROM NORTH AFRICA

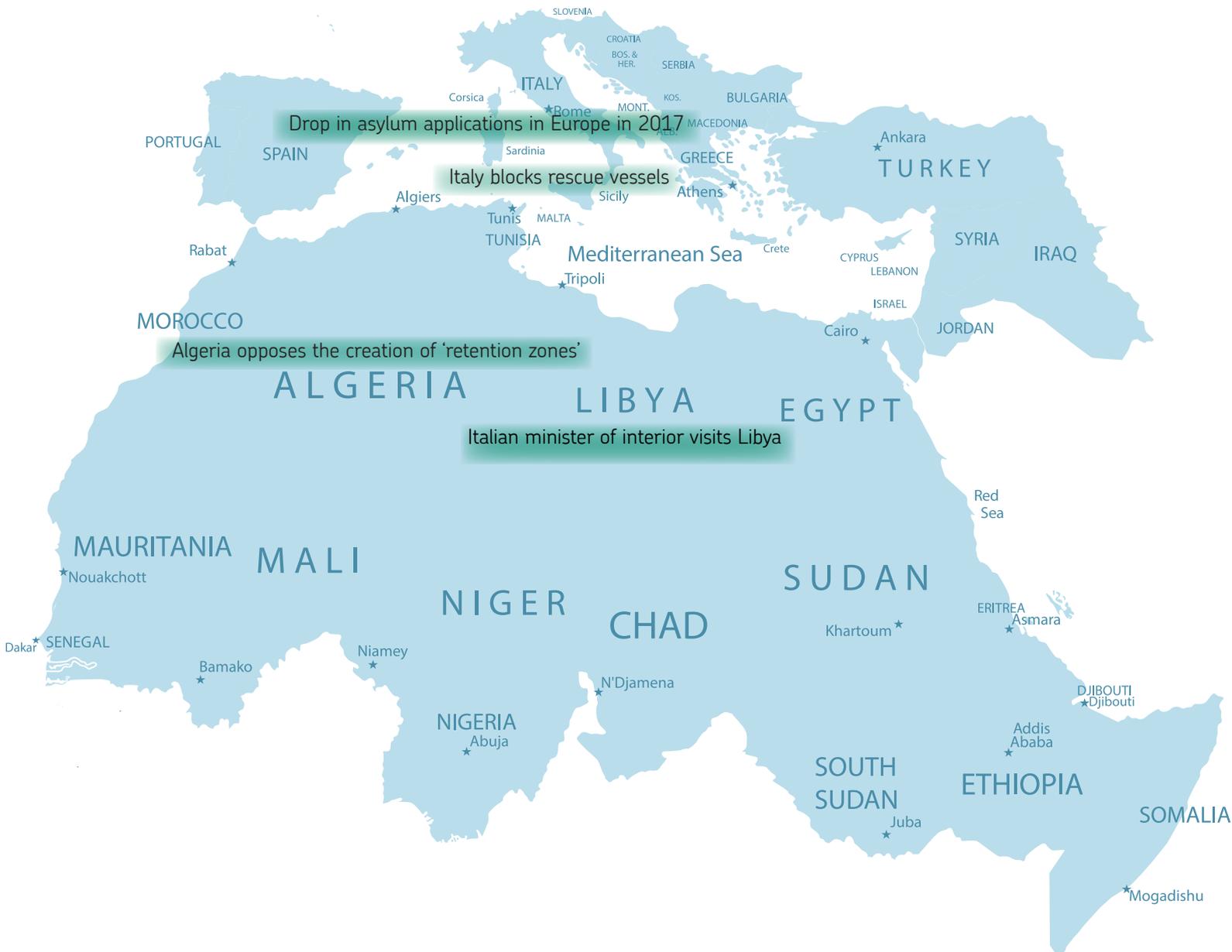
About: MHub is the regional knowledge hub and secretariat for the North Africa Mixed Migration Task Force, comprising of DRC, IOM, OHCHR, RMMS, Save the Children, UNHCR, UNICEF and UNODC. It promotes a human rights-based approach to ensure the protection of people moving in mixed and complex flows to,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



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For updates on the Horn of Africa, visit [RMMS](#)

REGIONAL

Migration takes center stage at EU summit

- Migration was the top item on the agenda for European leaders who [gathered](#) for a summit in Brussels between 28 and 29 June. While leaders were expected to discuss trade, security and eurozone reform, migration emerged as the single most pressing and contentious issue during talks, with leaders arriving at a ‘[European migration deal](#)’ in the early hours of Friday. Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte had threatened to hold up discussions and agreement over any of the items on the agenda unless a deal on migration could be reached. The main [elements](#) of the deal include; tightening and strengthening the EU’s external borders, setting up migrant processing centers in the EU to screen migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in centralized locations, exploring the option of ‘regional disembarkation platforms’ in African countries of transit and boosting investment in migrants’ countries of origin in order to deter further irregular migration to Europe.
- The deal was hailed as a success by the assembled leaders, with Prime Minister Conte [saying](#), “We are satisfied. It was a long negotiation but from today Italy is no longer alone.” Despite the fanfare from official sources immediately following the deal, the deal has come under [criticism](#) for being vague and difficult to implement as well as for raising human rights concerns. There are many questions already being raised regarding the location of the centralized processing facilities in Europe. France’s President, Emanuel Macron has already [said](#) that his country will not host any centers as it is not a ‘country of first arrival’ while Italian Prime Minister, Giuseppe Conte, stated that the centers can be located anywhere in Europe. Further questions are being raised regarding the planned location of ‘regional disembarkation platforms’ with Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, Egypt and Morocco already [rejecting](#) the idea of opening up such facilities on their territories.
- Despite the unresolved details of the deal the IOM, UNHCR and UNICEF have welcomed the new agreement as a positive step towards a unified, common approach to irregular migration. UNHCR spokesperson, Charlie Yaxley, welcomed the deal and said that what was needed was, “a unified approach that moves away from some of the more recent actions where we have seen States unilaterally seeking to harden or strengthen borders or restrict access to the asylum space.”

People smugglers sentenced in Hungary

- Four members of a people smuggling ring were [sentenced](#) to 25 years in prison in Hungary for the crime of “aggravated murder with particular cruelty” in relation to the deaths of 71 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in 2015. A further ten members of the group were charged with various other crimes and received sentences ranging from three to twelve years. The migrants, refugees and asylum seekers were being transported from the Serbian-Hungarian border in the back of an air-tight, refrigeration lorry. The person operating the vehicle refused to stop despite the victims’ pleas for help and fresh air and abandoned the vehicle in Austria once he realized that they had died. The prosecution has appealed the sentencing asking for harsher, life-imprisonment sentences instead.

Workshop on media representations of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers

- A workshop was held in Barcelona on 28 June to critically examine and debate the portrayal of the ‘migrant/refugee crisis’ in audiovisual media and the role of regulatory authorities in managing such representations. The event was organized by Spanish media regulatory authority (Comisión Nacional de los Mercados y la Competencia - CNMC) and the Network of Mediterranean Regulatory Authorities (MNRA) and brought together members of media regulatory bodies, international organizations, audiovisual media organizations and civil society from the Mediterranean region.

Drop in asylum applications in Europe in 2017

- The “[Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the EU in 2017](#)”, published in June by the European Asylum Support Office, has [revealed](#) that there was a 44% drop in the number of asylum applications received in the EU between 2016 and 2017. The report provides an overview of key developments relating to international protection in Europe as well as operational updates on the European asylum system.

Malta prosecutors target search-and-rescue NGO

- On 2 July, Maltese authorities [launched](#) legal proceedings against the captain of a Dutch rescue vessel, Mission Lifeline. Maltese prosecutors claim that Mission Lifeline’s vessel entered Maltese waters illegally and without proper boat registration following a rescue operation in the Mediterranean in late June. The rescue vessel was allowed to dock in Malta on 27 June following a week-long standoff, with both Maltese and Italian authorities refusing to allow the vessel to dock or disembark 200 newly rescued migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. The captain of the vessel pleaded not guilty to the charges leveled against him but is required to remain in Malta for the duration of the trial due to bail conditions. Speaking about the case, Neil Falzon, Director of Maltese human rights group, Aditus Foundation, said, “The goal is to hamper NGOs activities to rescue lives. But refugees will continue leaving Libya, and the solution can’t be to let people die.”

Austria carries out border exercise as EU states refuse to allow migrant rescue ship to dock

- On 26 June, hundreds of Austrian police forces and soldiers [carried](#) out an exercise along the Austrian-Slovenian border over fears 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.

ALGERIA

Algeria opposes the creation of 'retention zones'

- Algeria's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abdelkader Messahel, [announced](#) on 27 June that Algeria would reject any European proposals for the creation of 'retention zones' on its territory. The announcement came after European leaders had agreed to explore the idea of setting up 'regional disembarkation platforms' in North Africa. In statements made to a news media organization, Minister Messahel said, "There is no possibility that Algeria opens any retention zone. We already face the same problems." He further added that Algeria is already facing a critical situation with migrants, refugees and asylum seekers and conducting 'repatriation' operations in coordination with neighboring countries. The latter statement was in reference to ongoing deportations for which the Algerian government has come under criticism.

Algeria continues to receive criticism for deportations

- The series of mass deportations conducted by Algerian authorities has [brought](#) the country under fresh, fierce criticism by human rights organizations, international organizations and local human rights NGOs. A report published by Associated Press in late-June described how migrants, refugees and asylum seekers (including a large number of pregnant women and children) were expelled to the Sahara desert and made to walk across the border into Niger in the blazing sun with no food or water. The UN and NGOs have already raised concerns about the situation of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in Algeria and the mistreatment they face. Speaking about the latest media coverage, IOM's Director General, William Lacy Swing, [said](#), "Irregular migrants, including many pregnant women and minors, should not be left without food or water or expected to walk for miles in blistering 30-degree temperatures to seek safety in the desert." He further added, "Managed migration is the only answer. It comes down to ensuring that migrants everywhere are treated with dignity and in a way that is safe and orderly. These are the basics we ask of every country in the world."
- Officials in Algeria have claimed that deportations were conducted in cooperation with countries of origin and in accordance with international law. Algerian NGOs have, however, contested these claims and signed a petition saying that no readmission agreements were submitted to the governments

of the countries in question. Furthermore, upon the request of the Algerian government, foreign media correspondents living in the country were [invited](#) to cover the planned deportation in the first week of July. The requested coverage aims to show the international community that deportations are conducted in accordance with human rights law and that deportees are treated humanely and with tolerance. A person of the Ministry of Interior has reportedly said, "We wanted the foreign press, which takes what foreign rights organizations publish as an absolute fact, to be a witness against serious allegations." Local media organizations were not invited to cover the deportations.

Human Rights Watch interviews recently deported migrants, refugees and asylum seekers

- Human Rights Watch (HRW) [has](#) released fresh criticism of Algeria's mass expulsion of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers after interviewing 30 Sub-Saharan migrants, refugees and asylum seekers from different nationalities who reported on their experiences. Those interviewed said that they were rounded up in raids on neighborhoods where migrants, refugees and asylum seekers are known to live and led to the Nigerien or Malian borders. Authorities involved in the raids did not distinguish between irregular and regular migrants and refused to listen to asylum seekers who said they had certificates from UNHCR stating they were staying legally while their asylum claims were being processed. The Middle east and North Africa Director of HRW, Sarah Leah Whiston, said, "Algeria has the power to control its borders, but that doesn't mean it can round up people based on the color of their skin and dump them in the desert, regardless of their legal status and without a shred of due process."

Algeria remains transit, destination country for migrants

- In the annual [report](#) on trafficking in persons, published by the US Department of state, Algeria was [mentioned](#) as still being a country of transit and destination for irregular migrants coming from Sub-Saharan countries. According to the report, large numbers of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers remain in the country because of their financial situation or an inability to travel on to Europe. The report added that Algeria had identified 33 victims of trafficking in 2017.

EGYPT

Egypt refuses idea of 'disembarkation platforms'

- The Speaker of the Egyptian House of Representatives, Ali Abdul Aal, has [revealed](#) that Egypt rejects the idea of setting up 'regional disembarkation platforms' on the country's territory. The 'platforms' were proposed by EU leaders as part of a newly-minted European migration deal. Speaking with a German news outlet, Mr. Abdul Aal said, "EU reception facilities for migrants in Egypt would violate the laws and constitutions of our country." While Europe's plans for 'regional processing centers' was initially met with skepticism, its viability has come under additional scrutiny after Albania, Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia also rejected the idea.

Egyptian authorities impound migrant smuggling vessels

- Sources from the Egyptian Ministry of Interior have [revealed](#) that on 28 June, Egyptian authorities seized two vessels near Damietta that were being used for migrant smuggling. The sources added that one of the boats was heading to Cyprus while the other was reportedly going to Malta and then on to Libya. Further investigations revealed that there were two people smugglers operating out of Damietta and charging would-be migrants 30,000 to 40,000 Egyptian Pounds each for organizing their crossing to Europe.

Release of Ethiopian migrants from detention

- Following a [visit](#) by Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed to Egypt in the beginning of June, Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi pardoned 32 Ethiopian irregular migrants who were being held in detention in Egypt. The newly released migrants were returned to Ethiopia on June 11 where they were met by Ethiopian State Minister at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Aklilu Hailemichael and IOM Ethiopia Chief of Mission and Representative to the ECA AU and IGAD, Maureen Achieng. The returnees were then transported to the IOM Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Transit Center and were expected receive reintegration support from IOM.

Portugal to resettle 400 refugees currently in Egypt

- Portugal has announced that it will [resettle](#) 400 refugees of various nationalities that are currently living in Egypt. The news was welcomed by the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs with a spokesperson for the ministry stating that this latest decision

is the result of increased dialogue and cooperation between the government of Egypt and the EU. According to UNHCR, there were [289,231](#) persons of concern from 58 different countries registered with the agency in Egypt at the end of 2017.

Meeting between Ministry of Foreign Affairs official and head of Frontex

- On 27 June, the Egyptian Foreign Ministry's Assistant for Multilateral Affairs and International Security, Ehab Fawzi, [met](#) with the Executive Director of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, Frontex on to discuss areas of cooperation and collaboration on issues of irregular migration. The meeting is part of the [EU-Egypt Migration Dialogue](#) initiated at the end of 2017. During the meeting, Mr. Leggeri underscored Egypt's regional role in managing irregular migration and lauded Egyptian efforts to stem irregular departures from Egyptian shores towards Europe.

LIBYA

Boat disaster off Libyan coast

- A rubber boat carrying migrants, refugees and asylum seekers [capsized](#) off the coast of Garabouilli, about 31 miles east of Tripoli on 1 July. 41 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers were rescued while around 63 persons were still missing and presumed dead following the incident. The figures brought the total number of deaths off the coast of Libya for that week alone to 170. There has been an increase in the number of deaths recorded off the Libyan coast which has caused concern among many human rights and international organizations. IOM Libya's Chief of Mission has referred to the increase as 'alarming'.

- UNHCR [expressed](#) its deep sadness concerning the tragedy. UNHCR and partners were present in disembarkation points and provided the surviving migrants, refugees and asylum seekers with medical assistance. Those rescued were then transferred to detention facilities. UNHCR also expressed its concern over deteriorating conditions and increasing deaths along the CMR.

LNA rejects proposal for 'disembarkation platforms'

- The Libyan National Army (LNA), which controls eastern Libya under the command of Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar and in opposition to the UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA), has [issued](#) a statement saying that it rejects any attempt by "foreign parties to deploy a military presence in some areas of southern Libya on the pretext of stemming illegal migrations." The statement came after EU leaders had discussed the possibility of creating 'regional disembarkation platforms' in North African countries but did not reference those discussions directly. The statement went on to say, "The army's general command warns these foreign parties that any such (military) deployment would be considered a flagrant violation of international law and a heinous aggression against Libyan sovereignty."
- The GNA in Tripoli has also expressed its total refusal of any migrant centers in Libya. A proposal that Matteo Salvini, the Italian Minister of Interior had presented on a visit to Libya.

Italian minister of interior visits Libya

- Matteo Salvini, Italy's incoming Minister of Interior, made a visit to Libya on 25 June; marking the first such visit by a member of the new Italian government. The visit came just days before the EU summit in Brussels where leaders agreed a 'European migration deal'. The central purpose of the visit was to discuss possible ways of stemming irregular migration. The Italian minister proposed to establish processing centers to handle the applications of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in different countries in North Africa, including Libya. Speaking to the press in Tripoli, minister Salvini said, "On Thursday in Brussels, we will jointly support with Libyan authorities the setting up of reception and identification centers south of Libya, on the external border of Libya, to help Libya as well as Italy, block migration. Neither Italy or Libya can be alone in protecting their borders."
- The Libyan deputy head of the GNA, Ahmed Maiteeq, 'categorically refused' the presence of foreign-run centers on Libyan territory arguing that it would contravene Libyan law. Mr. Maiteeq further added that Libya will be holding a summit on migration in September. For Italy, Libya is considered one of the main departure points for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers dead off the coast of Libya

- The bodies of three babies were [recovered](#) following the sinking of a boat off the coast of the Libya on 29 June. Around 100 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers were still missing and presumed dead following the incident. Only 16 persons survived the incident and according to their accounts, the boat was carrying a total of around 120-125 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. That was not the only boat leaving from the coast of Tripoli. Another three boats were stopped by the Libyan coast guard carrying more than 345 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

MALI

Crisis simulation exercise along Mali-Mauritania border

- Between 27 and 28 June, IOM organized a crisis simulation exercise along Mali's border with Mauritania simulating a large-scale population displacement from Mauritania to Gogui, Mali. The event brought together more than 300 participants from local communities, civil society, security forces and local authorities from both countries. The exercise aimed to simulate the material, sanitary and human damages involved in massive displacement crises and to assess the preparedness

and capacities of various local stakeholders and actors in border crisis situations. Speaking about the simulation, Arouna Samake, Director of Mali's Border Police, said, "This exercise has strengthened border management by involving the population of both countries in humanitarian crisis management, and it has increased the mutual trust between law enforcement officials, local authorities in both countries and cross-border populations."

MOROCCO

Western Mediterranean Route

- [6,916](#) migrants, refugees and asylum seekers have crossed from Morocco to Spain by sea in the month of June bringing the total arrivals by sea for this year to 16,115. June's figure represents a sharp 96% increase from the figure for May and is a staggering 200% higher than arrival figures for June of last year. According to IOM figures, 55 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers died while attempting the crossing into Spain in between 30 May and 1 July.
- An additional 397 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers crossed from Morocco into Spain via its land borders with Morocco (through Ceuta and Melilla) during the month of June, bringing the total of number of persons making this crossing this year to 2,812. The number of land crossings in June represent a 4% decrease from those for May.

Rabat to host new migration observatory

- Morocco's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nasser Bourita, [announced](#) that Rabat will host The African Observatory for Migration and Development (OAMD), a pan-African institution tasked with "harmonizing the national strategies of African states and improving interaction with partners" with regards to matters of migration. Minister Bourita's announcement came on the sidelines of the 31st African Union summit in Mauritania and after the AU welcomed Morocco's proposal for the center.

Morocco and Spain to continue cooperation on migration but Morocco rejects EU proposals for 'regional disembarkation platforms'

- Following meetings in Rabat on 29 June, the foreign ministers of Morocco and Spain [said](#) that both countries will continue

to closely cooperate on issues of irregular migration and the counter-terrorism. Speaking about Moroccan-Spanish relations, Spain's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Josep Borrell, reiterated Spain's commitment to deepening and diversifying areas of cooperation and added that the two countries "are not only friends and neighbors, but they are also strategic partners determined to strengthen further their bilateral relations, based on respect, dialogue and mutual trust."

- Minister Bourita also [lauded](#) the special partnership between Morocco and Spain and added that the two countries' level and degree of cooperation on issues of migration "is a model as it treats the issue holistically." Minister Bourita did, however, formally reject the idea of setting up 'regional disembarkation platforms' in Morocco. Speaking about the proposal, Minister Bourita said, "Morocco rejects and has always rejected these kinds of methods for managing the issue of migration flows."

Morocco's border surveillance chief says clampdown along CMR increasing pressures on Morocco

- Morocco's migration and border surveillance director, Khalid Zerouali, has [said](#) that a clampdown on the Central Mediterranean Route from Libya is adding pressure on Morocco as migrants, refugees and asylum seekers divert their travels to the Western Mediterranean Route via Morocco. Mr. Zerouali's statements came in an interview with Associated Press on 28 June. He added that the country's border patrols had stopped 65,000 attempts at irregular departure from Morocco in 2017 and 25,000 this year. Mr Zerouali also added, "We are a strategic partner to Europe ... We think that what is happening today in the region, Morocco needs support so that we can cope with the increasing pressure."

NIGER

UNICEF expresses concern about the situation of migrant, refugee and asylum seeker children in Niger

- In statements made on 8 June, UNICEF said that European and North African efforts to contain and stem irregular migration are leading to the expulsion of bigger numbers of migrant, refugee and asylum seeker children to Niger. According to UNICEF, the new and increasing arrivals are not met with sufficient mechanisms to protect them against trafficking, violence, abuse, exploitation and detention. Since November 2017, 2,000 children were expelled from Algeria to Niger while 900 refugees have been transferred from Libya to Niger. Speaking about the situation, Ted Chaiban, UNICEF's Director of Programmes,

said, "Niger needs help to support the increasing number of refugee and migrant children arriving or being returned across its borders. Solutions must include improved cross-border cooperation between governments to keep children safe, as well as increased investment to help countries like Niger strengthen support systems available to all children in the country - no matter who they are or where they come from."

SUDAN

Sudanese-EU efforts to tackle trafficking and irregular migration

- A joint EU-Sudanese initiative to combat human trafficking and irregular migration was [launched](#) on 1 July. The initiative, titled “The Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration for Sudan” was signed by representatives from the Sudanese government, the EU and IOM on 28 June. The program will be implemented by IOM with funding from the EU Emergency Trust Fund and a budget of €45 million to run over the course of three years. In a speech to mark the launch, the EU’s Ambassador to Sudan, Jean-Michel Dumont said, “Managing migration poses challenges for many countries - this applies to

EU Member States and of course also to African countries...The initiative we launch today bridges both internal and external aspects, and indeed illustrates the complexity of the migration phenomenon.” And further added, “There are considerable flows of cross border migrants emanating from or passing through Darfur. The EU is seeking to work with the Government of Sudan on this issue, in particular with the Sudanese Migration Coordination Mechanism.”

TUNISIA

Tunisian Minister of Interior removed over migrant shipwreck

- On 6 June, Tunisian Prime Minister Youssef Chahed [removed](#) his Minister of Interior, Lotfi Brahem, from his position in relation to the sinking of a migrant, refugee and asylum seeker boat off the coast of Tunisia on 3 June. The boat in question was [overloaded](#) with roughly 180 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers when it sank, five miles from the Kerkennah Islands. At the time of the minister of interior’s removal, at least 68

migrants, refugees and asylum seekers were confirmed dead while scores others were still missing. According to a source from the government, the prime minister had fired the minister of interior for failing to stop the boat and the failure to tackle irregular migration more generally. The prime minister had fired ten security officials earlier in the day for their failure to stop the boat from setting off from the Tunisian coast.

GREECE

Arrivals by sea

- 2,559 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers arrived in Greece by sea between 30 May and 1 July which represents a 5% increase from the figures for May. According to IOM figures there were 10 recorded deaths along the EMR during the same period.

EU Commission gives Greece 20 million Euros to help with migrant crisis on Greek Islands

- On 2 July, the European Commission [announced](#) €54 million in funding to Greece and Spain in order to assist them with matters of migration. €20 million have already been earmarked for UNHCR in order to improve conditions on the Greek island of Lesbos. The Greek Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship, Dimitris Avramopoulos, has previously said, “While the EU-Turkey Statement has greatly contributed to lowering the number of arrivals in Greece, the country is still facing significant migratory pressure, in particular on the islands.”

Council of Europe Commissioner visits Greece

- Dunja Mijatovic, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights made a [five-day visit](#) to Greece where she lauded Greece’s efforts to welcome migrants, refugees and asylum seekers but called for greater and immediate action to ensure their rights and dignity are respected. Speaking at the end of her visit, she said, “The humanity and hospitality that Greece’s people and authorities demonstrated towards migrants in recent years is truly commendable. In spite of these efforts, however, the situation remains worrying and much more needs to be done to protect the human rights of those who have had to flee their country.” Despite the decrease in the number of arrivals to Greece over the last two years, reception centers are still stretched beyond their capacities in a way that endangers the migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. She called for immediate action from Greek authorities to improve living conditions in the reception centers as well as to accelerate the rates of handling asylum seekers applications.

“Temporary camps can meet the standards...however, given the length of the asylum procedure, there is also a need for more reception facilities adapted to prolonged residence,” said Commissioner Mijatovic. Commissioner Mijatovic also called on greater collective action by member states, saying, “It is high time that all member states of the Council of Europe united around its foundational values and address this issue in a spirit of collective responsibility and solidarity.”

Merkel Eases Migrant Row with Greece, Spain Accords

- On 29 June, on the sidelines of the EU summit in Brussels, German Chancellor Angela Merkel [closed](#) a deal with Greece and Spain whereby the latter parties would readmit asylum seekers who had previously been registered there but had since made the journey to Germany. According to a statement by the German government, “Greece and Spain are prepared to accept asylum seekers who are in future identified by German authorities at the German-Austrian border and who have a Eurodac registration in those countries.” The deal came at a critical point for Chancellor Merkel as she was facing increased pressure from the German Minister of Interior, Horst Seehofer that, over her handling of migration and refugee matters. Minister Seehofer had threatened to shutter Germany’s border with Austria by July if no deal were reached to return asylum seekers to the countries of registration.

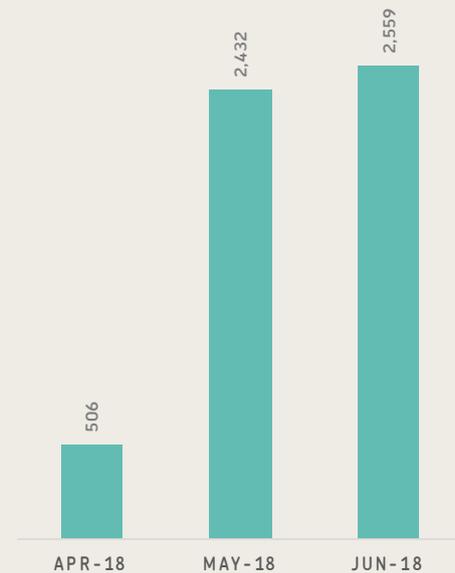
Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in crash in northern Greece

- Greek authorities reported that a car carrying 10 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers crashed in northern Greece causing the death of two and leaving the other eight with injuries. The 10 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers included 2 children and crossed the Greek-Turkish border and were being transported to Thessaloniki. The injured migrants were transferred to hospital to be treated while a search was ongoing for the capture of the smuggler who was driving the vehicle.

European Commission calls for continuing Turkey-Greece migrant deal

- The European Commission [called](#) for the continuation of a bilateral readmission deal that was signed between Greece and Turkey in 2002 to combat irregular migration. Speaking at a press briefing on 8 June, an EU commission spokesperson, Natasha Bertaud, said, “The commission’s position is that it should be continuously implemented in order to meet all remaining benchmarks under the visa liberalization roadmap with Turkey.” The statements came after the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mevlut Cavusoglu, announced on 7 June that Ankara was suspending the readmission deal over Greece’s refusal to repatriate Turkish asylum seekers who had fled Turkey following the 2016 failed coup attempt. Turkish authorities had made repeated calls for the extradition of soldiers whom they claim were ‘coup-plotters’.

Arrivals by Sea, Greece
April 2018 – June 2018



ITALY

Arrivals by sea

- 3,155 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers arrived to Italy by sea between 30 May and 1 July. While this is a 20% decrease from arrival figures for the month of May, there has been a sharp and troubling spike in the number of deaths recorded along the CMR with 680 deaths recorded between 30 May and 1 July whereas a total 388 had been recorded for the first five months of 2018.

Italy to provide additional support to Libyan Coast Guard

- Officials in Rome [announced](#) on 2 July that Italy will be providing the Libyan Coast Guard with 10 motor launches, two ships, dinghies, other vehicles and equipment and materials to support the coast guard’s capacity to curb further irregular migration from Libya’s shores. The in-coming Italian government aims to have even greater numbers of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers intercepted at sea returned to Libya. Italian officials have also denied that conditions in Libya are too dangerous for migrant, refugees and asylum seekers to be returned there. This latest batch of vehicles and equipment comes after the creation of the ‘Salvini plan’, named after Italian Interior Minister Matteo Salvini, and agreed between Italian and Libyan officials during Salvini’s visit to Libya earlier in June, and calls for the need to ‘urgently strengthen’ Libya’s capacity to fight irregular migration.

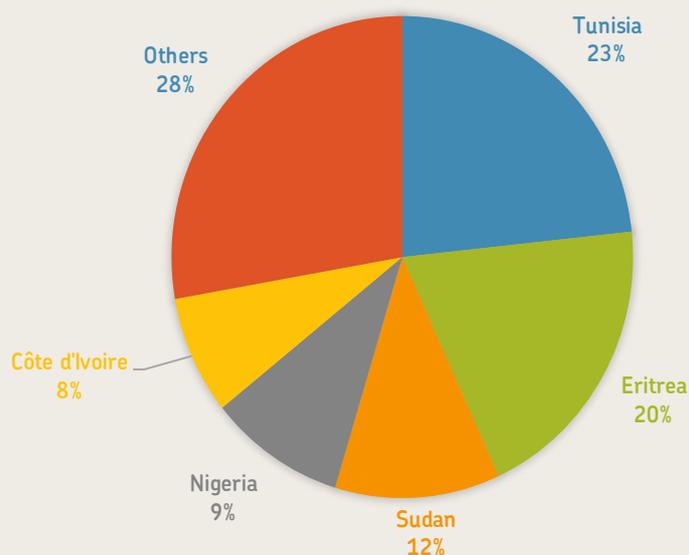
Italy blocks rescue vessels

- On 11 June, Italy’s new Minister of Interior, Matteo Salvini, [refused](#) to allow the rescue vessel Aquarius to dock in Italian ports. There were 629 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers aboard the Aquarius at the time, including 123 unaccompanied minors and seven pregnant women. Speaking about the rescued migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, Anelise Borges, a journalist aboard the Aquarius at the time, said, “Most of them are sleeping outside. They are obviously exhausted, they have been exposed to the elements, they have been at sea for 20 to 30 hours prior to their rescue.”
- The Aquarius, which is operated by German NGO SOS Méditerranée, became embroiled in a diplomatic standoff between Italy and Malta with each country claiming the

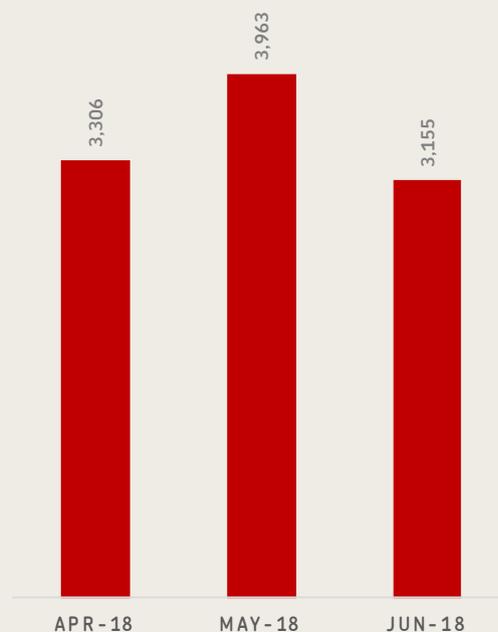
other should take responsibility for the vessel. Writing on Facebook, Minister Salvini [said](#), “Malta takes in nobody. France pushes people back at the border, Spain defends its frontier with weapons. From today, Italy will also start to say no to human trafficking, no to the business of illegal immigration.” While the Maltese government released a statement saying, “Malta is neither the competent nor the coordinating authority in this case. Malta will observe prevailing laws.”

- During the stand-off, the mayors of several southern, Italian cities spoke out publicly against Minister Salvini’s decision and [expressed](#) their readiness to disobey the minister’s order and open up their ports to allow the migrants, refugees and asylum seekers to safely disembark. The mayors’ statements, while welcomed, were impractical as the vessel would have still needed the Italian Coast Guard’s cooperation.
- Following twelve days at sea, Spain’s Prime Minister, Pedro Sanchez, [ordered](#) authorities to allow the Aquarius to dock in the Spanish port city of Valencia. In a statement released by his office, the Prime Minister said, “It is our duty to avoid a humanitarian catastrophe and offer a secure port for these people.”
- Later in June, Italy [barred](#) another two vessels, the Lifeline and Seefuchs, from docking in Italian ports. Minister Salvini wrote about the decision to turn back both ships on his Facebook page, saying, “Two other ships with the flag of Netherlands, Lifeline and Seefuchs, have arrived off the coast of Libya, waiting for their load of human beings abandoned by the smugglers. These gentlemen know that Italy no longer wants to be complicit in the business of illegal immigration, and therefore will have to look for other ports [not Italian] where to go.” There is growing concern among international, rescue and human rights organizations that Italy’s latest move to block ships will lead to greater figures of death in the Mediterranean and greater suffering in Libya.

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



Arrivals by Sea, Italy
April 2018 - June 2018



RESEARCH OF INTEREST

[Examining the protection of migrants in vulnerable situations](#) - Mixed Migration Centre

This study suggests some examples of policy and procedure practices towards migrants' rights to contribute to further legislation development.

[Forgotten at the gates of Europe Ongoing protection concerns at the EU's external border](#) - Jesuit Refugee Service

Through this report JRS show how people experience Europe's border by conducting interviews with migrants, refugees and asylum seekers and by giving policy recommendations.

[Nowhere but out: The failure of France and Italy to Help refugees and other migrants stranded at the border in Ventimiglia](#) - Oxfam

Oxfam reports on the situation of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers at the border between France and Italy where hundreds of them are suffering from lack of support.

MULTIMEDIA & EDITORIALS OF INTEREST

[The nowhere land where children on the move are someone else's problem](#) - Daily Maverick

A photo editorial shedding light on children on the move through and to Niger and the struggles they endure along the way.

[Inside Italy's plot to infiltrate migrant rescue boats in the Mediterranean](#) - PRI

A piece written by a reporter aboard Save the Children's rescue vessel about Italian efforts to infiltrate rescue operations.

[Thousands of migrants have been abandoned in the Sahara. This is what their journey looks like](#) - The Washington Post

This editorial sheds some light on the journey that migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers take through the desert from Algeria to reach Niger.

[The Guardian view on refugees: who is our neighbour?](#) - The Guardian

This editorial discusses the effect of the 'migration crisis' on the way migrants, refugees and asylum seekers are perceived in Europe and the difficulties that they face.

*MHub does not vouch for the accuracy or reliability of articles in its Monthly Bulletin.