



## smuggling of migrants — global news february 2017

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This monthly newsletter summarises news items and media commentary from some of the world's leading media outlets. The Migrant Smuggling Working Group takes no responsibility for the content and accuracy of the information provided in these news items.

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### AFRICA

#### LIBYA

***Libya mayors say Europe's migration crisis should not be dumped on them – 10 February 2017***

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-libya-idUSKBN15P2P7>

Mayors from Libya's desert south to its northern shores fear a deal between Tripoli and Rome to fund migrant holding centers in this north African country will simply shift Europe's migration crisis onto Libyan soil.

***Bodies of 74 Migrants Wash Up on Libyan Coast – 21 February 2017***

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/21/world/middleeast/migrants-libya-beach.html>

The bodies of 74 migrants were recovered from a beach near the town of Zawiya in western Libya, rescuers said on Tuesday, an ominous sign before the high season for Mediterranean crossings.

***Bodies of 74 migrants heading to Europe wash up in Libya – 21 February 2017***

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/63476a0c834649a0b425f6da5b4c998d/red-crescent-74-bodies-migrants-wash-ashore-libya>

At least 74 bodies of African migrants have washed ashore in western Libya, the Libyan Red Crescent said Tuesday, the latest tragedy at sea along a perilous but increasingly popular trafficking route to Europe.

***Bodies of 74 migrants wash up on Libyan shore – 21 February 2017***

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/bodies-of-74-migrants-wash-up-on-libyan-shore/article34095274/>

The bodies of at least 74 migrants have been found washed up on the shore in western Libya after the engine of their inflatable boat was stolen, coastguard and aid officials said on Tuesday.

***Dozens of migrants drown off Libya – 21 February 2017***

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-39037251>

The bodies of 87 African migrants have washed ashore in the Libyan city of Zawiya, in the latest drowning tragedy to hit the region.

***Red Crescent: 74 dead refugees wash ashore in Zawiya – 21 February 2017***

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/02/red-crescent-74-dead-refugees-wash-ashore-zawiya-170221092854189.html>

At least 74 bodies recovered from beach in western city of Zawiya on the Mediterranean Sea, Red Crescent says.

***Aid Group: 13 Migrants Suffocate in Libya Shipping Container – 23 February 2017***

[http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/M/ML\\_LIBYA\\_MIGRANTS?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT](http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/M/ML_LIBYA_MIGRANTS?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT)

Thirteen African migrants suffocated inside a shipping container while being transported over four days between two Libyan towns, a Red Crescent official said Thursday.

***NGO rescues off Libya encourage traffickers, says EU borders chief – 27 February 2017***

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/feb/27/ngo-rescues-off-libya-encourage-traffickers-eu-borders-chief>

NGOs who rescue people in the sea off Libya are encouraging traffickers who profit from dangerous Mediterranean crossings, the head of the EU border agency Frontex has said.

***Libya exposed as an epicentre for migrant child abuse – 28 February 2017***

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-39109585>

The United Nations has warned that large numbers of children are still risking their lives to make the dangerous journey from Libya to Italy.

***Refugee women and children 'beaten, raped and starved in Libyan hellholes' – 28 February 2017***

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/feb/28/refugee-women-and-children-beaten-raped-and-starved-in-libyan-hellholes>

Women and children making the dangerous journey to Europe to flee poverty and conflicts in Africa are being beaten, raped and starved in “living hellholes” in Libya, the United Nations children’s agency, Unicef, has said.

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## AMERICAS

### CANADA

***Bail granted to accused human smuggler in Sun Sea case – 2 February 2017***

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/bail-granted-to-accused-in-sun-sea-case/article33891439/>

A Sri Lankan man accused of bringing hundreds of Tamil asylum seekers into Canada illegally has been granted bail after more than six years in jail.

***Refugees crossing into Canada from US on foot despite freezing temperatures – 7 February 2017***

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/feb/07/us-refugees-canada-border-trump-travel-ban>

A growing number of asylum seekers are braving freezing cold temperatures to walk into Canada from the US, driven by fears of what Donald Trump’s presidency will mean for refugees, advocates say.

### ***Asylum-seekers speak of dangerous voyage that led them to Canada – 14 February 2017***

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/asylum-seekers-talk-of-dangerous-voyage-that-led-them-to-canada/article34023604/>

The perilous walk through frozen fields at the border between the United States and Manitoba was just the latest chapter of a three-continent, danger-filled journey for Mohammed and Mamood, two of the growing number of asylum-seekers who are hoping for a new life in Canada.

### ***Yazidis hail Canadian resettlement vow after Islamic State persecution – 22 February 2017***

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/yazidis-hail-canadian-resettlement-vow-after-islamic-state-persecution/article34111870/>

Canada's promise to resettle hundreds of Yazidis by the end of the year is being welcomed in Iraq, where Yazidi women and girls have endured horrific abuse and persecution at the hands of ISIL.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

### ***South Florida agent, trainer face trial on smuggling Cuban ballplayers – 1 February 2017***

<http://www.latimes.com/sports/sns-tns-bc-bbo-smuggling-trial-20170201-story.html>

MIAMI A South Florida sports agent and a baseball trainer accused of smuggling top Cuban ballplayers into the United States attacked the prosecution's case Wednesday, with their lawyers saying they were not involved in any illegal activities that led to multimillion-dollar contracts with major league teams.

### ***Australia-US refugee deal in doubt as Trump holds back support – 1 February 2017***

<http://www.scmp.com/news/asia/australasia/article/2067142/australia-us-refugee-deal-doubt-trump-holds-back-support>

The status of Australia's deal for the US to resettle asylum seekers detained in Pacific island camps has been thrown into doubt by the Trump administration – a potentially embarrassing blow for Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull.

### ***AP Explains: Why Australia-US refugee deal is contentious – 3 February 2017***

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-bc-as--ap-explains-trump-australia-20170203-story.html>

Amid the drama over a refugee resettlement deal between Australia and the United States, the White House has issued a series of conflicting statements on whether the agreement is still on, how many refugees it involves, and who, exactly, are the refugees. A look at what's at stake:

### ***Crossing the border – 3 February 2017***

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/idt-3a67db15-0018-40ad-97d3-51cd3b920487>

These photographs of the Mexico-US border - and the migrant workers trying to cross it - were taken in October 2016. They're the work of Italian photographer Alessandro Grassani.

### ***Marlins' Hechavarria admits lying in Cuban smuggling probe – 17 February 2017***

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/00cc248198dd40d6a1df13d15711742e/marlins-ss-hechavarria-admits-lying-cuban-smuggling-probe>

Miami Marlins shortstop Adeiny Hechavarria told a federal jury Friday he lied to investigators about knowing a key figure in an alleged Cuban ballplayer smuggling network linked to a Florida sports agent and a trainer.

### ***Trump Proposal Would Deport More Immigrants Immediately – 19 February 2017***

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/19/us/politics/trump-immigration-deportations.html>

Federal authorities would be empowered to immediately deport vastly more undocumented immigrants as part of a broad crackdown being developed by the Trump administration that would significantly change the way federal agencies enforce immigration laws.

### ***New Trump Deportation Rules Allow Far More Expulsions – 21 February 2017***

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/21/us/politics/dhs-immigration-trump.html>

President Trump has directed his administration to enforce the nation's immigration laws more aggressively, unleashing the full force of the federal government to find, arrest and deport those in the country illegally, regardless of whether they have committed serious crimes.

### ***Conservative U.S. Justices Skeptical in Cross-Border Shooting Case – 21 February 2017***

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-court-border-idUSKBN16021V>

Conservative U.S. Supreme Court justices on Tuesday expressed skepticism about reviving a lawsuit filed by the family of a Mexican teenager against a U.S. Border Patrol agent who fatally shot the 15-year-old from across the border in Texas in 2010.

### ***Mariners' Martin tells of threats in Cuban smuggling trial – 21 February 2017***

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/94b2e6252cb04a36ab1660bc5fd4a449/mariners-martin-tells-threats-cuban-smuggling-trial>

Seattle Mariners outfielder Leonys Martin told a Miami jury Tuesday he crossed the U.S.-Mexico border without any valid papers because he feared being kidnapped or worse after he was smuggled from Cuba by a group linked to a sports agent and a baseball trainer.

### ***Trump's Immigration Policies Explained – 21 February 2017***

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/21/us/trump-immigration-policies-deportation.html>

With an executive order last month and a pair of Department of Homeland Security memos on Tuesday, the Trump administration has significantly hardened the country's policies regarding illegal immigration. Here are some of the most significant elements of the new approach.

### ***Trump administration clears the way for far more deportations – 21 February 2017***

<http://www.latimes.com/politics/la-na-pol-trump-immigration-enforcement-20170221-story.html>

The Trump administration swept aside nearly all restrictions Tuesday on targeting for removal the 11 million people in the U.S. illegally, a vast expansion of the federal government's deportation priorities as the president pursues his promised crackdown on illegal immigration.

### ***What you need to know about Trump's new immigration rules – 22 February 2017***

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/ct-trump-immigration-rules-explained-20170222-story.html>

New memos issued this week by Homeland Security Secretary John F. Kelly brought President Trump's promised crackdown on illegal immigration one step closer to reality. Kelly lifted nearly all restrictions on targeting the 11-million people in the U.S. illegally for deportation.

### ***When do foreigners have rights under America's constitution? – 22 February 2017***

<http://www.economist.com/blogs/democracyinamerica/2017/02/justice-border>

In 2010, an unarmed 15-year-old, Sergio Hernández, was standing on Mexican soil when Jesus Mesa, an American border-patrol agent, killed him. Mr Mesa says the teenager had smuggled immigrants and, along

with a few friends, was throwing rocks. But Mr Hernández's parents insist—as video evidence appears to confirm—that he was just playing with friends.

***U.S. appeals court revives Texas immigrant-harboring law – 23 February 2017***

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-texas-immigration-decision-idUSKBN1622QW>

A federal appeals court on Thursday said Texas may resume enforcement of a 2015 state law making it a felony to harbor immigrants who entered the United States illegally.

***Santa Cruz and federal agents in war of words over whether a gang sweep was really a secret immigration raid – 23 February 2017***

<http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-santa-cruz-ice-raid-20170223-story.html>

A Northern California raid ostensibly targeting violent gang members triggered a dispute Thursday, with Santa Cruz's police chief angrily accusing the Homeland Security Department of turning it into a secret immigration sweep.

***U.S. Border Patrol accuses detained L.A. DACA recipient of immigrant smuggling – 23 February 2017***

<http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-daca-immigrant-smuggling-20170224-story.html>

A 22-year-old North Hollywood resident and beneficiary of the Obama administration's immigration relief program was detained by U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents near the Southern California border earlier this month on suspicion of attempting to smuggle someone into the country illegally.

***Mexican border wall building contracts to be awarded by April – 25 February 2017***

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/ct-mexico-border-wall-contracts-20170224-story.html>

U.S. Customs and Border Protection said Friday that it plans to start awarding contracts by mid-April for President Donald Trump's proposed border wall with Mexico, signaling that he is aggressively pursuing plans to erect "a great wall" along the 2,000-mile border.

***Border Patrol pursuit ends in crash; 9 hurt, one critically – 26 February 2017***

<http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/public-safety/sd-me-smuggling-pursuit-20170226-story.html>

Nine people were injured, one critically, when an SUV driven by a suspected human smuggler crashed Sunday while being chased by Border Patrol agents near Lake Morena in East County.

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## ASIA-PACIFIC

### BANGLADESH

***Rohingya relocation: Dhaka seeks help, diplomats sceptic – 7 February 2017***

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/seasia/2017/02/07/rohingya-relocation-dhaka-seeks-help-diplomats-sceptic.html>

Bangladesh government on Monday sought financial support from the United Nations and other international partners for relocating tens of thousands of Rohingya Muslims, who had fled ethnic cleansing in Myanmar, to Thengar Char in Hatiya in the Bay of Bengal.

## CAMBODIA

### ***Europe plans to cut migrant influx by working with Libya – 7 February 2017***

<http://www.scmp.com/news/asia/southeast-asia/article/2068759/cambodia-charges-three-japanese-sex-slavery-probe>

A Japanese restaurant owner accused of overseeing a smuggling ring that forced women into sex work in Japan was charged with trafficking in Cambodia on Tuesday, along with his wife and an employee.

## INDONESIA

### ***Australia sued for holding teenage Indonesian smuggling suspects in adult jails – 24 February 2017***

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/australianz/australia-sued-for-holding-teenage-indonesian-smuggling-suspects-in-adult-jails>

Australia is being sued for US\$80 million in Jakarta over claims it held juvenile Indonesian people-smuggling suspects in adult prisons or for long periods in immigration detention, a lawyer said Friday (Feb 24).

## MALAYSIA

### ***Sold into marriage - how Rohingya girls become child brides in Malaysia – 15 February 2017***

<http://www.reuters.com/article/uk-myanmar-rohingya-childbrides-insight-idUSKBN15U009>

Since 2012, violence and communal clashes have seen hundreds of Rohingya killed while tens of thousands have fled, seeking refuge in neighbouring countries such as Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and Bangladesh. In the most recent crackdown, security forces and police committed mass killings and gang rapes and burned villages in northern Rakhine, a U.N. investigation published earlier this month found.

## SRI LANKA

### ***'Come back, all is forgiven', Sri Lankan prime minister makes plea to Pacific island asylum seekers – 15 February 2017***

<http://www.scmp.com/news/asia/australasia/article/2071105/come-back-all-forgiven-sri-lankan-prime-minister-makes-plea>

Sri Lankan asylum seekers held on Pacific island camps who could potentially find new lives in the United States are free to return home without fear of persecution, Sri Lanka's prime minister said on Wednesday.

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## MIDDLE EAST

## IRAQ

### ***Aid groups brace for surge of displaced Mosul residents – 20 February 2017***

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/02/aid-agencies-additional-funds-mosul-170220093032968.html>

Aid organisations are racing against the clock to prepare for what is expected to be a mass exodus of hundreds of thousands of civilians from Mosul as Iraqi forces advance west of Mosul in the final stage of the battle for Mosul to recapture the city from the Islamic State or Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as ISIS).

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## EUROPE

### GENERAL

#### ***EU leaders back Libyans to curb new migrant wave – 3 February 2017***

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-italy-libya-idUSKBN15I17D>

European Union leaders placed a bet on Libya's fragile government to help them prevent a new wave of African migrants this spring, offering Tripoli more money and other assistance to beef up its frontier controls.

#### ***Migrant crisis: EU leaders agree plan to stop Libya influx – 3 February 2017***

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-38850380>

European Union leaders meeting in Malta have agreed on a plan to reduce the flow of migrants from Libya.

#### ***Europe plans to cut migrant influx by working with Libya – 4 February 2017***

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-bc-eu--europe-migrants-20170203-story.html>

European Union leaders at a summit Friday devised a plan involving largely lawless Libya to try to shut down the smuggling of hundreds of thousands of migrants from North Africa across the Mediterranean Sea to Europe.

#### ***Isis paying smugglers' fees in recruitment drive among child refugees – 5 February 2017***

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/feb/05/isis-recruitment-drive-child-refugees>

Islamic State is paying the smugglers' fees of child refugees in a desperate attempt to attract new recruits, according to a report highlighting the potential vulnerability of unaccompanied minors to radicalisation.

#### ***15 nations focus on keeping Balkan migrant route shut – 8 February 2017***

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-bc-eu--europe-migrants-20170208-story.html>

Interior and defense ministers from 15 European countries agreed Wednesday to come up with new measures to ensure that the overland route from Greece remains shut for migrants seeking new lives in other EU nations and those trying to bring them in illegally.

#### ***Phones are now indispensable for refugees – 11 February 2017***

<http://www.economist.com/news/international/21716637-technology-has-made-migrating-europe-easier-over-time-it-will-also-make-migration>

According to UNHCR, the UN's agency for refugees, refugees can easily spend a third of their disposable income on staying connected.

#### ***EU: Migrant deaths in Mediterranean rising despite more aid – 15 February 2017***

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-bc-eu--europe-migrants-20170215-story.html>

Migrant deaths have risen to a record level on the Libya-to-Italy Mediterranean Sea smuggling route, and the increasing number of rescue boats trying to prevent mass drownings there might actually be helping the smugglers, the European Union's border and coast guard chief says.

#### ***Germany suggests EU ease rules to deport asylum seekers – 21 February 2017***

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-germany-france-idUSKBN1602G0>

German officials have proposed that the European Union relax some human rights safeguards so that more asylum seekers can be deported while awaiting the outcome of their cases, according to a working paper seen by Reuters.



***Migrant children face abuse, abduction and detention on route from Africa to Europe, report says – 28 February 2017***

<http://www.latimes.com/world/global-development/la-fg-global-unicef-report-20170228-story.html>

Thousands of migrant and refugee children routinely face abuse, exploitation and detention as they make the journey along the central Mediterranean migration route to Europe, according to a new report from the United Nations Children's Fund.

CYPRUS

***Cyprus official says 700 migrants could land in next week – 4 February 2017***

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-bc-eu--europe-migrants-20170204-story.html>

Up to 700 migrants could arrive on the Mediterranean island of Cyprus next week on smuggling trips from Turkey, a top Cypriot official said Saturday, hours after 93 migrants landed in the dark on the island's northwestern shore.

FINLAND

***Aki Kaurismaki probes Finland's asylum system – 20 February 2017***

<http://www.economist.com/blogs/prospero/2017/02/other-side-hope>

Shot in Finland, Mr Kaurismaki's homeland, "The Other Side of Hope" tells two stories. The first is of Khaled (Sherwan Haji), a young Syrian refugee who arrives in Helsinki as a stowaway on a coal cargo ship.

GREECE

***Inside the world of human smuggling – 4 February 2017***

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/01/world-human-smuggling-170123122824101.html>

A look at the smuggling chain, from middlemen and passport counterfeiters to smugglers, and the refugees who use them.

***Greece Pressured to Improve Migrants' Living Conditions – 9 February 2017***

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/09/world/europe/greece-migrant-crisis.html>

Human rights groups stepped up their warnings on Thursday about the living conditions for migrants in Greece after three people died during a recent cold snap on the Aegean island of Lesbos, and as dozens of asylum seekers near Athens threatened to resume a hunger strike if the situation did not improve.

ITALY

***Italy welcomes 41 Syrian refugees, seeks bridges not walls – 1 February 2017***

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-ap-eu-europe-migrants-20170130-story.html>

Italian government and church officials welcomed 41 Syrian refugees at Rome's airport Monday, saying they wanted to show solidarity with those fleeing war at a time when the U.S. is sending refugees away and building a wall to keep migrants out.



***Italy-Libya deal on migration lays groundwork for EU summit – 2 February 2017***

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-bc-eu--europe-migrants-20170202-story.html>

A day before European Union leaders meet to discuss closing off the illegal migrant route from Libya, Italy laid some of the groundwork Thursday by reaching a deal with the Libyan prime minister to try to stop migrants from setting out to cross the central Mediterranean.

SPAIN

***Nearly 500 African migrants storm border with Spain – 17 February 2017***

<http://edition.cnn.com/2017/02/17/africa/morocco-migrants-spain/index.html>

Nearly 500 African migrants pushed their way across the border fence Friday morning from Morocco into the Spanish enclave of Ceuta, one of two Spanish enclaves in North Africa, a Spanish police source told CNN.

SWEDEN

***Journalist convicted of smuggling for helping Syrian boy migrate to Sweden – 9 February 2017***

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/feb/09/swedish-journalist-convicted-of-smuggling-for-helping-syrian-boy-migrate>

A Swedish court has found a TV journalist guilty of smuggling for helping a Syrian boy migrate to the country and given him a suspended sentence.

***Swedish reporter sentenced for smuggling Syrian teen – 10 February 2017***

<http://edition.cnn.com/2017/02/09/europe/swedish-reporter-smuggling-syrian-teen/index.html>

A reporter for a Swedish television station and two of his colleagues were sentenced to probation and community service on Thursday for smuggling a 15-year-old Syrian boy -- who they said pleaded with them for help -- out of Greece more than two years ago.

UNITED KINGDOM

***People-smuggling crackdown 'success' – 9 February 2017***

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-kent-38926443>

Numbers of people-smuggling operations disrupted rose by nearly a third in a year, UK Government figures have shown.

***'Garlic ploy' stowaway bid sees six men jailed – 13 February 2017***

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-38961372>

Two Bulgarian people smugglers have been jailed for bringing eight illegal immigrants, including two children, into the UK hidden in vans.