

smuggling of migrants – global news may 2017

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.

GENERAL

UN: 300,000 children migrating solo, up nearly fivefold – 18 May 2017

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-bc-af--un-refugee-children-20170517-story.html>

Authorities have documented more than 300,000 children migrating alone worldwide over a two-year period, marking a dramatic escalation of a trend that has forced many young refugees into slavery and prostitution, the U.N. children's agency said Wednesday.

People smugglers make \$35 bln a year on migrant crisis: IOM head – 31 May 2017

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-portugal-migration-idUSKBN18R26H>

People smugglers make about \$35 billion a year worldwide and they are driving the tragedy of migrants who die trying to cross the Mediterranean to reach Europe, the head of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) told Reuters on Wednesday.

AFRICA

LIBYA

Migrants who survive Sahara face new torture in Libyan oasis town – 5 May 2017

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-africa-idUSKBN18021C>

In his quest to reach Europe, 22-year old Gambian Mafu Hydera spent six days with little food or water crossing the Sahara before he reached the Libyan oasis town of Sabha. There, he says he was kidnapped and beaten by a smuggling gang to elicit a ransom from his family and frequently forced to work for no pay during his seven months in the town.

Spanish naval ship saves 651 migrants in Mediterranean – 6 May 2017

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-bc-eu--europe-migrants-20170506-story.html>

Spain's defense ministry says a Spanish navy ship has rescued 651 migrants trying to cross the Mediterranean from North Africa to Europe.

Nearly 200 asylum seekers feared dead off Libya coast – 9 May 2017

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/05/200-asylum-seekers-feared-dead-libya-coast-170508161908457.html>

Eleven migrants have died and nearly 200 are missing after two boats carrying asylum seekers sank off the coast of Libya, UN agencies said on Monday citing survivors.

Italy tries to bolster Libyan coast guard, despite humanitarian concern – 15 May 2017

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-libya-idUSKCN18B2E5>

Italy gave the Libyan coast guard four repaired patrol boats on Monday to beef up Libya's efforts to stop people smuggling, but the support worries humanitarian groups operating rescue ships near the Libyan coast.

Rescued migrants tell of detention, beatings, slavery in Libya – 19 May 2017

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-italy-idUSKCN18F1XQ>

A day after reaching safety aboard a humanitarian ship, migrants on Friday told of arbitrary detention, slavery and beatings in Libya as Europe seeks to build up the Tripoli-based coastguard.

More than 30 migrants, mostly toddlers, drown off Libya – 24 May 2017

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/migrants-toddler-drown-libya/article35097078/>

More than 30 migrants, mostly toddlers, drowned on Wednesday when about 200 people without life jackets fell from a boat into the sea off the Libyan coast before they could be hauled into waiting rescue boats.

Rescuers say 34 migrant bodies pulled from sea off Libya – 24 May 2017

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-bc-eu--italy-migrants-20170524-story.html>

The bodies of at least 34 migrants, many of them young children, were recovered from the sea off Libya after some 200 migrants tumbled into rough waters when their overcrowded smugglers' boat capsized Wednesday, the Italian coast guard said.

Spanish navy rescues 282 migrants from 2 boats off Libya – 25 May 2017

<http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/spanish-navy-rescues-282-migrants-boats-off-libya-47632535>

Spain's defense ministry says a navy frigate has rescued 282 migrants from two boats found adrift in waters off the Libyan coast.

AMERICAS

GENERAL

Migrants fleeing Central America face near-certain violence, charity says – 11 May 2017

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-centralamerica-migrants-violence-idUSKBN1872XU>

Almost all of the estimated 500,000 migrants who travel into Mexico each year, fleeing poverty and danger in Central America, are victims of violence along their journey, a leading charity said on Thursday.

CANADA

B.C. Supreme Court jury finds man guilty of smuggling Tamil migrants to Canada – 27 May 2017

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/bc-supreme-court-jury-finds-man-guilty-of-smuggling-tamil-migrants-to-canada/article35138852/>

A prosecutor says a man accused of bringing hundreds of Tamil migrants into Canada illegally in a dilapidated cargo ship nearly seven years ago has been found guilty.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

San Diego woman gets 3 years in prison for hiding immigrants in her home – 4 May 2017

<http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-immigrant-stash-house-20170504-story.html>

On Thursday, U.S. District Judge William Hayes sentenced Olivero to three years and one month in prison for her role in the smuggling effort. He said the number of people, as well as the “grim” conditions they were kept in, made it an aggravated crime.

Former border officer gets 5 years in prison for immigrant smuggling – 22 May 2017

<http://www.latimes.com/local/california/la-me-immigrant-smuggling-20170522-story.html>

A former Customs and Border Protection officer who took bribes of money and sex to allow immigrants into the U.S. illegally through the San Ysidro Port of Entry was sentenced Monday to five years in prison.

1 of 11 Suspected Border Crossers Found in Arizona Dies – 25 May 2017

<https://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2017/05/25/us/ap-us-border-crossers-rescued.html>

One of 11 suspected border crossers who were rescued from a desert area in Arizona has died at a hospital, federal authorities said Thursday.

ASIA-PACIFIC

THAILAND

Thai police find 35 Myanmar smuggling victims 'dumped' in the south – 5 May 2017

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-thailand-smuggling-idUSKBN1811C6>

Thai police found 35 migrants from Myanmar abandoned and wandering in a southern forest on Friday, raising fears that smuggling and trafficking routes are flourishing despite a crackdown by authorities.

Despite crackdown, people-smuggling across Thai-Myanmar border has risen – 11 May 2017

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-thailand-migrants-idUSKBN1870V9>

People smuggling across the border from Myanmar to Thailand is on the rise despite a crackdown by authorities in both countries that has made it more expensive and dangerous, Thai immigration police say.

MIDDLE EAST

AZERBAIJAN

Azeri journalist abducted in Georgia, put in custody in Azerbaijan – 31 May 2017

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-georgia-journalist-azerbaijan-idUSKBN18R269>

An independent Azeri journalist has been abducted in Georgia and forcibly taken to neighboring Azerbaijan where he was detained in custody, his lawyer said on Wednesday, in a case condemned by rights activists. The journalist was charged by the Azeris with illegal border crossing and smuggling, his lawyer said.

Lawyer says independent Azerbaijani journalist abducted from home in nearby Georgia – 31 May 2017

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/ct-azerbaijan-journalist-abducted-georgia-20170531-story.html>

An independent Azerbaijani journalist has been abducted from near his home in Georgia and forcibly taken to Azerbaijan, his lawyer said Wednesday. A court in this former Soviet republic was due to hold a hearing later in the day on whether to sanction the arrest of Afgan Mukhtarli, who is facing charges of smuggling and crossing the border illegally.

EUROPE

GENERAL

Rickety boats used to smuggle migrants into Europe 'made in China' – 5 May 2017

<http://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2093030/rickety-boats-used-smuggle-migrants-europe-made-china>

Dimitris Avramopoulos, the EU's commissioner for migration, calls on Beijing for help in closing down supply of cheap rafts tied to thousands of deaths in Mediterranean Sea

Italian coastguard: 3,000 rescued in Mediterranean Sea – 7 May 2017

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/05/italian-coastguard-3000-rescued-mediterranean-sea-170507043116392.html>

About 3,000 people have been saved in the Mediterranean Sea in a single day while trying to make the journey from northern Africa to Europe, according to the Italian coastguard.

UN: Up to 245 missing after 2 Mediterranean shipwrecks – 9 May 2017

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-bc-eu--europe-migrants-20170509-story.html>

Two wrecks of migrant ships in the Mediterranean have claimed as many as 245 lives, including those of at least five children, according to survivor accounts given to U.N. agencies and authorities in Sicily, where dozens of rescued migrants were taken.

Europe must turn back migrants on smugglers' boats: Belgian minister – 11 May 2017

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-belgium-idUSKBN1872D5>

The European Union must not accept African migrants who pay people smugglers to cross the Mediterranean, but turn them back, Belgium's migration minister Theo Francken told Reuters on Thursday.

HUNGARY

Hungary Indicts 11 in Truck Suffocation of 71 Refugees – 4 May 2017

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/04/world/europe/hungary-indicts-11-in-truck-suffocation-of-71-refugees.html>

Hungary indicted 11 people suspected of being smugglers on Thursday in the suffocation of 71 refugees, whose decomposing bodies were found stuffed inside a locked truck parked in neighboring Austria two summers ago at the height of Europe's migration crisis.

Hungary charges 11 over 71 migrant deaths in Austrian lorry – 4 May 2017

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-lorry-prosecutors-idUSKBN1801JJ>

The driver of a truck in which 71 migrants were found dead beside an Austrian motorway heard their cries for help as their oxygen ran out but followed an order to keep them locked up, Hungarian prosecutors said on Thursday.

Hungary charges suspects in Austria death of 71 migrants in 2015 – 4 May 2017

<http://www.reuters.com/article/europe-migrants-lorry-prosecutors-idUSL8N1I65OJ>

May 4 Hungarian prosecutors on Thursday charged 11 people, four of them with murder and all with human trafficking, in connection with the death of 71 migrants found in a lorry by an Austrian motorway in August 2015.

ITALY

Italy investigating some migrant aid workers for people smuggling – 10 May 2017

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-italy-ngos-idUSKBN1862BI>

An Italian prosecutor said on Wednesday he is investigating some members of humanitarian organizations rescuing migrants in the Mediterranean Sea on suspicion they may have cooperated with people smugglers.

'Not my husband': trafficking kingpin's wife claims wrong man is in Sicilian jail – 18 May 2017

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2017/may/18/not-my-husband-trafficking-kingpin-wife-claims-wrong-man-in-jail-sicily-trial-medhanie-yehdego-mered>

The wife of a man believed to be the world's most wanted people smuggler has said that her husband remains free and another man has been seized in his place.

Smugglers Offer Luxury Passage for Migrants, if They Can Pay – 23 May 2017

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/23/world/europe/smugglers-offer-luxury-passage-for-migrants-if-they-can-pay.html>

It was a far cry from the rotting fishing boats and overstuffed dinghies that carry so many thousands of migrants precariously to Italian shores. The family of six had paid about \$96,000 to travel from Afghanistan to Turkey. The last leg of their journey, a cramped week's sail through the Aegean and Mediterranean seas aboard a cerulean 15-meter yacht, the Polina, piloted by three Ukrainian skippers, cost \$7,000 a head. It dropped them in Sicily in relative style.

ROMANIA

11 migrants detained near Romania-Hungary border – 29 May 2017

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-bc-eu--europe-migrants-20170529-story.html>

Romanian border police say they have detained 11 Syrian and Iraqi migrants who are suspected of trying to illegally cross the border and reach the Schengen zone.

SPAIN

Spain saves 157 migrants in 5 boats crossing from Africa – 27 May 2017

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-bc-eu--europe-migrants-20170527-story.html>

Spain's maritime rescue service has saved 157 migrants from five small boats attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea.