



smuggling of migrants — global news December 2013

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.

AFRICA

ERITREA

Extortionists, smugglers preying on Eritrean refugees, report says – 3 December 2013

<https://beta.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/extortionists-smugglers-preying-on-eritrean-refugees-report-says/article15757184/>

A new report, to be released on Wednesday by three European researchers, concludes that the torture camps and smuggling rings have killed 5,000 to 10,000 refugees – most of them from impoverished Eritrea – over the past four years.

AMERICAS

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Borderline Insanity at the Fence in Nogales – 7 December 2013

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/08/opinion/sunday/borderline-insanity-at-the-fence-in-nogales.html>

The fence that separates Nogales, Ariz., from Nogales, Mexico, is a see-through wall of vertical steel rods 15 to 18 feet high, set four inches apart in a deep bed of concrete. It is a rusty ribbon that runs up and down dusty hills and streets, cutting one city into two and jutting into the desert for a few miles east and west.

Arizona border residents join together to tackle migrant aid issues

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-ff-arivaca-20131213-story.html>

While illicit border crossings in this southern Arizona corridor have plummeted, deaths are at an all-time high. The worsening situation led some Arivaca residents to band together last year to form People Helping People, a group that provides aid to border crossers in the area.

Border officer convicted of helping smugglers of pot and immigrants – 20 December 2013

<http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-officer-smuggling-20131220-story.html>

A Customs and Border Protection officer was convicted Friday of conspiring for more than a decade to help smugglers bring marijuana and undocumented immigrants into the U.S.

ASIA-PACIFIC

THAILAND

Rohingya refugees being 'held in secret Thai jungle camps and sold to human traffickers' – 5 December 2013

<http://www.scmp.com/news/asia/article/1373153/thailands-secret-rohingya-refugee-camps>

Rohingya Muslims are being detained at a clandestine site in the Thai jungle where it is alleged they are sold to brokers and held to ransom

Thailand's anti-trafficking effort loses steam – 5 December 2013

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-thailand-rohingya-usa/thailands-anti-trafficking-effort-loses-steam-idUSBRE9B401H20131205>

The U.S. State Department is gathering information for its next Trafficking In Persons (TIP) Report, due to be published in June. It ranks countries on their efforts to combat human trafficking. Thailand faces an automatic downgrade to Tier 3, the lowest rank, unless it makes “significant efforts” to improve its record, the State Department says.

Special Report - Thailand secretly dumps Myanmar refugees into trafficking rings- 5 December 2013

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-thailand-rohingya-special-report/special-report-thailand-secretly-dumps-myanmar-refugees-into-trafficking-rings-idUKBRE9B400920131205>

As thousands of Rohingya flee Myanmar to escape religious persecution, a Reuters investigation in three countries has uncovered a clandestine policy to remove Rohingya refugees from Thailand's immigration detention centers and deliver them to human traffickers waiting at sea.

Thailand's PM offers help in trafficking probe of Myanmar refugees – 8 December 2013

<http://www.scmp.com/news/asia/article/1375743/thailands-pm-offers-help-trafficking-probe-myanmar-refugees>

Thailand will help the UN and the United States with any investigation into reports that Thai immigration officials moved Myanmar refugees into human-trafficking rings, the prime minister says.

MIDDLE EAST

ISRAEL

Israel violates international norms over African refugees – 17 December 2013

<http://america.aljazeera.com/opinions/2013/12/israel-african-refugees.html>

Today Israeli immigration officers forcibly removed more than 200 African asylum seekers from outside the Knesset, Israel's parliament, who showed up to protest their forced detention. The protesters, refugees from east Africa, had marched from an indefinite-detention facility in the Negev Desert, a two-day journey by foot. They will reportedly be jailed for up to three months before being returned to detention.

TURKEY

For Syrian refugees, even jail is paradise – 14 December 2013

<http://america.aljazeera.com/opinions/2013/12/for-syrian-refugeesevenjailisparadise.html>

Nearly 150 asylum seekers arrested in a people-smuggling operation, Oct. 29, 2013, in Turkey's Mugla province.

EUROPE

GENERAL

EU moves to prevent new migrant deaths after Lampedusa – 4 December 2013

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-25215691>

The EU has revealed plans to tighten patrols of its sea borders and do more to help asylum-seekers, two months after the Lampedusa boat tragedy.