



smuggling of migrants — global news

October 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.

GENERAL

The plight of refugees – 28 October 2013

<http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/insidestory/2013/10/plight-refugees-2013102875355382765.html>

War and political turmoil force thousands to leave their homelands, but why do so many risk it all in search of asylum?

AFRICA

EGYPT

Syrians in Egypt: Escaping a once safe haven – 21 October 2013

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-24612768>

Refugees who fled the conflict in Syria are now fleeing Egypt, where they once found a safe haven. But in trying to leave Egypt by sea they are risking their lives, as Orla Guerin reports from the coastal city of Alexandria.

LIBYA

Libya turns zoo into migrant processing centre as more head for EU- 14 October 2013

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/13/libya-zoo-migrant-centre-eu-refugee>

With the country's 22 refugee centres overflowing, the zoo – closed since the 2011 uprising – is being used to handle those picked up on the streets. More than 50 people are brought there every day.

'Easier from Libya' - Migrants return to Tripoli – 15 October 2013

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-24521875>

Migrants and people traffickers have long seen Libya as the best way of getting from North Africa to Europe. Its extensive land and sea borders are perfect for smugglers, as is its proximity to European shores.

NIGER

Scores die of starvation, thirst in Niger's desert on smuggling route – 31 October 2013

<http://www.latimes.com/world/worldnow/la-fg-wn-niger-migrants-20131031-story.html>

It's a long, arduous and well-worn route. Hopeful Africans travel north through Niger, Mali and Algeria, crossing the Sahara desert to reach Europe, find work and send money home to their families. In the latest tragedy involving African migrants, 92 bodies were found in the desert of Niger, according to a humanitarian worker, after their two trucks broke down near the Algerian border.

AMERICAS

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Boat with Haitian and Jamaican nationals capsizes off Miami; 4 dead – 16 October 2013

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/nationnow/la-na-nn-capsized-boat-miami-four-dead-20131016-story.html>

At least four women died when a boat capsized early Wednesday off the coast of South Florida, U.S. Coast Guard officials said, in the latest example of the recent tragedies worldwide of illegally transporting people from poorer to wealthier nations.

ASIA-PACIFIC

MYANMAR

Myanmar violence between Buddhists, Muslims threatens reforms – 27 October 2013

<http://www.latimes.com/world/la-fg-myanmar-religious-violence-20131027-story.html>

The attack this month on Myanmar's coast was the latest in a string of brutal clashes between the country's Buddhist majority and Muslim minority. The sectarian violence has claimed hundreds of lives, most of them Muslim, and threatens to overshadow the reform effort of President Thein Sein, a former army general who surprised the world three years ago by promising to steer his isolated nation toward democracy.

EUROPE

GENERAL

Mediterranean migrant deaths: a litany of largely avoidable loss – 4 October 2013

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/03/mediterranean-migrant-deaths-avoidable-loss>

There is a divide between those who prioritise the saving of lives and those who insist on border enforcement. These days, it takes a blockbuster tragedy for migrant boats to reach the front pages – the quiet, regular additions to the Mediterranean's death toll encountered on an almost-weekly basis by rescuers, human rights activists and migrant communities themselves are simply far too humdrum to make the mainstream news.

European Union Official Calls for More Surveillance of Migrant Routes – 8 October 2013

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/09/world/europe/european-union-official-calls-for-more-surveillance-of-migrant-routes.html>

A senior European Union official called on Tuesday for vastly expanded patrols of Mediterranean waters, as horror mounted over the deaths of hundreds of African migrants near Sicily last week.

Shaming lesson behind the boat tragedy in Lampedusa – 9 October 2013

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/08/shame-behind-migrant-tragedy-lampedusa>

The causes of migration are overwhelmingly poverty, inequality and conflict. This is a humanitarian crisis that demands a humanitarian and European response. To paraphrase a currently popular soundbite: we are Europe, surely we can do better than this.

Why Europe's immigration nightmare is only beginning – 30 October 2013

<http://edition.cnn.com/2013/10/30/opinion/europe-immigration-debate-koser/index.html>

Reactions to the drowning of nearly 400 migrants in the seas off Lampedusa and Malta earlier this month demonstrate three important reasons why Europe will not resolve its immigration crisis any time soon.

BULGARIA

Syrian refugees face bleak time in Bulgaria's broken asylum system – 25 October 2013

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2013/oct/24/syrian-refugees-bulgaria-asylum>

Refugees escaping the violence in Syria face harsh conditions in Bulgaria, which is being overwhelmed by their numbers. In an abandoned schoolhouse outside the Bulgarian capital, Sofia, 380 migrants and asylum seekers are living in squalid conditions. They are part of a new wave of migrants and asylum seekers, mostly Kurds from Syria, who have strained Bulgaria's inefficient asylum system to breaking point.

FRANCE

Calais's Syrian refugees desperate to cross Channel – 18 October 2013

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-24573575>

Hundreds of Syrians say they are stuck in the French port of Calais waiting to claim asylum in the UK.

GREECE

Greek island on frontline of Europe's migration war – 31 October 2013

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-24747332>

Since August 2012, when the Greek authorities increased controls on the land border with Turkey, the country's islands have borne the brunt of the inflow for Europe's key immigration frontiers.

ITALY

Seeking new home, at least 94 Eritreans die as boat sinks off Italy - 3 October 2013

<http://www.latimes.com/world/worldnow/la-fg-wn-italy-ship-capsized-20131003-story.html>

The Eritreans were seeking a new life in Europe, with about 500 of them crowded aboard a 66-foot boat crossing the Mediterranean. Instead, the vessel caught fire and capsized Thursday, in one of the worst disasters seen on a route sailed by thousands of Africans each year.

Migrants Die as Burning Boat Capsizes Off Italy – 3 October 2013

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/04/world/europe/scores-die-in-shipwreck-off-sicily.html>

Having floated for at least two days in the choppy Mediterranean Sea to reach Europe, a rickety trawler overstuffed with African migrants fleeing war and poverty was nearing a Sicilian island, not even a quarter-mile away. But it was still dark and no one had yet spotted them. So to signal their position, someone set a match to a blanket.

94 die as ship capsizes off Italian island – 3 October 2013

<http://www.latimes.com/world/worldnow/la-fg-wn-ship-capsizes-off-italian-island-20131003-story.html>

A ship carrying African migrants to Europe caught fire and capsized off the Italian island of Lampedusa on Thursday, killing at least 94 people as it spilled hundreds of passengers into the sea, officials said. Over 150 people were rescued but some 200 were still unaccounted for.

Search for victims of Sicily migrant wreck postponed – 4 October 2013

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-italy-migrants/search-for-victims-of-sicily-migrant-wreck-postponed-idUSBRE9920AX20131004>

Choppy seas prevented divers on Friday from recovering more bodies of migrants who died in a shipwreck off Sicily that has killed an estimated 300, in one of the worst disasters of Europe's immigration crisis.

World's deadliest migration routes – 4 October 2013

<https://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2013/oct/03/migration-routes-migrants-boat-italian-lampedusa>

Each year, thousands of hopeful migrants make the perilous journey to Europe via the Italian island of Lampedusa. The latest boat of them wasn't able to complete the journey and as a result, at least 94 Eritreans are dead and hundreds more are missing. How many people risk their lives to make it to Europe and which routes are the most dangerous?

Italy sinking: Bad weather hampers search for migrants – 4 October 2013

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-24392732>

Rough seas forced divers to postpone their search for more than 200 migrants still unaccounted for after their boat sank off southern Italy.

Italy boat sinking: hundreds of migrants still missing off Lampedusa – 4 October 2013

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/04/lampedusa-boat-sinking-italy-migrants>

Divers are searching for more bodies from a migrant boat that caught fire and capsized off the Italian island of Lampedusa, killing at least 111 people. A further 200 are still missing.

African migrants risk lives to flee homelands for future in Europe – 4 October 2013

<http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2013/10/4/african-migrantsriskitalltofleestrifeinhomelandforbetterlife.html>

Authorities in Italy had to contend with choppy waters Friday as they continued their search for dozens of migrants believed to have drowned after their rickety boat caught fire and sank off the coast of the southern Italian island of Lampedusa, killing more than 100 people, with hundreds more still missing.

Lampedusa: A wake-up call for the EU? – 5 October 2013

<http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/insidestory/2013/10/lampedusa-a-wake-up-call-for-eu-20131057330650131.html>

Will the latest migration tragedy off the Italian coast trigger any change in the EU's migration and refugee policies?

Italy searches for boat disaster victims – 5 October 2013

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2013/10/migrants-drown-after-boat-sinks-off-italy-20131038632793201.html>

Coastguard boats and helicopters are searching the sea off the Italian island of Lampedusa for hundreds of missing people, a day after a boat carrying African migrants sank killing at least 127.

Lampedusa boat tragedy death toll rises amid EU migrant policy concerns – 7 October 2013

<http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2013/10/7/lampedusa-boat-tragedydeathtollrisesamidemigrantpolicyconcerns.html>

Italian divers recovered 17 more bodies Monday from a smugglers' boat that capsized and sank to the bottom of the Mediterranean Sea with hundreds of migrants on board, bringing the confirmed death toll from Thursday's tragedy to 211 and highlighting Europe's flawed migration and asylum policy, which some countries in Southern Europe say places an unfair burden on them.

Lampedusa dead honoured as survivors detained – 8 October 2013

<http://stream.aljazeera.com/story/201310081957-0023095>

Hundreds of asylum seekers killed in the Lampedusa ship wreck will receive state honours, but Italians online are focusing on the survivors, who face deportation and fines.

Italy arrests Tunisian in migrant ship tragedy, plans state funeral – 9 October 2013

<http://www.latimes.com/world/worldnow/la-fg-wn-italy-migrant-boat-tragedy-arrest-funeral-20131009-story.html>

Italian authorities have arrested a 35-year-old Tunisian with a reported history of human smuggling in last week's deadly sinking of a boat packed with some 500 Africans migrants trying to reach Europe, according to media reports.

Lampedusa divers find bodies in hold of sunken migrant boat – 8 October 2013

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/07/lampedusa-divers-bodies-hold-migrant-boat>

Divers searching for victims of last week's migrant boat disaster off the Italian island of Lampedusa entered the hold of the sunken vessel for the first time on Monday to find dozens of corpses packed in so tightly they were still on their feet.

Lampedusa victims include mother and baby attached by umbilical cord – 11 October 2013

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/10/lampedusa-victims-mother-baby-umbilical-cord>

Italian divers recovering the bodies of migrants who died in their hundreds off the coast of Lampedusa last week have said they found a baby boy still attached to his mother by the umbilical cord among the victims.

Adrift about boat people – 12 October 2013

<https://www.economist.com/news/europe/21587802-deaths-lampedusa-highlight-europes-contradictions-over-immigration-adrift-about-boat>

The flotsam of a wrecked world washes up regularly on the shores of southern Europe. Afghans and Syrians land on the Aegean islands. Somalis and Eritreans fetch up in Italy. They come in dinghies and rickety boats, and often perish at sea. This month saw one of the most wretched incidents yet: the deaths of more than 300 people drowned when an overladen fishing boat capsized off the Italian island of Lampedusa.

Why Lampedusa remains an island of hope for migrants – 17 October 2013

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/16/lampedusa-island-of-hope>

Despite the death toll, boatloads of migrants still pour into Lampedusa – where the islanders' compassionate welcome is at odds with Italy's harsh immigration laws.

Italian coast guards rescue 700 migrants as EU leaders promise action - 27 October 2013

<http://edition.cnn.com/2013/10/25/world/europe/europe-migration-lampedusa/index.html>

Italian coast guards rescued nearly 700 people in five separate operations overnight around the island of Lampedusa, they said Friday.

SWEDEN

Sweden's asylum offer to refugees from Syria – 23 October 2013

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-24635791>

Swedish authorities announced that Syrians seeking asylum would be granted permanent residency. No other country in the EU has followed Sweden's lead, even as the worst refugee crisis since World War II unfolds on Europe's doorstep.

UNITED KINGDOM

Over the top – 26 October 2013

<https://www.economist.com/news/britain/21588362-perhaps-half-million-people-live-illegally-britain-governments-draconian-new>

A new immigration bill, is the latest in a series of government efforts to reduce immigration. It follows curbs on student and work visas and changes designed to prevent the poor from importing spouses. Immigration is broadly unpopular in Britain, the illegal kind particularly so.