



smuggling of migrants — global news september 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.

AFRICA

LIBYA

Sub-Saharan African Migrants Face Old Enemy in Libya: Bigotry – 12 September 2017

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/12/world/africa/migrants-africa-libya.html>

Libyan smugglers call them “burned,” a racial epithet sometimes used in the country for people whose skin color is black. And while many of the migrants who pass through Libya hoping to set sail for Italy are beaten and otherwise abused by smugglers, Mr. Drammeh believes his treatment was especially harsh because of his skin color.

Rescued migrants say lucky to dodge Libyan coastal clampdown – 19 September 2017

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-libya-departures/rescued-migrants-say-lucky-to-dodge-libyan-coastal-clampdown-idUSKCN1BU0U3>

Migrants rescued in the Mediterranean last week said they had been lucky to dodge increased sea and police patrols along the Western coast of Libya that have dramatically reduced arrivals in Italy since July.

Rescue Ship Says Libyan Coast Guard Shot at and Boarded It, Seeking Migrants – 26 September 2017

<https://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2017/09/26/world/europe/26reuters-europe-migrants-libya-ngo.html>

A Libyan coast guard vessel fired shots and boarded a humanitarian ship in the Mediterranean on Tuesday, demanding that the migrants on board be handed over to them, a spokesman for the Mission Lifeline charity said.

Migrant smuggling crackdown triggered clashes in Libyan city: armed group head – 29 September 2017

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-libya/migrant-smuggling-crackdown-triggered-clashes-in-libyan-city-armed-group-head-idUSKCN1C41ML>

An armed group in the Libyan smuggling hub of Sabratha is being targeted because it began stopping migrant boats leaving for Italy, leading to heavy clashes with groups benefiting from the trade, the head of the group said.

U.N. aims to open Libyan transit center early next year - senior official – 30 September 2017

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-libya/u-n-aims-to-open-libyan-transit-center-early-next-year-senior-official-idUSKCN1C4276>

The U.N. refugee agency is seeking to open a refugee transit center in Tripoli early next year to resettle or evacuate as many as 5,000 of the most vulnerable refugees out of Libya each year, a senior U.N. official said on Friday.

AMERICAS

CANADA

Man guilty of smuggling Tamil migrants to Canada given four-year sentence – 11 September 2017

<https://beta.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/man-guilty-of-smuggling-tamil-migrants-to-canada-given-four-year-sentence/article36231123/>

A Sri Lankan man found guilty of smuggling Tamil migrants to Canada won't serve any more time in prison, despite being handed a four-year sentence on Monday.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Son of mariachi star is sentenced in immigrant smuggling case – 5 September 2017

<http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-aguilar-sentenced-20170905-story.html>

The son of Mexican American mariachi singer Pepe Aguilar, charged in March with trying to smuggle four Chinese immigrants into the United States in his car trunk, was sentenced to time served Tuesday.

Survivors' testimony not needed in Texas truck smuggling that killed 10 – 6 September 2017

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/sep/06/texas-truck-smuggling-survivor-testimony-james-matthew-bradley-jr>

Authorities have said 22 survivors of a semitrailer found outside a San Antonio Walmart packed with immigrants are no longer needed to testify and are being turned over to immigration authorities.

Man charged after 2 killed when van sped into US from Mexico – 20 September 2017

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/sns-bc-us--fatal-border-crash-20170920-story.html>

U.S. officials have charged an accused human smuggler after two people were hit by a car and killed as they sprinted from a van that sped across the border crossing from Tijuana, Mexico, into San Diego County.

More charges, new defendant in Texas human smuggling case – 20 September 2017

<http://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/charges-defendant-texas-human-smuggling-case-49993593>

The driver of a semitrailer found outside a San Antonio Walmart in July packed with immigrants, including 10 who died, faces additional charges in the smuggling case and another defendant has now been charged, federal officials said Wednesday.

Immigration Officials Taking New Steps to Discourage Smuggling of Children – 24 September 2017

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/24/us/politics/parents-illegal-immigrants-human-smuggling.html>

The Trump administration is stepping up its pursuit of parents who paid to have their children illegally brought into the United States, according to people familiar with the matter. The effort, part of a widening crackdown on illegal immigration, is aimed at discouraging families from paying human smuggling organizations.

ASIA-PACIFIC

GENERAL

Migrant aid group deploys Mediterranean rescue ship to Asia as Rohingya crisis worsens – 5 September 2017

<http://www.scmp.com/news/asia/southeast-asia/article/2109835/migrant-aid-group-deploys-mediterranean-rescue-ship-asia>

A rescue ship that has plucked tens of thousands of migrants from the Mediterranean is shifting operations to Southeast Asia to help Rohingya refugees fleeing violence in Myanmar.

Options sought for Rakhine problem – 18 September 2017

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2017/09/18/options-sought-rakhine-problem.html>

As ASEAN member countries have their hands tied with the nonintervention principle preventing them from directly dealing with the Rohingya crisis, another regional grouping is offering a fresh approach on how to deal with the matter.

Rohingya fleeing Myanmar violence at mercy of traffickers, warns U.N. – 21 September 2017

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-myanmar-rohingya-humantrafficking/rohingya-fleeing-myanmar-violence-at-mercy-of-traffickers-warns-u-n-idUSKCN1BV1V7>

Hundreds of thousands of Rohingya Muslims who have fled violence in Myanmar are “at the mercy” of human traffickers, the United Nations migration agency warned on Wednesday, saying well-managed refugee camps were needed to reduce the risk.

MALAYSIA

Malaysian police step up security at border with Thailand after over 100 smuggling trails identified – 19 September 2017

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/malaysia-police-step-up-security-at-malaysia-thailand-border-after-over-100-smuggling>

Police in Malaysia's Kelantan state have identified more than 100 smuggling trails at the Malaysia-Thailand border and have stepped up security control in the area to prevent illegal entry of ethnic Rohingya fleeing the crisis in Myanmar, Bernama reported.

MYANMAR

Rohingya Muslim minority streaming out of Myanmar to escape deadly attacks – 5 September 2017

<http://www.latimes.com/world/la-fg-rohingya-muslim-flee-myanmar-20170905-htlstory.html>

Tens of thousands of Rohingya Muslims, fleeing the latest round of violence to engulf their homes in Myanmar, have been walking for days or handing over their meager savings to Burmese and Bangladeshi smugglers to escape what they describe as certain death.

As Rohingya flee Myanmar, leader Suu Kyi skips UN meeting – 16 September 2017

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-bc-as--myanmar-attacks-20170913-story.html>

Facing global condemnation for weeks of violence that has driven minority Rohingya to flee — a crisis U.N. officials have described as "ethnic cleansing" — Myanmar's leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, pulled out of this month's U.N. General Assembly meetings.

UK says 'unacceptable tragedy' of Rohingya crisis risks Myanmar progress – 28 September 2017

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/28/uk-unacceptable-tragedy-rohingya-crisis-myanmar>

The UK has warned Myanmar that the Rohingya crisis is an “unacceptable tragedy” and Aung San Suu Kyi’s government must end the violence and lift a blockade on humanitarian aid.

EUROPE

GENERAL

Why the number of migrants crossing the Mediterranean is falling – 9 September 2017

<https://www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21728687-one-reason-smugglers-make-more-money-shipping-petrol-why-number>

OVER the past three summers, tens of thousands of migrants piled into boats to make the perilous journey across the Mediterranean. This summer, though, the sea was unusually empty. Since the European Union and Turkey struck a deal in 2016—in effect closing the eastern route to Greece—Italy has been the main destination for migrants.

305 Syrian migrants reach Cyprus; 313 are stopped in Turkey – 11 September 2017

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-bc-eu--europe-migrants-1st-ld-writethru-20170910-story.html>

Cyprus police arrested a 36-year-old man Sunday for allegedly driving one of two boats that brought 305 Syrian refugees to the Mediterranean island's northwestern coast.

Reality Check: Has the EU reduced migrant deaths? – 13 September 2017

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/amp/world-europe-41257834>

The claim: The President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, said: "We have drastically reduced the loss of life in the Mediterranean," in his State of the Union speech to the European Parliament.

The €8,000 ticket: the migrants crossing the Mediterranean by yacht – 14 September 2017

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/14/luxury-landings-the-migrants-crossing-the-mediterranean-by-yacht>

Wealthier migrants and refugees – doctors, lawyers, professors – can pay for a level of safety and comfort that others can't afford

Balkan police break up Turkish migrant smuggling ring – 15 September 2017

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-balkans-arrests/balkan-police-break-up-turkish-migrant-smuggling-ring-idUSKCN1BP25X>

Police in the Balkans have arrested 21 men suspected of smuggling close to 200 Turks to the European Union, officials said on Thursday.

EU sticks to Libya strategy on migrants, despite human rights concerns – 15 September 2017

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-libya-italy/eu-sticks-to-libya-strategy-on-migrants-despite-human-rights-concerns-idUSKCN1BP2CQ>

The European Union is determined to go on preventing migrants setting off from the coast of Libya, interior ministers said on Thursday, despite criticism from rights advocates who say the strategy is aggravating human suffering.

GERMANY

German police arrest five in raid of Nigerian 'husband' smuggling ring – 13 September 2017

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-germany-crime-nigeria/german-police-arrest-five-in-raid-of-nigerian-husband-smuggling-ring-idUSKCN1BN2BR>

Police in Germany on Tuesday arrested five people suspected of smuggling Nigerian men into the country through fake marriages, the German federal police said in a statement.

GREECE

Thousands of refugees have been languishing in an overcrowded camp in Greece for nearly two years – 5 September 2017

<http://www.latimes.com/world/europe/la-fg-greece-refugee-camp-20170905-story.html>

More than 3,500 people from the Middle East, Africa and Asia have been stranded in this overcrowded camp on the Greek island of Lesbos for up to 18 months — after surviving perilous Aegean Sea crossings in rickety boats from Turkey, about four nautical miles away.

Greek Court Says Syrian Refugees Can Be Returned to Turkey – 22 September 2017

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-bc-eu--greece-refugees-ruling-20170922-story.html>

Greece's supreme court ruled Friday that refugees can be returned to Turkey under last year's migrant deal between the European Union and Turkey, rejecting arguments by two Syrian men that Turkey is not a safe destination.

Surge in migration to Greece fuels misery in refugee camps – 29 September 2017

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/29/surge-in-migration-to-greece-fuels-misery-in-refugee-camps>

Greece is experiencing a dramatic rise in the number of refugees and migrants entering the country, exacerbating already deplorable living conditions on island camps.

ITALY

Italy, Going It Alone, Stalls the Flow of Migrants. But at What Cost? – 17 September 2017

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/17/world/europe/italy-libya-migrant-crisis.html>

As they scrambled to curb the flow of migrants, Europe's leaders wrestled with a vexing question: How to stop the ruthless Libyan militias that control the human-trafficking trade from dispatching countless boats across the Mediterranean? Now Italy, after striking out on its own, appears to have found a solution — one that, though wildly successful for the moment, is provoking questions about its methods and the humanitarian costs.

ROMANIA

Romanian coast guards rescues 157 migrants from Black Sea – 14 September 2017

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-bc-eu--romania-migrants-20170913-story.html>

Romania's coast guard on Wednesday rescued more than 150 migrants from Iraq and Iran, including 56 children, from a ship in distress on the Black Sea, on what is becoming a favored route for migrants trying to reach Western Europe.

People smugglers test new migrant sea route through Romania – 19 September 2017

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-blacksea/people-smugglers-test-new-migrant-sea-route-through-romania-idUSKCN1BT21T>

About 500 migrants from the Middle East reached Romania across the Black Sea from Turkey in about a month, coastguards said on Monday, in a sharp increase the European Union says shows smugglers are testing alternative routes into Europe.

TURKEY

21 migrants dead, 5 missing after boat sinks in Black Sea – 22 September 2017

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-bc-eu--europe-migrants-20170922-story.html>

A fishing boat carrying migrants sank Friday off Turkey's Black Sea coast, killing at least 21 people and leaving up to five others missing, the Turkish coast guard said.

Death toll above 20 after migrant boat sinks off Turkish coast – 22 September 2017

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-tns-bc-turkey-migrants-20170922-story.html>

ISTANBUL At least 21 people are dead after a fishing boat carrying migrants sank off Turkey's Black Sea coast Friday, according to the country's coast guard.

Refugees drown as boat capsizes in Black Sea – 23 September 2017

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/09/fifteen-dead-refugee-boat-capsizes-black-sea-170922145614016.html>

At least 21 refugees and migrants drowned on Friday and up to nine others were missing after a Europe-bound boat sank off Turkey's Black Sea coast, the Turkish coastguard said.

UNITED KINGDOM

Eurotunnel Vietnamese migrants smuggling couple jailed – 11 September 2017

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/amp/uk-england-kent-41227700>

A couple have been jailed for trying to smuggle 12 Vietnamese migrants into the UK in a van loaded with tyres.

People smuggling gang members jailed – 18 September 2017

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-birmingham-41309908>

Six members of a "professionally organised criminal organisation" who profited from human trafficking have been jailed.

Charity estimates extent of child migrant exploitation – 28 September 2017

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/amp/uk-41423442>

Unicef UK wants youngsters orphaned in warzones to be reunited immediately with any family members in the UK.