



smuggling of migrants — global news october 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

GENERAL

Migrant deaths in the Sahara likely twice Mediterranean toll: U.N. – 13 October 2017

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-sahara/migrant-deaths-in-the-sahara-likely-twice-mediterranean-toll-u-n-idUSKBN1CH21Y>

West African migrants trying to reach Europe are dying in far greater numbers in the Sahara than in the Mediterranean but efforts to dissuade them may cause new routes to open up, the United Nations migration agency said on Thursday.

LIBYA

Civilians among dozens of casualties from clashes in Libyan smuggling hub – 3 October 2017

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security-sabratha/civilians-among-dozens-of-casualties-from-clashes-in-libyan-smuggling-hub-idUSKCN1C7242>

At least five civilians were killed and 12 others wounded among dozens of casualties in recent fighting in the Libyan migrant smuggling hub of Sabratha, the United Nations said on Monday.

Libyans flee by boat amid 'terrible' violence at home – 6 October 2017

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-libya-rescue/libyans-flee-by-boat-amid-terrible-violence-at-home-idUSKBN1CA1Y4>

Already this year some 800 Libyans have reached Italy by sea, more than double the number for the whole of 2016, according to data collected by the U.N. refugee agency (UNHCR).

Armed force claims victory in Libyan migrant smuggling hub – 6 October 2017

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security-sabratha/armed-force-claims-victory-in-libyan-migrant-smuggling-hub-idUSKBN1CB15B>

An armed alliance involved in a three-week battle over the Libyan smuggling hub of Sabratha said it had taken control of the coastal city on Friday.

U.N. assisting thousands of migrants in Libyan smuggling hub – 10 October 2017

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-libya/u-n-assisting-thousands-of-migrants-in-libyan-smuggling-hub-idUSKBNICE1SH>

U.N. agencies said on Monday they were trying to provide urgent help to large numbers of migrants held and then stranded in the smuggling hub of Sabratha as rival factions battled for control of the city.

Libyan path to Europe turns into dead end for desperate migrants – 30 October 2017

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/30/libyan-migrants-detention-centres-europe-unhcr>

Migrant centres in this country, packed with thousands of people seized on the trafficking routes that criss-cross Libya, have become renowned for forced labour, beatings, torture and rape.

New \$400m army to fight human traffickers and terrorists faces UN moment of truth – 30 October 2017

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/30/new-400m-army-to-fight-human-traffickers-and-terrorists-faces-un-moment-of-truth>

Unprecedented plans to combat human trafficking and terrorism across the Sahel and into Libya will face a major credibility test on Monday when the UN decides whether to back a new proposed five-nation joint security force across the region.

Libyan Coast Guard Intercepts Nearly 300 Migrants East of Tripoli – 31 October 2017

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-libya/libyan-coast-guard-intercepts-nearly-300-migrants-east-of-tripoli-idUSKBN1D031T>

Libya's coastguard intercepted 299 migrants from sub-Saharan African countries on two rubber boats east of Tripoli on Thursday, officials said.

TUNISIA

Tunisian migrant, navy boats collide; eight bodies found – 9 October 2017

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants/tunisian-migrant-navy-boats-collide-eight-bodies-found-idUSKBNICE11D>

At least eight people drowned on Monday when a boat carrying dozens of mostly Tunisian migrants collided with a navy vessel off the country's southeast coast, its defense ministry said.

Tunisian navy rescues 100 migrants, hours after eight drown – 10 October 2017

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-tunisia-migrants/tunisian-navy-rescues-100-migrants-hours-after-eight-drown-idUSKBN1CF0WD>

Tunisia's navy rescued almost 100 migrants from a sinking boat off its southeast coast late on Monday, authorities said, hours after eight people being smuggled to Europe drowned in the same stretch of water.

Smugglers offer new routes to Europe for jobless Tunisians – 18 October 2017

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-tunisia/smugglers-offer-new-routes-to-europe-for-jobless-tunisians-idUSKBN1CN0PK>

Tunisian smugglers are offering migrants seeking a fresh start in Europe a new route from Africa to Italy

AMERICAS

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Border Patrol trying out new surveillance balloon – 12 October 2017

<http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-border-balloons-20171012-story.html>

The U.S. Border Patrol is considering another type of surveillance balloon that can be quickly moved to spot illegal activity, part of an effort to see if more eyes in the sky translate to fewer illegal crossings.

Driver in Deadly Human Smuggling Case Pleads Guilty in San Antonio – 16 October 2017

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/16/us/truck-driver-guilty-trafficking.html>

A tractor-trailer driver accused of hauling undocumented immigrants in a scorching truck through South Texas in July, which resulted in the deaths of 10 men, pleaded guilty on Monday to human smuggling charges.

Trucker in deadly Texas immigrant case pleads guilty, faces life sentence – 17 October 2017

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-texas-bodies-immigrants/trucker-in-deadly-texas-immigrant-case-pleads-guilty-faces-life-sentence-idUSKBN1CL2XS>

The driver of a truck packed with immigrants, 10 of whom died due to sweltering Texas heat in July, pleaded guilty on Monday to human smuggling charges and could face up to life in prison, prosecutors said.

Mexico cartels recruit children to smuggle people to US – 31 October 2017

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/10/mexico-cartels-recruit-children-smuggle-people-171030103553245.html>

Sturdily built, initially taciturn and with a fashionable top knot haircut, Jose* listens head bowed as his dad says that he brings him nothing but trouble.

ASIA-PACIFIC

BANGLADESH

Bangladesh destroys boats ferrying Rohingya from Myanmar – 5 October 2017

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-myanmar-rohingya-bangladesh-boats/bangladesh-destroys-boats-ferrying-rohingya-from-myanmar-idUSKBN1C92ML>

Bangladeshi authorities have destroyed about 20 boats that ferried Rohingya Muslims fleeing violence in Myanmar, accusing smugglers of using the huge exodus to bring methamphetamine into the country.

Rohingya children among 12 dead, scores missing after overloaded boat capsizes – 9 October 2017

<http://www.scmp.com/news/asia/southeast-asia/article/2114483/rohingya-children-among-12-dead-scores-missing-after>

Coastguard and border guard officials said the boat was overloaded with about 100 people when it sank in the mouth of the Naf river that separates Myanmar from Bangladesh.

HONG KONG SAR

Hong Kong police round up illegal immigrants and their snakeheads hiding in Shek O hills – 27 October 2017

<http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/law-crime/article/2117288/hong-kong-police-round-illegal-immigrants-and-their>

Police arrested 12 illegal immigrants and four human traffickers in a big operation on Friday, including eight people who had been hiding in the hills around Shek O.

EUROPE

GENERAL

How Europe exported its refugee crisis to north Africa – 30 October 2017

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/30/how-europe-exported-its-refugee-crisis-to-north-africa>

Something happened to the deadly migrant trail into Europe in 2017. It dried up. Not completely, but palpably. In the high summer, peak time for traffic across the Mediterranean, numbers fell by as much as 70%.

Save the Children suspends migrant rescues in Mediterranean – 24 October 2017

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-ngo/save-the-children-suspends-migrant-rescues-in-mediterranean-idUSKBN1CS244>

International humanitarian group Save the Children said on Monday it had suspended migrant rescues in the Mediterranean Sea as departures from Libya slow and security conditions worsen.

Human smuggling raids carried out in 3 European countries – 26 October 2017

<http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/authorities-launch-raids-countries-human-smuggling-50733656>

Authorities in Britain, Belgium and Bulgaria arrested some 25 people early Thursday in overnight raids targeting smugglers who allegedly helped people immigrate illegally.

GREECE

Greek police arrest 8 smugglers who brought in 49 migrants – 8 October 2017

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-bc-eu--europe-migrants-20171008-story.html>

Greek police say they have arrested eight migrant traffickers who smuggled 49 migrants through Greece's land border with Turkey.

Rights groups urge Greece to ease migrant 'containment' – 23 October 2017

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/rights-groups-urge-greece-to-ease-migrant-containment/2017/10/23/5e75cad2-b7d4-11e7-9b93-b97043e57a22_story.html

Human rights and aid groups are urging Greece's government to end a "containment policy" of migrants reaching islands in the Aegean Sea from Turkey, warning of worsening conditions ahead of winter.

ITALY

Italy's deal to stem flow of people from Libya in danger of collapse – 3 October 2017

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/03/italys-deal-to-stem-flow-of-people-from-libya-in-danger-of-collapse>

A key pillar of the Italian government's effort to stem the politically toxic issue of people crossing the Mediterranean from Libya to southern Italy is in danger of collapse as a result of a bloody power struggle in the key Libyan port of Sabratha, the epicentre of human trafficking to Italy.

Rights group questions Italy's work with Libya stopping migrants – 12 October 2017

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants/rights-group-questions-italys-work-with-libya-stopping-migrants-idUSKBN1CG21Z>

Europe's top human rights organization asked Italy for more information on its work intercepting migrants at sea, warning that any moves to return them to Libya would break international treaties.

600 migrants rescued; fears rise of new surge from Libya – 14 October 2017

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-bc-eu--europe-migrants-20171013-story.html>

Some 600 migrants rescued at sea arrived Friday in Sicily — one of the biggest influxes since Italy struck a deal with Libyan authorities to limit migrant smuggling — raising concerns of a renewed surge on the Libyan human trafficking route.

UNITED KINGDOM

Four charged in Southwold port people-smuggling inquiry – 19 October 2017

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/amp/uk-england-suffolk-41679529>

Four men arrested as part of a human trafficking inquiry have been charged with people smuggling offences.

People-smuggling raids lead to 11 UK arrests – 26 October 2017

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/amp/uk-41764002>

Immigration officers have arrested 11 people in the UK after overnight raids, as part of a Europe-wide investigation into people smuggling.