



## smuggling of migrants — global news December 2017

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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.

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### AFRICA

#### LIBYA

##### ***Libya and Italy to set up operations room to tackle migrant smuggling – 10 December 2017***

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-libya/libya-and-italy-to-set-up-operations-room-to-tackle-migrant-smuggling-idUSKBN1E30L8>

Libya's U.N.-backed government agreed with Italy to establish a joint operations room for tackling migrant smugglers and traffickers as part of efforts to curb migrant flows toward Europe.

##### ***EU governments complicit in migrant torture in Libya, says Amnesty – 12 December 2017***

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/amp/world-europe-42318508>

Amnesty International has alleged that European governments are knowingly complicit in the torture and abuse of refugees and migrants in Libya. In an effort to stem migration, the EU is actively supporting a "system of abuse and exploitation" on Libyan shores. EU funds are going to authorities working with militias and people smugglers.

##### ***EU leaders complicit in torture of refugees and migrants, Amnesty says – 12 December 2017***

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/dec/12/eu-leaders-complicit-libyan-torture-refugees-migrants-amnesty-says>

European leaders stand accused by Amnesty International of being knowingly complicit in the torture and exploitation of thousands of migrants and refugees by the EU-financed Libyan coastguard and officials running the country's detention camps.

##### ***Exclusive: Italy plans big handover of sea rescues to Libya coastguard – 16 December 2017***

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-libya-exclusive/exclusive-italy-plans-big-handover-of-sea-rescues-to-libya-coastguard-idUSKBN1E91SG>

Italy wants Libya's coastguard to take responsibility within three years for intercepting migrants across about a tenth of the Mediterranean even as Libyan crews struggle to patrol their own coast and are accused of making deadly mistakes at sea.

***Libyan coast guard rescues more than 250 migrants trying to reach Italy – 16 December 2017***

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-libya/libyan-coast-guard-rescues-more-than-250-migrants-trying-to-reach-italy-idUSKBN1EA0EQ>

Libya's coastal guard has rescued more than 250 illegal migrants trying to leave the North African country in small boats bound for Italy.

***U.N. to move 10,000 migrants from Libya in 2018 – 19 December 2017***

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-libya/u-n-to-move-10000-migrants-from-libya-in-2018-idUSKBN1ED1PJ>

The United Nations plans to move up to 10,000 illegal migrants from Libya next year in a bid to relieve the plight of thousands stranded in deteriorating conditions in detention centers there.

NIGER

***Italy PM plans to shift military forces from Iraq to Niger – 24 December 2015***

<http://www.straitstimes.com/world/europe/italy-pm-plans-to-shift-military-forces-from-iraq-to-niger>

Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni said he would propose to parliament transferring some of the country's troops stationed in Iraq to Niger to fight people smuggling and terrorism.

***Italy PM Plans to Shift Military Forces From Iraq to Niger – 24 December 2017***

<https://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2017/12/24/world/europe/24reuters-italy-defence-niger.html>

Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni said he would propose to parliament transferring some of the country's troops stationed in Iraq to Niger to fight people smuggling and terrorism.

***Italy Aims to Send Up to 470 Troops to Niger to Curb People-Smuggling – 28 December 2017***

<https://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2017/12/28/world/africa/28reuters-italy-defence-niger.html>

Italy aims to deploy up to 470 troops to Niger to help tackle people-smuggling. If the necessary approval is given, Italy would aim to gradually send up to 470 troops, probably posting an average of 250 over the course of a year, to Niger.

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ASIA-PACIFIC

HONG KONG

***Fewer illegal immigrants arrested in Hong Kong after joint crackdown on people smugglers with mainland police – 8 December 2017***

<http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/law-crime/article/2123432/fewer-illegal-immigrants-arrested-hong-kong-after-joint>

Hong Kong and mainland law enforcement agencies have claimed initial victory over the problem of cross-border human smuggling, with figures they released showing a 75 per cent drop in non-Chinese illegal immigrants arrested this year compared to two years ago.

## MALAYSIA

### ***600 officers transferred after KLIA smuggling ring bust – 17 December 2017***

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/600-officers-transferred-after-klia-smuggling-ring-bust>

Some 600 officers from Malaysia's immigration department have been transferred out of Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) as some are suspected of working with criminal syndicates to smuggle in workers from Bangladesh.

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## EUROPE

## BULGARIA

### ***Bulgaria arrests gang suspected of smuggling migrants to Western Europe – 19 December 2017***

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-bulgaria/bulgaria-arrests-gang-suspected-of-smuggling-migrants-to-western-europe-idUSKBN1EC25L>

Bulgarian authorities have detained a gang suspected of smuggling migrants from Iraq, Iran and Syria to Western Europe from Turkey. The gang of three Kurds and four Bulgarians was charged with smuggling offences after they transported migrants from Turkey into Serbia and Romania,

## GERMANY

### ***Afghan suspect arrested in Germany over migrant deaths at sea – 5 December 2017***

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-germany-arrests/afghan-suspect-arrested-in-germany-over-migrant-deaths-at-sea-idUSKBN1DZ1KD>

German police arrested an Afghan citizen on suspicion of smuggling migrants by sea from Turkey to Greece resulting in the death of several dozen people when the boat sank.

## GREECE

### ***Refugees face increasingly perilous journeys to Europe – 5 December 2017***

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/12/refugees-face-increasingly-perilous-journeys-europe-171205130726787.html>

Refugees in Greece are taking increasingly desperate measures to enter other parts of Europe. Many land borders were closed when the EU and Turkey made a deal over migration last year, and efforts to circumvent the restrictions have made the refugees' journeys much more perilous.

### ***Man Thought to Be Migrant Found Dead on Greek-Turkish Border – 29 December 2017***

<https://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2017/12/29/world/europe/ap-eu-greece-migrants.html>

The Greek Police have found the body of a man, believed to be a migrant, in a river that flows along the country's northeastern border with Turkey and which is on an illegal migration route.

## ITALY

### ***U.N. Evacuates Refugees to Italy From Libya for First Time – 22 December 2017***

<https://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2017/12/22/world/africa/22reuters-europe-migrants-italy-libya.html>

The United Nations began bringing African refugees to Italy from Libya on Friday, evacuating them from detention centers whose conditions have been condemned by humanitarian groups as inhumane.

***Italy airlifts refugees from Libya as criticism mounts – 22 December 2017***

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-bc-eu--italy-migrants-20171222-story.html>

Italy organized a first airlift of refugees from Libyan detention centers to Rome after coming under international criticism for helping the Libyan coast guard block migrants from leaving by boat. and for helping the Libyan coast guard more effectively patrol its coasts to prevent smugglers from operating.

***Migrant Arrivals to Italy by Sea Fall by a Third in 2017 – 31 December 2017***

<https://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2017/12/31/world/europe/31reuters-europe-migrants-italy.html>

Migrant arrivals to Italy by sea fell by a third in 2017 compared to a year earlier as Libyan authorities helped to slow departures during the second half of the year. Since July, arrivals have declined by more than two thirds versus a year earlier.

SERBIA

***Serbian, Croatian police detain 17 for smuggling migrants to EU – 20 December 2017***

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migration-serbia/serbian-croatian-police-detain-17-for-smuggling-migrants-to-eu-idUSKBN1EE1DW>

In a joint sting, Serbian and Croatian police have detained 17 people suspected of smuggling dozens of migrants into the European Union.

SPAIN

***Coming to the aid of drowning migrants? Get ready to be treated like a criminal – 20 December 2017***

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/dec/20/aid-drowning-migrants-criminal-activists-ngo-witness-brutal-border-policing>

Spanish journalist and human rights activist Helena Maleno Garzón will on 27 December face a hearing as part of an investigation by Moroccan authorities into her alleged collusion with smuggling and human-trafficking networks.