



smuggling of migrants — global news January 2018

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

CHAD

The deadly African gold rush fuelled by people smugglers' promises – 17 January 2018

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2018/jan/17/deadly-african-gold-rush-people-smugglers-northern-chad-mines>

Refugees from the troubled Sudanese region of Darfur, who are living in camps in neighbouring Chad, are being drawn into an African gold rush in a desperate effort to pay smugglers to get them to Europe.

LIBYA

Migrants drown as dinghy sinks off Libya coast – 6 January 2018

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/amp/world-africa-42592052>

At least eight migrants have drowned and 84 have been rescued after a rubber dinghy sank off the coast of Libya.

8 Dead, 84 Rescued From Sinking Boat Off Libya – 6 January 2018

<http://time.com/5091100/migrant-boat-sinks-mediterranean-sea/?iid=sr-link5>

The bodies of eight migrants have been recovered and 84 other migrants have been rescued from a floundering smugglers' dinghy off the Libyan coast.

Eight migrants dead, dozens rescued from sinking boat off Libya – 6 January 2018

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/eight-migrants-dead-dozens-rescued-from-sinking-boat-off-libya/article37518050/>

The bodies of eight migrants have been recovered and 84 other migrants have been rescued from a floundering smugglers' dinghy off the Libyan coast.

Eight dead in boat sinking off Libya coast believed to be migrants – 7 January 2018

<https://edition.cnn.com/2018/01/07/africa/libya-migrants-dead-at-sea/index.html>

Eight people died and 84 people were rescued after a boat sank off the coast of Libya. The victims are believed to be migrants who were on the treacherous route to Europe from Libya.

Eight refugees die in shipwreck off Libya – 7 January 2018

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/01/refugees-die-shipwreck-libya-180107062530225.html>

At least eight refugees have died and 86 others were rescued off the coast of Libya after a rubber dinghy ran into trouble in what is believed to be the first Mediterranean shipwreck of 2018.

64 migrants believed dead after boat sinks in Mediterranean – 8 January 2018

<https://edition.cnn.com/2018/01/08/europe/libya-migrant-boat-deaths-intl/index.html>

Sixty-four migrants are presumed dead after the rubber dinghy they were traveling in sank off the coast of Libya over the weekend.

Survivors say about 50 migrants feared dead after boat sinks off Libya – 9 January 2018

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/survivors-say-about-50-migrants-feared-dead-after-boat-sinks-off-libya/article37543252/>

Survivors from a boat that sank off Libya's coast said about 50 people who had embarked with them were missing and feared dead.

Up to 64 migrants drown in weekend sinking off Libya: NGOs – 9 January 2018

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-italy/up-to-64-migrants-drown-in-weekend-sinking-off-libya-ngos-idUSKBN1EX1MW>

Up to 64 migrants died off the coast of Libya when their flimsy boat sank. Eighty-six people were plucked from the stricken rubber dinghy and eight bodies - all women - were recovered.

Scores feared dead and up to 100 missing after boat sinks off Libya's coast – 10 January 2018

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jan/10/scores-feared-dead-and-up-to-100-missing-after-boat-sinks-off-libyas-coast>

Survivors from a boat that foundered off Libya's coast said about 50 people who had embarked with them were feared dead, while the coastguard said the number of missing might be as high as 100.

Survivors, coastguard say dozens of migrants missing off Libya – 10 January 2018

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-libya/survivors-coastguard-say-dozens-of-migrants-missing-off-libya-idUSKBN1EY2LP>

Survivors from a boat that foundered off Libya's coast said about 50 people who had embarked with them were feared dead, while the coastguard said the number of missing might be as high as 100.

Some 1,400 migrants rescued at sea, two bodies recovered: Italy coastguard – 17 January 2018

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-italy/some-1400-migrants-rescued-at-sea-two-bodies-recovered-italy-coastguard-idUSKBN1F52FC>

Some 1,400 migrants were plucked from overcrowded boats off the coast of Libya, and two bodies were recovered.

Italy: Some 1,400 refugees rescued at sea – 17 January 2018

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/01/italy-1400-refugees-rescued-sea-180117081228265.html>

Around 1,400 refugees have been rescued from overcrowded boats in the Mediterranean Sea, off the coast of [Libya](#). Two bodies were also recovered.

AMERICAS

BAHAMAS

Bahamas Military Detains 70 Haitian Migrants From Sailboat – 23 January 2018

<https://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2018/01/23/world/americas/ap-cb-bahamas-haitian-migrants.html>

The Bahamas military has detained 70 Haitians crossing the southern portion of the island chain in a sailboat.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Mexican Pleads Guilty in Human Smuggling by Texas Soldiers – 30 January 2018

<https://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2018/01/30/us/ap-us-fort-hood-soldiers-immigrants.html>

A Mexican man living in the U.S. illegally has pleaded guilty to helping other immigrants be smuggled by American soldiers through a border checkpoint in Texas.

77 immigrants reportedly found in presumed UPS truck near border – 30 January 2018

<http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ups-immigrant-smuggling-20180130-story.html>

A traffic stop on what appeared to be a brown UPS truck Monday evening revealed 77 immigrants stuffed shoulder-to-shoulder inside its hot cargo area. Five children were found traveling among the overheated group of Mexican nationals, who admitted to being in the U.S.

DACA recipients arrested on suspicion of human smuggling – 30 January 2018

<http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-daca-smuggling-20180130-story.html>

A man who was in the U.S. under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program and another man whose DACA protections had expired were arrested on suspicion of human smuggling in two separate incidents

MEXICO

Chinese immigrants found in trunk of car at border; driver arrested – 5 January 2018

<http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-chinese-immigrants-20180105-story.html>

Three Chinese immigrants were found hidden in the trunk of a vehicle trying to cross into the U.S. from Mexico.

ASIA-PACIFIC

HONG KONG

Illegal immigrant racket relying on fishing boats smashed as 38 arrested in Hong Kong and China – 5 January 2018

<http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/law-crime/article/2127030/illegal-immigrant-racket-relying-fishing-boats-smashed-38>

Hong Kong and Guangdong province authorities have broken a cross-border, people-smuggling racket accused of using fishing boats to bring Chinese illegal immigrants to and from the city and offering them illegal employment following the arrest of 38 people.

MIDDLE EAST

LEBANON

Syrians Freeze to Death Crossing Mountains Into Lebanon – 19 January 2018

<https://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2018/01/19/world/middleeast/19reuters-mideast-crisis-lebanon-syria.html>

Nine Syrians froze to death crossing into Lebanon when an icy storm hit a smuggling route in the mountains near a border post with Syria.

Lebanese officials: 14 Syrian refugees found frozen near border – 20 January 2018

<https://edition.cnn.com/2018/01/19/middleeast/syrian-refugees-frozen/index.html>

At least 14 Syrian refugees who crossed into Lebanon were found frozen Friday in a snowy, mountainous area near the border.

Syrians freeze to death crossing mountains into Lebanon – 20 January 2018

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-lebanon-syria/syrians-freeze-to-death-crossing-mountains-into-lebanon-idUSKBN1F81RO>

Nine Syrians froze to death crossing into Lebanon when an icy storm hit a smuggling route in the mountains near a border post with Syria.

Syria conflict: 15 refugees found frozen to death – 20 January 2018

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/amp/world-middle-east-42758532>

Fifteen Syrian refugees - some of them children - have been found frozen to death while trying to cross the mountainous border into Lebanon. Two smugglers have reportedly been arrested.

Refugees found frozen in Lebanon near Syria border – 20 January 2018

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/01/refugees-frozen-lebanon-syria-border-180119180011632.html>

The bodies of nine Syrian refugees who crossed into Lebanon were found frozen in a mountainous area near the border with Syria on a people-smuggling route.

YEMEN

'Gunfire used against passengers' as migrant boat sinks off Yemen – 26 January 2018

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jan/26/gunfire-used-against-passengers-as-migrant-boat-sinks-off-yemen>

At least 30 people drowned when their migrant boat capsized off war-torn Yemen this week, the UN has said, adding that it had received reports of gunfire being used against those on board.

EUROPE

GENERAL

Brexit presents new opportunities for organised crime – 18 January 2018

<https://www.economist.com/news/britain/21735569-crooks-stand-benefit-new-lines-business-smuggling-goods-and-people-brexit>

A business opportunity that organised criminals will be eyeing with interest is people-smuggling. Lower limits on legal immigration, and the resulting squeeze on the labour market, could lead to a rise in the number of migrants working in the country illegally, both of their own free will and under duress

Lone operators, not criminal gangs, dominate people smuggling from Africa: study – 22 January 2018

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-africa-migrants-smuggling/lone-operators-not-criminal-gangs-dominate-people-smuggling-from-africa-study-idUSKBN1FB003>

Human smuggling often conjures up images of shady networks run by organized crime gangs, but new research reveals that independent operators rather than criminal kingpins control routes that bring migrants into Europe from Africa.

GERMANY

Germany detains two after raids target Syrian-Polish smuggling gang – 18 January 2018

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-germany-poland-migrants-smuggling/germany-detains-two-after-raids-target-syrian-polish-smuggling-gang-idUSKBN1F6267>

Police raided sites in seven German states and detained two people in Berlin on suspicion of links to a gang smuggling Syrians through Poland to Germany

German police detain three in raids on human trafficking ring – 31 January 2018

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-germany-trafficking-arrests/german-police-detain-three-in-raids-on-human-trafficking-ring-idUSKBN1FK0TA>

German police arrested three people in a nationwide operation to crack down on a gang accused of trafficking migrants into Germany in trucks last year. Investigators believe the traffickers smuggled at least 160 migrants into Germany in the summer and autumn of 2017, hiding some of them in trucks behind goods and pallets,

ITALY

Around 800 Migrants Rescued in Mediterranean, Two Bodies Recovered – 27 January 2018

<https://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2018/01/27/world/europe/27reuters-italy-migrants.html>

Around 800 migrants were rescued by Italy's coast guard in the Mediterranean as they tried to reach Europe and two bodies were recovered.

Around 800 migrants rescued in Mediterranean, two bodies recovered – 28 January 2018

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-italy-migrants/around-800-migrants-rescued-in-mediterranean-two-bodies-recovered-idUSKBN1FG0V4>

Around 800 migrants were rescued in the Mediterranean as they tried to reach Europe. Two bodies were recovered by the Italian coastguard who were coordinating the rescue.

SPAIN

Spanish activist in Moroccan court over people smuggling charge – 11 January 2018

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jan/10/spanish-activist-helena-maleno-in-moroccan-court-over-people-smuggling-charge>

A Spanish journalist and human rights activist who is thought to have saved hundreds of lives by alerting maritime authorities to the plight of vulnerable migrants in the Mediterranean has appeared in court in Morocco over allegations that she has been colluding with people smugglers.

Migrants' heroine faces jail for people smuggling – 30 January 2018

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/amp/world-europe-42858838>

A Spanish woman has been credited with saving the lives of thousands of migrants crossing the Strait of Gibraltar to get to Europe. She now faces prosecution in Morocco for human smuggling, accused of working with criminal gangs to facilitate the illegal movement of people.