



smuggling of migrants – global news

january 2016

This monthly newsletter summarises news items and media commentary from some of world's leading media outlets. The Migrants Smuggling Working Group takes no responsibility for the content and accuracy of the information provides in these news items.

GENERAL

More neighbours make more fences – 7 January 2016

<http://www.economist.com/blogs/graphicdetail/2016/01/daily-chart-5>

Europe will soon have more physical barriers on its national borders than it did during the Cold War. The ongoing refugee crisis, combined with Ukraine's conflict with Russia, saw governments plan and construct border walls and security fences across the continent in 2015.

New multi-year initiative launched to step up global response to trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants – 21 January 2016

<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/press/releases/2016/January/new-multi-year-initiative-launched-to-step-up-global-response-to-trafficking-in-persons-and-the-smuggling-of-migrants.html>

The European Union (EU) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) today launched the Global Action to Prevent and Address Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants. A four-year joint initiative between the EU and UNODC, the programme will be implemented in partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) through to 2019.

AFRICA

GENERAL

Irregular Migration in Horn of Africa Increases in 2015 – 26 January 2016

<http://www.iom.int/news/irregular-migration-horn-africa-increases-2015>

In 2015 five countries in the Horn of Africa – Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, and Sudan – experienced a marked increase in irregular migration by land and sea from a year earlier.

ETHIOPIA

Ethiopian Survivors of Somalia Boat Tragedy Return Home – 29 January 2016

<http://www.iom.int/news/ethiopian-survivors-somalia-boat-tragedy-return-home>

In early January a migrant boat left the northern coast of Somalia bound for Yemen. It carried 106 Ethiopian and Somali migrants who had trekked across large swathes of remote land on foot and by truck to reach the point of embarkation.

AMERICAS

migrant smuggling **working group**

HONDURAS

Portrait of a people smuggler – 25 January 2016

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2015/12/portrait-people-smuggler-151231125324569.html>

This is a people smuggler, better known in this part of the world as a "pollero". For the past four years, he has been earning a living running migrants through a lethal gauntlet; from the gang-ridden hinterlands of Central America, through Mexico with its ever vigilant migration authorities and brutal cartels - all in the aim of reaching the US.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Cubans, Fearing Loss of Favored Status in U.S., Rush to Make an Arduous Journey – 9 January 2016

<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/10/world/americas/cubans-fearing-loss-of-favored-status-in-us-rush-to-make-an-arduous-journey.html>

While American politicians debate whether to accept Syrian refugees and lament the crush of Central Americans who make their way illegally into the United States, the border is about to be crashed in the coming weeks by another wave of newcomers.

First group of Cubans stranded in Costa Rica reaches US – 15 January 2016

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-35330479>

The first group from among 8,000 Cuban migrants recently stranded in Costa Rica have crossed the border from Mexico into the United States.

Lawyers Challenge Texas Law on Harboring Immigrants – 25 January 2016

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/22e0ed99abf94422ba13c954651daa03/lawyers-challenge-texas-law-harboring-immigrants>

Immigrant rights attorneys filed a federal lawsuit Monday challenging part of a Texas border security bill they say could allow state authorities to target shelters and landlords for harboring immigrants who are in the country illegally.

ASIA-PACIFIC

INDONESIA

Six boatmen jailed in people smuggling case – 15 January 2016

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2016/01/15/six-boatmen-jailed-people-smuggling-case.html>

The Baa District Court in Rote Ndao regency, East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), on Thursday sentenced a ship's captain to five years and eight months in prison for attempting to transport asylum-seekers to New Zealand.

EUROPE

GENERAL

After 1 million migrants, Europe's borders are back – 4 January 2016

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-bc-eu--europe-borders-are-back-20160103-story.html>

Since it opened in 2000, the Oresund bridge between Sweden and Denmark has been a towering symbol of European integration and hassle-free travel across borders that people didn't even notice were there. On Monday new travel restrictions imposed by Sweden to stem a record flow of migrants are transforming the bridge into a striking example of how national boundaries are re-emerging.

Denmark and Sweden tighten border controls – 4 January 2016

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/01/denmark-sweden-tighten-border-control-160104140849704.html>

Denmark has introduced temporary controls along its border with Germany, just hours after Sweden took similar measures to check the flow of refugees.

IOM Counts 3,771 Migrant Fatalities in Mediterranean in 2015 – 5 January 2016

<http://www.iom.int/news/iom-counts-3771-migrant-fatalities-mediterranean-2015>

With 3,771 deaths, 2015 was the deadliest year on record for migrants and refugees crossing the Mediterranean trying to reach Europe, reports IOM in a year-end summary. By comparison 3,279 deaths were recorded in the Mediterranean in 2014.

IOM Counts Latest Mediterranean Arrivals in 2016 – 8 January 2016

<http://www.iom.int/news/iom-counts-latest-mediterranean-arrivals-2016>

One week into the New Year, IOM's Missing Migrants Project reports 46 migrants or refugees have been reported dead or missing in the Mediterranean, the majority dying in a pair of shipwrecks off the Turkish coast last Tuesday.

Migrant Arrivals in Europe by Sea Reached 18,872 in First 11 Days of 2016: IOM – 11 January 2016

<http://www.iom.int/news/migrant-arrivals-europe-sea-reached-18872-first-11-days-2016-iom>

Migrant arrivals in Europe by sea averaged over 1,700 a day during the first 11 days of 2016, according to IOM. The period also saw the year's first fatalities in the Mediterranean between Libya and Italy, a route that took the lives of almost 3,000 migrants and refugees in 2015.

IOM: Migrant Arrivals in Europe by Sea Reached 23,664 in First 14 Days of 2016 – 15 January 2016

<http://www.iom.int/news/iom-migrant-arrivals-europe-sea-reached-23664-first-14-days-2016>

Migrant arrivals in Europe by sea averaged over 1,700 per day during the first 14 days of 2016, according to IOM. The period also saw the year's first fatalities in the Mediterranean between Libya and Italy, a route that took the lives of almost 3,000 migrants and refugees in 2015.

EU chief gives migrant plan 2 months to work – 19 January 2016

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-bc-eu--europe-migrants-20160119-story.html>

The European Union's top official warned Tuesday the bloc has just two months to get its migration strategy in order amid criticism that its current policies are putting thousands of people in danger and creating more business for smugglers.

Doctors Without Borders condemns EU attempts to deter migrants – 19 January 2016

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/ct-doctors-without-borders-europe-migrants-20160119-story.html>

The aid group Doctors Without Borders said Tuesday that attempts by various European Union nations to deter migrants have put thousands of people in danger and created more business for smugglers.

German-Turkish police operation busts Syrian smugglers ring – 20 January 2016

<http://www.reuters.com/article/europe-migrants-germany-turkey-idINKCN0UY27B>

German and Turkish police arrested 15 people suspected of people smuggling in a joint operation to break up a ring believed to have trafficked more than 1,700 Syrian refugees to Europe.

Germany, Turkey arrest 35 in raids against traffickers – 20 January 2016

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/af8ca030155f41e1b0c69e44e0e9b170/germany-turkey-arrest-35-raids-against-traffickers>

German and Turkish police said Wednesday they broke up a sophisticated smuggling ring that had been trafficking primarily Syrian refugees across the Mediterranean in freight ships into Europe.

Migrant Arrivals in Europe by Sea Reached 36,556 in First 21 Days of 2016: IOM – 22 January 2016

<http://www.iom.int/news/migrant-arrivals-europe-sea-reached-36556-first-21-days-2016-iom>

With more than a week left in the first month of 2016, IOM reports that deaths of migrants and refugees in the Mediterranean already make this the deadliest January on record. Deaths in the past 24 hours bring to at least 113 the total number of fatalities recorded, which is more than the past two Januaries combined, when 94 deaths were recorded – 12 in January 2014 and 82 last year.

Greece reacts to EU's hard line on refugees – 27 January 2016

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2016/01/greece-reacts-eu-hard-line-refugees-160127072111370.html>

Greece's migration minister dismissed a Belgian proposal to build a camp for almost half a million migrants in Greece as "dangerous nonsense".

Migrant crisis: Migration to Europe explained in graphics – 28 January 2016

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34131911>

More than a million migrants and refugees crossed into Europe in 2015, sparking a crisis as countries struggle to cope with the influx, and creating division in the EU over how best to deal with resettling people.

Migrant Arrivals in Europe in 2016 Top 55,000, Over 200 Deaths – 29 January 2016

<http://www.iom.int/news/migrant-arrivals-europe-2016-top-55000-over-200-deaths>

IOM estimates that 55,528 migrants and refugees crossed the Mediterranean to enter Europe during the first 28 days of 2016 – a rate of nearly 2,000 per day. The daily average is nearly equivalent to the total numbers for the month of January as recently as two years ago.

10,000 refugee children are missing, says Europol – 30 January 2016

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/30/fears-for-missing-child-refugees>

At least 10,000 unaccompanied child refugees have disappeared after arriving in Europe, according to the EU's criminal intelligence agency. Many are feared to have fallen into the hands of organised trafficking syndicates.

More than 10,000 refugee children missing in Europe – 31 January 2016

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/01/10000-refugee-children-missing-europe-160131164555450.html>

More than 10,000 unaccompanied refugee and migrant children have disappeared in Europe, the EU police agency Europol said on Sunday, fearing many have been whisked into sex trafficking rings or the slave trade.

BELGIUM

Belgium smashes ring smuggling migrants to Britain: Police – 11 January 2016

<http://www.straitstimes.com/world/europe/belgium-smashes-ring-smuggling-migrants-to-britain-police>

Belgian police aided by their British counterparts said on Monday (Jan 11) they have smashed a ring that smuggled possibly thousands of migrants into Britain, with 12 suspects arrested in the case.

FRANCE

British ex-soldier regrets trying to take young migrant girl to UK – 7 January 2016

<http://www.reuters.com/article/europe-migrants-britainsmugglercase-idUSL8N14R1FJ20160107>

A former British soldier who goes on trial in France next week after being caught trying to smuggle a child from a French migrant camp into Britain said he felt he had to do something to help those caught up in last year's refugee crisis.

Rain and restrictions blight refugees in Dunkirk – 8 January 2016

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2016/01/despair-disease-refugees-dunkirk-160108081609439.html>

On the edge of northern France's Grande-Synthe refugee camp, a white van comes to an abrupt halt and three female volunteers leap out clutching tarpaulin sheets. They run into the woods surrounding the camp to avoid detection by the French police and Gendarmerie, a branch of the French armed forces.

Migrants in squalid camps in France get housing upgrade – 11 January 2016

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-bc-eu--france-migrants-20160111-story.html>

French officials took steps on Monday to improve the lot of thousands of migrants living in dreadful conditions in northern France, setting up containers with bunk beds in Calais, the largest camp, and approving plans to relocate another squalid camp outside nearby Dunkirk.

Jihadis 'may be in Calais camp', ex police terror chief claims – 11 January 2016

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-35254574>

The so-called jungle camp in Calais may be a refuge for returning jihadis to "hide in plain sight" before "smuggling themselves" into the UK, a former head of police counter-terrorism has said.

Briton seeks acquittal in France for trying to take migrant girl to UK -lawyer – 12 January 2016

<http://www.reuters.com/article/europe-migrants-britain-france-idUSL8N14W2YN20160112>

A British ex-soldier hopes to be cleared of all charges in France after trying to smuggle a small Afghan girl into Britain at her father's request, since French law protects from punishment those who help people in danger, his lawyer said.

French court convicts UK man in migrant girl case; no jail – 14 January 2016

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-bc-eu--france-crime-of-compassion-20160114-story.html>

A British man who risked being convicted as a smuggler prevailed in court Thursday, convincing judges that he acted with his heart when he tried to deliver a four-year-old Afghan girl from a squalid migrant camp in France to family members in Britain.

French court rules compassionately in refugee smuggling case – 14 January 2016

<http://www.latimes.com/world/europe/la-fg-france-lawrie-20160114-story.html>

He said it was an act of compassion. But should that excuse the crime? A French court on Thursday essentially said yes, giving Rob Lawrie what amounted to a slap on the wrist for trying to smuggle a 4-year-old Afghan refugee out of a squalid settlement in France.

British man who sneaked girl out of refugee camp gets plenty of sympathy – 14 January 2016

<http://www.latimes.com/world/europe/la-fg-france-immigration-20160114-story.html>

The image of a dead Syrian toddler washed up on a beach last year stirred worldwide outrage over a growing refugee crisis.

Rob Lawrie admits bid to sneak Afghan child from Calais – 14 January 2016

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-leeds-35312424>

A former soldier caught trying to bring a child into the UK has been given a suspended fine by a French court.

Calais refugees take a chance with 'pot-luck' smuggling service – 20 January 2016

<http://www.straitstimes.com/world/europe/calais-refugees-take-a-chance-with-pot-luck-smuggling-service>

Smuggling yourself from France to Britain can be hugely expensive for refugees, but there is a cheaper "pot-luck" option - the only snag being you might end up in a French military base.

Migrants storm French port of Calais and board British ferry – 23 January 2016

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-calais-idUSKCN0V10UO>

Around 200 refugees managed to break into the port of Calais in northern France on Saturday after a demonstration of support for migrants living in a slum nearby ended, enabling some of them to board the front deck of a British ferry, an official said.

GERMANY

Migration, Asylum and Refugees in Germany: Understanding the Data – 22 January 2016

<http://www.iom.int/news/migration-asylum-and-refugees-germany-understanding-data>

Last year, Germany was the main European Union (EU) country of destination for migrants and refugees. A new briefing from IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre in Berlin presents the main data on arrivals of migrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers during 2015.

GREECE

NGOs decry charges against volunteers in Greece – 16 January 2016

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/01/ngos-decry-arrests-volunteer-lifeguards-greece-160116193522648.html>

Police charges carrying prison sentences of up to 10 years in jail made against volunteer lifeguards who rescue refugees have angered the NGO community in the Greek island of Lesbos, with some reporting a growing crackdown on their activities.

Greek president accuses Turkish port officials of helping people smugglers – 18 January 2016

<http://www.reuters.com/article/europe-migrants-greece-turkey-idUSL8N1520NR>

Greek President Prokopis Pavlopoulos said Turkey was not doing enough to reduce the number of migrants arriving in Europe and accused Turkish port officials of helping people smugglers.

Migrant Arrivals in Greece in January Spike 2,100 Percent from a Year Ago: IOM – 19 January 2016

<http://www.iom.int/news/migrant-arrivals-greece-january-spike-2100-percent-year-ago-iom>

Since the beginning of 2016, IOM estimates that 31,244 migrants and refugees have arrived in Greece by sea. This is some 21 times as many as the 1,472 recorded by the Greek Coast Guard for the whole of January 2015.

Migrants, refugees still flow to Greek islands' shores – 21 January 2016

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/migrants-refugees-still-flow-to-greek-islands-shores/2016/01/21/89820d46-c05d-11e5-98c8-7fab78677d51_story.html

Half buried in the fine yellow sand of one of this Greek island's most popular beaches lies one of the few signs of the drama that has played out over the past year: The remains of two torn and deflated dinghies by the water's edge.

Europe's migration crisis claims another 46 lives in Aegean – 22 January 2016

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/92ed63da31b14feeb477014d89e2998d/least-21-die-boat-sinkings-greek-islands>

The death toll in Europe's migration crisis rose Friday when two overcrowded smuggling boats foundered off Greece and at least 46 people drowned — more than a third of them children — as European officials remained deeply divided on how to handle the influx.

Dozens drown as two migrant smuggling boats sink near Greek islands – 22 January 2016

<http://www.latimes.com/world/europe/la-fg-boats-sink-off-greece-20160121-story.html>

Within hours of each other, the two wooden smuggling boats sank in the Aegean Sea near different Greek islands, killing more than 40 people, many of them children.

45 Migrants Drown After Boats Sink Off Greek Islands – 22 January 2016

<http://time.com/4190011/migrant-boats-sink-greek-islands/>

At least 45 people, including 17 children, drowned Friday in the Aegean Sea as two smuggling boats sunk off different Greek islands. A search-and-rescue operation was underway for others feared trapped in the wreckage.

Protests at Greek border after more migrants drown in Aegean – 23 January 2016

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/protests-planned-at-greek-border-after-more-migrants-drown/2016/01/23/28f5fd80-c1ba-11e5-98c8-7fab78677d51_story.html

A day after 46 migrants drowned in a choppy Aegean Sea, protesters demonstrated Saturday at a Greek border town to demand that Greece ease transit restrictions at its heavily militarized border with Turkey.

Refugees drown as two boats capsize off Greek islands – 23 January 2016

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/01/refugees-drown-boats-capsize-greek-islands-160122100827699.html>

At least 43 people, including 17 children, have drowned after two boats carrying refugees capsized in the Aegean Sea, the Greek coastguard has said.

Despite patrols, sealing Greek sea border is near impossible – 24 January 2016

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/2a10c0d4e1c54fee8918f23cce78b69e/despite-patrols-sealing-greek-sea-border-near-impossible>

Hour after hour, by night and by day, Greek coast guard patrols and lifeboats, reinforced by vessels from the European Union's border agency Frontex, ply the waters of the eastern Aegean Sea along the frontier with Turkey. They are on the lookout for people being smuggled onto the shores of Greek islands — the front line of Europe's massive refugee crisis.

Migrant Arrivals in Greece Top 45,000 through January 25: IOM – 26 January 2016

<http://www.iom.int/news/migrant-arrivals-greece-top-45000-through-january-25-iom>

Since the beginning of 2016, IOM estimates that 45,361 migrants and refugees have arrived in Greece by sea. This is roughly 31 times as many as the 1,472 recorded by the Greek Coast Guard for the whole of January 2015.

HUNGARY

Hungary detains man accused of being migrant smuggler – 12 January 2016

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-bc-eu--hungary-migrant-trafficking-20160112-story.html>

Hungarian prosecutors say a Romanian man suspected of human trafficking has been placed under preliminary arrest for allegedly cramming 150 migrants into the back of a truck.

ITALY

How the Mafia Make Millions Out of the Plight of Migrants – 18 January 2016

<http://time.com/4134503/mafia-millions-migrants/>

The Sicilian mafia are making millions from taking advantage of migrants and refugees, organizing their journeys from North Africa to Europe, embezzling funds provided for their welfare in camps in Sicily and

then using some of them as prostitutes and drug dealers, police and prosecutors have revealed to TIME.

SWEDEN

Refugees look to the sea as Sweden tightens land border – 15 January 2016

<http://www.aljazeera.com/blogs/europe/2016/01/refugees-sea-sweden-tightens-land-border-160114133524227.html>

Of all the European countries affected by the refugee crisis, perhaps Sweden is the most conflicted. This country, after all, refused to have anything to do with the 2003 Iraq war but then took in thousands of the refugees it caused.

TURKEY

36 migrants killed in 2 boat disasters off Turkey – 5 January 2016

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-bc-eu--europe-migrants-20160105-story.html>

Authorities recovered the bodies Tuesday of at least 36 migrants who drowned off Turkey after their boats overturned in rough waters as they tried to reach the Greek island of Lesbos, officials and news reports said. Twelve others were rescued.

Refugees, including children, drown off coast of Turkey – 5 January 2016

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/01/refugees-including-children-drown-coast-turkey-160105082555171.html>

At least 34 people, including three children, have drowned off Turkey's Aegean coast after their boat capsized in rough seas.

What a people smuggling deal looks like – 20 January 2016

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-35356959>

Syrian refugees continue to make the dangerous crossing between Turkey and Greece, with some drowning due to unseaworthy boats. A key component in this journey are the people smugglers who promise safe passage and a new life in Europe. A BBC News investigation filmed an undercover reporter making a deal with a smuggling middleman in Turkey.

At Least 37 Migrants Drown Trying to Reach Greece – 30 January 2016

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/e58c62fd58f64865bc232dcb27249cdc/10-greece-bound-migrants-drown-turkish-coast>

A boat carrying Syrians attempting the short sea journey from Turkey to Greece struck rocks and capsized at dawn on Saturday, causing at least 37 people to drown, among them several babies and young children.

Migrant crisis: Dozens drown off Turkey as boat capsizes – 30 January 2016

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-35450290>

At least 39 migrants, including several children, have drowned trying to cross the Aegean Sea from Turkey to Greece, coastguards say.

Tens of refugees drown as boat sinks off Turkey – 30 January 2016

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/01/children-drown-refugee-boat-sinks-turkey-160130090622640.html>

At least 33 refugees, including at least five children, have died after their boat sank in the Aegean Sea while trying to cross from Turkey to a Greek island, according to Turkish media.

UNITED KINGDOM

Suspected people-smugglers arrested in Eccles and Bordesley Green – 7 January 2016

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-35256788>

Two men have been arrested on suspicion of being part of a network which daily smuggled up to 20 migrants into the UK.

People smuggling and murder suspect arrested – 29 January 2016

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-35446586>

A Ukrainian man suspected of murder and people smuggling into the UK has been arrested in Battersea, south-west London.

UK extradition of Ukrainian murder and smuggling suspect begins – 30 January 2016

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b06wd7f6>

Extradition proceedings have begun against a Ukrainian man suspected of murder and allegedly helping a criminal operation smuggle people to the UK.