



smuggling of migrants – global news

november 2015

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.

AFRICA

EGYPT

African migrants en route to Israel fired on in Sinai; 15 reported dead – 15 November 2015

<http://www.latimes.com/world/middleeast/la-fg-egypt-migrants-shooting-20151115-story.html>

Fifteen African migrants were shot to death Sunday in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula while trying to reach Israel, a hospital official said.

Egypt Passes New Anti-Human Smuggling Law – 27 November 2015

<http://www.iom.int/news/egypt-passes-new-anti-human-smuggling-law>

The Egyptian Cabinet has approved a new anti-human smuggling law that is in line with international standards, safeguarding the rights and addressing the needs of smuggled migrants.

LIBYA

Libya says Italian vessels entered waters without permit – 1 November 2015

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/e1096f32e5cb43c4b9959e202a2fe998/libya-says-italian-vessels-entered-waters-without-permit>

Libya's internationally recognized government said Italian vessels entered the country's territorial waters early Sunday without permission, a claim disputed by Italy.

NIGER

On the road in Agadez: desperation and death along a Saharan smuggling route - Europe Banks on Incentives and Persuasion to Keep Migrants Home – 11 November 2015

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/12/world/europe/europe-banks-on-incentives-and-persuasion-to-keep-migrants-home.html>

Along the Sahara trail that tens of thousands of Africans take each year to reach the shores of Italy, Europe is paying for a pit stop, of sorts — one that it hopes will give these young people on the move a reason to go back home.

AMERICAS

GENERAL

More Central Americans fleeing violence to enter U.S., suggesting another major surge – 14 November 2015

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/immigration/la-na-border-stats-20151114-story.html>

The number of families illegally crossing the southern U.S. border has more than doubled over the same period last fall, prompting concern about a new surge of migrants from Central America.

Global refugees take long detours through Latin America to reach the US – 24 November 2015

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/24/syrian-refugees-central-america-routes-cuban-migrants>

Recent events involving Syrian refugees arriving at North American borders have brought to light the increased global traffic along the continent's migrant routes

CANADA

Supreme Court of Canada rules human smuggling laws unconstitutional – 27 November 2015

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/supreme-court-defines-people-smuggling-in-pair-of-key-judgments/article27506133/>

In two cases involving ships carrying Tamil refugees to Canada's shores, the Supreme Court has ruled that federal immigration laws denying entry to human smugglers are unconstitutional.

HONDURAS

Honduras says Syrians not part of terror cell, want refuge in US – 19 November 2015

<http://www.straitstimes.com/world/americas/honduras-says-syrians-not-part-of-terror-cell-want-refuge-in-us>

Five Syrian men detained in Honduras for travelling on doctored Greek passports do not belong to "any terrorist cell", Honduran authorities said on Thursday, adding that four were university students.

Syrians Flee War to Brave Smugglers' Gauntlet in Volatile Latin America – 20 November 2015

<http://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2015/11/20/world/americas/20reuters-france-shooting-latam.html>

A group of five Syrians paid smugglers \$10,000 each to travel through multiple countries before being detained for carrying false Greek documents in Honduras, their epic journey exposing a little-known southern smuggling route for Syrians fleeing war in their homeland.

MEXICO

Study: Migrant detentions in Mexico up 73 percent since 2014 – 18 November 2015

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-bc-lt--mexico-migration-20151118-story.html>

Mexico detained 73 percent more migrants in the first year since the announcement of an operation to shore up security on its southern border, according to a study released Wednesday by human rights groups and migrants' advocates.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Border Patrol hunting for one of San Diego area's most dangerous human smugglers – 17 November 2015

<http://www.latimes.com/local/california/la-me-border-smuggler-20151118-story.html>

Federal authorities are searching for a notorious human smuggler who struck a Border Patrol agent in the face with a rock after a foiled smuggling attempt in the mountains of eastern San Diego County .

8 Syrian refugees turn themselves in at US-Mexico border – 19 November 2015

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-bc-us--syrians-us-mexico-border-20151119-story.html>

Eight Syrian refugees turned themselves in to immigration authorities along the U.S.-Mexico border this week, officials said Thursday. Their arrival and uncertainty about their future in the United States comes at a time of political upheaval over Syrian refugees following the deadly Paris attacks.

Migrants' Attempts to Enter U.S. via Mexico Stoke Fears About Jihadists – 19 November 2015

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/20/world/americas/migrants-attempts-to-enter-us-via-mexico-stoke-fears-about-jihadists.html>

In quick succession this week, three small groups of people, from Syria, Pakistan and Afghanistan, have reportedly tried to enter the United States through the border with Mexico, fanning fears that violent jihadists could make their way into the country.

Number of Migrants Illegally Crossing Rio Grande Rises Sharply – 26 November 2015

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/27/us/number-of-migrants-illegally-crossing-rio-grande-rises-sharply.html>

The numbers of migrants crossing the Rio Grande illegally have risen sharply in recent weeks, replaying scenes from the influx of Central American children and families in South Texas last year.

ASIA-PACIFIC

GENERAL

Thai summit to spotlight Myanmar, Bangladesh over migrant crisis – 26 November 2015

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/thai-summit-to-spotlight-myanmar-bangladesh-over-migrant-crisis>

Myanmar and Bangladesh face renewed pressure to tackle "the root causes" of an annual migration crisis after Thailand on Thursday (Nov 26) announced a regional summit ahead of the new sailing season.

HONG KONG

Hong Kong's bogus asylum claim industry exposed: The black-market labour racket and the middlemen making millions – 22 November 2015

<http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/economy/article/1881639/bogus-asylum-claims-fuel-black-market-labour-racket>

A black-market labour racket which uses bogus asylum claims as cover for a growing army of illegal workers to fill chronic labour shortages in key sectors of the Hong Kong economy is costing the city's taxpayers millions.

The dark path to becoming an illegal worker in Hong Kong – 22 November 2015

<http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/economy/article/1881638/dark-path-being-illegal-worker>

If Hong Kong had to find a slogan to sum up the essence of its being, it would be hard pressed to come up with anything better than "we're open for business".

INDONESIA

Islands in focus: Police deny knowledge of human smuggling – 18 November 2015

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2015/11/18/islands-focus-police-deny-knowledge-human-smuggling.html>

Two police officers testified on Tuesday at the Ba'a District Court, Rote Ndao regency, East Nusa Tenggara province, that they did not know about the transportation of 65 migrants from the regency to New Zealand.

NORTH KOREA

Defecting or fishing? 11 wooden fishing boats from North Korea with 25 dead bodies found in Japanese waters – 26 November 2015

<http://www.scmp.com/news/asia/east-asia/article/1883970/defecting-or-fishing-11-wooden-fishing-boats-north-korea-25-dead>

Japanese authorities are looking into a spate of incidents in which small boats, apparently from North Korea, have washed up on beaches the length of northern Japan.

THAILAND

Major Thailand people smuggling court hearing begins – 10 November 2015

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-34774879>

Thailand has begun a court hearing in a major people smuggling case involving 88 suspected human traffickers.

Verdicts in Thai human trafficking trial years away – 10 November 2015

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/11/10/us-thailand-trafficking-idUSKCN0SZ0CA20151110>

A Thai court's examination of 500 witnesses in a case against 88 suspected human traffickers will take as long as two years, a court official said on Tuesday, meaning verdicts in a case that sparked an international outcry are even further away.

Thai military general, the alleged 'lynchpin' in human trafficking, among 88 charged in junta-led crackdown – 10 November 2015

<http://www.scmp.com/news/asia/southeast-asia/article/1877453/thai-military-general-among-suspects-human-trafficking>

Dozens of people arrested in Thailand's human trafficking crackdown, including a senior general, appeared in court Tuesday, days after the police officer in charge of the investigation tendered his resignation saying he feared for his life.

Thailand general among human trafficking suspects in court – 10 November 2015

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/thailand-general-among-human-trafficking-suspects-in-court>

Dozens of people arrested in Thailand's human trafficking crackdown, including a senior general, appeared in court on Tuesday (Nov 10), days after the police officer in charge of the investigation tendered his resignation saying he feared for his life.

EUROPE

GENERAL

Migrants Continue to Flow into Greece, Balkans – 3 November 2015

<http://www.iom.int/news/migrants-continue-flow-greece-balkans>

An estimated 28,000 migrants and refugees crossed into Greece from Friday (30/10) to Sunday (01/11), according to Hellenic Police figures. Some 10,842 arrived on October 30th, 8,998 on October 31st, 4,292 on November 1st and 3,787 on November 2nd.

Hit on Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking Ring Operating via the Mediterranean – 4 November 2015

<https://www.europol.europa.eu/content/hit-migrant-smuggling-and-human-trafficking-ring-operating-mediterranean>

An international law enforcement operation against migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings, coordinated by Europol, has led to the arrest of 29 suspected migrant smugglers. Those arrested are thought to be part of an organised crime network responsible for facilitating deadly journeys for Pakistani migrants across the Mediterranean Sea, as well as labour exploitation.

Mediterranean Migrants and Refugees: Latest Arrivals and Fatalities – 6 November 2015

<http://www.iom.int/news/mediterranean-migrants-and-refugees-latest-arrivals-and-fatalities>

The first group of asylum applicants from Greece was assisted by IOM to leave for Luxembourg Wednesday morning. This first relocation group consisted of six families - two from Iraq and four from Syria.

EU leaders meet in Malta on migration as refugees continue to come, die – 11 November 2015

<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/11/11/europe/eu-meeting-on-migration/index.html>

Maybe the sixth time will be the charm for European leaders trying to forge a unified response to the EU's migration crisis. This time, they're meeting with African leaders on the tiny island nation of Malta and are ready to offer them at least \$1.93 billion to stem the tide of migrants.

EU, Africa seek migration crisis plan as Slovenia barricades border – 11 November 2015

<http://www.straitstimes.com/world/europe/eu-africa-seek-migration-crisis-plan-as-slovenia-barricades-border>

European and African leaders gathered on Wednesday for talks on joint action on the migration crisis, as Slovenia became the latest EU member to act on its own by barricading its border.

EU leaders offer nearly \$2 billion in aid to Africa to stem migrant crisis – 12 November 2015

<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/11/12/europe/europe-migrant-crisis/index.html>

As Europe faces its worst refugee crisis since World War II, the European Union has launched an emergency fund for Africa to tackle the spiraling number of migrants flooding its shores.

Europe fund to tackle African migration 'not enough' – 12 November 2015

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-34797715>

The \$1.9bn (£1.2bn) European fund to tackle African migration is not sufficient, several African leaders have said after crisis talks with their European counterparts.

Mediterranean Migrants: Latest Developments – 17 November 2015

<http://www.iom.int/news/mediterranean-migrants-latest-developments>

IOM Greece is reporting that a boat carrying some 20 migrants capsized this morning off the Greek island of Kos, leaving nine migrants dead. Two of the victims were children aged seven and 14. Seven people were rescued.

Balkan border controls leave migrants in limbo: aid agencies – 20 November 2015

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/11/20/us-europe-migrants-un-idUSKCN0T912720151120>

New border controls in the western Balkans are leaving migrants stranded behind barbed wire as temperatures start to plunge, and aid agencies warned on Friday that the clampdown would lead to a rise in smuggling.

IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF Joint Statement on New Border Restrictions in the Balkans – 20 November 2015

<http://www.iom.int/news/iom-unhcr-unicef-joint-statement-new-border-restrictions-balkans>

In the last couple of days, we have witnessed Governments instituting a range of restrictions against movements of refugees and migrants from Greece through the Western Balkans and further northwards.

International Cooperation Delivers Major Hit to People Smuggling Network – 24 November 2015

<https://www.europol.europa.eu/content/international-cooperation-delivers-major-hit-people-smuggling-network>

Judicial and law enforcement authorities from Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany and the UK, supported by Europol and Eurojust, took action early today against a Europe-wide organised crime group (OCG), composed primarily of Czech and Albanian nationals. The OCG is suspected of arranging for mainly Albanian nationals to be brought into the European Union in breach of immigration law. The OCG is also suspected of money laundering.

Mediterranean Migrants: Latest Developments – 24 November 2015

<http://www.iom.int/news/mediterranean-migrants-latest-developments-0>

IOM staff in Greece report a drastic decrease in the number of migrants and refugees crossing into Greece over the weekend. On Sunday, just 155 migrants arrived on the Greek islands by sea. Of these, 79 arrived in Kalymnos, 44 in Megisti and 24 in Lesbos. The remainder arrived in Chios and Ko

Mediterranean Migrants: Latest Developments – 27 November 2015

<http://www.iom.int/news/mediterranean-migrants-latest-developments-1>

Based on data gathered by the Hellenic Police and IOM field staff, IOM estimates that over 110,000 migrants and refugees have now arrived in Greece by sea since the beginning of November.

E.U. Offers Turkey 3 Billion Euros to Stem Migrant Flow – 29 November 2015

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/30/world/europe/eu-offers-turkey-3-billion-euros-to-stem-migrant-flow.html>

Under heavy pressure from Germany to get a grip on the migrant crisis in the Continent after months of dithering, the European Union agreed to a deal on Sunday with Turkey that aims to slow the chaotic flood of asylum seekers into the 28-nation bloc.

Migrant crisis: Turkey and EU strike deal to limit refugee flow – 29 November 2015

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34957830>

Turkey and European leaders have struck a deal to try to control the flow of migrants to Europe.

Declaring 'new beginning,' EU and Turkey seal migrant deal – 30 November 2015

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/11/30/us-europe-migrants-turkey-idUSKBN0TI00520151130>

Turkey promised to help stem the flow of migrants to Europe in return for cash, visas and renewed talks on joining the EU in a deal struck on Sunday that the Turkish prime minister called a "new beginning" for the uneasy neighbors.

AUSTRIA

Twelve members of people smuggling gang arrested: Austrian police – 12 November 2015

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/11/12/us-europe-migrants-austria-arrests-idUSKCN0T110T20151112>

Twelve members of a human trafficking gang, many of whose victims were from Afghanistan and Syria, have been arrested and international warrants issued for another five, Austrian police said on Thursday, hailing a major coup against people smugglers.

FRANCE

27 police hurt in 2 nights of unrest at Calais migrant camp – 10 November 2015

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-bc-eu--europe-migrants-calais-20151110-story.html>

Riot police and migrants camped near the French port of Calais have clashed in overnight violence that aid workers said reflects the growing frustration of refugees' inability to smuggle themselves aboard trucks and trains bound for England.

Aid worker facing jail for smuggling refugee girl into Britain says what he did was morally right – 11 November 2015

<http://www.straitstimes.com/world/europe/aid-worker-facing-jail-for-smuggling-refugee-girl-into-britain-says-what-he-did-was>

A British aid worker faces jail for trying to smuggle a young girl from a French migrant camp into Britain, triggering a flood of support online from well-wishers urging clemency.

Girl's father's 'guilt' over Calais child smuggling fate – 13 November 2015

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-leeds-34806480>

A father who hoped his four-year-old daughter could be smuggled from the migrants' camp at Calais into the UK says he feels guilty the man who tried to help may be jailed.

GERMANY

German police bust people smuggling ring – 4 November 2015

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/11/04/us-germany-crime-peoplesmuggling-idUSKCN0ST2DS20151104>

German police on Wednesday broke up an international ring of people smugglers whose members used falsified documents to bring foreigners into Germany, mainly by air, for a fee of up to 10,000 euros (\$10,859.00) per person.

German, French raids against human smuggling operations – 4 November 2015

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/9d0e658b4b284f4a91599c5e10a86f25/german-french-raids-against-human-smuggling-operations>

Germany and French authorities raided two unconnected human smuggling operations, saying Wednesday that they were bringing refugees into Germany by plane and sneaking others across the English Channel by boat.

German police bust refugee-smuggling ring – 6 November 2015

<http://www.straitstimes.com/world/europe/german-police-bust-refugee-smuggling-ring>

German police have broken up an international ring of people smugglers whose members used falsified documents to bring foreigners into Germany, mainly by air, for a fee of up to €10,000 (S\$15,300) per person.

Afghans Arriving in Germany Find the Welcome Is Wearing Thin – 10 November 2015

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/11/world/europe/afghans-arriving-in-germany-may-find-the-welcome-is-wearing-thin.html>

A growing sense that Afghanistan is slipping into greater chaos and will not stabilize anytime soon is driving rising numbers of Afghans to flee for Europe, hopeful that they will enjoy the same welcome given to Syrians and Iraqis seeking safety from war and terror.

"They'll think we are the enemy": refugees in Germany fear backlash – 17 November 2015

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/11/17/france-shooting-germany-refugees-idUSKCN0T60IY20151117>

Syrian and Iraqi refugees in Germany fear that the attacks in Paris could further shift public opinion against the Berlin government's welcoming asylum policy.

Merkel, Bavarian ally clash over cap on Germany's refugee intake – 20 November 2015

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/11/20/us-europe-migrants-germany-idUSKCN0T92JN20151120>

Chancellor Angela Merkel on Friday rejected pressure from her Bavarian allies to cap the number of refugees Germany will accept, insisting instead that it share the burden of handling the influx with its neighbors.

GREECE

Migrant boat overturns near Greek island, at least 9 dead – 17 November 2015

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/090c60dc384249758c5d90430e1cc092/migrant-boat-overturns-near-greek-island-least-8-dead>

A plastic boat carrying migrants capsized in the eastern Aegean Sea near the Greek island of Kos on Tuesday, killing at least nine people including four children, authorities said, as thousands of people continued to risk the short sea crossing from Turkey in unseaworthy vessels.

Migrants barred from crossing into Macedonia hold protest – 22 November 2015

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-bc-eu--europe-migrants-20151122-story.html>

Migrants barred from crossing the Greece-Macedonia border held a fourth day of protests Sunday, as Macedonia's president criticized the European Union over the refugee crisis for a lack of financial support and data sharing.

IRELAND

Revealed: trafficked migrant workers abused in Irish fishing industry

<http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/nov/02/revealed-trafficked-migrant-workers-abused-in-irish-fishing-industry>

African and Asian migrant workers are being routinely but illegally used as cheap labour on Irish fishing trawlers working out of some of the country's most popular tourist ports, the Guardian can reveal.

ITALY

Refugee crisis a multibillion-dollar honeypot for Italian Mafia – 10 November 2015

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/refugee-crisis-a-multibillion-dollar-honeypot-for-italian-mafia/article27186445/>

Prosecutors say the Sicilian Mafia, known as the Cosa Nostra, and possibly other Italian Mafia groups must consider the Mediterranean refugee crisis manna from heaven. "Behind the smugglers, there is a multibillion-dollar business – and that of course attracts the Mafia," said Maurizio Scalia, a prosecutor in the Sicilian capital, Palermo, who is investigating smuggling networks and sharing his findings with European investigators.

MACEDONIA

Stranded migrants battle police on Greece-Macedonia border – 28 November 2015

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34954127>

Clashes between riot police and migrants angry at being prevented from entering Macedonia from Greece have left up to 40 people injured.

Unrest erupts as Macedonia erects fence on Greek border – 28 November 2015

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/11/unrest-erupts-macedonia-erects-fence-greek-border-151128135109217.html>

Police in Macedonia have fired tear gas at a group of refugees stranded for more than a week at the Greece-Macedonia border, as soldiers began erecting a metal fence to keep them out.

SLOVAKIA

Ukraine helicopter 'may have been human smuggling' – 13 November 2015

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34812405>

A Ukrainian helicopter has crashed in Slovakia, killing six people, Slovak officials say.

TURKEY

Turkey has 'all but closed its borders' to Syrian refugees, HRW says – 23 November 2015

<http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/11/23/turkey-closes-borders-to-syrian-refugees-hrw-says.html>

Turkey has "all but closed its borders" to Syrian refugees, many of whom say they have been beaten, detained and expelled by Turkish border guards while trying to escape the devastating civil war that has sent millions fleeing Syria, nongovernmental organization Human Rights Watch (HRW) said Monday.

Hiding in plain sight: inside the world of Turkey's people smugglers – 29 November 2015

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/29/hiding-in-plain-sight-inside-the-world-of-turkeys-people-smugglers>

Thousands of refugees are continuing to board boats to Europe everyday despite the worsening winter weather

Report: Turkey detains 1,300 migrants in sweep – 30 November 2015

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-bc-eu--migrants-turkey-20151130-story.html>

Authorities in northwestern Turkey on Monday rounded up some 1,300 asylum seekers and migrants allegedly preparing to make their way into Greece, Turkey's state-run news agency reported.

Migrant crisis: Turkey rounds up hundreds 'bound for Greece' – 30 November 2015

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34968056>

Turkish authorities have rounded up some 1,300 migrants allegedly bound for Greece, Turkish state media report.

Turkey arrests 1,300 asylum seekers after £2bn EU border control deal – 30 November 2015

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/30/turkey-arrests-1300-asylum-seekers-after-2bn-eu-border-control-deal>

Turkey has stepped up a crackdown on people smuggling, arresting 1,300 asylum seekers in a single operation just hours after the country promised to curb the flow of refugees to Greece in exchange for financial aid from the EU.