



smuggling of migrants – global news

october 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

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Exclusive-Congolese Ban on Overseas Adoptions Fuels Smuggling of Children – 28 October 2015

<http://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2015/10/28/world/africa/28reuters-congodemocratic-adoptions-smuggling.html>

A crackdown on international adoptions by the Democratic Republic of Congo has spurred a black market in child smuggling, with Americans paying to get dozens of infants out across its jungle borders, the Thomson Reuters Foundation has found.

LIBYA

Bodies of 95 migrants washed ashore in Libya – 4 October 2015

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/ct-migrant-bodies-libya-20151004-story.html>

The bodies of at least 95 migrants have been found washed ashore in Libya over the past five days, a spokesman for Libya's Red Crescent said Sunday.

EU launches operation targeting Libyan smugglers – 7 October 2015

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/07/eu-hopes-to-begin-arresting-libyan-smugglers>

The EU hopes to begin intercepting people-smugglers in the southern Mediterranean on Wednesday, nearly six months after first pledging to target the Libyan smuggling industry.

Libyan authorities detain 300 African migrants – 9 October 2015

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-bc-ml--libya-migrants-20151009-story.html>

A Libyan official with the Islamist-backed government controlling the capital, Tripoli, says they have detained 300 African migrants captured while boarding boats headed to Europe.

Bodies of 40 migrants wash ashore in Libya – 24 October 2015

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-bc-ml--libya-20151024-story.html>

Libya's Red Crescent says the bodies of 40 migrants have washed ashore in the Mediterranean country.

AMERICAS

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Texas man charged with smuggling immigrants in truck – 9 October 2015

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/a838b0059f974364982cc3891f276e41/texas-man-charged-smuggling-immigrants-truck>

A Texas man is being held on charges that he smuggled more than three dozen immigrants inside a sweltering 18-wheeler.

2 Indian Men Accused of Conspiring to Smuggle People Into US – 22 October 2015

<http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2015/10/22/us/ap-us-human-smuggling-sting.html>

Two Indian nationals conspired with an undercover federal agent to smuggle people from Thailand to New Jersey, prosecutors said Thursday.

ASIA-PACIFIC

HONG KONG SAR

Hong Kong government investigates organised scam providing transport and fake papers for Indians to claim asylum – 29 October 2015

<http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/law-crime/article/1873497/hong-kong-government-investigates-fake-indian-asylum-claims>

The government has asked the Indian consulate general to investigate a rising trend of agencies using fake papers to allow Indians to enter Hong Kong and then claim asylum, the security chief said yesterday.

MALAYSIA

People smugglers exploring new routes to Malaysia after Thai crackdown: Aid groups – 21 October 2015

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/people-smugglers-exploring-new-routes-to-malaysia-after-thai-crackdown-aid-groups>

People smugglers are exploring new routes to Malaysia after a crackdown on trafficking in Thailand with no large migrant boat departures from Myanmar and Bangladesh in nearly six months, aid agencies said.

Smugglers 'seeking new Malaysia routes' – 22 October 2015

<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/smugglers-seeking-new-malaysia-routes>

People smugglers are exploring new routes to Malaysia after a crackdown on trafficking in Thailand with no large migrant boat departures from Myanmar and Bangladesh in nearly six months, aid agencies said.

MYANMAR

Southeast Asia: Deadly Journeys - The Refugee and Trafficking Crisis in Southeast Asia – 20 October 2015

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ASA21/2574/2015/en/>

In May 2015 three boats carrying 1,800 women, men and children landed in Aceh, Indonesia. Most of the passengers were Muslim Rohingya, a persecuted religious and ethnic minority from Myanmar. All those who arrived had endured weeks or months at sea, in overcrowded boats controlled by ruthless traffickers or abusive people-smugglers. The report includes testimonies from the Rohingya on the shocking conditions and human rights abuses they suffered on the boats for weeks or sometimes months on end, including killings and beatings while they were held hostage for ransom.

Thousands of Rohingya refugees to flee by boat in 'looming disaster', Amnesty warns – 21 October 2015

<http://www.theguardian.com/law/2015/oct/21/thousands-rohingya-refugees-flee-boat-looming-disaster-amnesty>

Human traffickers will resume their brutal trade across southeast Asia despite a regional crackdown, Amnesty International has warned, as it detailed the “hellish” abuses migrants have suffered at the hands of gangmasters.

EUROPE

GENERAL

Migrant crisis: EU plan offers more money for Turkey camps – 6 October 2015

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34451660>

The EU is offering new incentives to Turkey - including financial aid and easing of visa restrictions - for help to solve the migrant crisis.

IOM Monitors Latest Migrant Arrivals, Deaths in Mediterranean – 6 October 2015

<https://www.iom.int/news/iom-monitors-latest-migrant-arrivals-deaths-mediterranean>

With reports surfacing from Libya this morning of nearly 100 migrant deaths since Sunday, IOM's Missing Migrants Project calculates that 2,987 migrants this year have perished in the Mediterranean, or almost three quarters of the 4,093 migrants who have died worldwide so far in 2015.

EU talks tough on deportations amid flood of Syrian refugees – 7 October 2015

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/10/07/us-europe-migrants-eu-idUSKCN0S12OE20151007>

European Union governments are set to agree on Thursday to step up deportations of illegal immigrants among the hundreds of thousands who have failed to win asylum as they try to cope with a surge in refugees from war-torn Syria.

Migrant crisis: EU to begin seizing smugglers' boats – 7 October 2015

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34461503>

The EU is beginning a new operation in the southern Mediterranean to intercept boats smuggling migrants. Under Operation Sophia, naval vessels will be able to board, search, seize and divert vessels suspected of being used for people smuggling.

Europol Supports Dismantling of Criminal Group Involved in Irregular Migration – 8 October 2015

<https://www.europol.europa.eu/content/europol-supports-dismantling-criminal-group-involved-irregular-migration>

Europol has supported an international investigation led by France and Portugal, called 'Operation Bouquet', aimed to dismantle an international criminal network involved in facilitating irregular migration within the EU. The operation has led to the arrest of 69 individuals, nine of whom are key figures of the criminal network.

UN Security Council OKs migrants resolution for 1 year – 9 October 2015

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/1592dc97f7ec4e9fa65b4ca4f262c140/un-security-council-oks-migrants-resolution-1-year>

The U.N. Security Council on Friday adopted a resolution to authorize the European Union and individual countries to seize migrant-smuggling vessels on the high seas off Libya.

Italy Sends Eritreans to Sweden as E.U. Migrant Relocations Begin – 9 October 2015

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/10/world/europe/italy-sends-eritreans-to-sweden-as-eu-migrant-relocations-begin.html>

A small group of Eritrean asylum seekers left Italy for Sweden on Friday, initiating a contentious European Union relocation program meant to help the union's front-line countries deal with the largest movement of refugees on the Continent since World War II.

U.N. Security Council authorizes military action against human traffickers off Libya – 9 October 2015

<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/10/09/europe/un-migrants-smugglers/index.html>

The U.N. Security Council voted Friday to approve a new resolution authorizing European military action against migrant smugglers in the high seas off Libya's coast.

IOM Launches Online Platform to Track Europe's Migration Emergency – 13 October 2015

<https://www.iom.int/news/iom-launches-online-platform-track-europes-migration-emergency>

As part of its overall response to Europe's migration emergency, IOM has developed an online platform to display and evaluate the complex migration flows from Africa and the Middle East to Europe.

Mediterranean Arrivals Near Record 600,000 – 13 October 2015

<https://www.iom.int/news/mediterranean-arrivals-near-record-600000>

Italy registered the arrival of 132,071 migrants from January through the end of September 2015 - a slight drop from the number recorded during the same period in 2014, when arrivals totalled 138,796. As of today (13/10), the total is over 136,408.

EU migration: EU presses Turkey to agree deal – 14 October 2015

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34527046>

A delegation of European commissioners has travelled to Turkey in a last-ditch bid to secure a draft agreement on tackling Europe's migration crisis.

Merkel says Turkey key to solving Europe's refugee crisis – 15 October 2015

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/10/15/europe-migrants-germany-turkey-idINKCN0S90SE20151015>

German Chancellor Angela Merkel stressed Turkey's "key role" in solving Europe's refugee crisis ahead of a weekend visit to Ankara, as her government tightened asylum rules on Thursday to stem an influx of new arrivals.

New European migrant trafficking links old crime networks – 15 October 2015

<http://www.businessinsider.com/ap-new-european-migrant-trafficking-links-old-crime-networks-2015-10?>

Organized crime networks are making new connections as they jump into the lucrative business of smuggling migrants, the operations chief for Europe's top law enforcement agency said Thursday.

Migrant crisis: Merkel says EU must secure external borders – 15 October 2015

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34535933>

All EU countries must be prepared to send security staff to the bloc's external borders, German Chancellor Angela Merkel has said.

INTERPOL-Europol Forum Targets Migrant Smuggling Networks – 15 October 2015

<https://www.europol.europa.eu/content/interpol-europol-forum-targets-migrant-smuggling-networks>

Developing a coordinated and effective law enforcement response against the organized criminal networks behind people smuggling is the focus of the INTERPOL and Europol Operational Forum on Countering Migrant Smuggling Networks.

Turkey rejects EU offer on refugee crisis – 16 October 2015

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/10/turkey-rejects-eu-offer-refugee-crisis-151016194610039.html>

A proposed financial package from the EU to Turkey to help ease the refugee crisis is "unacceptable" and "insignificant", the country's foreign minister has said.

INTERPOL-Europol Forum Outlines Steps against People Smuggling – 16 October 2015

<https://www.europol.europa.eu/content/interpol-europol-forum-outlines-steps-against-people-smuggling>

The INTERPOL and Europol Operational Forum on Countering Migrant Smuggling Networks, held at INTERPOL on 15 and 16 October, has outlined various measures against the organised criminal networks behind people smuggling. Both organisations will reinforce their cooperation to ensure optimal investigative support to police across source, transit and destination countries within their respective memberships.

Latest Relocation Flight for Eritrean and Syrian Asylum Seekers Leaves Italy for Scandinavia – 22 October 2015

<https://www.iom.int/news/latest-resettlement-flight-eritrean-and-syrian-asylum-seekers-leaves-italy-scandinavia>

On Wednesday, 21 October, an IOM charter flight left Rome's Ciampino Airport for Finland and Sweden. On board were 68 asylum seekers – 19 from Syria and 49 from Eritrea.

UN Experts Criticize Using Force Against Migrant Boats – 23 October 2015

<http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2015/10/23/world/europe/ap-un-united-nations-migrants.html>

Two U.N. experts on the human rights of migrants warned Friday that force will not stop Europe's migration crisis or deter smugglers.

Leaders Plan for Balkans Migration Crisis – 25 October 2015

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/10/26/us-europe-migrants-factbox-idUSKCN0SK00E20151026>

European Union and Balkan leaders meeting in Brussels agreed a 17-point plan to cooperate on managing flows of migrants through the Balkan peninsula, the European Commission said early on Monday.

Migrant crisis: Leaders agree to 17-point plan on European route – 26 October 2015

<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/10/26/europe/europe-migrant-crisis/index.html>

Leaders of countries along the Western Balkans migration route have agreed on a 17-point action plan to deal with the influx of migrants into Europe.

European leaders commit to more shelter for refugees – 26 October 2015

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/10/european-leaders-commit-shelter-refugees-151026003504265.html>

European Union and Balkan leaders have agreed a 17-point plan to cooperate on managing arrival of refugees through the Balkan peninsula, the European Commission has said.

Key points of EU, Balkan plan for managing migrants – 26 October 2015

<http://www.straitstimes.com/world/europe/key-points-of-eu-balkan-plan-for-managing-migrants>

European Union and Balkan leaders meeting in Brussels have agreed on a plan to cooperate on managing flows of migrants through the Balkan peninsula, the European Commission said on Monday (Oct 26).

Mediterranean Update: Shipwrecks off Libya, Greece – 27 October 2015

<https://www.iom.int/news/mediterranean-update-shipwrecks-libya-greece>

The Libyan Red Crescent has reported another tragedy at sea, with the recovery of over 40 corpses on Libyan beaches. Some 27 bodies were found on Zliten beach, east of Tripoli, others were found nearby on Khoms beach.

Greek Premier Condemns Europe's Response to Migrant Crisis – 30 October 2015

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/31/world/europe/tsipras-migrants-aegean-eu.html>

Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras of Greece railed against Europe's failed response to the migration crisis on Friday after at least 22 people were reported to have drowned in two shipwrecks, the latest in a series of deadly episodes in the Aegean Sea this week.

Refugee deaths spur criticism of Europe's 'ineptness' – 30 October 2015

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/10/refugee-deaths-spur-criticism-europe-ineptness-151030101046617.html>

Greece's prime minister has strongly criticised European "ineptness" in handling the refugee crisis after the deaths of 22 more people off the coast of his country.

Mediterranean Update – Migrant Deaths Rise to 3,329 in 2015 – 30 October 2015

<https://www.iom.int/news/mediterranean-update-migrant-deaths-rise-3329-2015>

With the latest tragic drownings in the Aegean on Wednesday and Thursday—along with four new deaths reported today off Spain—IOM now estimates that the total number of migrant deaths on Mediterranean sea routes to Europe have surpassed 3,329 in the first ten months of 2015.

AUSTRIA

Hungary receives Austrian request to take over truck deaths case – 22 October 2015

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/10/22/us-europe-migrants-hungary-austria-idUSKCN0SG11O20151022>

Hungarian prosecutors have received a request from Austria to take over the case of 71 migrants found dead in a lorry on an Austrian road in August, the Chief Prosecutor's Office said on Thursday.

Fatigued refugees trapped in Slovenia and Greece – 30 October 2015

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/inpictures/2015/10/fatigued-refugees-trapped-slovenia-greece-151030143337506.html>

Chaos has erupted in a Slovenian border town, as thousands of people pushed through metal barriers and a police cordon, to force their way into Austria, part of an ongoing refugee crisis, which claimed more lives off the waters between Greece and Turkey.

FINLAND

Finland arrests suspected traffickers bringing migrants from Turkey – 15 October 2015

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/10/15/us-europe-migrants-trafficking-idUSKCN0S90YP20151015>

The Finnish Border Guard said on Thursday it was investigating a ring of human traffickers suspected of illegally smuggling at least 100 people from Turkey to Finland over the last year.

FRANCE

Eurotunnel train drivers fear killing migrant, speaking out – 2 October 2015

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-bc-eu--france-migrants-20151002-story.html>

Eurotunnel freight train drivers, increasingly fearful they may accidentally kill migrants sneaking from France to Britain, are speaking out about the growing number of deaths around the vast site — 13 since June — saying they are afraid to drive their trains.

Traffic resumes in Eurotunnel after refugee storming – 3 October 2015

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/10/traffic-resumes-eurotunnel-refugee-storming-151003065858291.html>

Traffic has resumed in the Eurotunnel connecting Britain and France, after more than 100 refugees stormed the tunnel's entrance terminal in the French city of Calais.

GREECE

IOM Deploys Experts to Aid Unaccompanied Egyptian Migrant Children in Greece – 2 October 2015

<https://www.iom.int/news/iom-deploys-experts-aid-unaccompanied-egyptian-migrant-children-greece>

On 26 August 2015, a boat with 240 migrants put in a rescue call in international waters south of the Greek island of Crete. The majority of the people on board were Egyptian nationals. Of those, an alarming 73 per cent were unaccompanied migrant children.

Greek police break migrant smuggler ring, arrest 12 people – 7 October 2015

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/10/07/uk-europe-migrants-greece-idUKKCN0S116N20151007>

Police said on Wednesday they had broken up an international criminal organisation smuggling migrants and refugees through Greece, one of the main gateways into the European Union.

IOM Monitors Mediterranean Migrant Flows: 7,000 Crossing Daily to Greece – 7 October 2015

<https://www.iom.int/news/iom-monitors-mediterranean-migrant-flows-7000-crossing-daily-greece>

In the past week, IOM staff in the Greek islands have recorded a sharp increase in the number of newly arrived migrants and refugees to some 7,000 a day, in contrast with the approximately 4,500 a day recorded at the end of September. This may be due to expected worsening weather conditions.

Migrant smugglers held in Greece – 8 October 2015

<http://www.nytimes.com/video/multimedia/100000003965254/migrant-smugglers-held-in-greece.html>

Greek police have arrested 12 people after smashing an international criminal ring smuggling migrants through Europe. Paul Chapman reports.

Hiding a humanitarian crisis on Greece's Lesbos – 12 October 2015

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2015/10/hiding-humanitarian-crisis-greece-lesbos-15101111917715.html>

Police beatings, tear gas, hunger and chaos. It sounds more like the repression of the Arab Spring than a registration centre for refugees. But at Camp Moria on the Greek island of Lesbos, this is the reality.

Rubber boat with Lebanon family of 12 sinks in Aegean Sea – 15 October 2015

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-bc-ml--lebanon-family-drowns-20151015-story.html>

When the rubber boat carrying a Lebanese family of 12 punctured in the choppy Aegean Sea waters, they first started throwing their belongings in the water to keep afloat. Inevitably, it sank, all but wiping out the Safwans.

Surge in Migrant Arrivals in Greece – 10 October 2015

<https://www.iom.int/news/mediterranean-migrant-flows-iom-update>

Since the beginning of October, IOM reports that over 68,000 migrants have now crossed into Greece, with the majority arriving on the island of Lesbos (41,954). Smaller numbers have arrived on the islands of Samos (10,283) and Chios (6,393). Despite deteriorating weather conditions, the flow of migrants and refugees arriving at the main entry points continues to average over 4,500 a day.

Weekend Greece Arrivals Exceed Peak Summer Day Totals – 20 October 2015

<https://www.iom.int/news/weekend-greece-arrivals-exceed-peak-summer-day-totals>

IOM Greece reports, after consultations with the Hellenic Police, an unprecedented number of migrants arriving in Greece this weekend, with totals exceeding arrivals during peak summer sailing days.

Greece Records Highest Weekly Migration Inflows in 2015 So Far – 23 October 2015

<https://www.iom.int/news/greece-records-highest-weekly-migration-inflows-2015-so-far>

This week IOM Greece recorded the highest migration inflows since the beginning of 2015. Despite deteriorating weather conditions, approximately 48,000 refugees and migrants crossed from Turkey to the Greek islands – or about 9,600 migrants and refugees in each of the past five days.

Race against winter increases pressure on desperate Syrians to reach Greece – 24 October 2015

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/24/syrians-refugees-migrants-lesbos-winter>

Rashid al-Shabai knew that time was against him. Like his family and friends, he has tried to outrun the seasons, embarking on the treacherous trek west before the winter sets in. The Syrian student was far from alone.

Coast Guard Rescues 242 After Boat Capsizes Near Lesbos – 28 October 2015

<http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2015/10/28/world/europe/ap-eu-greece-migrants.html>

At least 11 migrants died in the eastern Aegean Sea Wednesday in five separate incidents, including a large shipwreck from which 242 others were rescued by the Greek coast guard.

Greece Saves 240 as Boat With Migrants Capsizes – 28 October 2015

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/29/world/europe/greek-coast-guard-saves-240-migrants-after-their-boat-capsizes.html>

Mounting one of its biggest rescue operations in the Aegean Sea this year, the Greek Coast Guard on Wednesday saved some 240 migrants after a large wooden smuggling boat capsized in high winds off the Greek island of Lesbos, killing three people, including two children. The search continued late into the night in a bid to find more survivors.

Death Toll From Sinking of Migrants' Boat Off Greece Rises to 7 – 29 October 2015

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/30/world/europe/greece-lesbos-refugees-migrants-boat.html>

Greek rescuers recovered four bodies off the island of Lesbos on Thursday, bringing the death toll from the sinking of a large smuggling vessel to seven, with dozens more feared missing, officials said.

Hope wanes for refugees missing in Aegean Sea – 29 October 2015

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/10/refugees-missing-aegean-sea-151029101549458.html>

At least 11 people - mostly children - have died in five separate incidents in the eastern Aegean Sea, as thousands of people continue to head to the Greek islands from Turkey in frail boats and stormy weather.

22 die in migrant boat shipwrecks near Greece; prime minister blasts European 'ineptness' – 30 October 2015

<http://www.latimes.com/world/europe/la-fg-migrant-boats-sink-20151029-story.html>

Greece's prime minister lashed out Friday against European "ineptness" in handling the migration crisis, after 22 more people drowned in two new shipwrecks as boatloads of Middle Eastern refugees and economic migrants sought to reach the Greek islands in rough seas.

Kurdish pop singer barely survives Aegean migrant shipwreck – 30 October 2015

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-bc-eu--europe-migrants-singers-journey-20151030-story.html>

Delal Zaxoyi left his career as a pop singer in northern Iraq for a chance to make a new life in Europe — but he barely got out of the Aegean Sea alive.

HUNGARY

Hungary closes Croatia border to migrants, as Slovenia suspends rail links with Croatia – 17 October 2015

<http://www.straitstimes.com/world/europe/hungary-closes-croatia-border-to-migrants-as-slovenia-suspends-rail-links-with-croatia>

Hungary closed its border with Croatia to migrants early on Saturday (Oct 17) in a bid to block the path of streams of refugees desperate to get to northern Europe, while a much-hyped European Union deal to stem the crisis looked shaky.

SPAIN

Spain arrests 89 accused of running people-smuggling ring – 10 October 2015

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/10/10/us-spain-immigration-arrests-idUSKCN0S40CP20151010>

Spanish police have arrested 89 people accused of being part of a network which smuggled Chinese nationals into Britain, Ireland, Canada and the United States, the interior ministry said on Saturday.

Chinese Network of People Smugglers Dismantled with Europol's Support – 12 October 2015

<https://www.europol.europa.eu/content/chinese-network-people-smugglers-dismantled-europol%E2%80%99s-support>

Eighty-nine arrests have been made in a coordinated operation led by the Spanish National Police and supported by Europol. Operation 'TIJA' targeted a Chinese organised crime group specialised in smuggling people into Spain, as a transit country on the way to the UK, Ireland, Canada and the United States of America by using forged identity documents or travel documents belonging to someone else.