

## MONTHLY REVIEW: OCTOBER 2020



This monthly review covers topics such as Eurafrikan migration control, migration and displacement in African countries and news on the European border regime. In case there is a news item, report, or campaign you would like to flag for in next month's review please write us to: [migr-contr@ffm-online.org](mailto:migr-contr@ffm-online.org) or on Twitter [@MigControl](https://twitter.com/MigControl)

### WEST AFRICA

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**Algeria/Morocco/Niger** 01.10.2020: Algerie ECO: L'Algérie expulse 1500 migrants illégaux vers le Niger: Algerian Minister of Interior Affairs, Kamel Beldjoud states in a press conference on October 1 that Algeria had (voluntarily) returned 1500 irregular migrants from the country, adding that the Ministry had adopted a strategy against irregular migration. Human rights organization have been raising strong concerns over human rights abuses during deportations from Algeria.

See also: Alarmphone Sahara: 05.10.2020: **New wave of deportations: more than 2500 citizen from sub-Saharan countries deported from Algeria and Morocco on a large scale**, Der Standard: 15.10.2020: **Algerien setzt tausende Menschen in der Wüste aus**, Qantara: 23.10.2020: **Algeria abandons thousands of migrants in the desert**

**Burkina Faso** 07.10.2020: UNHCR: **UNHCR condemns killing of 25 internally displaced people in Burkina Faso**: "UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, strongly condemns an attack that killed 25 internally displaced people (IDPs) in Burkina Faso on the night of 4 October. Survivors of the attack said that 25 people – all men – were killed, and one seriously injured when their convoy carrying 46 people was ambushed by an armed group near the town of Pissila, in the country's Sanmatenga province in the Centre-Nord region. [...] Burkina Faso is now the world's fastest-growing displacement and protection crisis with over 1 million people – more than one in every 20 inhabitants – displaced by surging violence inside the country. Many have fled multiple times in Burkina Faso's north and east."

See also: 15.10.2020: New York Times: **How one of the most stable nations in West Africa transcended into mayhem** (Long Read), 26.10.2020: Clingendael: **The 'fight against terrorism' in the Sahel revisited**, 26.10.2020: Le Monde: **Au Burkina Faso, les déplacés sont les grands oubliés des élections de novembre** (In Burkina Faso, IDPs are the forgotten ones in the November elections)

**Mauretania** 27.10.2020: Le Figaro: **Près de 300 migrants secourus au large de la Mauritanie, deux corps découverts (Nearly 300 migrants rescued off the coast of Mauretania, two bodies discovered)** : The Mauritanian State Information Agency stated that in the last week of October nearly 300 people have been rescued off the Mauritanian Coast off boats experiencing engine failure. Two dead bodies have been recovered.

**Niger** 30.09.2020: Niamey et Les 2 Jours: **Le Niger valide son document de politique migratoire**: On September 28 the Nigerien Council of Minister's adopted the country's national migration policy for the period from 2020-2025. The formulation of the policy document was financially supported by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and technically supported by GIZ.

**Niger** 30.09.2020: [Sahel Intelligence](#): **Le mandat de la Mission civile de l'Union Européenne au Niger prolongé jusqu'au 30 septembre 2022**: The mandate of the EU CSDP Mission has been prolonged until September 22, 2022 according to an official communication of the EU Delegation in Niamey. Besides security capacity building of Niger's Internal Security Forces, the mission's mandate also covers support in the field of irregular migration, focusing especially on anti-smuggling measures. It was launched in 2012.

**Niger** 08.10.2020 [via Twitter \(@Guilia Rastajuly\)](#): Refugee protested in the transit centre Hamdallaye decried severe food shortage after food contractor failed to deliver for the three consecutive days.

See also: [taz](#): **Dem Leid ins Gesicht sehen: Europa verschließt sich dem „Flüchtlingsproblem“, wenn es sich nicht vor der Haustür abspielt. Eine Bekämpfung der Fluchtursachen sieht anders aus.** (Looking into the face of suffering: Europe closes its doors to the 'refugee problem' as long as it does not occur in front of its door. A real fight against root causes looks differently.)

**Senegal** 30.10.20: [Guardian](#): **Refugee agencies call for action on people smuggling after 140 die in shipwreck**: The deaths, which followed four shipwrecks in the central Mediterranean last week and another in the Channel, come amid a huge rise in the number of migrants and refugees using the dangerous Atlantic route from Africa to the Canary Islands.

See also: **Senegal** 08.10.2020: [La Minute](#): **Le Sénégal intercepte 186 migrants alors que davantage choisissent la route de migration atlantique vers les Canaries** (Senegal intercepts 186 migrants while more choose the Atlantic migration route to the Canary Islands), 26.10.2020: [RFI](#): **Sénégal: des migrants meurent noyés après le dessalage de leur pirogue** (Senegal: migrants drown)

## EAST AFRICA

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**Djibouti** 05.10.2020: [IOM](#): **Eight migrants dead several injured: Horn of Africa**: The recovery of eight migrant bodies washed ashore in Djibouti sheds light on the desperate situation of African migrants' attempts to return from the Arabian-Gulf back to Africa. According to the IOM, significant numbers are estimated to be stuck in conflict-ridden in Yemen.

## NORTH AFRICA

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**Libya** 09.10.2020: [MSF](#): **350 migrants abducted from their homes by armed men**: "[...]Doctors Without Borders called for the immediate release of 60 people being held in captivity by armed men in Sabratah, Libya. The group, which includes 24 children, was abducted from their homes almost two weeks ago and is being held on a former military base in appalling conditions. On the night of September 28, masked armed men stormed homes in Al Ajaylat, stole valuable items and identification documents, and took approximately 350 people, mostly from West Africa, to a warehouse guarded by armed men in nearby Sabratah. Since then, some have escaped, and others were released, but 60 people remain held in captivity."

**Libya** 21.10.2020: [EU Observer](#): **EU Commission's Libya stance undercut by internal report**: „The European Commission claims EU funding for the Libyan authorities are helping migrants - but its statements on Tuesday (20 October) paint a rosy picture compared to an overview internal report on Libya by the EU's foreign policy branch [...] But a [60-page report by the head](#)

of the EU's border assistance mission (EUBam) seen by EU Observer has described that training as substandard“

**Tunisia** 02.10.2020: taz : Abschiebungen über das Mittelmeer: Rom macht Druck, Tunis lenkt ein (Deportation across the Mediterranean: Rome exerts pressure, Tunisia follows suit): Italy aims to increase deportations towards Tunisia by more than double. According to media reports Italy a deal between Italy and Tunisia which allowed the deportation of 80 Tunisian per week was extended to now enable the deportation of 600 per month. Tunisian civil society has been criticizing this decision strongly.

**Turkey/Libya** 21.10.20: La Repubblica: La Turchia prende il controllo della guardia costiera Libicia : The Turkish Ministry of Defense communicated on 20 October that it is taking over the training of the so-called Libyan Coast Guards. This move, according to the article is undermining Italy's influence and is understood as another indicator of Turkey taking on control over migration in the Central Mediterranean.

See also: German summary of the article.

**North Africa/EU** 27.10.2020: Junge Welt: Aufrüsten und ausbeuten. Neue EU-Initiative zur »Schleusungsbekämpfung« soll Kooperation mit nordafrikanischen Staaten ausbauen (Re-arm and exploit. New EU initiative on "smuggling control" to expand cooperation with North African countries): Following Italy's initiative six European governments and the European Commission continued to expand the "Operative Mediterranean Initiative" (OMI). The initiative aims to strengthen cooperation to "fight migrant smuggling." First steps towards the initiative were already taken in July, when the Interior Ministers of Germany, Italy, Spain, France and Malte as well as high government official of the "partner countries" Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Mauretania and Tunisia met during a video conference.

## EUROPE

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**EU** 06.10.2020: ECRE: Joint Statement : The Pact on Migration and Asylum: to provide a fresh start and avoid past mistakes, risky elements need to be addressed and positive aspects need to be expanded: In a joint statement numerous civil society organizations have raised concerns over New Pact on Migration and Asylum which was launched by the Commission in late September and lines out a set of policy proposals to reform the EU's migration and asylum policy. The criticism raised in the statement includes concern over the fact that the pact does not provide an automatic sharing of responsibility but a more complex Dublin system and 'return sponsorship', expansion of border procedures and increased use of detention, a crisis mechanism that allows Member States to derogate from safeguards and subject more people to substandard asylum procedures, the proposed "pre-entry screening process" and the priority of return and deportation in the proposal.

See also: 08.10.2020 Euromed Rights: Like parcels to be sorted, migrants' and refugees' treatment under the New EU Pact, EU Observer: 09.10.2020: EU seeks political accord on migration this year, 25.09.2020 CEPS: Whose Pact?

**EU** 23.10.2020: Bellingcat: Frontex at Fault: European Border Force Complicit in 'Illegal' Pushbacks: A joint investigation by Bellingcat, Lighthouse Reports, Der Spiegel, ARD and TV Asahi has found that vessels from the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, Frontex, have been complicit in maritime "pushback" operations to drive away refugees and migrants attempting to enter the European Union via Greek waters. Open source data suggests Frontex assets were actively involved in one pushback incident at the Greek-Turkish maritime border

in the Aegean Sea, were present at another and have been in the vicinity of four more since March.

**EU 13.10.2020: Balkan Insight: Who will watch the watchmen on Europe's borders:** The EU Commission's New Pact on Migration and Asylum contains a proposition to establish an independent border monitoring mechanism which in light of severe violations of European and international law at the EU borders might become a contentious issue for Central and Southeast European Member States.

**EU 21.10.20: Guardian: Airbus to operate drones searching for migrants crossing the Mediterranean:** Airbus and two Israeli arms companies will be paid €100m (£91m) to operate unmanned drones to spot refugees and migrants attempting to cross the Mediterranean sea to Europe, according to EU contracts. Drone operations over the Mediterranean will start next year, after testing carried out on the Greek island of Crete. The drones will be based in either Greece, Italy or Malta. The companies will provide the equipment as well as human operators to control the drones via radio and satellite links. According to airbus the drone will be painted white with Frontex labelling.

**EU 28.10.20: Guardian: EU accused of abandoning migrants to the sea with shift to drone surveillance:** Campaigners and MEPs have accused the EU's border agency Frontex of investing in technology to monitor migrants from afar and skirt its responsibilities towards people in distress. Frontex is already under fire after an investigation last week accused it of complicity in often dangerous pushbacks aimed at preventing asylum seekers crossing the Aegean Sea.

**EU 30.10.20: Telepolis: Keine Waffen für Frontex (No weapons for Frontex):** For the first time, the European Union is setting up a border guard force with uniform uniforms. Their planned equipment with service pistols, baton and pepper spray could be illegal: The Border Agency is based in Warsaw, but Polish law does not mention Frontex as a unit that may acquire, register, store or transport weapons or ammunition to operational areas. The headquarters agreement that Frontex has concluded with the Polish government does not allow this either. It is possible that the first Frontex uniformly uniformed guards go into action at the beginning of 2021 but completely unarmed.

**Greece 07.10.2020: Statewatch: Greek police recruited migrants in operations against NGOs:** The Greek police recruited two undocumented migrants as informers in an operation which has led to multiple accusations of criminality against a number of NGOs, whom the police argue have assisted in migrant smuggling. According to a report in Greek paper Kathimerini, the investigation revolves around the use of the AlarmPhone service – which exists precisely to help to people in distress at sea, and whose work has saved thousands of lives in recent years.

**United Kingdom 01.10.2020: The Guardian: British plans to 'offshore' asylum seekers have a long and grubby history:** A government leak revealed officials had been asked to consider setting up an immigration centre on Ascension Island, over 4,000 miles away in the South Atlantic. When that idea was kiboshed, further leaks identified other territories being considered for extraterritorial processing, including Moldova, Morocco and Papua New Guinea. First plans to offshore immigration processing came from the Labour government in 2003.

## REPORTS

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05.10.2020: Clingendael: **When the dust settles - Economic and governance repercussions of migration policies in Niger's north**: This report considers the emerging longer-term dynamics in Northern Niger in response to the 2015 criminalisation of smuggling and the measures subsequently taken to curb northward migratory movements. It has discerned such effects on the local economy and on the perception of governance providers, who are often responsible for detecting and managing discontent.

10.10.2020: Borderline Europe: **Push back solidarity: Wie die Europäische Union Solidarität mit Schutzsuchenden kriminalisiert (Push Back Solidarity: How the EU criminalizes solidarity with people seeking protection)**: This publication provides an overview of the increasing criminalisation of solidarity with persons seeking protection within the European Union. It shows to what extent this not only has drastic consequences for those affected and thus for those who support them, but also fundamentally questions and threatens our understanding of the rule of law, civil society action, human dignity and human rights. A development which consequently affects all people living in Europe.

21.08.2020: Statewatch Report: **Deportation Union: Rights, accountability and the EU's push to increase forced removals**: Deportation Union provides a critical examination of recently-introduced and forthcoming EU measures designed to increase the number of deportations carried out by national authorities and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, Frontex. It focuses on three key areas: attempts to reduce or eliminate rights and protections in the law governing deportations; the expansion and interconnection of EU databases and information systems; and the increased budget, powers and personnel awarded to Frontex.

14.10.2020: Alarmphone: **Aegean Regional Analysis: Human rights violations reached a new level in the Aegean Sea and at the Greek-Turkish land border from the beginning of March**. The escalation went along with acts of repression against NGOs and solidarity structures for refugees and migrants. The regional analysis covers the escalation and further militarization of the border region, a summary of Alarm Phone cases from February until September, Push back cases, the fire in Moria camp on Lesbos, the situation in Turkey and its consequences for people on the move, solidarity networks and the fight against the increasing violence.

17.10.2020: Transnational Migrants Coordination: On October 17 the Transnational Migrant Coordination (TMC) published their **first joint journal**: "The TMC was born after months of struggles and communication among migrants and non-migrants' collectives from all Europe, Morocco and Turkey, in the first attempt of transnational organization of migrants. The TMC was born out of the struggles and the need to overcome isolation in times of pandemic. After promoting two days of action in May and June, the TMC has launched for the 17th of October a transnational day of migrant struggle. In this day, when hundreds of thousands of migrants and sans-papiers will storm Paris from all over France, we call all migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, collectives, groups and supporters, to demon-strate throughout Europe and beyond."

## CAMPAIGNS

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Alarmphone: 11.10.20: **Six Years Alarm Phone: The Struggle at Sea continues**: On 11 October 2020, the Alarm Phone turns six years old. Our network of over 200 activists who live on both sides of the Mediterranean Sea has assisted over 3,300 boats in distress in the three regions of the sea. Since October 2014, we keep this project running, without a break, 24/7. The perpetual violence of the border regime but especially the continuous struggles of people on

the move have meant that we had to be alert day and night, ready to stand in solidarity with those trying to cross the sea.

**Channel Rescue:** The activist group channel rescue earlier this year. Channel rescue aims to set up shore patrols along the Kent Coast. If during the patrols migrants in distress (either sinking or in ill health) are encountered Channel rescue will contact the appropriate authorities (such as the RNLI) while simultaneously honouring our legal and moral requirement to save life. As such Channel rescue is a human rights monitoring project, and aims to ensure migrants are offered the aid that is currently protected to them by international law, and to ensure no violations of human rights are committed. We also intend to offer humanitarian supplies to those we encounter at sea (be that food, water, or life jackets). You can support the project's crowdfund [here](#).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

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**Online Webinar:** [CNCD11.11.11](#): 6 November 2020: Cooperation or externalization: Online Discussion on EU-Africa cooperation and the New Pact on Migration and Asylum 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. (CET) The panelists will share their insights on latest developments from a legal, policy and field perspective and assess if and how the New Pact on Migration and Asylum can offer a way forward.

**Online Conference:** [Academy of Law and Migration \(ADiM\) and the Centre of Excellence IntoME of the University of Tuscia](#): 5-6 November 2020: The conference brings together different legal experts and practitioners considering the following questions in regard to the New Pact: A Pact between whom?, Beyond Dublin?, Managing the External Borders, Roundtable: How good as a piece of Realpolitik?

**Online Conference:** [Respond](#): 20-21 November 2020: RESPOND is a Horizon 2020 research project, which has studied the multilevel governance of migration in Europe and beyond. Its final conference is dedicated to the transnational exchange between researchers, stakeholders and a wider (political) public on main findings, lessons learned and best practices.