

This monthly press review covers 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 or on Twitter [@MigControl](https://twitter.com/MigControl)

EAST AFRICA

Burundi 08.03.21: [Human Rights Watch](#): **Burundi: Free Forcibly Returned Refugees:** Human Rights Watch demands the Burundian government to release eight Burundian refugees who were forcibly returned from Tanzania. The men were arrested by Tanzanian police from a refugee camp and tortured in custody. When they could not pay the sum demanded to free them, they were forcibly returned to the Tanzanian border. Their charges include: "(...) discouraging fellow refugees in Tanzania from returning to Burundi to support the charge of threatening 'national territorial integrity,' even though the refugees' decisions to return to Burundi have no bearing on this issue."

Mozambique 31.03.21: [Al Jazeera](#): **More than 5,000 find refuge after attack in Mozambique:** "So far some 5,300 displaced people registered in different districts of troubled Cabo Delgado province after fleeing assault, UN says."

WEST AFRICA

Mali 27.02.21: [EN24](#): **Peace agreement in the Koro circle between Peuls and Dogons:** "In Mali, a new peace agreement was signed Thursday, February 25 in Koro, in the center of the country. It concerns the Fulani and Dogon communities under the patronage of the Mossi and Samogo communities. The sixteen communes of the Koro circle are represented, in particular thanks to the mediation of the NGO Center for Humanitarian Dialogue. More than 300 community leaders have pledged, among other things, to lay down their arms and allow the return of the displaced. This is the fourth peace agreement signed in this part of Mali, but it is the first time that the Malian state has been represented."

See also 19.03.21: [BBC](#): **Mali village's five-month siege temporarily lifted;** March 2021: [MINUSMA](#): **Note sur les tendances des violations et abus de droits de l'homme au Mali (Note on trends in human rights violations and abuses in Mali)**

Niger 22.03.21: [Le Monde](#): **Les attaques s'intensifient dans l'ouest du Niger, un bilan de 203 morts en six jours (Attacks intensify in western Niger, death toll of 203 in six days):** The deadly attacks in Niger's Tillaberie region bordering Mali have increased in severity and frequency. In March 2021, 203 people died following attacks carried out by presumably jihadist groups, making worsening security situation a key challenge for the new government.

See also 23.03.21: [taz](#): **Ein Land vor der Explosion (A country before the explosion)**

Niger 04.03.21: [Amnesty](#): **Niger: Post-election period marred by violence, mass arrests and internet disruption**: “Authorities in Niger must launch an investigation into the death of two individuals, put an end to mass arrests and restore access to the internet, Amnesty International said today. Protests, at times violent, erupted on 23 February in the capital Niamey and several other towns following the announcement of the provisional results of the 21 February presidential election runoff.”

See also 31.03.21: [Al Jazeera](#): **Niger: Attack on presidential palace an ‘attempted coup’**; 29.03.21: [rfi](#): **[Entretien exclusif] Niger: le président élu Mohamed Bazoum demande aux Français de maintenir leur dispositif aérien ([Exclusive interview] Niger: President-elect Mohamed Bazoum asks the French to maintain their air force)**

Sahel 29.03.21: [Foreign Brief](#): **US, West African nations to begin counterterror exercises**: “The US-led ‘West Africa Joint Operations’ (WAJO) counterterrorism exercises will begin today. Counterterrorism investigators from Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger’s will participate in the drill designed to develop regional cooperation between military, intelligence and judicial institutions in combating extremism.”

NORTH AFRICA

Algeria 09.03.21: [North Africa Journal](#): **Algeria: Protest movement enters third week of rallies as students maintain their Tuesday marches**: “Hundreds of students and pro-democracy supporters demonstrated in Algiers Tuesday as a revived protest movement enters its third week of rallies. The march made its way through the main streets of the Algerian capital to reach the central post office.”

See also 01.03.21: [North Africa Journal](#): **Algeria: Police unleash violence on population in Ouargla after blogger sentenced to seven years in prison**

Libya 09.03.21: [North Africa Journal](#): **Foreign meddlers continue to maintain thousands of mercenaries in Libya**: “Libya’s prime minister-designate demanded the departure Tuesday of an estimated 20,000 foreign fighters as he sought support from lawmakers to help end a grinding civil war in the North African nation.”

See also 18.03.21: [North Africa Journal](#): **Libya: More evidence that new PM Dbeibah may have been elected in exchange for large cash bribes**; 04.03.21: [jungle.world](#): **Der zweite Versuch (The second Try)**

Libya 02.04.21: [The Libya Observer](#): **UNHCR: More than 4000 migrants rescued and returned to Libya since the start of 2021**: According to The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), returns to Libya of migrants rescued at sea exceeded 4000, almost a thousand individuals were disembarked at end of March by the so-called Libyan Coast Guard. The UNHCR also says that, “more than 8000 people in Tripoli, Al-Zawiya and Misrata received food baskets sufficient for one month, stressing that it continues, in cooperation with the World Food Program (WFP), to support refugees and asylum-seekers who endure a lack of food provisions.”

Morocco 12.03.21: The Guardian: **Moroccan police accused of burning migrant shelters near Spanish enclave**: “Refugees and migrants camped along the border to Melilla say there have been repeated raids following 150 people attempting to cross.”

Sudan 14.03.21: The Guardian: **Fleeing Syrians lament the loss of their final refuge in Sudan**: “Until the end of last year, Sudan was the only country in the world that Syrians could travel to without a visa, a unique haven for those seeking a new life away from their country and its brutal civil war.” This abrupt change in visa policy in December 2020 comes at the ten-year anniversary of the war in Syria. The Sudanese government will review all citizenships handed out over the last two decades, likely leaving thousands of Syrians stranded inside the country and beyond.

Sudan 31.03.2021: Dabanga: **UNHCR: \$574 million needed for refugees in Sudan**: “The UN refugee agency UNHCR, together with 38 international and national partners, has launched an appeal to assist more than a million refugees in Sudan. The 2021 inter agency funding appeal seeks US\$ 574 million to assist refugees meeting basic needs, bolster self-reliance, and realize their rights. Sudanese from the host communities also stand to benefit, UNHCR says.”

Tunisia 10.03.2021: taz: **Dutzende ertrinken in Fischerbooten (39 Persons Dead After Boat Capsizes)**: A boat capsized off the Tunisian coasts on Tuesday afternoon. 39 people have died and 165 could be rescued.

See also 09.03.2021: Guardian: **Rescuers find 39 bodies off Tunisia after two boats sink**, 01.03.2021: North Africa Journal: **More migrants rescued off the coast of Libya**

EUROPEAN UNION

EU/North Africa 24.03.21: Statewatch: **EU: Tracking the Pact: Tunisia and other North African states targeted for new action on migration, asylum and more**: Two papers circulated by the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the EU give an insight into ongoing discussions and activities geared towards implementing the Pact on Migration and Asylum in North Africa, covering issues such as cooperation on asylum, border control and law enforcement.

EU 31.03.21: Der Spiegel: **Schiffe der EU-Mission »Irin« retten keine Migranten (Ships of the EU mission "Irin" do not rescue migrants)**: The EU naval mission "Irin" in the Mediterranean, which is the predecessor of the mission Sophia, has not rescued any refugees from distress at sea. The mission's aim is to enforce the arms embargo against Libya. In contrast, mission Sophia had rescued around 45,000 migrants from 2015. The EU member states decided on the Irini mission on 31 March 2020. Under pressure from Italy and other member states, however, the area of operations was moved further east than with Sophia and is now away from common migration routes.

EU 02.03.2021: Statewatch: **Libya: Interceptions of people fleeing by sea increase as EU border mission seeks two-year extension**: “The EU Border Assistance Mission in Libya (EUBAM Libya) wants to continue its support for the Libyan coast guard

agencies that intercepted almost 3,000 more people at sea in 2020 than in 2019, according to a document obtained by Statewatch.”

EU 24.03.21: Eurostat: First-time asylum applicants down by a third in 2020: “In 2020, 416 600 first-time asylum applicants applied for international protection in the EU Member States, down by 34% compared with 2019 (631 300) and by 21% compared to the level recorded in 2014 (530 600), before the peaks of 2015 and 2016.”

EU 15.03.21: come-on.de: Maas bei Migration für Partnerschaften mit Drittstaaten (Maas on migration for partnerships with third countries): German foreign minister Heiko Maas has warned against focusing too much on return policies when cooperating with third-countries on migration. According to Maas “Europe needs comprehensive and tailored partnerships with the countries from which people come to us (...). He also said that visa policy as a means of exerting pressure when dealing with uncooperative countries cannot solve the problems on its own.”

EU 23.03.21: taz: EU-Topf kann nun Waffen finanzieren (EU pot can now finance weapons): The EU has approved a billion-dollar fund to finance foreign missions and military aid to partner countries for peacekeeping. As the EU Council announced on Monday, Member States finally approved the so-called European Peace Facility (EFF). It has a volume of around 5 billion euros for the years up to 2027. For the first time, the EU can also use it to finance the supply of weapons to third countries.

EUROPE

Germany 26.02.21: Flüchtlingsrat Hessen: Skandalöse Abschiebung nach Somalia. Hessen schiebt erstmals in das Bürgerkriegsland ab (Scandalous deportation to Somalia. Hesse deports to civil war country for the first time): A Somali from Hessen was deported to Mogadishu for the first time. Omar F. was unexpectedly arrested at the immigration office, when he wanted to extend his ‘Duldung’ status, and transferred to a deportation prison in Darmstadt. He was then deported by scheduled flight via Doha to Mogadishu.

Greece 05.03.21: Guardian: Greece: thousands of migrants at risk of homelessness as EU scheme ends: “Thousands of refugees are at risk of being left homeless by the abrupt termination of an EU-funded programme providing cash assistance and temporary shelter to people granted asylum in Greece. Appeals from aid groups have mounted, amid fears more than 2,000 men, women and children will face destitution if action isn’t taken.”

Greece 10.03.21: Legal Centre Lesvos: Justice for the Moria 6: On March 09, two of the Moria 6 defendants, A.A. and M.H. were found guilty of arson, related to the fires that destroyed Moria refugee camp in September 2020, and sentenced to five years in prison – which they will likely spend in Avlona prison for minors and young adults.

See also 09.03.21: [cantevictsolidarity](#): **Untragbares Gerichtsurteil – Willkürliche Verurteilung zweier Geflüchteter für den Brand im Moria-Lager (Unacceptable court verdict – Arbitrary conviction of two refugees for the fire in Moria camp)**

Italy 23.02.21: Front Line Defenders Story: Crackdown on local Volunteers in Trieste: “On Tuesday 23 February at dawn, the police broke into the private home of two local volunteers and founders of Linea d’Ombra ODV association in Trieste, north-east Italy, the city at the immediate border with Slovenia. Personal mobile phones were seized, in addition to the association's accounting books and materials from the organization they had founded to support people on the move, in search of evidence for a charge of “facilitating illegal immigration”. Like it happened to the major of Riace, Mimmo Lucano, we are again in front of a vile attempt of criminalization of solidarity by the authorities. Today, in Italy, giving shoes, clothes and food to those who need them to survive, is seen as a persecuted action more than the promotion of fascism, as we could see last October 24, again in Piazza Libertà in Trieste.

See also 05.03.21: ECRE Weekly Bulletin: Italy Steps up Criminalisation of the Civil Fleet as Dozens Die at Sea

Italy 01.04.2021: Deutsche Welle: Hilfsschiff Open Arms steuert Sizilien an (Rescue vessel open arms heads for Sicily): The civilian rescue vessel Open Arms, that rescued 229 people in the Central Mediterranean was given permission to disembark its passengers in Sicily. Ten people were evacuated before disembarkation due to medical reasons.

See also 19.03.2021: ECRE: Med: A Distress Call for Human Rights as More People Die at Sea; 02.04.2021: North Africa Journal: Libya intercepts large number of would-be migrants

Spain/Tenerife 10.03.21: Teneriffa News: Teneriffa und Gran Canaria schicken Migranten zurück in den Senegal (Tenerife and Gran Canaria send migrants back to Senegal): For the first time in three years, the Canary Islands are sending migrants back to Senegal. The Ministry of the Interior chartered an airplane especially for this purpose. It is supposed to fly from the mainland to two Canary Islands. It will then take off in the direction of the African continent.

See also 07.03.21: NZZ: Auf den Kanarischen Inseln gestrandete Migranten fordern, dass sie nach Europa weiterreisen können (Migrants on Canary Islands Demand Transfer to Europe); 07.03.21: Schweriner Volkszeitung: Auf der Insel Teneriffa protestieren Hunderte Menschen (Hundreds of People Protesting on Tenerife); 08.03.21: DLF: Spanische Küstenwache greift mehr als 100 Migranten auf (Spanish Coastguard seizes more than 100 migrants); 05.03.21: ECRE Weekly Bulletin: Atlantic Route: Conditions in the Canary Islands Remain Poor as Protests and Calls for Transfers Grow Louder

REPORTS

18.03.21 [Medico International](#): **Der Moria-Komplex - Studie zu 5 Jahren EU-Türkei-Deal (The Moria Complex-Study on 5 years of the EU-Turkey Deal)**

03/2021 [ActionAid](#): **The big wall: An ActionAid investigation into how Italy tried to stop migration from Africa, using EU funds, and how much money it spent:** “There are satellites, drones, ships, cooperation projects, police posts, repatriation flights, training centers. They are the bricks of an invisible but tangible and often violent wall. Erected starting in 2015 onwards, thanks to over one billion euro of public money. With one goal: to eliminate those movements by sea, from North Africa to Italy, which in 2015 caused an outcry over a “refugee crisis”. Here we tell you about the (fragile) foundations and the (dramatic) impacts of this project. Which must be changed, urgently. Libya lies at the heart of a strategy for which funds from Italy, EU institutions and other member states have been channeled through an opaque financing mechanism with the central aim of reducing migration from Africa to Europe, says a new report by ActionAid.”

31.03.2021 [Alarm Phone Aegean Archive](#): **"We asked for help, but they only shouted: Go back, go back!": Alarm Phone Report: One year of pushbacks and systematic violence in the Aegean region:** “With this report, the Alarm Phone aims to share one year of documentation of repeated attacks against migrants and illegal pushbacks in the Aegean Sea and at the Evros/Meriç land border. Out of the 125 distress calls we received in this time period, 79 involved human rights violations and violence exercised by mostly Greek authorities.”

02/2021 [Europe Must Act](#): **NO MORE CAMPS MONTHLY UPDATE:** This is the first edition of Europe Must Act’s monthly update on the planning and construction of closed-controlled centres intended to replace the current hotspot camps on the Aegean islands.

03/21 [Borderline-Europe](#): **Report on the Situation at the Border to Spain: The Canary Islands:** Short report on the situation the so-called Atlantic route, which has re-emerged as one of the deadliest crossings from African shores to Europe, and the response on the islands.

03/21 [University of Copenhagen](#): **Danish desires to export asylum responsibility to camps outside Europe:** Report gathering different aspects of the Danish plans to externalize its asylum procedure with contributions focusing on North African dynamics and partnerships for migration control, the externalization proposal in the context of the Danish asylum regime and the international legal framework.

CAMPAIGNS

Call for Action Free the ElHiblu 3: On 28 March 2021, it's been two years since the Merchant Vessel ElHilblu1 arrived in Malta. Upon arrival, three teenagers were arrested and accused of a multiplicity of crimes, including acts of terrorism. From the beginning human rights activists, networks and NGOs have been working on getting attention to the case. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights spokesperson Ravina Shamdasani appealed to the Maltese authorities to reconsider the charges against the three teenagers already two years ago. For the second anniversary, we endorse all responsible actors, public personas and European decision makers to express their concern about proceeding with the unfair trial and demand the Maltese authorities to drop the accusations immediately.

Follow the campaign also on Twitter

International Solidarity Call 17.03.21: CLT: Mediterranea Saving Humans: "Mediterranea Saving Humans is under attack in Italy. Several members of Mediterranea are accused by the Office of Public Prosecutor of Ragusa of "facilitating illegal immigration." It is definitely not the first time that such an accusation has been used to criminalize civil migrant rescue operations at sea. The campaign is calling for solidarity and is starting a fundraising campaign in support of the NGO Mediterranea.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Online Discussion 14.04.2021 // 15:00 GMT: Collective for the Renewal of Africa: Whither Pan-Africanism?

Online Discussion 15.04.2021 // 5 pm ET: Africa is a Country, Haymarket Books and more: Imperialism and Militarism in the Sahel and East Africa

Launch event 15.04.2021 // 13:00 - 14:20: People's Coalition for the Sahel/Coalition citoyenne pour le sahel: Sahel: ce qui doit changer. Pour une nouvelle approche centrée sur les besoins des populations. Registration here.

Caravan 17.04.2021: Progetto20k and Campagna Lesvos calling: Balkanroute calling: caravan for freedom movement

Online Discussion 19.04.2021 // 15:00 CEST: Migration Policy Institute: Pushing borders outward: Asylum after the EU Turkey Deal

Guest Lecture 22.04.2021 // 18:00 - 20:00 CEST: Goldsmith Migration Research Network: Alison Mountz: The Death of Asylum and Asylum's Afterlives

Guest Lecture 29.04.2021 // 14:00 - 16:00 CEST: Decolonising Forced Migration Seminars: Lucy Mayblin: Asylum After Empire