

THE NEWSCAST

EGYPTIAN POLITICIANS AND MPS REJECT THE PLAN TO 'DISPLACE PALESTINIANS

The deputies and politicians in Egypt have rejected the statements made by Israeli ministers regarding the displacement of Palestinians from the Gaza Strip to the Congo, the reoccupation of the territory, and the construction of settlements there.

Dr. Mohamed Abu al-Ala, the head of the Arab Nasserist Party, expressed his rejection of the Israeli statements, affirming that they expose the malicious plans of the occupation and expand the scope of conflict in the region. He emphasized that there is no alternative to the liberation of Palestinian land.

In agreement with him, Member of Parliament Asmaa Al-Gamal, a member of the Foreign Relations Committee in the Parliament, rejected the Palestinian displacement plan. She pointed out that Israel has adopted extremist statements that reflect a bloodthirsty and violence-expanding attitude. These statements confirm to the world the diabolical plan of the occupation government to displace Palestinians and completely reject the Palestinian issue.

Deputy Ahmed Abdel-Gawad, Vice President of the Future of the Nation Party, stated that the international community remains silent on the heinous crimes committed by the Israeli occupation against the Palestinian brothers. These crimes have entered their third month, leading to the martyrdom and injury of thousands of innocent civilians. He explained that these crimes caused an unprecedented collapse in humanitarian conditions in the Gaza Strip, especially with the continued targeting of hospitals, which are no longer able to receive the injured. This is in addition to the ongoing displacement of people to the south of the sector, the continuation of the policy of starvation and thirst for Palestinians under the blockade imposed by the occupation on Gaza, representing a genocide.

Dr. Ayman Mahsoub, Deputy Chairman of the Arab Affairs Committee in the Parliament, stated that the actions of the Israeli occupation constitute a disregard for human values and principles. Forced displacement and the targeting of civilians are war crimes that warrant the punishment of Israeli leaders involved, to preserve global peace and stability.



WHAT DOES EUROPE EXPECT IN 2024 REGARDING THE 'MIGRATION AND ASYLUM SEEKERS' DOSSIER? THE CONTINUOUS INFLUX OF IRREGULAR MIGRANTS... AND THE ANTICIPATION OF APPROVAL FROM EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTS FOR NEW IMMIGRATION POLICIES AND LAWS

Europe expects the issue of migration and asylum policies to remain prominent in 2024. This dossier has occupied political and governmental circles in various European countries throughout 2023. The continued prioritization of the migration file coincides with the onset of the European Parliament elections in the summer of 2024 and the rise of the far-right movement in most European countries, which opposes immigration and the accommodation of migrants.

In Germany, there has been disagreement between the federal government and states, municipalities, and local authorities burdened with the refugee crisis. Similar challenges have been reported in other European Union countries, which have complained about the burden of hosting refugees.

According to the European Border Agency, 350,000 people entered Europe irregularly in 2023, with asylum seekers exceeding one million, compared to one million in 2022. Additionally, 4.2 million Ukrainians obtained temporary protection in 2022, along with 3.5 million legal migrants to EU countries.

The Director of the European Council on Refugees expects the number of asylum seekers and those seeking European protection to reach one million people in 2024. In 2023, there was consensus among EU countries and the European Parliament on a comprehensive reform of the immigration and asylum policy. However, before this political consensus takes effect, it must be officially approved by EU countries and the European Parliament, a process expected to be finalized in the first half of 2024 after clarifying technical details.

The EU agreed to alleviate the burdens on countries forming the external borders of the European Union, such as Italy and Greece, through a mandatory solidarity mechanism among member states. Those refusing to participate are required to provide financial compensation or alternative contributions to ease the burden on border countries.

Some human rights advocates argue that the European agreement will empty the right of asylum of its substance, as pushback and return operations from the borders are expected to increase. Others call for patience in implementing the agreements made in 2023 and assessing their success in containing the migration crisis.

Human rights advocates also demand a reassessment of agreements made in 2023, such as the agreement with Tunisia and the feasibility of building settlements on borders to accommodate irregular migrants or deporting migrants to third countries, expressing skepticism about their implementation.



GERMANY RECORDS 351.9 THOUSAND ASYLUM APPLICATIONS IN 2023, WITH SYRIANS BEING THE MOST NUMEROUS APPLICANTS



The German government has announced an increase in the number of asylum applications in 2023 compared to 2022, placing pressure on the government to fulfill its promises to curb illegal migration. The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees in Germany reported 351,915 asylum applications in Germany in 2023, an increase of 51% from 2022. The center-left coalition government in Germany has maintained a firm stance on migration, even as its popularity wanes in opinion polls behind right-wing parties. The top nationalities applying for asylum were Syria (104,651), followed by Turkey (62,624), Afghanistan (53,582), Iraq (12,360), Iran (10,206), Georgia (9,399), and Russia (9,028).

The office stated that protection status was granted in 52% of cases for which decisions were made.

The Mexican President calls on America for 10 million work visas to assist in halting illegal migration



The Mexican President, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, has outlined conditions to assist the United States in stopping illegal migration. The Mexican President called for the provision of 10 million work visas for individuals of Spanish descent working in Mexico for a duration of 10 years. Additionally, he proposed providing \$20 million to support countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, lifting the blockade on Cuba, and ending sanctions on Venezuela.

Obrador stated in press remarks that addressing the issue of migration lies in addressing its root causes, which involves assisting impoverished countries. The American side considered the demands of the Mexican President as 'highly ambitious,' with an official in the Biden administration affirming that Obrador's requests require congressional approval.

Meanwhile, the United States is urging Mexico to secure its borders with Guatemala to curb illegal migration as the number of migrants continues to rise. On the eve of Christmas, a caravan of 6,000 migrants moved from Central America, Cuba, and Venezuela towards the United States.

A JOURNALISTIC INVESTIGATION REVEALS GERMANY'S SIGNING OF A SECRET AGREEMENT FOR THE DEPORTATION OF IRAQIS

The German government has reached a secret agreement with the Iraqi government for the deportation of thousands of Iraqis. This comes as the government announces its rejection of Iraqi asylum requests and declares the necessity for 26,000 Iraqis to leave in 2023, despite only deporting 77 individuals in 2022.

The report reveals that Iraqis face the highest rate of asylum request rejections, necessitating their deportation. There is an outlined plan for the scheduled deportation of Iraqis from Germany.

The investigative journalism report discloses that officials from Germany and Iraq met in early 2023, formulating a declaration of intentions that highlights plans for greater collaboration on mutually significant issues, especially in legal and illegal immigration.

The secret agreement signed by both parties states that "legal migration is beneficial for both societies and enhances relations between the two countries," but within the framework of monitored paths, including work permits.

The document specifies the collaboration's objectives, emphasizing the promotion of voluntary return programs for individuals lacking residence permits in Germany, with a necessity to readmit Iraqis who do not meet or no longer meet the conditions required for entry, presence, or residence.

The report warns of the dangers of the return of Iraqis, particularly the Yazidis facing severe persecution. It points out that many migrants await behind barbed wire fences at the Rudnikai camp in Lithuania, hoping to be repatriated to Baghdad.

The investigation confirms that most Iraqi asylum seekers failed to meet the government's identity verification standards, attempting to extend their stay in Germany and protect themselves. The German-Iraqi agreement emphasizes the need for document exchange between the two countries, posing a potential risk to some individuals.

The German Ministry of Interior states that 77 Iraqi migrants were deported in 2022, compared to 164 by October 2023, with an additional 28 in the last week.



A FRENCH REPORT ACCUSES BRITAIN OF NOT COOPERATING ON THE MIGRATION FILE

A new French report from the French Court of Auditors accused Britain of insufficient coordination in the efforts to reduce the number of migrants crossing the English Channel in small boats. The report states that a joint intelligence unit was established in 2020 to combat human trafficking and reduce the number of people risking their lives to illegally cross the English Channel. In 2022, the unit assisted in dismantling seven networks involved in illegal migration.

The court found that the British did not provide usable information about small boat departures, offering only very general unverified level-one information. The report notes that information about the conditions, nationalities, and occupants of the boats seems highly inconsistent, making the relationship between France and the United Kingdom unbalanced in terms of information and intelligence exchange.

The British Ministry of Defense estimated a 58% increase in English Channel crossings by boats between 2021 and 2022. The same year witnessed over 45,000 migrants reaching British shores. The report claimed that approximately 56% of crossing attempts were prevented in the same year, with no change from the previous year.

This week, the British government announced a more than one-third reduction in the number of migrants crossing in 2023, totaling just under 26,000, thanking the "partnership with France" for its role in the decline.

France received €222 million from the UK between 2018 and 2022 as part of a bilateral agreement. In March, British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak signed an additional €541 million for the period 2023-2026.

The Court of Auditors' report also evaluated various other issues related to illegal immigration policies, noting the complexity of implementing departure orders. France, despite carrying out the highest number of deportations in the European Union, saw only 10% of the individuals actually leave out of more than 150,000 decisions made in 2022. In comparison, Britain deported 3,500 individuals, and Germany deported 13,000 in 2022. The report attributes the low execution of deportation orders to difficulties in proving the identity of the individuals, reluctance from their home countries to issue entry permits, and commercial airlines and pilots refusing to transport them by air.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY IS INVESTIGATING THE SALE OF FLOOD-PRONE LANDS TO MIGRANTS



The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is investigating 11 suspected environmental crimes in the community of "Colony Ridge" northeast of Houston. "Colony Ridge" is the largest settlement of undocumented immigrants in America for the past 12 years, with over 50,000 undocumented immigrants residing there. The U.S. Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and the Department of Justice are investigating 11 cases of fraud related to a scheme involving the sale of vast flood-prone lands. This scheme involves unlawfully pricing interest rates on mortgages, imposing hefty interest rates, securing mortgages on flood-prone underground lands, and transferring them to alleged new immigrant victims.



The city of Quincy in the United States is exploring the legality of "welcoming or rejecting" buses carrying undocumented immigrants

The state of Illinois, specifically the city of Quincy, held a city council meeting to discuss the entry of a bus carrying undocumented immigrants due to concerns about the transformation of "migrant buses" from the state of Texas to the city. Texas is transporting immigrants by bus to major cities, especially Chicago, which has been a safe haven for immigrants for over 40 years. However, it has recently exceeded its capacity, leading authorities to impose fines on bus companies conducting unscheduled migrant delivery operations to accommodation and welcome centers for immigrants. This has increased the concerns of the state of Illinois about being considered an alternative to Chicago. Despite no arrival of a "migrant bus" in Quincy, the city council decided to explore the response to the question of "what will Quincy do if a bus carrying 30 immigrants suddenly arrives in Washington Park." The mayor of the city announced his refusal to welcome immigrants, while the police emphasized the need to deport them without facing government investigations or legal action. Local council members believed that a complete ban on unscheduled buses is legally questionable under interstate commerce and travel provisions, exposing the council to legal challenges. Others urged local charities to be prepared to receive buses, especially in winter, to prevent humanitarian crises.



MINISTER OF EMIGRATION: THE PRESENCE OF 4 MINISTERS OF EGYPTIANS ABROAD CONFIRMS THE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP'S KEENNESS TO INTEGRATE THEM INTO DECISION-MAKING

Minister of Emigration, Sahar Gendy, met with the military attachés who will serve as heads and assistants to the defense offices abroad. The Minister expressed confidence that the Egyptian military attachés, known for always representing Egypt effectively, will contribute to the protection of national security and the maximization of Egyptian interests abroad, especially in caring for the interests of Egyptians abroad.

The Minister emphasized the deep-rootedness of the Egyptian diplomatic school, spanning from ancient Egypt to the present stage, maintaining exceptional relations with various countries while respecting the sovereignty of each state. She pointed out that there are currently 4 ministers of Egyptian origin in the current government, highlighting the political leadership's commitment to integrating them into the decision-making process. The Minister stressed the importance of an updated database to benefit from the expertise of Egyptians around the world.

She added that Egypt has distinguished elites in various fields and an excellent workforce, always striving to open new markets for Egyptians to encourage safe migration. The Minister mentioned replicating the Egyptian-German experience with Italy, Saudi Arabia, Australia, Finland, and other countries, based on their interest after learning about the German model.

The Minister highlighted the significant contributions of Egyptians abroad to the development of many countries. She emphasized personal engagement with compatriots abroad through international visits, community meetings, and various initiatives.



TUNISIA ARRESTS A CRIMINAL NETWORK INVOLVED IN SMUGGLING AFRICANS TO EUROPE

The Tunisian security forces have thwarted smuggling operations of illegal immigrants from its coasts, leading to the arrest of 60 suspects. They face charges of "smuggling migrants and transporting them by land in private cars from the Algerian and Libyan borders to the city of Sfax, preparing to smuggle them to Italy – a journey that takes no more than an hour and a half."

Meanwhile, the National Guard in Sfax announced the arrest of an international criminal network specialized in human trafficking, facilitating the entry and exit of Africans from sub-Saharan countries to Tunisia, with the intention of smuggling them to Europe.

Security forces reported that arrest warrants have been issued against four members of the criminal network, who have been suspended and referred to court.

The Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights filed a new complaint, citing "repeated certificates about mass expulsion operations towards the Algerian border in harsh weather conditions, as well as expulsions towards the Libyan border ending up in detention centers run by armed Libyan formations."

A statement by about 20 Tunisian non-governmental organizations called on international entities and the Tunisian government to stop adopting a "repressive security approach" when dealing with irregular migration files "under the pressure of European officials" practicing a policy of extortion by conditioning financing needed by Tunisia to tightening security control over African migrants.

These organizations urged the Tunisian authorities and European countries to put an end to the phenomenon of "expelling Tunisian, African, and Arab migrants from Europe." They also called for a change in the approach to dealing with the situation of refugees, asylum seekers, migrants, and stateless individuals in Tunisia and countries south of the Mediterranean Sea.

It is worth noting that Libyan and Tunisian authorities estimated that around 150,000 irregular migrants had moved from the Libyan port of Zuwara and the coasts of Sfax, Tunisia, in 2023.

THE MOROCCAN BORDER GUARD HAS ARRESTED AN INDIVIDUAL WHO WAS EVADING A 14-YEAR PRISON SENTENCE



The Moroccan National Guard has successfully apprehended an individual who was evading the execution of a 14-year prison sentence. This person faces convictions related to charges that have been proven against him, including the formation of a criminal gang involved in crossing maritime borders, drug trafficking, and smuggling. The National Guard forces handed him over to the competent authorities for the execution of the issued judgments against him.



The Libyan government is reconsidering the laws on "illegal migration"

The Libyan Ministry of Migration organized a forum on "Irregular Migration Issues" with the aim of reviewing Libyan laws related to illegal migration. Fathi Al-Tebawi, the Minister of State for Migration Affairs in the Stability Government, stated, "A committee has been formed to review Libyan laws related to migration, in line with the current situation and international laws, while taking into consideration human rights." The Minister emphasized that amending these laws is a continuation of the efforts of the Libyan Armed Forces in combating illegal migration, organized crime, and human trafficking.



NAILA GABR: 9 MILLION FOREIGNERS LIVING IN EGYPT

Naila Gabr, the head of the National Coordinating Committee to Combat and Prevent Illegal Migration, stated that the government is beginning the process of counting the numbers of foreign guests in Egypt and studying the anticipated economic costs, especially since Egypt has a history of welcoming and receiving foreigners.

Gabr pointed out that the number of foreign guests in Egypt has reached 9 million people, including 400,000 registered refugees with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, who have legal protection as refugees. The remaining number either has valid or invalid residency permits.

She mentioned that the number of Sudanese who came to Egypt after the events in Sudan ranges from 400,000 to 500,000 people, and these numbers could increase due to Egypt's economic and political challenges. The government is working to compile data on these numbers and assess the economic cost of their presence, especially considering the pressure on services. The Ministry of Interior is conducting a census of the numbers, and an announcement will be made in the future.



MIGRATION: MORE THAN 300,000 BENEFICIARIES FROM AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS TO REDUCE ILLEGAL MIGRATION

The Ministry of Immigration announced the implementation of several awareness campaigns to address illegal migration in 72 villages across 14 governorates, which are the most significant exporters of illegal migration. This is part of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and Egypt's Vision 2030, focusing on providing a decent life for Egyptian citizens and preserving their well-being.

Ambassador Saha Gendi, the Minister of Immigration, conducted field visits to 7 governorates that are major exporters of illegal migration, including Monufia, Sharkia, Luxor, Aswan, Kafr El-Sheikh, Gharbia, and Alexandria. Awareness sessions were conducted to educate about the risks of illegal migration and introduce positive and safe alternatives for youth and families. A total of 122 training courses reached 3,196 beneficiaries.

Programs for awareness and the training of educators on the risks of illegal migration were implemented, with 29 training courses in 8 governorates reaching 1,326 beneficiaries. Door-to-door campaigns were launched to educate families in targeted villages about the risks of illegal migration, with 24 campaigns in 8 governorates, 32 villages, and 40 centers, conducting 165,986 home visits reaching 295,160 beneficiaries.

As part of youth training for employment opportunities, the Egyptian-German Center provided training to 28,754 individuals, with 225 beneficiaries securing job opportunities, totaling 29,822 services provided by the center.

Ambassador Saha Gendi emphasized the significant efforts made by the Egyptian government to combat illegal migration and provide positive alternatives. Coordination between various ministries and state institutions, as well as collaboration with local and international partners, plays a crucial role in youth rehabilitation and training in governorates most affected by illegal migration. The focus is on meeting the needs of European and local labor markets while ensuring a decent life for citizens. The Ministry of Immigration systematically works according to the state's vision to train and qualify the workforce, providing safe alternatives for Egyptian youth based on the needs and standards of foreign labor markets, especially Germany.



18 ILLEGAL MIGRANTS HAVE BEEN IMPRISONED IN TUNISIA ON CHARGES OF ILLEGAL RESIDENCE



The Public Prosecutor's Office in Tunisia has decided to imprison 18 illegal migrants from sub-Saharan African countries on charges of illegal residence in the country. This is an attempt to halt the influx of migrants and reduce the phenomenon of irregular migration. Tunisian police are conducting security campaigns to track down illegal migrants of African nationalities who are dispersed in major cities, waiting to illegally cross to Europe. They are also targeting organizers of migration operations and brokers.

Libya announces the deportation of 113 irregular migrants



The Illegal Immigration Combat Agency in Libya has announced the deportation of 113 irregular migrants, including 62 Sudanese migrants, 47 migrants from Chad, and 4 Egyptians. The agency confirmed the transfer of migrants to the Qanfouda deportation center to the Kufra Shelter Center, as part of the daily campaigns to maintain Libyan national security. In a related context, the agency reported that in the city of Derna, Libya, 21 migrants from Bangladesh were apprehended and handed over to the relevant authorities for deportation.