

THE NEWSCAST

THE FRENCH CONSTITUTIONAL COUNCIL TRIUMPHS FOR IMMIGRANTS AND REJECTS 35 ARTICLES OF THE NEW IMMIGRATION LAW. THE FAR-RIGHT PARTY CALLS FOR A POPULAR REFERENDUM ON "IMMIGRATION"

The French Constitutional Council rejected extensive parts of the immigration law, which were added by members of the far-right party in the parliament, opposing the proposed law presented by Emmanuel Macron's government. The Council announced its rejection of 35 out of 86 articles in the law, deeming 32 of them irrelevant to the law's subject and leaving room for accepting amendments to 3 other articles later as part of different legislation. The Council maintained the original structure proposed by the government, with a significant section facilitating the expulsion of foreigners convicted of misdemeanors.

The French Parliament had approved a new immigration law proposed by Macron's government on December 19. However, the nine members of the Council responsible for assessing the constitutionality of laws rejected the majority of measures that sparked significant criticism and protests. These measures included reducing financial aid for non-European foreigners, setting annual immigration quotas, and tightening family reunification conditions.

Interior Minister Gérald Darmanin affirmed that the Constitutional Council approved the government's text entirely, noting that the executive authority acknowledged the rejection of many provisions added by the parliament due to their failure to adhere to parliamentary procedures.

With the Constitutional Court rejecting the far-right parliamentary additions, the leader of the extreme-right National Rally, Jordan Bardella, denounced a judicial coup supported by the president, considering the immigration law "stillborn." He called for a referendum on immigration.

Jean-Claude Samoyault, the head of Amnesty International, described the Constitutional Council's decision as a victory. Twenty-seven out of 248 parliament members opposed the law, while Aurélien Rousseau, the health minister affiliated with the left-wing faction in the government, resigned after its approval.

During a gathering near the Constitutional Council, Jean-Claude Samoyault stated, "A victory was recorded this evening," while left-wing circles considered it a blow and a lesson in the rule of law, with calls to withdraw the flawed law.

Olivier Faure, the Secretary-General of the Socialist Party, believed that the government would bear an indelible stain by calling for a vote on a law aligning with the historical positions of the far-right under pressure from the Republicans.

Manuel Bompard, coordinator of the "France Unbowed" party, considered the law entirely amputated and lacking any legitimacy, stating that it "must be withdrawn."



THE UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT REJECTS THE "TEXAS SHARP WIRE" LAW

The U.S. Supreme Court rejects "Texas Barbed Wire" on the Mexican border. The U.S. Supreme Court has rejected the installation of barbed wire along miles of the Texas-Mexico border by Texas Governor Greg Abbott, ruling against Abbott. However, the Republican Party expressed its support for Abbott's decisions to address illegal immigration, pledging to add more barbed wire to eliminate what it described as an invasion.

Twenty-five Republican governors issued a joint statement in solidarity with Abbott to "intensify efforts to protect American citizens from historic levels of illegal immigrants." Abbott had installed barbed wire along a 45-kilometer stretch as part of the "Lone Star" operation in Eagle Pass, near the Rio Grande River, one of the most congested areas with irregular migrants coming from Mexico.

Politicians view the Supreme Court's ruling as a victory for President Joe Biden's Democratic administration in its confrontation with Texas. The judges ruled by a majority of 5 to 4 that the U.S. Border Patrol could cut or remove the barbed wire erected by the Texas National Guard. The Democratic Party is urging Biden to take a stricter stance against Texas.

The Department of Justice stated that the fence hinders the work of Border Patrol agents as it poses a danger to both migrants and law enforcement. The Texas governor accused the Biden administration of abandoning its responsibility to secure the borders and enforce laws, asserting that Texas is securing the borders. Abbott faces legal challenges from the White House in Biden's era due to his orders to install floating barriers in the Rio Grande River, imprison thousands of migrants on charges of trespassing, and transport migrants by bus to Democratic cities and states.



AUSTRIA IS PREPARING TO RECEIVE SKILLED LABOR AND TO SEND REJECTED ASYLUM SEEKERS TO "THIRD COUNTRIES"



Chancellor Karl Nehammer of Austria has announced details of the ruling People's Party's plan until 2030 for the European Union to curb illegal immigration to the country, especially by not granting social benefits to residents in Austria until after five years.

The Austrian Chancellor aims to acquire valuable assets from asylum seekers upon their initial entry into the country, to fund expenses and support the refugees' stay until their asylum status is determined.

Nehammer emphasized that Austria will focus on attracting skilled labor, while rejected asylum seekers will be placed in internal camps until they are transferred to asylum centers in third countries outside the European Union.

The United Nations: 186,000 migrants entered Europe in 2023, of whom 102,000 departed from Tunisia



The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) stated that approximately 186,000 people have already arrived in Europe via the Mediterranean Sea in 2023. According to the UNHCR statement, around 130,000 individuals were recorded in Italy, marking an 83% increase compared to the same period last year. The statement also mentioned that more than 2,500 people have gone missing or died since the beginning of the year until September 24. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported over 2,700 deaths and missing persons during the same period. Filippo Grandi, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, stated that over 102,000 people attempted to cross the Mediterranean Sea from Tunisia, representing a 260% increase compared to the previous year. Additionally, more than 45,000 people attempted to cross from Libya, with boats also heading towards Greece, Spain, Cyprus, and Malta. The recent sharp increase in the number of migrants has caused tensions within the European Union regarding measures aimed at reducing migration.

THE UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES: THE "STOP THE BOATS" PLAN IS NO DIFFERENT FROM THE "US BORDER WALL" POLICY. THE IMMIGRATION POLICIES OF BOTH BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES ARE "DECEPTIVE," AND POLITICIANS EXPLOIT "MIGRATION" IN ELECTIONS.

Filippo Grandi, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, stated that Britain's immigration policy, particularly concerning stopping boats in the English Channel, is a "false response" to migration issues. Grandi emphasized that migrants have "clear goals," and the issue of migration in both Britain and the United States is tied to "elections," as politicians amplify the phenomenon through a range of fake news, fueled by pressures from voters on immigration issues in both countries.

In a press statement, Grandi said, "Migrants and refugees are easy targets. They are less exciting, less attractive, and we need to roll up our sleeves and work to solve these issues." He asserted that Boris Johnson's plan, "Stop the Boats," is no different from Trump's American policy of "Building the Wall," as both are false responses that do not address the migration issue or the challenges faced by newcomers.



ITALY ANNOUNCES AN ECONOMIC PLAN TO COMBAT IRREGULAR MIGRATION IN 23 AFRICAN COUNTRIES

Italy has prepared an economic plan named "Matteo" to combat irregular migration from the African continent. The plan, named after Enrico Mattei, the founder of the oil company "Eni," aims to operate within the African continent, improving economic conditions and allowing for engagement in Africa, which has been an uncontested arena for Russia, China, and Turkey. Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni is expected to announce the plan next week. The plan will be presented to a group of leaders from 23 African countries, including the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki, and the President of the European Union, Ursula von der Leyen, at the Madama Palace, the headquarters of the Italian Senate. The plan outlines Italy's goal to become an energy hub, particularly in the wake of the painful European crisis following the Russo-Ukrainian War, as Europe seeks to reduce its heavy reliance on Russian gas. Despite facing internal criticism for announcing the plan in the "historical palace," supporters see it as a significant European intervention.



ITALY ANNOUNCES THE DEATH OF A MIGRANT NEAR THE COAST OF SICILY



Italian security sources have announced the death of a migrant near a beach in the province of Agrigento, Sicily. The sources added that "more than 60 migrants managed to independently reach the shore after the boat carrying them sank."

The security sources stated that the ship "Geo Barents," belonging to the organization "Médecins Sans Frontières" (Doctors Without Borders), carried out a new rescue operation involving 68 people who were on board three overcrowded boats made of fiberglass. Among them were five children and a pregnant woman, none of whom were wearing life jackets.

Britain and Italy agree to fund a project to assist migrants in Tunisia

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and his Italian counterpart, Giorgia Meloni, have agreed to jointly fund a project to assist migrants in Tunisia in returning to their home countries. This agreement was reached during Sunak's visit to Rome, where he praised Meloni's approach to addressing irregular migration. Both leaders pledged to halt the influx of migrant boats on their shores.

They agreed to fund a project aimed at assisting the voluntary return of migrants in Tunisia, being a departure country, to their respective home countries. Additionally, they committed to intensifying efforts to combat human trafficking.

Comparing Meloni to the former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, Sunak stated that there is a need for some "Iron Lady radicalism" to address irregular migration. He emphasized that if this issue is not addressed, the numbers will increase, and both countries will deteriorate in their ability to help those truly in need of assistance. Sunak highlighted the agreement made with Albania, allowing for the deportation of Albanians arriving in the UK on small boats. He confirmed that the agreement has reduced the numbers of Albanian migrants by 90%.

Meloni had previously reached an agreement with Albania to establish two reception centers for asylum seekers intercepted by the Italian coast guard in the sea. However, this agreement faced criticism in both countries, and the Albanian Constitutional Court temporarily blocked its ratification.



TUNISIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS DEMAND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A STRATEGY TO COMBAT MIGRATION

Tunisian human rights activists and politicians are calling for the development of a strategy to combat illegal migration. They emphasize the need for a comprehensive approach that goes beyond security measures, addressing the issue from social, economic, and political perspectives. The Tunisian government's agreement with Italy and the European Union, focusing mainly on security aspects, is deemed insufficient by politicians who argue that tackling illegal migration requires internal projects to support the stability of Tunisian youth. Some critics believe that the security dimension dominates the Tunisian-Italian agreement and that negotiating with the European Union on handling migration-related issues poses challenges. The analysts stress the importance of finding economic and social solutions to reduce the need for migration to Europe outside legal frameworks, advocating for dignified living conditions and discouraging security-centric approaches. It's noted that previous security-oriented solutions contributed to economic and social problems in Tunisia and failed to align with European conditions for accommodating and integrating migrants into society. The European Union leaders discussed an agreement in Brussels aimed at combating migration and controlling human trafficking networks. The proposed European plan includes providing Tunisia with long-term financial assistance totaling 900 million euros, an immediate disbursement of 150 million euros to the budget, and a 105 million euros package for migration management. This includes boats, mobile radars, cameras, and vehicles to enhance border control both on land and at sea.



TUNISIANS PROTEST AGAINST IMMIGRANTS, CONSIDERING THEM A "THREAT TO THE SECURITY OF SFAK"

Hundreds of people in Sfax, Tunisia, demonstrated against the influx of irregular migrants from sub-Saharan Africa in their city, a major departure point for illegal migration from Tunisia to Europe. Protesters gathered in front of the governorate headquarters chanting "Sfax is back," responding to a call from the local "Seb Trotoire" movement, which asserts that the presence of irregular migrants poses a threat to the security of Sfax residents.

On February 21, Tunisian President Kais Saied criticized illegal migration, considering it a demographic threat to his country. This stance was rejected by local and international non-governmental organizations at the time, describing his speech as "a discourse of hatred and intimidation against migrants."

Most migrants come from sub-Saharan African countries to Tunisia for clandestine migration across the sea to Europe through the nearby Italian coasts.



LIBYA HAS REPATRIATED 323 MIGRANTS TO NIGERIA



The Libyan Anti-Illegal Immigration Agency in the Ministry of Interior has announced the repatriation of 323 Nigerian migrants who entered the country illegally, in coordination with the International Organization for Migration.

Libyan authorities stated that 163 migrants of Nigerian nationality were repatriated from Mitiga International Airport, including 107 women, 51 men, and five children. Additionally, 160 Nigerians were repatriated from Benina International Airport in Benghazi.

Under an agreement signed by leaders from western, southern, and eastern Libya in 2023, the Anti-Illegal Immigration Agency became responsible for managing deportation operations in a unified manner.

Last year, 9,370 individuals received assistance from the International Organization for Migration to voluntarily return to their home countries, following 11,200 in 2022. According to data collected by the United Nations between May and June 2023, there are more than 700,000 migrants on Libyan territory.

REFERRING MEMBERS OF THE "SHERIFA HANEM" GANG TO TRIAL ON CHARGES OF MIGRANT SMUGGLING IN CAIRO

The Public Prosecution in East Cairo has referred 5 suspects to the Criminal Court on charges of establishing the "Sherifa Hanem" network for smuggling migrants to Italy. The investigations accuse them of engaging in organized crime and committing transnational crimes by unlawfully profiting from migrants, facilitating their illegal transit from Egypt to Italy. The investigations confirmed the suspects' involvement in an international organized crime network initiated by the first suspect, illegally transferring people from Egypt to Italy for financial gains. The prosecution has charged the five suspects with receiving money and organizing illegal travel trips, while the first suspect faces additional charges related to forming a criminal organization. According to Egyptian law, individuals charged with migrant smuggling may face imprisonment, fines up to 500,000 Egyptian pounds, and the restitution of collected financial gains.



After the construction of a metal fence, an online group in the state of Texas is calling for marches on Monday to protest against migrants

The state of Texas in the United States has escalated its stance against undocumented immigrants. While the state government emphasizes its refusal to welcome immigrants, an online group of Texas residents, self-identified as "Electronica," has called on people to head to the Texas border to prevent migrants from crossing from Mexico.

The electronic group, with the hashtag "Expel Immigrants Out," announced itself on the Telegram electronic application with the support of 1600 followers, describing themselves as the "Army of God."

The group announced its march starting from Virginia to California, Arizona, and ending in Texas, holding three marches on February 3rd.

The group denied being an armed caravan, stating on its electronic page that it rejects carrying weapons and is a peaceful group that opposes border crossings. The marches on February 3rd aim to peacefully stop illegal immigration and close the borders, without specifying the methods it will take to implement its plan.

Texas entered into a confrontation with the federal government of the United States after installing barbed wire in a park on the banks of the Rio Grande River, which migrants used for their crossing.

Illegal immigration is one of the most prominent political issues in America currently, as the number of migrants has reached record levels, estimated at 300,000 people in 2023.



OUT OF FEAR OF THE IMPACT OF MIGRANT NUMBERS ON REDISTRICTING, A NEW U.S. BILL REFUSES TO "INCLUDE THEM IN THE VOTING PROCESS."

Senator Kevin Cramer in the U.S. state of North Dakota participated in introducing the Equal Representation Act, which seeks to reject using illegal immigration as a tool to influence the redistricting of congressional districts and electoral votes.

The bill addresses the inclusion of undocumented immigrants in the process of allocating congressional seats and electoral votes, highlighting the potential for disproportionate political power and urging the Census Bureau to publicly report certain demographic data to ensure transparency and informed decision-making.

Illegal immigration has become one of the key issues in the United States during the Biden administration, with parties concerned about the impact of increasing immigrant numbers on congressional and electoral district divisions, where the number of congressional districts for each state is determined using the census.

The U.S. Customs and Border Protection indicated a 30.3% increase in the number of non-detained individuals from 4.7 million non-citizens in 2022 to 6.2 million non-citizens in 2023.

Cramer stated, "Biden's administration's refusal to secure the southern border and then allowing unrestricted entry of illegal immigrants into the United States has far-reaching effects beyond what we think on the surface." "The census is the basis of representation in our political system, and any census that could include non-citizens in the division count is indeed disturbing to me and should be for all North Dakota residents.

He added, "Illegal and non-citizen immigrants cannot vote and should not be used as pawns while Democrats are redrawing districts in different states, and our population census must count Americans and non-Americans, but it should also distinguish between them."

The new legislation requires the Census Bureau to include a citizenship question in future censuses, enhancing the understanding of the demographic composition of the U.S. population and distinguishing between citizens and non-citizens for redistricting purposes. It prohibits counting non-citizens in congressional and electoral district divisions, ensuring that only American citizens influence representation.

Senator Bill Hagerty, a Republican from Tennessee, led this legislation, along with 19 members of the Senate from various states.

THE U.S. STATE OF OKLAHOMA IS DEPLOYING ITS NATIONAL GUARD TO TEXAS TO DETER MIGRANTS



Kevin Stitt, the governor of the state of Oklahoma, announced the deployment of the National Guard from his state to Texas to assist with border control issues between the United States and Mexico. The governor stated, "There are 28 points of entry, and federal law says it's illegal to enter anywhere other than these points of entry." This decision follows former President Donald Trump's call for Republican-led states to collaborate in addressing the issue of illegal immigration along the southern border, accusing President Biden of failing to handle the issue. Twenty-five Republican-led states pledged support to Texas in rejecting migrants. Trump urged states to deploy their guards in Texas to prevent the entry of undocumented immigrants and return them across the border. The Republican Governors Association expressed solidarity with Governor Greg Abbott of Texas, stating, "We stand with our fellow Governor, Greg Abbott, and the state of Texas in using every tool and strategy, including barbed wire fences, to secure the border."

The Moroccan Navy recovers the bodies of 5 migrants



The Moroccan Navy retrieved the bodies of 5 migrants from Senegal and rescued 189 others after their boat capsized off the coast of Laâyoune in the Sahara. A military source stated that 11 migrants in critical condition were transported to the port of Laâyoune in the Sahara. The source added that the migrants' vessel had departed "from a country located south of the kingdom," attempting to reach the Canary Islands in Spain before encountering difficulties off Laâyoune. The rescued migrants, including a woman, were transported to the port of Laâyoune on Sunday and handed over to the Royal Gendarmerie for administrative procedures. At least 13 migrants lost their lives in July alone due to the sinking of their boats off the Moroccan coast, including 5 Moroccans. The Moroccan coast has witnessed an increase in migration attempts from the northwest African and Moroccan coasts and the Sahara to Europe since the beginning of June. Non-governmental organizations regularly report on the sinking of migrant boats in Moroccan, Spanish, and international waters. In a related context, a coastal monitoring unit southwest of Dakhla intercepted a boat carrying 110 Senegalese migrants, including 20 minors and a woman, who had left the Senegalese coast in September. They were rescued, received medical treatment, and handed over to the Royal Gendarmerie.

