

THE NEWSCAST

THE LARGEST CRIMINAL NETWORK FOR ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION IN THE WESTERN REGION HAS BEEN ARRESTED

The investigations conducted by the Public Prosecution in the Gharbia Governorate revealed the largest illegal immigration network, consisting of 24 suspects, originating from the Gharbia Governorate and extending to other governorates. The investigations confirmed the presence of members of this network in the cities of Siwa, Qutur, Al-Mahalla Al-Kubra, Samannoud, and Tanta, managed by an individual from the village of Katama in the Gharbia Governorate.

The General Prosecution investigations in Case No. 122 of 2024, Administrative Department of Siwa, indicated that behind the incident was an organized criminal group specialized in smuggling illegal migrants to Italy from the coasts of Libya in an illegal manner. They used unprepared and unsafe fishing boats to transport passengers beyond their capacity, endangering the lives of the victims with risks of loss, death, and drowning. They exploited poverty and the need for work and money without considering human dignity, causing severe damage to the country's reputation abroad, in exchange for large sums of money amounting to 168,000 Egyptian pounds.

The investigations added that this group used the Gharbia Governorate and some other governorates as a stage for their criminal activities, employing various methods of smuggling, including sending their victims to Libya through legal means such as work visas or smuggling them through desert routes and mountain roads adjacent to the western borders of the country, then storing them in Libya and starting to smuggle them by sea from its coasts, using unprepared fishing boats to transport passengers, risking their lives.

It was also noted that members of this criminal group operate according to a clustered cell system, each group acting according to specific assignments from the group's leader, either collectively or individually, with full knowledge of the nature of the crime and their participation, assistance, and support for each other. Some of them use aliases to avoid detection, and they have been engaging in this sinful activity for nearly the past two years and continue to do so.



MAURITANIA RECEIVES €522 MILLION SUPPORT TO COMBAT ILLEGAL MIGRATION. THE EUROPEAN UNION SUPPORTS MAURITANIA WITH €210 MILLION. SPAIN PROVIDES €200 MILLION OVER 5 YEARS TO DEVELOP "GREEN HYDROGEN" PROJECTS

President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen and Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez met with Mauritanian President Mohamed Ould Ghazouani in the Mauritanian capital, Nouakchott, to hold discussions on border control and economic development.

The talks concluded with the announcement by the European Union of its intention to provide financial support to Mauritania to assist it in addressing challenges in the areas of migration management, forced displacement, as well as security and development. Both sides affirmed that the European Union's border agency, Frontex, would play a role.

It was announced that assistance totaling €522 million would be provided to the Mauritanian side to enhance its economic development and combat illegal migration. The European Union pledged to provide €210 million to help Mauritania eradicate human traffickers and deter migrant boats, as well as to provide humanitarian assistance to refugees, develop enterprises and employment, enhance skills, and double European Union support for Mauritanian security to €40 million during the current year.

Meanwhile, Spain's Sánchez announced financial support of €200 million from Spain over the next five years to facilitate the development of green hydrogen projects in collaboration with Spanish companies. These European talks with Mauritania come amid increasing numbers of irregular migrants, with the migration issue dominating discussions in the upcoming European Parliament elections scheduled for June, amidst a growing anti-migration discourse in Europe.

Spain has witnessed a 300% increase in the number of irregular migrants arriving by sea, with most of them arriving via the Canary Islands, 83% of whom arrive via rubber boats launched from Mauritania, through which citizens of Mali cross.

Europeans see Mauritania as playing a role in promoting security and stability in the West African region, and blocking the passage of irregular migrants originating from Sahelian and desert countries who seek to reach European Union countries, starting from Spain. They aim to empower Mauritania with rewarding incentives for its efforts in this regard.

Mauritanian President Mohamed Ould Cheikh El Ghazouani stated that the flow of African migrants to Mauritania does not stop, putting pressure on local resources and populations, and calling for international support commensurate with the challenges arising from this situation in terms of refugee care and assistance to host communities.

Von der Leyen announced an increase in support for refugees and their host communities to meet the aspirations of the Mauritanian side, and Spanish Prime Minister announced his intention to double humanitarian aid to refugees in 2024.

The talks concluded with the three leaders expressing their concern about the increase in irregular migration to Europe, and the resulting suffering, violations, and loss of life. They pledged to enhance their cooperation to dismantle human trafficking networks and combat irregular migration while ensuring the protection and respect of the fundamental rights of migrants and asylum seekers.

It is worth mentioning that Spain announced the arrival of 7,250 irregular migrants during last January, arriving at the Canary Islands across the Atlantic Ocean, amidst an increase in departure trips from Mauritania, as well as flights for migrants from Mauritania, Morocco, Mali, and Kenya under the pretext of traveling to Latin American countries, which do not require a visa. However, once they arrive at Madrid airport, they discard their papers and apply for asylum, claiming they are at risk in their home countries.



TUNISIA IS SEARCHING FOR 17 MIGRANTS WHO DISAPPEARED DURING THEIR 'ILLEGAL JOURNEY'



The Tunisian National Guard has announced the disappearance of a boat engaged in illegal migration during its journey to Italy. The boat, which departed from the coast of Cap Angela in the northern state of Bizerte, carried 17 Tunisian irregular migrants. The journey began on the evening of February 5th in an attempt to cross the Mediterranean Sea and reach the Italian coast, but the boat vanished. The families of the migrants filed a report with the National Guard stating the loss of contact with their children after they entered Italian waters. Officials have announced efforts to communicate with the Italian side to search for the missing individuals. Tunisia is considered one of the main departure points for irregular migrants to Europe.

The International Organization for Migration announces the loss of 73 migrants since the beginning of the year, and the rescue of 1004 others off the coast of Libya



The International Organization for Migration announced the rescue of 442 migrants off the Libyan coast last week. The organization stated that between February 4th and 10th, 442 migrants were intercepted and returned to Libya, including 68 women and 25 children. It noted that 1004 irregular migrants have been rescued since the beginning of the current year, 2024, while 16 people have died, and 73 others are now classified as missing off the Libyan coast. In 2023, the total number of migrants rescued and returned reached 17,190 individuals.

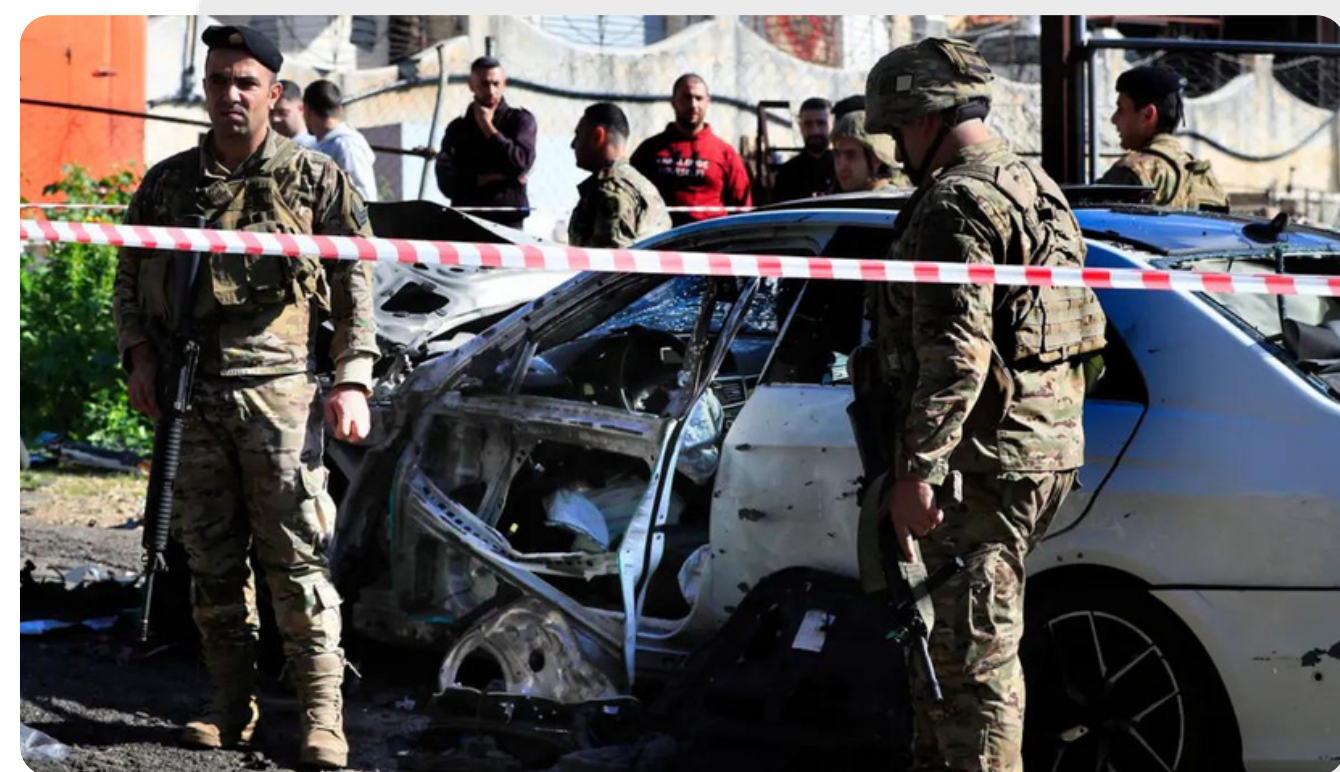
YEMEN: ARRIVAL OF 1700 SOMALI AND DJIBOUTIAN MIGRANTS DURING JANUARY

The United Nations International Organization for Migration stated that 1700 African migrants entered Yemen, and over 5000 expatriates returned during the month of January. The organization explained in its monthly report that the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) of the International Organization for Migration in Yemen recorded the entry of 1737 migrants into Yemen in January, compared to 1679 migrants in December 2023. The organization mentioned that 76% of all registered movements in January were exclusively recorded in Shabwah Governorate, noting that 89% of the arrivals came from Somalia, compared to 11% from Djibouti. The displacement matrix in Yemen also noted the departure of 282 migrants on an outbound journey from Yemen to their homeland during January, in a dangerous journey, compared to the deportation of 5 Somali migrants from Oman to Yemen. The organization also observed a decrease in the number of Yemeni returnees from Saudi Arabia during January, with 5148 Yemenis returning compared to 5092 Yemenis in December. Yemen continuously receives thousands of migrants, especially from Ethiopia and Somalia, with many aiming to transit through Yemen to Gulf countries, especially Saudi Arabia, to improve their living conditions.



ARREST OF A GANG FOR KIDNAPPING MIGRANTS IN LIBYA: CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES THE LIBERATION OF 79 ILLEGAL MIGRANTS, INCLUDING 14 WOMEN

The Criminal Investigation Department in Libya announced the arrest of a criminal gang composed of men and women involved in kidnapping illegal migrants and holding them in cells to demand ransom from their families. The Criminal Investigation Department stated that, during a qualitative security operation, they managed to liberate 79 illegal migrants, including 14 women, who were held for varying periods inside cells established by the gang to carry out their criminal activities. The department explained that the operation came after investigations revealed the existence of a criminal gang engaged in luring African migrants in the city of Sabha by deceiving them with promises of work, then detaining them inside cells and contacting their families to demand ransom. The department pointed out the location of the criminal gang's headquarters, situated in the "Abdul Kafi" neighborhood in the city of Sabha, where they were able to apprehend the gang consisting of two men and two women, in addition to freeing the detainees.



1509 IRREGULAR MIGRANTS CROSSED THE ENGLISH CHANNEL DURING 45 DAYS



The British Home Office stated that 1506 irregular migrants crossed the English Channel since the beginning of 2024, including 124 migrants who arrived last Saturday in 3 small boats. The Home Office indicated a decrease in the number of irregular migrants during that period compared to 2023, which saw 2072 migrants arriving, compared to 1339 migrants in 2022 during the same period. The Home Office mentioned that January 17th had the highest number of irregular migrants arriving in Britain, with 358 irregular migrants arriving, while the forces managed to intercept 171 migrants during the past week. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has made "stopping the boats" a key pledge of his leadership as the country approaches expected general elections later this year.

A parliamentary committee reiterates its rejection of the British government's plan to send migrants to Rwanda

The parliamentary human rights committee of British MPs has reiterated its rejection of the government's project regarding sending migrants to Rwanda. The committee warned that the government's latest bill to revive its plan to send migrants to Rwanda "does not align" with the country's commitments in the field of human rights. The bill has faced criticism from the opposition and various international bodies, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The government had introduced its project with the aim of reducing "irregular migration" to Britain by deporting migrants to a third country, namely Rwanda. However, the Supreme Court issued a ruling affirming that deporting asylum seekers to Kigali is illegal under international law. The joint human rights committee of Parliament expressed its concerns about several issues related to the plan in a new report. The proposed law does not comply with the European Convention on Human Rights, the 1951 UN Refugee Convention, and domestic human rights law. The committee warned that passing the law internationally poses a risk of "damaging" Britain's reputation in protecting rights and "encouraging other countries with less respect for international legal norms." The report also criticized allowing ministers, rather than judges, to determine whether a country like Rwanda is safe or not. The committee's rejection, comprising 12 members, comes after the House of Commons voted in favor of it last month. It is expected to be discussed by the House of Lords, which includes senior judges, next Monday.



AMERICAN REPORT: RE-ELECTING TRUMP WOULD SPREAD FEAR AMONG MILLIONS OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS AND UNDERMINE LOCAL ECONOMIES

The American news website "Axios" published a journalistic report about the re-election of Donald Trump. The report stated that former President Donald Trump's plan to launch a crackdown campaign on immigration includes using a range of tools to deport millions of people in the United States annually, starting from vague laws to military funding and law enforcement officers at various levels of government.

The report emphasized that history shows that such an effort would undermine communities and local economies across the United States and spread fear among millions of undocumented individuals. If Trump is re-elected, he intends to mobilize agents of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency alongside the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Drug Enforcement Administration, prosecutors, the National Guard, and even state and local law enforcement officers to deport immigrants without legal status.

The report pointed out that rapid deportations, currently designated for new crossers encountered near the border, would be expanded to apply to anyone who crosses the border illegally and cannot prove they have been living in the United States for more than two years.

The website explained that Trump would limit the usual multi-step deportation process by using a section of the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798 to immediately arrest and deport some immigrants with criminal histories, noting that the military would build large facilities near the border to detain awaiting deportees. The report noted that the deportation of undocumented immigrants evokes scenes from the 1950s when over a million undocumented Mexican migrants were deported during President Dwight Eisenhower's tenure.

Trump has made similar promises in the past, but deportation levels during his presidency never reached those of his predecessor, Barack Obama.



CYPRUS CALLS FOR COOPERATION WITH MIGRATION SOURCE COUNTRIES AND CONSIDERS SYRIA A SAFE ZONE



Cyprus stated that the European Union needs to adopt a comprehensive approach and reconsider the imposed ban on deportation operations to Syria to address illegal migration, affirming that spending on illegal migration will not stop it. Cyprus has been suffering from an increase in the influx of illegal migrants in recent years, either by sea from neighboring Syria and Lebanon or through a now closed gap in the ceasefire line separating the island's two halves. Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades said, "If we really want to deal with the migration issue, it's not through money or measures to deal with the phenomenon itself," calling for cooperation with countries from which migrants originate. Cyprus is about 185 kilometers west of Lebanon and Syria and witnessed a more than fourfold increase in the number of arrivals from both countries last year. Cyprus demands that the European Union declare Syria a safe zone, which would allow authorities to deport arrivals from there.

PROTEST BY DETAINED MIGRANTS IN ITALIAN SHELTERS ACTIVISTS: CENTERS SUFFER FROM FOOD SHORTAGES, BED BUGS INFESTATION, AND DETAINEES CONTRACTING SCABIES CENTER WORKER: THERE IS NO SOAP... AND DETAINEES HAVE NOT "SHOWERED" ALL SUMMER.

Detained migrants staged a protest at an immigration detention center in Milan, northern Italy, due to the scarcity of food and medical care provided to them. Two migrants stood in the rain, half-naked in the winter cold, as raindrops fell on the courtyard of the repatriation center to express their suffering from the shortage of food and medical care provided to them.

Activists confirmed that two migrants in the center were transferred to the infirmary: one with a clear leg fracture and the other, a minor, in a critical condition. The protests that took place on February 10th and 11th were captured on video and posted by the "No ai Cpr" association, which opposes the establishment of permanent centers for repatriation.

Activists submitted a memorandum of objection, stating that "some immigrant detainees were stripped of their clothes in the rain and left there for several hours without anyone listening to them, including officers and staff."

The association cited complaints from nearly 50 individuals regarding the detention conditions, adding that many of them had spots all over their bodies, questioning whether it was scabies, bedbugs, or poisoning. They stated that these individuals only receive treatment if they are lucky enough to reach the hospital, adding that the only medicines they are not deprived of are painkillers.

A healthcare worker explained that during the summer, soap was sometimes not provided, and therefore, "in reality, bathing did not occur." Activists wrote that, "in addition to suffering literal hunger as immigrants claim the food is unfit for consumption, and the alternative is to buy biscuits, families are not allowed to bring cooked food from outside, only packaged."

Sources from the Italian police headquarters stated that the subsequent intervention by riot police officers was necessary because the immigrants who were protesting outside the immigrant center in Milan were about to incite a small rebellion inside. This was documented by police leadership through videos that will be sent to the prosecutor's office.

It is worth mentioning that repatriation detention centers, designed for the deportation of immigrants, were established in 1998, where foreign citizens are detained pending the execution of deportation orders from Italian territories. Deportation may occur due to the lack of a valid residency permit or based on a decision by the judicial authority.

Although designed to be temporary residence facilities, the detention period is often very long, as the enforcement of deportation decrees is extremely complicated, due to the lack of bilateral agreements between Italy and many countries to which detainees must return.



THE DEATH OF 13 TUNISIAN MIGRANTS AND THE DISAPPEARANCE OF 27 OTHERS OFF THE TUNISIAN COAST

A Tunisian judicial spokesperson reported that 13 Sudanese migrants have perished while the search continues for 27 others on Thursday, having drowned off the eastern coast of Tunisia after their boat capsized.

The spokesperson for the Monastir Court, Farid Ben Jha, stated that 42 migrants departed from the shores of Jebniana area in the governorate of Sfax, eastern Tunisia. However, the boat was in distress, and only two migrants were rescued, with the number of missing migrants rising from 17 to 27.

Tunisia, along with Libya, serves as a primary departure point for thousands of migrants seeking to reach Europe.

The Tunisian National Guard had intercepted 69,963 migrants until November 2023, compared to 31,297 during the same period in 2022.

The International Organization for Migration estimated the number of deaths in 2023 at over 2,270 individuals in the Mediterranean Sea while attempting to reach European shores illegally, marking a 60% increase from the previous year.

It is worth noting that more than 25 million Sudanese have been affected by the ongoing war between the Sudanese army and the Rapid Support Forces for the past 10 months, leading to the displacement of approximately 10 million people, with 1.5 million crossing the borders into neighboring countries.

The current war in Sudan has caused one of the worst displacement crises globally, with Sudanese refugees constituting around 12% of the total displaced population worldwide.

