

THE NEWSCAST

INDEPENDENT ORGANIZATION INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS WELCOMES 354 MALE AND FEMALE TRAINEES

"In the context of youth empowerment, job creation, and economic empowerment for youth, women, and refugees, the Independent Institute for International Affairs organized 11 training batches during the months of January and February, with the participation of 354 trainees, both male and female. These training courses are part of the Workshop Program launched by the institute to combat illegal migration, which is scheduled to continue during the upcoming month of March. The training courses diversified during January and February, divided into three parts: the first focusing on personal development and self-improvement, followed by training on professional workshops, which varied between leather industries, the art of embroidery, and the use of punch needles. Finally, the third stage involved e-marketing, entrepreneurship, how to conduct feasibility studies for projects, and developing plans for project success, along with creating marketing programs for their products to ensure the continuity of their work. The Warsha aims to combat illegal migration by changing the lives of participating trainees through creating alternative job opportunities, encouraging them to establish small businesses, and subsequently empowering them economically. The program initially launched in Cairo during its first and second sessions, with plans to extend its activities to other governorates. The courses witnessed significant participation from girls, women, men, and a number of Sudanese refugees, lasting for 140 hours in January and an additional 115 training hours in February. Dr. Basma Fouad, the Chairperson of the institute's Board of Directors, stated that the Workshop Program is an interactive training program aimed at combating illegal migration by developing self-skills and creating alternative job opportunities. She further added that during January and February, they conducted training courses in which 354 men and women from Egypt and Sudan participated, emphasizing that the training program targets various handicrafts, enabling participants to provide a steady source of income, such as leather manufacturing and the art of embroidery, after enhancing their skills and personal development to manage and market their businesses electronically. Fouad announced the expansion of the Workshop Program to various Egyptian governorates in the coming months."



EUROPE STARTS PROTECTING ITS BORDERS WITH "AIRCRAFT"

Britain has announced its intention to sign an agreement with the European Border and Coast Guard Agency "Frontex" to collaborate in combating illegal migration.

The agreement is scheduled to be signed tomorrow, Friday, as announced by the British Home Office. The agreement stipulates the exchange of intelligence information between "Frontex" and the British Border Force to assist in combating human trafficking gangs. Additionally, it involves cooperation in developing new technologies such as the use of drones to protect borders.

The Director-General of the British Border Force, Phil Douglas, and the Executive Director of "Frontex," Fabrice Leggeri, are expected to officially sign the agreement in London.

This comes as British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak reaffirmed his government's priority to halt illegal migration across the English Channel.

British Home Secretary James Cleverly considers organized immigration crimes and human trafficking to be global challenges requiring shared solutions and ambitions. He emphasizes that the working arrangements between the United Kingdom and Frontex are a crucial and historic step in addressing illegal migration, securing borders, and stopping boats.

The British Home Office worked to reduce small boat crossings in the English Channel by a third last year, which decreased the number of migrants despite an increase in migrants in EU countries.

The agreement between Britain and the European Union provides a means for exchanging intelligence information, with a commitment to close cooperation to address organized immigration crimes and secure borders against illegal migration, whether in the Channel or along the EU's borders or beyond.



TUNISIA: ORGANIZERS OF "ILLEGAL MIGRATION" OPERATIONS APPREHENDED



The Tunisian National Guard announced the arrest of 5 individuals involved in organizing illegal migration operations in the city of Jebeniana in the Sfax Governorate on Thursday.

An official statement stated that a joint patrol succeeded in apprehending 5 individuals involved in illegal migration operations, and their involvement in networks specialized in manufacturing iron boats used in these operations was confirmed. They have been referred to the public prosecutor's office to take legal action against the suspects.

Italy: Commemoration of 94 Migrants Revived After a Year of Their Ship Sinking



Survivors and relatives of victims of a tragic shipwreck off the southern coast of Italy, which claimed the lives of 94 migrants, including 35 minors, commemorated the incident to demand justice.

The memorial commemorating the victims of illegal migration came a year after the ship sank near the shores of Italy. Locals emphasized that despite a year passing since the massacre, the truth about the ship's sinking, which victims hailed from Middle Eastern and South Asian countries, has not been determined.

The wooden boat, named "Samar Love," departed from Turkey on February 26, 2023, carrying 200 migrants. However, as they approached the coast of Calabria, Italy, their boat sank while attempting to land on the beach near the coastal resort of Sticcato di Cotrone. Only 80 migrants survived, while 94 perished, and others went missing, including children and women. It's worth noting that 400 associations urged the Italian government to investigate the shipwreck, which is one of the deadliest sinking incidents off the Italian coast. However, Italian Prime Minister Georgia Meloni issued a decree introducing a new crime - human trafficking resulting in the deaths of migrants - punishable by up to 30 years in prison. She pledged to intensify efforts against illegal migration.

THE SAUDI MINISTRY OF INTERIOR ANNOUNCES THE ARREST OF MORE THAN 18,000 EXPATRIATES WITHIN A WEEK

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia witnessed extensive joint field campaigns to monitor and apprehend violators of residency, work, and border security regulations across all regions of the kingdom.

These efforts resulted in the apprehension of 19,431 violators, who were found to be in violation of residency, border security, and work regulations, reflecting the firmness and determination in law enforcement and protecting the state's borders.

The nationalities of those apprehended while attempting to cross the borders illegally varied, with the majority being from Yemen and Ethiopia. This highlights the challenges of illegal migration facing the kingdom and the urgent need to intensify security efforts to address this phenomenon.

The Ministry of Interior emphasized the penalties for anyone facilitating or supporting violators of regulations, stating that any assistance to violators will not go unpunished. Penalties include imprisonment for up to 15 years and substantial fines, reinforcing the legal deterrent system against illegal migration and covering up for violators.



THE YEAR 2023 WAS THE BLOODIEST IN THE CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN SINCE 2017

Twenty-two humanitarian organizations working in the field of illegal migration stated that the year 2023 was the bloodiest year in the Central Mediterranean region since 2017, with 2,500 people drowning or missing during it.

The European humanitarian organizations warned of increasing death tolls during the current year and accused the Italian government of exacerbating the humanitarian disaster on the deadliest migration route in the world. They claimed that the government hindered the activities of non-governmental search and rescue organizations instead of enhancing rescue capabilities.

Twenty-two non-governmental organizations involved in maritime rescue missions published a statement to draw attention to the deteriorating conditions of migrants. They called on the European Union and its member states to respect international maritime law and human rights and to stop obstructing the work of rescue ships in the Mediterranean Sea.



INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION LAUNCHES ITS DEVELOPMENT PLAN IN 2024 AND CONFIRMS: 2.2 MILLION MIGRANTS NEED HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE



The International Organization for Migration stated that 2.2 million migrants in several countries require humanitarian assistance. Initial estimates indicate that these aids require \$112.2 million in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, the United Republic of Tanzania, and Yemen.

This came in a report titled "Regional Plan for Responding to Migrants 2024," issued by the organization. The plan aims to meet the humanitarian needs and urgent protection needs of migrants and host communities along the Eastern and Southern migration routes from the African continent to Yemen and Southern Africa.

The plan, coordinated by the International Organization for Migration and launched by 48 organizations, aims to provide a balanced response that combines immediate life-saving assistance with long-term development measures to address migration drivers.

The report highlighted that Sudan represents the largest displacement crisis in the world, despite the ongoing displacement issue for the past 20 years, rooted in the Darfur conflict that began in 2003. However, the current conflict that erupted in April 2023 has radically reshaped the dynamics of displacement.

The Albanian Parliament approves hosting "Illegal Migrants in Italy"

The Albanian Parliament, on Thursday, approved the agreement between the Albanian government, the Italian government, regarding hosting two reception centers for migrants rescued in Italian waters.

The agreement received the support of 77 deputies out of a total of 140 parliamentarians, with the opposition boycotting the voting process.

Prime Minister Edi Rama stated, "Albania stands alongside Italy by choosing to act as a member state of the European Union, affirming that Tirana is helping to confront a danger that transcends divisions, as Europe must face it uniformly as an integrated family."

However, the opposition believes that the migration agreement harms national security, territorial integrity, and public interest. The agreement allows for the construction of two centers near the Albanian port of Shëngjin, managed by the Italian government, accommodating 3000 migrants. Asylum requests will be registered, and a facility in a nearby area will host those awaiting a response to their applications.

The Parliament's approval came weeks after Italian MPs voted in favor of the agreement, with the Chamber of Deputies supporting it with a majority of 155 votes in favor, 115 against, and two abstentions.

Italy is expected to fund the construction costs of the two centers and the necessary facilities, as well as cover the expenses of providing security and healthcare for asylum seekers, according to Albanian authorities.



INTERPOL HAS DISMANTLED AN INTERNATIONAL NETWORK INVOLVED IN SMUGGLING MIGRANTS

Interpol announced the dismantling of one of the largest networks involved in smuggling migrants across the English Channel, with 19 individuals arrested in Germany, including the network leader and four key coordinators.

This operation was conducted in cooperation with the German, French, and Belgian police forces. The EU law enforcement agency, Interpol, stated that the investigation focused on an Iraqi Kurdish network suspected of smuggling migrants from the Middle East and East Africa from France to the United Kingdom using low-quality inflatable boats.

The investigations began at the end of 2022 after monitoring the purchase, storage, and transportation of the inflatable boats used later for smuggling migrants from the shores near the French city of Calais to Britain.

Interpol revealed that each boat carried 50 migrants, despite having a capacity of only 10 people, and migrants were charged between one to three thousand euros (\$1,081 - \$3,242) each.



EGYPT: AN INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM REPORT REVEALS BROKERS SMUGGLING PLAYERS IN TURKEY

The newspaper Al-Youm Al-Sabea published an investigation titled "Brokers of Loss", which tells the story of smuggling children who are sports enthusiasts to Europe through human trafficking mafias. The investigation focused on the recruitment of children who love football, tantalizing them with dreams of reaching international fame, only to become victims of smugglers. Their aspirations ended up in "dishwashing, construction work, and cleaning."

The investigation uncovered how football players fell victim to scams involving forged professional contracts in Turkish clubs, suffering from monopolistic contracts that do not guarantee them "their daily bread" and prevent them from returning to Egypt, forcing them into inhumane living conditions where ten players share a single room. Consequently, they are compelled to escape and engage in illegal work in restaurants and shops.

Additionally, the investigation discussed the issue of Egyptian players fleeing, especially those who participated in the Olympics, raising questions about whether Egypt is being targeted to drain its talents, especially with some of them representing countries they fled to after acquiring their citizenship.

The investigation also explained the special exceptions for international player transfers, as well as Article 6 of Law No. 82 of 2016, which deals with combating illegal migration and migrant smuggling. Furthermore, the investigation presented a summary of a study published by the scientific journal of applied research in sports, under the auspices of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, regarding the phenomenon of player flight and the naturalization of Egyptian athletes. The study acknowledged that the flight of Egyptian players reached 42 athletes recently.

The investigation attributed the emergence of the phenomenon of naturalizing Egyptian athletes to the neglect and lack of attention from the media towards some individual sports. It noted that some individual sports lack the financial capability to spend on champions, making them susceptible to playing under the name of any other country, either through naturalization or citizenship acquisition. The financial temptations offered by other countries to sports champions are significant, coupled with the limited financial resources of some federations in providing healthcare for injured athletes.



LIBYA: DEPORTATION OF 75 EGYPTIAN MIGRANTS



Libya: Deportation of 95 Migrants to Egypt and Pakistan
The Illegal Immigration Combat Department in Libya announced the deportation of 95 migrants to Egypt and Pakistan. Last Thursday, 75 irregular migrants of Egyptian nationality were deported through the Asmda land border crossing.

The Illegal Immigration Combat Department stated that 20 irregular migrants of Pakistani nationality were deported to the Qanfouda shelter center, in preparation for their deportation through the Benina International Airport in Benghazi.

The International Organization for Migration had previously reported the rescue and repatriation of 442 migrants to Libya during the first days of February, raising the total number of irregular migrants returned to 1004 since the beginning of the year.

Among the migrants repatriated, there were 68 women and 25 children rescued off the western coast of Libya. The total number of intercepted and returned migrants to Libya reached 1004, including 31 children. In contrast, 17,190 migrants were rescued in 2023, with 962 recorded deaths and 1536 cases of disappearance last year.

IN A RESEARCH REPORT: THE MAJORITY OF AMERICANS SUPPORT BUILDING A BARRIER BETWEEN AMERICA AND MEXICO

In a research report, Monmouth University revealed that the majority of Americans now support building a wall along the border between the United States and Mexico. The poll found that 61% of Americans say that illegal immigration is a "very serious problem" before the 2024 election, and 61% of Americans say that migrants seeking asylum at the border should be forced to stay in Mexico while their requests are processed, while only 35% believe they should be allowed to enter the United States while waiting.

The survey found that 53% of respondents support building the wall on the southern border, while only 46% oppose it. Politicians view this as the first time a majority of Americans have supported the border wall since Monmouth University began polling on the issue in 2015.

It is worth mentioning that 7.2 million illegal immigrants have entered the United States during the Biden administration, a number exceeding the population of 36 states. Monmouth conducted its survey by phone, interviewing 902 American adults from February 9 to 12.

In a related context, another survey by Gallup showed that 55% of Americans believe that large numbers of immigrants entering the United States illegally pose a serious threat to the country's interests, compared to the previous high of 50% in 2004.

According to a report from the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office, high immigration rates may help offset the effects of slowing birth rates in the United States. The report stated that the growth of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2023 was faster than expected partly because immigration led to an increase in the workforce. The Congressional Budget Office expects the workforce to grow by 5.2 million workers by 2033, largely due to immigration, adding \$7 trillion to the US economic output.

