

THE NEWSCAST

"THE CAIRO CRIMINAL COURT POSTPONES THE TRIAL OF 16 DEFENDANTS IN 'CRIMINAL ORGANIZATION FOR SMUGGLING MIGRANTS'."

The Cairo Criminal Court has decided to postpone the trial of 16 defendants accused of smuggling migrants to May 13th. They are accused of establishing a criminal organization aimed at smuggling migrants.

The referral order of the defendants to the Criminal Court reveals that they, along with others, previously established a criminal organization for the purpose of smuggling migrants. This organization consisted of several individuals and operated according to a specific structure, which involved managing the group, distributing tasks, recruiting migrants, and issuing assignments to other members of the organization. The primary goal was to directly benefit financially from each migrant.

According to the report, the defendants committed the crime of migrant smuggling, and this organized criminal group collaborated with a non-national organization to arrange the air travel of migrants from Egypt to the United States, in violation of the necessary conditions for lawful entry into the receiving country. This action posed a threat to the lives of the migrants, subjecting them to danger, humiliation, and inhumane treatment.



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS: MIGRANTS IN LIBYA ARE AT RISK AT THE HANDS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKERS

UN Secretary-General António Guterres stated that "migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in Libya are exposed to serious risks at the hands of human trafficking networks and other criminal networks." He called for comprehensive and impartial investigations into all reported human rights violations inside Libyan detention centers and urged for the release of detainees held unlawfully. Guterres expressed concern over deportation and collective expulsion of migrants and asylum seekers under inhumane conditions.

He also called for the repeal of laws criminalizing irregular entry and stay and advocated for non-custodial measures as alternatives to detention. Guterres emphasized the need to allow UN missions, agencies, funds, and programs unrestricted access to migrant detention centers.

According to the International Organization for Migration, the number of migrants in Libya reached 706,369 in December 2023, including approximately 10% children. Until March 15th, Libyan coastguards intercepted 3,311 migrants and refugees at sea and returned them to Libya. Additionally, 558 other deaths were reported along the Libyan coast from January 1st to March 25th, 2024. Migrants and refugees landing in Libyan ports accessible to UN humanitarian agencies received life-saving humanitarian assistance. As of March 20th, around 3,427 migrants and refugees were detained in official detention centers across Libya, including 348 children.



ON CHARGES OF SMUGGLING MIGRANTS TO EGYPT: AGGRAVATED IMPRISONMENT FOR A SUDANESE SMUGGLER



The Cairo Criminal Court, located in Fifth Settlement, issued its verdict sentencing a Sudanese national to 3 years of imprisonment and a fine of one million Egyptian pounds for his involvement in smuggling migrants from Nigeria to Egyptian territories.

According to the referral order of case No. 5045 for the year 2023 in Qasr El Nil Criminal Court, registered as No. 334 for the year 2023 in Central Cairo, the two defendants committed the crime of migrant smuggling, which has a transnational nature. They arranged the illegal transportation of a migrant from Nigeria to Egyptian territories by conspiring together. The referral order also stated that the second defendant planned the smuggling operation, took on the role of managing the process, and coordinated communication with his accomplices involved in smuggling migrants across the border between Egypt and Sudan.

Cyprus suspends consideration of Syrian asylum applications



The Cypriot authorities have suspended the consideration of asylum applications from Syrians following an increase in the number of irregular migrants during the current month of April. More than a thousand Syrians arrived in Cyprus on boats coming from Lebanon until April of this year. This prompted the Cypriot President, Nicosia, to call on its European Union partners to make more efforts to assist Lebanon and reconsider the situation in war-torn Syria, which is currently deemed unsafe for the return of asylum seekers.

Cyprus is located on the eastern edge of the European Union, approximately 160 kilometers west of the shores of Lebanon or Syria. More than a thousand migrants arrived by sea in the first three months of this year compared to just 78 during the same period in 2023.

Under the Cypriot decision, asylum seekers will be confined to two reception camps providing food and shelter without any other benefits. Those leaving these camps will not be allowed to work or receive any allowances.

Currently, discussions are underway at the European Commission on how Brussels can assist Beirut in halting these flows, as Lebanon struggles with a severe financial crisis and an increase in the influx of hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees.

FRANCE COMPLETES ITS MILITARY OPERATIONS TO ELIMINATE COMOROS IMMIGRANTS IN MAYOTTE

The French Overseas Territories Ministry has announced the launch of a new operation against security breaches, illegal migration, and unhealthy housing on the island of Mayotte in the Indian Ocean, one year after the start of the initial intervention known as "Wamusho."

According to French newspapers, approximately 1,700 gendarmes, police officers, and soldiers will participate in this 11-week operation.

Operation Wamusho began on April 25th, 2023, on the French island of Mayotte in the Indian Ocean by French authorities to deport illegal migrants from the island, most of whom come from neighboring Comoros Islands, as well as dismantling shanty towns.

It's worth mentioning that many African migrants and immigrants from the Comoros Islands attempt to reach the archipelago illegally each year, with half of its population being foreigners. Migrants from the nearby island of Anjouan, Comoros, are just 70 kilometers away from Mayotte. However, France has reinforced its forces since 2019 to combat this irregular migration by deploying interception ships at sea and enforcing aerial surveillance.



6265 IMMIGRANTS CROSSED THE ENGLISH CHANNEL IN 4 MONTHS

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak remains firm on the law to deport asylum seekers in the UK to Rwanda if they arrive without permission, despite the UK Supreme Court affirming that deporting migrants and asylum seekers from its territory is "unlawful."

Sunak and Rwandan President Paul Kagame recently met, where they announced the imminent dispatch of illegal migrants from Britain to Rwanda.

A spokesperson for the British government stated that Sunak briefed President Kagame on "the next stages of legislation in Parliament," which is currently subject to significant controversy. The spokesperson added that "Sunak and Kagame look forward to commencing flights departing for Rwanda in the spring."

The British Prime Minister had announced a series of measures to reduce legal immigration rates to 300,000 people after reaching 745,000 immigrants in 2022. He pledged to prevent individuals from undertaking the perilous Channel crossing, a route where 29,000 people arrived last year, with a record-breaking 45,775 migrants in 2022.

The British government revealed the discovery of 6,265 attempts by illegal migrants to cross the English Channel until last Sunday, with 10 boats carrying 534 migrants in a single day.

Britain has allocated £200 million to Rwanda for the resettlement of illegal migrants there, despite the European judges banning the first deportation flight in June 2022. Currently, Britain spends over £3 billion annually on processing asylum applications, with the cost of accommodating migrants awaiting decisions in hotels and other accommodation reaching around £8 million per day. Approximately 100,000 asylum applications remain undecided.



POLITICIANS: ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES THAT EGYPT IS CONCERNED WITH



Political experts specialized in Egyptian migration issues agree that illegal migration is one of the most important files that the Egyptian state is concerned with, giving it significant importance due to its extreme sensitivity, especially after the tensions witnessed in the Middle East region. They also agree that Egypt has become a haven for refugees from Sudan, Syria, Libya, and Palestine, as Egypt has received over 10 million refugees from various nationalities in recent years. Dr. Tarek Fahmy, a professor of political science at Cairo University, says that Egypt is steadily progressing in completing its path in the file of illegal migration, noting Egypt's success in closing its maritime borders against illegal migration trips. He added that the coming period will witness strength in Egyptian-European relations, and it is natural that there will be joint European investments through economic partnerships and European investments in Egypt.

On the other hand, Dr. Akram Badr al-Din, a professor of political science, says that illegal migration is always a problem that worries Western countries and Mediterranean countries, pointing out that its spread is due to conflicts, internal wars, and subsequent economic crises. He added that Egypt has made great efforts to control regional waters, thus no illegal migration operations have emerged from Egypt in recent years. This matter concerns the whole world because it is linked to the issue of terrorism, emphasizing the necessity of cooperation in the economic field and the establishment of joint projects and more investments between Egypt and Europe to reduce the risk of illegal migration to Europe.

Dr. Ayman Samir, a professor of international relations and a political expert, said that Egypt has a comprehensive vision to solve the issue of illegal migration, noting that Egypt is making every effort to limit illegal migration to Europe. Egypt has agreed with the European Union that migration must be within its legal frameworks.

The professor of international relations explained that Israel contributes to exacerbating the phenomenon of illegal migration through the war on the Gaza Strip because the result of the war pushes thousands to leave the Gaza Strip and search for safe areas away from the war. Consequently, the destruction of the sector, infrastructure, and homes makes it an inhuman area, leading to migration.

97 African refugees arrive in Italy by air...Monday

The Catholic group of Sant'Egidio announced the arrival of 97 refugees from Ethiopia at Rome's Leonardo da Vinci International Airport in Fiumicino suburb, aboard an Ethiopian Airlines flight from Addis Ababa, as part of the humanitarian corridors project promoted by the Italian Bishops' Conference in collaboration with local and foreign ministries.

A memo from the Catholic group stated that "the 97 individuals, mostly Eritrean and Somali refugees in Ethiopia for some time," had been "partially reported on by their family members or friends already in Italy," some of whom "previously arrived through humanitarian corridors."

Some of the arriving families were welcomed by their relatives, while others will be hosted in homes provided by the civil society support network, enabling this widespread reception in eight Italian provinces: Lazio, Abruzzo, Campania, Emilia-Romagna, Liguria, Lombardy, Sicily, and Tuscany. Minors will be integrated through immediate enrollment in schools, while adults will learn the Italian language and, upon obtaining refugee status, enter the workforce.

The arrival of the 97 refugees is part of a plan announced by the Catholic group targeting the arrival of 300 migrant workers as part of a pilot project led by the Sant'Egidio Catholic group in collaboration with the Ministry of the Interior, under the title "Labor Corridors Project." The project aims to address the labor shortage in the Italian manufacturing, hospitality, and nursing sectors, with targeted countries including Lebanon, Ivory Coast, and Ethiopia.



A GLOBAL APPEAL TO PROVIDE \$112 MILLION TO SUPPORT 2.1 MILLION MIGRANTS

Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades expressed extreme concern in recent weeks following the arrival of over 600 irregular migrants from Lebanon within two days. Syrian migrants left Lebanon for Cyprus, seeking refuge from the ongoing severe economic crisis in the country, along with improved weather conditions facilitating navigation in the Mediterranean.

After meeting with the President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola, the Cypriot President stated, "I fully understand the challenges faced by Lebanon, but exporting migrants to Cyprus should not be the solution and cannot be accepted."

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) issued a global appeal, joined by 48 humanitarian, development organizations, and governments, calling for \$112 million to provide necessary support for 2.1 million migrants and their host communities in East and South Africa, including Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, Yemen, Kenya, and Tanzania.

This appeal follows the tragedy that occurred last week off the coast of Djibouti, where their boat sank during a journey to Yemen, resulting in the deaths of 38 migrants, including children. Augushie Daniels, Deputy Director of IOM Operations, emphasized the need to provide necessary support for humanitarian aid and protection for migrants across East and South Africa.

He pointed out that tens of thousands of migrants annually leave the Horn of Africa region, especially Ethiopia and Somalia, seeking work in the Gulf countries through the East African route. Additionally, migrants attempt to reach South Africa through Kenya, Tanzania, and other countries in the Southern African region, taking some of the most dangerous and complex routes.

In 2023, 480,000 migration movements were recorded along these routes. Migrants face various violations, exploitation, and trafficking.

The appeal aims to provide the necessary funds to support and rescue these migrants and facilitate their voluntary return to their home countries while addressing the root causes of migration by providing livelihood opportunities and reintegrating them into their communities.

The Interior Minister confirmed that "all indicators suggest that the flow of migrants will continue," with the situation exacerbated by the Lebanese authorities' decreased focus on stopping migration from their coasts in recent months amid escalating tensions on the Lebanese-Israeli border. Ewanou added that Cyprus also wants EU aid to Lebanon to be conditional on stopping the influx of migrants.

Cyprus is only 160 kilometers away from Lebanon, and around 2,004 migrants arrived in Cyprus by sea in the first three months of this year, compared to only 78 in the same period in 2023, according to official data. Interviews with refugees have shown that human traffickers charge \$3,000 for a single journey to Cyprus, compared to \$7,000 to Italy.

Cyprus is urging the European Union to consider Syria as a safe country so that Syrian migrants can be returned there.



SPANISH PARLIAMENT APPROVES HALF A MILLION ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS OBTAINING CITIZENSHIP

The Spanish Senate is deliberating the fate of half a million undocumented immigrants after the Spanish Congress approved a bill in favor of immigrants, allowing them to obtain Spanish citizenship. The bill, which was discussed last week, was supported by parties in the left-wing liberal government, as well as the opposition Popular Party, while the conservative Vox party opposed it.

The opposition party believes that allowing immigrants to gain benefits will encourage others to migrate illegally to Spain, while supporters of the bill argue that immigration should be addressed in a smart and reasonable manner, and that a country like Spain "needs thousands of immigrants" to maintain current productivity levels.

It is worth noting that if the resolution project, dubbed "exceptional settlement," is executed, it would be the seventh time in Spain's history to regularize the status of immigrants, as it was implemented in 1991, 1996, 2000, 2001, and 2005, collectively regulating more than a million undocumented immigrants.

The Congress is currently studying the text, which may undergo amendments or additions proposed by parliamentary groups before sending it to the Senate for final approval. If it reaches the Senate, where Socialists and their regional allies and the People's Party occupy 260 out of 266 seats, the likelihood of its passage appears high.



AN AMERICAN OFFICIAL ATTACKS CHINESE AND RUSSIAN IMMIGRANTS...AND CONFIRMS: THEY ARE CARRYING OUT ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES



The city of Oklahoma, located in the state of Texas, has announced its efforts to curb illegal immigration, with Charles McCool, the Speaker of the House, unveiling an immigration bill aimed at reducing irregular migration. He emphasized that it's not limited to those who illegally cross the southern border, but also targets migrants from around the world engaging in illegal activities, specifically pointing out Chinese and Russian immigrants.

He stated that in recent years, the state has dealt with an influx of foreign criminal activity following the legalization of medical marijuana, which brought a lot of illegal activity into their state related to human trafficking and exporting marijuana for non-medical purposes.

The proposed law aims to limit "unlawful occupation," with anyone caught in the state illegally facing a fine of \$500. McCool clarified that the law enforcement won't deport the offenders but will give them three days to leave the state. He added that failure to leave Oklahoma within 72 hours and facing a subsequent crime could also result in imprisonment, highlighting that illegal immigration is the primary political concern among Oklahoma residents, but the issue extends beyond the state, and others may follow suit.

McCool further stated that the legislation is also written in a way that he believes other states in the region could adopt, proposing a regional solution within the United States instead of each state dealing with the crisis individually.

Tunisia announces that the bodies of drowned people have exceeded the capacity of the mortuary department in the city hospital

A former official from the Algerian Ministry of Interior warned of a destructive plan called "Kalergi" to transport African migrants to his country in order to make the indigenous population a minority, similar to what happened in southern Libya. Hassan Qasimi, a security expert and specialist in migration issues in Algeria, stated in a Facebook post titled "Niger: Kingdom of Migrant Trafficking and Human Trafficking" that the authorities in Niger intentionally turned the city of Agadez into a migration center through which more than 500,000 migrants pass annually to travel to Libya, Algeria, and Tunisia.

An official in the health sector in Sfax, Tunisia, mentioned that the bodies of drowned migrants have exceeded the capacity of the morgue at the city's hospital by three times, with the number of bodies surpassing 100, while the morgue's capacity is only 35 bodies.

The coasts of Sfax are a main platform for the launch of irregular migration boats towards the nearby Italian islands. However, with the arrival of warm spring weather, human trafficking gangs and migration boats become more active, resulting in recurring tragic drowning incidents involving migrants, mostly from sub-Saharan African countries, including women and children.

Additionally, an official in Sfax stated that the cemeteries are facing pressure due to the large number of bodies during the peak of migration waves. Local authorities suffer from a shortage of logistical capabilities to preserve bodies for longer periods, including conducting DNA tests and providing graves.

Last week, authorities announced the formation of a "crisis cell" to deal with the situation after the coasts of Tunisia witnessed the death of more than 1,300 migrants by drowning in 2023.

It is worth noting that the European Parliament approved extensive reforms to immigration and asylum laws in the European Union last Wednesday, including stricter border controls. The new "Migration and Asylum Agreement" includes 10 laws formulated after years of negotiations, aiming to push EU member states with differing national priorities to "act together" on migration issues based on common rules.

Under the new system, border centers will detain illegal migrants, while their asylum requests undergo examination, with the acceleration of deportations for those not qualifying for asylum.

Reforming the immigration and asylum system requires other EU member states to accept thousands of asylum seekers from first-entry countries like Italy and Greece. Another option available to these other states is to provide financial or other resources to countries under pressure. It is expected that at least 30,000 asylum seekers annually will undergo a "resettlement" system. A financial compensation will be determined annually amounting to 600 million euros (650 million dollars) for countries preferring to pay money instead of receiving migrants.

Criticism has been directed at the recent European agreement by groups advocating for more liberal policies on immigration and asylum. The agreement includes establishing border centers to detain asylum seekers and sending some of them to countries outside the European Union deemed safe.

Furthermore, it was reminded that the transitional authorities in Niger abolished a law in 2015 criminalizing migrant trafficking, considering this action a violation of the International Palermo Agreement of 2000, including its additional protocols combating migrant trafficking and human trafficking. These illegal measures also target Europe by increasing the number of migrants heading to Italy through Tunisia and Libya. It was pointed out that the most dangerous aspect is that Niger collaborates with smuggling networks to guide and accompany migrants from Sahel countries and the Economic Community of West African States to Algeria, Libya, Tunisia, and Europe.

Revenue from migrant trafficking and human trafficking networks in Africa exceeds one billion dollars annually, explaining the tactical alliance between armed groups, terrorist organizations, weapons and drug networks, mine workers, hallucinogens, and some active authorities in sub-Saharan countries behind this trade.

The International Organization for Migration has observed a 50% increase in new migration waves originating from Niger towards Libyan territories since last December, directly attributed to the Niger military council's repeal of the law criminalizing human trafficking across borders.

