

THE NEWSCAST

THE CRIMINAL COURT ISSUES DETERRENT SENTENCES OF LIFE IMPRISONMENT AND SEVERE IMPRISONMENT AGAINST 35 DEFENDANTS IN THE CASE OF HUMAN SMUGGLING

In a deterrent ruling against the human smuggling mafia and illegal immigration, the Appellate Criminal Court for Terrorism and Human Trafficking Crimes, presided over by Judge Khaled Al-Shabasi, sentenced 35 defendants to penalties ranging from life imprisonment to 5 years of severe imprisonment. This decision follows the sinking of a Libyan boat off the coast of Greece at the end of last year, which was carrying 281 people of various nationalities, including 8 Egyptians.

Case Background:The court reviewed the case of 36 defendants from the illegal immigration mafia involved in the sinking of the Libyan boat that resulted in the death of a large number of its passengers, including 3 Egyptians, while 5 other Egyptians were rescued. Case documents revealed that the mafia leader, a Libyan national married to an Egyptian woman, was assisted by his brother-in-law, an Egyptian married to a Libyan woman, a gold merchant, a farm owner, a travel agency owner, a tourism office owner, a car dealer, three women, and others.

Criminal Network Activities:The gang would gather individuals wishing to travel at the farm of one of the defendants before transporting them to Libya in coordination with travel and tourism agencies to complete the necessary procedures. The gold merchant provided and exchanged foreign currencies, while the leader of the organization managed the operation and coordinated with external parties in Libya.

Initial Judgments and Appeals: The first-instance court had issued varying sentences, including life imprisonment, 3 years of severe imprisonment, and acquittals. The Public Prosecution appealed the lenient sentences and acquittals, requesting harsher penalties. The appellate court accepted the prosecution's request, upheld the severe sentences, and rejected the defendants' appeals, except for the acquittal of a 19-year-old girl due to a lack of evidence of her involvement.

The court praised the state's efforts in combating illegal immigration, noting that the gangs evade Egyptian security control by resorting to neighboring countries like Libya to facilitate the departure of migrants to Europe via the Libyan coast.



DOZENS OF IRREGULAR MIGRANTS WERE DETAINED IN LIBYA AND VOLUNTARILY RETURNED TO NIGERIA

A security force in western Libya detained dozens of irregular migrants before they could be smuggled to European shores by a human trafficking gang. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported that 147 migrants were voluntarily returned to Nigeria.

In the interception operation, the "Directorate Support Force in the Western Region" announced that it had detained migrants from Bangladesh who were preparing for irregular migration by sea. They were handed over to the Illegal Immigration Authority in Tripoli. This follows the detention of African migrants last week.

The IOM also announced that 147 migrants, including two unaccompanied children, voluntarily returned to Lagos, Nigeria, with support from the Voluntary Humanitarian Return Program. The organization noted that it had returned more than 9,300 migrants to their homes in 2023 through the "Voluntary Humanitarian Return" program, raising questions about the program's effectiveness in reducing the number of migrants in Libya.

In another context, the IOM held a dialogue and awareness session in Benghazi to enable displaced Sudanese women and children to share their stories and enhance community trust. The discussions identified future support needs.

Libyan authorities combating migration are working to retrieve migrants fleeing across the Mediterranean and place them in detention centers, where they often face mistreatment. Many other migrants remain detained in unofficial facilities, subjected to forced labor and harsh conditions.

In March, IOM Chief António Vitorino noted that the number of migrants in official detention centers in Libya was 5,000, a small fraction of the total number of detainees in the country.

SHOUKRY: EGYPT'S SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS HAVE PREVENTED THE DEPARTURE OF ANY ILLEGAL MIGRATION BOATS SINCE 2016



Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry stated that since 2016, no illegal migration boats have departed from Egyptian shores, thanks to Egypt's security efforts and the presence of the navy to prevent these boats, in order to safeguard migrants' lives and in consideration of the realities facing European coasts. Additionally, developmental efforts have provided means for a decent livelihood.

During a joint press conference with his Greek counterpart, broadcast on "Extra News" channel, Shoukry added that Egypt has made significant security efforts to eliminate the phenomenon of illegal migration and to combat organized crime and human trafficking organizations. He pointed out that the international community has not provided sufficient support, but Egypt has taken these measures out of responsibility and its history of hosting and caring for migrants.

Shoukry also noted that Egypt hosts 9 million migrants according to IOM estimates. These migrants have integrated into Egyptian society without the need for camps and benefit from social security and services provided to them, including food, energy, free education, and healthcare.

Finland intends to return migrants coming through Russia without considering their asylum requests



Finland plans to enact a law that mandates the return of migrants arriving through Russian territory without considering their asylum requests. Finnish Prime Minister, Petri Orpo, told the English-speaking "Sky News" network on Sunday, stating, "We cannot allow migrants at the border, especially since Russia can control who comes, when, and where they arrive at Finland's borders; therefore, we must strengthen our legislation."

The draft law allows Finnish border authorities to return asylum seekers coming from Russia to their country of origin, with or without the use of force, except for children and disabled individuals. Finland had closed its borders with Russia last year to halt the increasing influx of arrivals.

The draft law will be referred to parliament next week for consideration by the Constitutional Committee. The law requires five-sixths of the votes in parliament for passage, which is the highest threshold required for constitutional matters.



ESCALATING REPRESSION IN TUNISIA: ASSAULT ON CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE PRESS

Today, Amnesty International announced that the Tunisian government has conducted an unprecedented crackdown over the past two weeks against migrants, refugees, non-governmental organizations defending their rights, and journalists, following a period of escalating violence against these individuals in Tunisia. This crackdown comes after a coordination meeting with the Italian Ministry of Interior to discuss migration issues. Since the beginning of May, Tunisian authorities have carried out numerous arrests, summons, and investigations against members of civil society organizations on unclear charges, raising concerns among human rights organizations. At the same time, illegal deportation operations and forced evictions of migrants have escalated, and property owners who rented apartments to migrants without official permits have been arrested. Heba Morayef, Amnesty International's Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa, urged the Tunisian authorities to halt this harsh campaign and work towards achieving justice and ending violations against refugees, migrants, journalists, and non-governmental organizations.



SHARP INCREASE IN MIGRATION: TUNISIA WITNESSES RISE IN MIGRANT BOATS, TRAGEDY ESCALATES

Today, the National Guard in Tunisia announced that the bodies of four migrants were recovered off the country's coast, amidst an increase in the number of migrant boats heading from Tunisia to Italy in recent times. The National Guard clarified that the coast guard managed to rescue 52 migrants in a separate incident, and nine smugglers were arrested, with boats seized. This comes in the context of the disappearance of a number of Tunisian migrants, as the National Guard had announced the disappearance of at least 23 individuals after they set off on a boat headed for Italy. Tunisia faces challenges in the field of migration, as it replaces Libya as one of the main points of migration from poverty and conflict in various regions of Africa and the Middle East, where people seek to build a better life in Europe.

EFFORTS TO COMBAT ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION: THE UNION OF EGYPTIAN YOUTH ABROAD ORGANIZES A CONFERENCE IN COOPERATION WITH EGYPTIAN YOUTH CENTERS.



The Union of Egyptian Youth Abroad, under the leadership of Dr. Mahmoud Hussein, commends the efforts of Egyptian Youth Centers in serving the sons of Egypt inside and outside the country. The Union announced the organization of a conference on the dangers of illegal migration in cooperation with the Ismailia Youth Center, praising the efforts of the association's president and the center's director in providing full support. The General Coordinator of the conference praised the support provided by Brigadier General Ayhab Naseer, the Executive Director of Egyptian Youth Centers, and Ibrahim Abdel-Aal, the director of the Youth Center.



"The Biden administration threatens to sue the state of Oklahoma over its anti-illegal immigration law

"The Biden administration threatens to sue the Republican-led state of Oklahoma over its efforts to combat illegal immigration - following lawsuits against two other states over their anti-illegal immigration bills. The Department of Justice wrote to Oklahoma Governor Kevin Stitt and Attorney General John O'Connor regarding the HB 4156 bill. This bill makes it a crime for an individual to be in the state unlawfully, empowering local police to arrest undocumented immigrants and request they leave the state within 72 hours after conviction or release from custody. Stitt signed this bill earlier this month, set to take effect on July 1st. The law mirrors those approved and implemented in Iowa and Texas, which were later sued by the Department of Justice. Federal officials argue that these laws violate federal government authority in immigration law and enforcement. The Department of Justice has confirmed it will sue Oklahoma to prevent the law's implementation unless the state agrees not to enforce it. On the other hand, Oklahoma pledged to vigorously defend the law if sued, blaming the Biden administration for the southern border crisis."



A NEW AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND BANGLADESH TO EXPEDITE THE PROCESS OF REPATRIATING ILLEGAL MIGRANTS

During the first meeting of the Joint Working Group on Internal Affairs held in London this week, both countries committed to enhancing their partnership and deepening cooperation in economic, cultural, and social fields.

The new agreement primarily aims to streamline the return process by eliminating a mandatory interview in cases where there is strong supporting evidence for repatriation. This move will enable quicker return of unsuccessful asylum applicants, undocumented migrants, and individuals overstaying their entry visas.

Mr. Michael Tomlinson, Deputy Minister for Combating Illegal Migration, stated: "Expediting return operations is a vital part of our strategy to prevent individuals from coming or staying here illegally. Bangladesh is a trusted partner, and it's great to strengthen our relations with them in this regard and on a range of other issues. We've already seen clear evidence of the significant impact these agreements have on illegal migration. Dealing with global issues requires global solutions, and I look forward to working with Bangladesh and other partners to establish a fairer system for all."

Additionally, the Joint Working Group committed to the following: (continuing to facilitate legal migration through existing visa pathways_combating illegal migration by enhancing cooperation in visa misuse, enhancing data exchange, and capacity-building_developing mutual understanding of their respective approaches in combating serious organized crime) These collaborations follow the recent meeting between Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and UK Home Secretary Ann Marie Trevelyan in Dhaka. Prime Minister Hasina affirmed Bangladesh's firm stance on combating illegal migration, while Secretary Trevelyan thanked Prime Minister Hasina for her support in approving the new returns agreement. Last year, 26,000 individuals without legal rights to stay in the UK were returned to their countries, marking a 74% increase compared to 2022. The agreement signed with the Albanian government to expedite returns led to a reduction of small boat arrivals from Albania by over 90%.



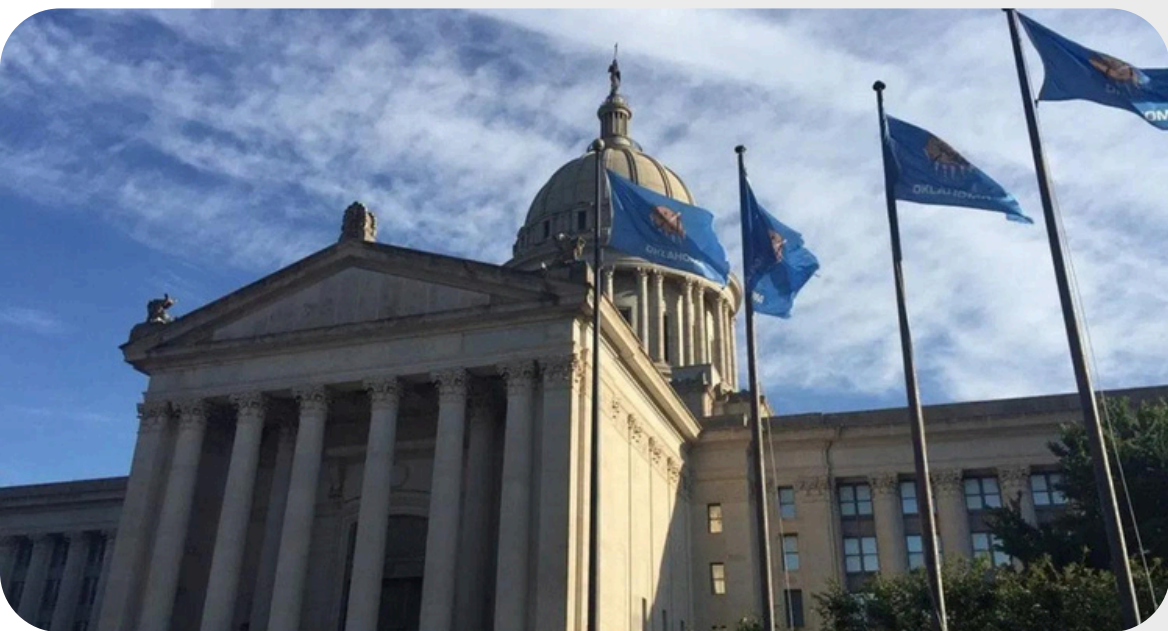
ATTORNEY GENERAL GENTER DRUMMOND PLEDGES TO DEFEND OKLAHOMA'S IMMIGRATION LAW AFTER THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION THREATENED TO SUE

After the Biden administration threatened to sue Oklahoma over its new law regarding illegal immigration, Attorney General Genter Drummond affirmed his readiness to defend the law. In a letter addressed to the state on May 15, the US Department of Justice threatened to sue if the state did not comply with its demands to not implement Law 4156. In his response on May 17, Drummond asserted Oklahoma's right to protect its borders and citizens and expressed his willingness to defend the state if sued by the Biden administration. Furthermore, he emphasized that the law aims to combat crime rigorously without tolerating any racial discrimination. Senator Brooks and House Speaker McCool urged the effective tackling of illegal immigration, expressing their readiness to support in this regard.

A GREEK COURT DROPS CHARGES AGAINST EGYPTIANS IN MIGRANT BOAT SINKING INCIDENT



A Greek court dropped charges against nine Egyptians in a migrant boat sinking incident off the coast of Greece, citing lack of jurisdiction in the case. The Egyptians were tried on charges related to causing the accident, which resulted in the deaths of hundreds of migrants, but the charges were dropped due to the court's lack of jurisdiction. The defendants face potential life imprisonment if convicted of criminal charges related to the incident. Lawyers from human rights organizations point to a threat to the defendants' right to a fair trial and call for an investigation into allegations of Greek coast guard involvement in the rescue operation. Organizations believe that over 500 people drowned in the incident, which occurred on their way from Libya to Italy, putting pressure on European governments to enhance protection measures for migrants.



The European Union acknowledges the difficult situation of migrants in Tunisia, Morocco, and Mauritania

The European Union acknowledged on Tuesday the complexities of the situation after a journalistic report revealed that Tunisia, Morocco, and Mauritania are relocating migrants and leaving them in the desert with funding from the European Union. The spokesperson for the European Commission, Eric Mamer, affirmed that this situation is difficult and rapidly changing, pledging to continue working to address these challenges.

The report stated that "Europe supports, finances, and directly participates in secret operations in North African countries to transport thousands of migrants and leave them in the desert or remote areas, aiming to prevent them from reaching the European Union."

The report mentioned a "massive migration system managed by the European Union and European countries thanks to financial funding, equipment, intelligence information, and security forces."

According to the report, refugees and migrants are detained in Morocco, Mauritania, and Tunisia based on their skin color, then transported to remote desert areas, where they face forced displacement and exploitation by human traffickers and gangs.

The European Union's cooperation with these countries includes providing funding to enhance their capabilities to combat illegal migration to Europe, with significant financial allocations from Brussels to Tunisia, Mauritania, and Morocco in this regard.

The European Union's efforts aim to prevent the flow of migrants across the Mediterranean Sea by enhancing border surveillance and expediting deportation processes for those not eligible for asylum, alongside comprehensive reforms to asylum laws.

The Light House Reports conducted interviews with over 50 black migrants expelled from those countries, all of whom are from Sub-Saharan Africa, contributing to documenting the violations they face.

Despite denials by European officials of the use of European funds in violating migrants' rights, the European Union has not provided a full clarification on how those funds are utilized, while the European Commission affirmed the commitment of partner countries to the principles of international law and human rights.

