



## News

18 September (Issue 11/20)

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**Event: 28 September, 13:30 BST/14:30 CET**

**[Webinar: Deportation Union: revamped return policies and reckless forced removals](#)**

Join *Statewatch* and *TNI* on 28 September for the first webinar of a three-part series accompanying the publication of the report 'Deportation Union: Rights, accountability and the EU's push to increased forced removals'.

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## Our reports

1. 17 September: [Internal Frontex report: agency moves forward with "standing corps" recruitment despite COVID-19 delays](#)

The Council Working Party on Frontiers met last week, on Wednesday 9 September, in part to review a Frontex report outlining the "current state of play of the main activities related to the establishment of the standing corps and description of the plans for the future". The report covers the recruitment of permanent staff, the secondment of member state border guards, training, uniforms, and equipment of the new standing corps, who will have executive powers - for example, to permit or refuse entry - at the EU's borders.

2. 16 September: [Council of the EU: Impact of COVID-19 on law enforcement cooperation](#)

The coronavirus pandemic has had a significant impact upon cross-border law enforcement cooperation in the EU, according to recent documents circulated to the member states by the German Presidency of the Council. However, the situation appears to be providing an impetus for a reassessment of existing laws, policies and procedures, with the aim of stepping up cross-border operational action.

3. 16 September: [EU: Moria refugees need relocation, the member states send tents](#)

With 13,000 refugees left without shelter following the fire that destroyed the Moria camp on the Greek island of Lesbos, there were immediate calls for people to be relocated to other EU member states. Notwithstanding the promised relocation of some 400 children and 1500 other people, mainly by Germany, the member states have largely responded by sending tents, blankets and toiletries - suggesting that they are quite happy to leave people trapped on the island.

4. 11 September: [Greece: Thousands left without shelter after Moria fire - what now?](#)

Thousands of people who were living in the Moria camp on the Greek island of Lesbos have been left without shelter after a huge fire that began on Tuesday night destroyed most of the tents and buildings. Other EU member states have agreed to take in unaccompanied children who were living in Moria. The Greek government has been accused of responding with "securitisation as opposed to the provision of urgent assistance."

5. 11 September: [EU: Updates to Frontex complaints mechanism shrouded in secrecy](#)

EU border agency Frontex is in the process of updating the rules governing its highly-criticised individual complaints mechanism. Attempts to ensure transparency over those updates - which have important implications for the protection of fundamental rights - have, so far, been unsuccessful.

6. 09 September: [UK: Digital ID plans unveiled and condemned](#)

The UK government has announced "plans to enable the use of digital identity across the UK," stating its intention to "update existing laws and a new set of guiding principles for policy development."

7. 08 September: [Greece: Grassroots groups condemn government plans for closed detention centres](#)

Under the cover of the coronavirus pandemic, the migrant and refugee reception centres on Lesbos and Chios - already overcrowded, unsanitary and unable to provide people with their basic rights - are to be turned into closed detention centres, the Greek government has announced. The move has been condemned by grassroots organisations.

8. 03 September: [UN agencies sign new agreement on establishing worldwide travel surveillance systems](#)

The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) have signed a new 'Memorandum of Agreement' that will extend their cooperation in implementing UN rules requiring that every member state set up systems for the surveillance and profiling of air passengers, in the name of combating terrorism and organised crime.

9. 03 September: [EU: German Presidency: how can Frontex help deport unaccompanied children?](#)

The implementation of the new mandate of EU border agency Frontex is well under way, and the German Presidency of the Council has raised a question with other member states that is likely to spark controversy: how can the agency assist with the deportation of lone children?

10. 25 August: [UK: New tasers for the police - less accuracy, more pain](#)

The UK Home Office has approved a new type of electroshock weapon for police forces in England and Wales, despite a scientific advisory committee concluding that it has a "consistently higher miss rate" (thus representing a greater risk to bystanders) and "may be more painful for the subject" than those currently in use. The news that English and Welsh police may now procure the 'Taser 7' comes a week after it was revealed that UK police forces disproportionately deploy the weapons against non-white children.

11. 24 August: ['Five Country Ministerial' - official "communiqué" short on substance](#)

At the end of June, the UK Home Office quietly published a "communiqué" announcing the results of a 'Five Country Ministerial' meeting, in which officials from the 'Five Eyes' countries (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK and the USA) get together to discuss matters of common interest. On the agenda: law enforcement and security threats stemming from the coronavirus pandemic and encryption.

12. 24 August: [German naval deployments sit back and watch illegal deportations by the Greek authorities](#)

In response to parliamentary questions, a German Defence Ministry official has admitted knowing that migrants and refugees have been pushed back to Turkey by the Greek authorities. Two incidents were observed by German naval vessels, but the fact that they did not intervene to halt the illegal deportations makes Germany equally culpable, says the MP who filed the questions. The admission comes after months of increased illegal deportations by Greece.

## Other reports

1. 17 September: [UK: David Davis MP demands access to secret hearings on torture](#)

The British Conservative MP David Davis is taking legal action to gain access to proposed secret court hearings on the UK's involvement in torture.

2. 15 September: [EU: 25 organisations call on MEPs to protect journalists, doctors, lawyers, social services in e-evidence rules](#)

A coalition of 25 organisations has called on the European Parliament's civil liberties committee (LIBE) to ensure that forthcoming legislation on "e-evidence" contains protections for journalists, doctors, lawyers and others - in particular by requiring that cross-border orders for electronic data always require judicial approval.

3. 14 September: [UK: New regulations extend fingerprint retention rules for a further six months](#)

A second set of retention regulations made under powers conferred by section 24 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 was put before Parliament 10 September 2020, to come into force 1 October 2020.

4. 11 September: [UN Special Rapporteur: Ending immigration detention of children](#)

The UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, Felipe González Morales, has produced a report in which he "concludes that the immigration detention of children is effectively avoidable," and that states should focus on "human rights-based alternative care and reception for all migrant children and their families."

5. 11 September: [Belgium to hand over remains of Congo's murdered prime minister](#)

Following a court judgment, the Belgian government will hand back remains of murdered post-independence Congolese prime minister Patrice Lumumba to his family. Two of Lumumba's teeth were kept by a Belgian police officer after he destroyed Lumumba's body. One tooth will be given back to his family; the other is currently being held by the authorities as part of an investigation.

6. 10 September: [France: Six months undercover with the police: racism, violence, impunity](#)

A new book by French journalist Valentin Gendrot chronicles the six months he spent working undercover as a police officer in Paris, where police violence "was so frequent it became almost banal".

7. 09 September: [EU: Study on the political economy of border control measures](#)

An in-depth study conducted as part of an EU-funded research project picks apart the "political economy of entry governance" in the EU - in short, who is allowed to enter the EU and who is not. The report is "founded on the outlook that any careful analysis of EU entry governance needs to take into account the political economy of border control practices, and

how they can be shaped by concerns other than about migration, and by other actors than the public bodies and institutions of the EU or its Member States."

8. 09 September: [UK: New reports on immigration detention and the hostile environment](#)

Two new reports, by the Jesuit Refugee Service and the Institute for Public Policy Research, expose some of the most harmful aspects of the UK's immigration and asylum system.

9. 08 September: [UK: Police to stop referring to protesters as "domestic extremists"](#)

Many years of campaigning by the Network for Police Monitoring and others has pushed the police to stop referring to protesters "domestic extremists". It remains to be seen what term will be adopted to replace it.

10. 07 September: [ICS, UNHCR and IOM call on States to end humanitarian crisis onboard ship in the Mediterranean](#)

In a joint press release, two UN agencies and a global industry body have called on the International Maritime Organization to take steps to ensure that the Maersk Etienne cargo ship is allocated a port of disembarkation. 27 rescued people have been trapped on board the ship for over a month.

11. 07 September: [Controlling the use of personal data by intelligence agencies: Council of Europe officials call for action](#)

In the wake of the Schrems II ruling at the Court of Justice of the EU, which annulled certain data transfers from the EU to the USA due to a lack of data protection safeguards, two high-ranking Council of Europe officials have called for all UN member states to accede to Council of Europe Convention 108 and its protocols, which cover the protection of personal data. They argue that wider implementation of the Convention will "address the question of the operation of intelligence services, under the aegis of a globally respected human rights organisation."

12. 04 September: [European Arrest Warrant: Dutch court seeks answers from CJEU over extradition to Poland](#)

Dutch courts have suspended extraditions to Poland, pending answers from the Court of Justice of the EU over whether the Polish judicial system can provide the necessary guarantees regarding the right to a fair trial. The move follows doubts expressed by courts in Germany, Ireland and Spain.

13. 04 September: [Greece: Massive denials of entry, lockdown of migrant and refugee centres extended](#)

ECRE provide an update on the situation in Greece, where the Shipping Minister has said that 10,000 people have been prevented from irregularly entering the country so far in 2020, the coronavirus lockdown on centres for migrants and refugees has been extended until 15 September, and the first instance recognition rate for asylum claims has risen to 69%.

14. 03 September: [Search and rescue: EU states are demanding ships assist in rescues, then refusing permission to disembark](#)

Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders explain the case of SeaWatch 4, which was recently left at sea for 11 days with 353 rescued people on board, until it was finally allowed to disembark in Palermo. MSF explain the dirty tricks being played by EU member states that are putting people's lives at risk.

15. 03 September: [Spain: Crackdown in Morocco pushes people to take more dangerous journeys to the Canary Islands](#)

200 people are camping in a port "with no shower or adequate sanitary conditions" on the island of Gran Canaria, as the number of people arriving on the Canary Islands by small boats reaches its highest level for over a decade following a crackdown on other routes to Spanish territory.

16. 03 September: [UK: No criminal charges against five police officers over death of 'doting' dad following arrest caught on camera](#)

Andre Moura was "found unresponsive in the back of a police van" after being arrested in July 2018 and declared dead at a hospital later that night. Five officers from Greater Manchester Police were investigated by the Independent Office of Police Conduct, which recommended that the Crown Prosecution Service press various charges - but the CPS has decided otherwise.

17. 03 September: [UK: Unmasking Facial Recognition: An exploration of the racial bias implications of facial recognition surveillance in the United Kingdom](#)

A new report by WebRoots Democracy, a think tank focused on progressive and inclusive technology policy, looks at the implications of the police use of facial recognition technology for people of colour and Muslims - two social groups who are heavily monitored by the state.

18. 03 September: [UK: JUSTICE calls for urgent reform of major inquests and inquiries](#)

Press release published by JUSTICE on 24 August 2020 for the report 'When Things Go Wrong: the response of the justice system'.

19. 03 September: [Beyond Bias: Why We Can't Just "Fix" Facial Recognition](#)

The Digital Freedom Fund argue that problems with facial recognition technology cannot simply be fixed by trying to remove "bias" or ensure "fairness", and that instead a more holistic approach to the development and use of new technologies is required.

20. 01 September: [Malta: Prime Minister to spend €1m a month to detain migrants on ship](#)

The Maltese government is to spend €1 million a month to charter a ferry that will host people rescued at sea offshore, according to reports. It is alleged that the move is driven to distract attention from the government's failing response to the pandemic.

21. 01 September: [Germany: How Angela Merkel's great migrant gamble paid off](#)

Five years on from Angela Merkel's declaration that "we can manage this" in response to the arrival of hundreds of thousands of refugees, what has happened?

22. 01 September 2020: [Cast away: the UK's rushed charter flights to deport Channel crossers](#)



Following the recent uptick in people arriving in the UK after crossing the Channel in small boats, there have been a number of swift deportations to EU states. Corporate Watch and Calais Migrant Solidarity report that "these mass deportations have been particularly brutal, and may have involved serious legal irregularities." Meanwhile, the EU recently rejected a UK plan to allow the continuation of such removals following the end of the Brexit 'transition period' on 31 December.

23. 29 August: [\*\*In Calais, Abdulfatah Hamdallah was the latest victim of European migration policies\*\*](#)

Joint statement signed by 16 human rights organisations, including Statewatch.

24. 27 August: [\*\*UK: Asylum: Brook House Protest: I'm still on a hunger strike, and I will continue the strike\*\*](#)

A statement by a Yemeni citizen currently held in the Brook House detention centre and on hunger strike in protest at their pending deportation to Spain, under the 'Dublin' system of allocating state responsibility for asylum applications.

25. 27 August: [\*\*UK: Attacks on the legal profession undermine the rule of law\*\*](#)

Press release from The Law Society in response to the UK Home Office's attempt to disparage lawyers who provide legal advice to migrants and asylum-seekers.

26. 27 August: [\*\*Greece has a deadly new migration policy – and all of Europe is to blame\*\*](#)

Greece has come in for sharp criticism for its continued pushbacks of migrants and refugees, in flagrant violation of European and international human rights law. However, its practices are the result of a continent-wide migration policy that seeks to pass the buck when it comes to providing protection to people in need, argues Daniel Trilling.

27. 26 August: [\*\*Germany/Belgium: Video footage puts police violence in the spotlight\*\*](#)

Two recent incidents of police violence in Germany and Belgium have been compared to the case of George Floyd in the USA. In the first, mobile phone footage circulated on social media showed a police officer placing his knee on an individual's neck. In the second, footage from inside a police station at Belgium's Charleroi airport, published by a newspaper, showed a police officer sitting on a detainee's rib cage for 18 minutes, whilst another officer performs what appears to be a Nazi salute. The detained man, Jozef Chovanec, subsequently died in hospital.

28. 26 August: [\*\*Italy: New project examines alternatives to immigration detention\*\*](#)

A project launched by the Italian Coalition for Civil Liberties and Rights (Coalizione Italiana per le Libertà e i Diritti Civili, CILD) and Progetto Diritti will examine and advocate for alternatives to immigration detention. The organisations highlight that detention, which is most frequently used in cases of pending deportation, doesn't work: "the ratio between the number of repatriated and detained people has always been around 50%, regardless of which maximum detention limits are in force. The data hence demonstrates that the 'effectiveness' of the immigration detention system is not directly correlated to the length of detention periods."

29. 25 August: [Five years on from UK's first drone targeted killing, increasing secrecy needs serious challenge](#)

Five years after an RAF Reaper drone flying over Syria launched a missile that killed three people, including the Cardiff-born Reyaad Khan, Chris Cole of Drone Wars looks at the ways in which the government has been able to stymie transparency of the UK's drone warfare programme. Without public knowledge of the what the government is doing, Cole argues, "decisions that are hugely costly and damaging" will be made over and over again with no accountability.

30. 24 August: [Brexit: What's the price of a UK/EU security agreement?](#)

A blog by Julian King, the British official who until recently served as the EU's 'Commissioner for the Security Union', looks at "what kind of cooperation, if any, are the two sides going to have in future on security issues".

31. 24 August: [Ireland: Internal surveys shows no frontline gardaí had favourable view of Travellers](#)

Not a single frontline gardaí (police officer) questioned for a internal survey had a favourable view of Travellers, almost 75% of those questioned had a negative view of Roma, and significant proportions hold negative views on Indian, Pakistani, Arab and black African people.

32. 24 August: [Belarus: we stand in solidarity with the people](#)

A statement in support of those protesting in Belarus signed by a number of civil society organisations, including Statewatch.

33. 24 August: [Belarus: protests continue](#)

Tens of thousands of people took to the streets of Minsk at the weekend to continue to protest against Alexander Lukashenko, the longstanding president who claimed victory in recent elections with 80% of the vote. Meanwhile, over 50,000 people in Lithuania formed a human chain to the Belarussian border in solidarity.

34. 21 August: [Schizophrenic agendas in the EU's external actions in Mali](#)

An academic article explaining the results of research into the EU's security activities in Mali.

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