



News

16 October (Issue 13/20)

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Webinar: Deportation Union: databases for expulsions

The EU is expanding a host of databases used for migration and border control. New systems are being developed to ensure the biometric registration of almost all non-EU nationals in the Schengen area. Under the moniker of “interoperability”, the data held in these systems is being interconnected and used in new and controversial ways. Frontex has been given an increasing role in the design and operation of databases used to facilitate expulsions.

Join Statewatch and *TNI* with guests on Monday 26 October at 14:00 CET for the second in our series of webinars looking at the report *Deportation Union: Rights, accountability and the EU's push to increase forced removals*.

Sign up [here](#) and explore the report [here](#).

News

Our reports

1. Spain: Forty immigration detainees go on hunger strike
2. EU: Tracking the Pact: Reinforced cooperation against migrant smuggling with Balkan and African "partners"
3. EU: Mass, suspicionless surveillance regimes are illegal, court confirms
4. EU: Frontex on cooperation with Libya: nothing to see here
5. Europol unlawfully processing personal data of vast numbers of innocent people, says report
6. Northern Ireland: "I am sir, you are a number": Prisoners faced "systemic inhuman and degrading treatment" in response to 1970s protests, report finds
7. Joint NGO letter: No data retention in the EU!
8. UK: Calls to halt bill authorising crimes by state agents
9. UK Parliament must not introduce impunity for war crimes, say UN experts

Other reports

1. UK: Commons approves bill giving state agents powers to commit crimes without limits
2. UK: Government rhetoric on "activist lawyers" inspiring physical attacks, say legal professionals
3. Greece: On Lesbos, migrants and their supporters continue to suffer at the hands of the authorities
4. Brexit: New laws put UK on a path to dictatorship, warns former Supreme Court president
5. Italy: UN expert condemns 'criminalization' of those saving lives in the Mediterranean
6. Germany: Police and security services riddled with far-right activists, says official report
7. Greece: Golden Dawn: a criminal organisation
8. Greek police recruited undocumented migrants in operation against NGOs
9. UK: Undercover policing: Met police pay compensation to man fathered by undercover officer
10. France turns down offer of UK drone assistance to stop migrants leaving beaches in first place
11. Joint Statement: The Pact on Migration and Asylum: to provide a fresh start and avoid past mistakes, risky elements need to be addressed and positive aspects need to be expanded
12. UK: Grenfell files 'lost forever' after laptop wiped, inquiry hears
13. European Parliament study on the EU's response to the USA's anti-abortion 'Gag Rule'
14. Twelve arrested for smuggling migrants in small boats across the English channel
15. EU: Neo-Nazi Nordic Resistance Movement targets Jews on Yom Kippur

Our reports

1. 16 October: **Spain: Forty immigration detainees go on hunger strike**

In the Sangonera detention centre near the city of Murcia, 40 immigration detainees have gone on hunger strike to demand they be released.

[Read more](#)

2. 15 October: **EU: Tracking the Pact: Reinforced cooperation against migrant smuggling with Balkan and African "partners"**

The EU's Pact on Migration and Asylum reiterated the long-standing priority for the EU and its member states to work more closely with "third countries" to control migration. In practice, this has led to serious abuses and even deaths, as smugglers engage in increasingly-complex and dangerous circumvention of border controls and police operations. Nevertheless, the EU is pushing ahead with new initiatives seeking to formalise cooperation with Balkan and African states on anti-migrant smuggling operations.

[Read more](#)

3. 15 October: **EU: Mass, suspicionless surveillance regimes are illegal, court confirms**

On 6 October 2020, the Court of Justice of the EU (CJEU) ruled in two separate cases (concerning the UK, and France and Belgium) that mass surveillance by national security agencies - here, the mass retention and collection of telecommunications data - is not in line with EU law, and that only certain types of limited data retention schemes with adequate safeguards are permissible.

[Read more](#)

4. 15 October: **EU: Frontex on cooperation with Libya: nothing to see here**

Two recent Amnesty International reports have highlighted the role played by EU institutions, agencies and member states in facilitating 'pull-backs' by the Libyan Coast Guard (LCG). Amnesty argues that collaboration with the LCG in this way violates international law. In a response to Amnesty, Frontex has avoided any meaningful engagement with the issues raised.

[Read more](#)

5. 8 October: **Europol unlawfully processing personal data of vast numbers of innocent people, says report**

Europol is unlawfully processing the personal data of a vast number of innocent people, says a report by the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS). The agency has been given two months to come up with an "action plan" to fix the problem – but in the meantime, despite the serious risks to individual rights identified by the EDPS, the agency is allowed to continue using the techniques.

[Read more](#)

6. 7 October: **Northern Ireland: "I am sir, you are a number": Prisoners faced "systemic inhuman and degrading treatment" in response to 1970s protests, report finds**

Prisoners held in the Armagh and H-Block prisons between 1976 and 1981 were subjected to "systemic inhuman and degrading treatment" that "violated international human rights standards and breached common law and statute", with the full knowledge of the British government, an independent inquiry has found.

[Read more](#)

7. 6 October: **Joint NGO letter: No data retention in the EU!**

40 organisations, including Statewatch, have written to the European Commission calling for a ban on blanket telecommunications data retention. Judgments in a number of cases concerning data retention are due to be handed down by the Court of Justice today. The Commissioner for Home Affairs has previously expressed a desire for new legislation on the issue, and the member states have long been keen on new EU-wide measures.

[Read more](#)

8. 6 October: **UK: Calls to halt bill authorising crimes by state agents**

The Covert Human Intelligence Sources (Criminal Conduct) Bill would, if approved, give explicit legal permission for certain state agents to commit crimes in the course of their duties, but does not specify which crimes are covered. There is fierce opposition to the proposed measures.

[Read more](#)

9. 5 October: **UK Parliament must not introduce impunity for war crimes, say UN experts**

UN human rights experts have called on MPs in the Westminster parliament to reject the Overseas Operations (service personnel and Veterans) Bill, which seeks to prevent prosecutions of British armed forces personnel for serious crimes such as torture and unlawful killing.

[Read more](#)

Other reports

1. 15 October: **UK: Commons approves bill giving state agents powers to commit crimes without limits**

The Covert Human Intelligence Sources (Criminal Conduct) Bill has passed its third reading in the House of Commons. The law would allow state agents to commit crimes in the course of undercover operations, with no limits set down on what they may do.

[Read more](#)

2. 12 October: **UK: Government rhetoric on "activist lawyers" inspiring physical attacks, say legal professionals**

The government's ongoing rhetoric against "activist lawyers" - which seems to be spearheaded, in particular, by the Home Office - has led to a physical attack at a law firm, legal professionals claim. Last month, a man entered a London law firm's office with a knife and managed to injure one member of staff in a racist attack, before being overpowered.

[Read more](#)

3. 8 October: **Greece: On Lesbos, migrants and their supporters continue to suffer at the hands of the authorities**

Legal Centre Lesbos reports on the situation following the fire that destroyed the Moria camp three weeks ago. Grassroots initiatives are being targeted and shut down, and a new, closed camp has been set up. Nevertheless, the organisation reports some successes with individual cases.

[Read more](#)

4. 8 October: **Brexit: New laws put UK on a path to dictatorship, warns former Supreme Court president**

A former president of the Supreme Court has warned that certain provisions in the Internal Market Bill put the UK on a path towards "dictatorship", due to the explicit intention to breach international law and make it possible for the government to introduce regulations that are not subject to review by the courts.

[Read more](#)

5. 8 October: **Italy: UN expert condemns 'criminalization' of those saving lives in the Mediterranean**

Criminal proceedings in Italy are ongoing against the crew of the rescue boat *Iuventa* and the former captain of rescue boat *Sea-Watch 3*. A UN human rights expert says the charges should be dropped, because those saving lives at sea are "human rights defenders and not criminals."

[Read more](#)

6. 7 October: **Germany: Police and security services riddled with far-right activists, says official report**

A report by Germany's domestic intelligence agency (Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz, BfV) has detailed hundreds of anti-constitutional far-right incidents in the police and the military, yet the country's interior minister has apparently sought to downplay the significance of the findings.

[Read more](#)

7. 7 October: **Greece: Golden Dawn: a criminal organisation**

At the end of a five year trial, a Greek court has found senior members of neo-fascist party Golden Dawn guilty of running a criminal organisation. Party members were also found guilty of the 2013 murder of the rapper Pavlos Fyssas, physical attacks on trade unionists and the attempted murder of a fisherman.

[Read more](#)

8. 7 October: **Greek police recruited undocumented migrants in operation against NGOs**

The Greek police recruited two undocumented migrants as informers in an operation which has led to multiple accusations of criminality against a number of NGOs, whom the police argue have assisted in migrant smuggling. According to a report in Greek paper Kathimerini, the investigation revolves around the use of the AlarmPhone service - which exists precisely to help to people in distress at sea, and whose work has saved thousands of lives in recent years.

[Read more](#)

9. 7 October: **UK: Undercover policing: Met police pay compensation to man fathered by undercover officer**

The Metropolitan Police have paid a "substantial sum" in compensation to a man who found out when he was 26 that his father was Bob Lambert, a notorious undercover police officer. He had grown up believing that his father was a left-wing activist who had fled abroad. His mother became aware of Lambert's real identity at the same time as her son, after reading about Lambert in the papers. The Met previously paid her £425,000 in compensation due to the trauma she suffered.

[Read more](#)

10. 7 October: **France turns down offer of UK drone assistance to stop migrants leaving beaches in first place**

According to a report originally published in The Telegraph, the French authorities have turned down a UK offer of drones assistance to try to prevent departures of boats trying to cross the Channel. However, it is unclear from the report whether the UK authorities sought to lend the drone itself to the French, or instead wanted access to French airspace to monitor beaches.

[Read more](#)

11. 6 October: **Joint Statement: The Pact on Migration and Asylum: to provide a fresh start and avoid past mistakes, risky elements need to be addressed and positive aspects need to be expanded**

A joint statement signed by 70+ NGOs and human rights organisations from across Europe and beyond.

[Read more](#)

12. 6 October: **UK: Grenfell files 'lost forever' after laptop wiped, inquiry hears**

The Grenfell Inquiry, which is investigating the fire that killed 72 people in the Grenfell Tower block of flats in west London in June 2017, heard in mid-September that "emails, documents and design drawings" relating to the refurbishment of the tower with flammable cladding may have been "lost forever".

[Read more](#)

13. 6 October: **European Parliament study on the EU's response to the USA's anti-abortion 'Gag Rule'**

A study commissioned by the European Parliament's Women's Rights and Gender Equality committee (FEMM), looking at the EU's response to the 'Global Gag Rule', which "blocks US aid funds for organizations or groups that perform abortion services, provide information about sexual and reproductive health rights, and advocate for abortion."

[Read more](#)

14. 6 October: **Twelve arrested for smuggling migrants in small boats across the English channel**

A major operation involving judicial and law enforcement authorities from Belgium, France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, supported by Europol and Eurojust, led to the dismantling of a large network of criminals smuggling migrants in life threatening conditions across the English Channel.

[Read more](#)

15. 6 October: **EU: Neo-Nazi Nordic Resistance Movement targets Jews on Yom Kippur**

Anti-semitic campaigns were launched by the neo-Nazi Nordic Resistance Movement in Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Sweden recently, in the week leading up to Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement), the holiest day in the Jewish calendar. Actions were taken in almost 20 different cities including direct confrontation of Jewish worshippers, putting up anti-semitic posters and distributing flyers. The organisation was issued with a cease-and-desist order by the Finnish Supreme Court in late September, the first such order handed down in Finland since the 1970s.

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