**News**

**18 June (Issue 12/21)**

www.statewatch.org

Like us on Facebook | Follow us on Twitter

\---------------------------------------

# Global call to ban public biometric surveillance

As public and private sector institutions push ahead with the development and deployment of remote biometric surveillance systems – currently best-exemplified by facial recognition technology – opposition is increasing.

A statement signed by over 200 individuals and organisations from across the globe to launch the #BanBS campaign demands action – namely, "an outright ban on uses of facial recognition and remote biometric recognition technologies that enable mass surveillance and discriminatory targeted surveillance."

Find out more here and sign on to the statement here.

\---------------------------------------

# Challenging border violence

Since September 2019, volunteers for *Border Violence Monitoring Network* (BVMN) have gathered numerous testimonies alleging the presence of and violence by Frontex officers on North Macedonian territory, where the agency has no legal authority to act. We worked with *BVMN* to investigate the agency's activities in North Macedonia and last week sent a joint letter to Frontex demanding an investigation.

Read the letter here and our analysis of the issue here.

\---------------------------------------

# Support the fight for civil liberties in Europe

Our small team relies on your support to keep our work trustworthy, independent and free to access. **With your support, we can maintain and expand our work.**

Donate £ | Donate €

\---------------------------------------

# News and analysis

# Analysis

8 June
**Foreign agents and violence against migrants at the Greek-Macedonian border**

An increasing number of reports of violent pushbacks at the Greek-Macedonian border have been collected by volunteers in recent years. Some reports allege the presence of Frontex, but bilateral policing deals in place may also explain the presence of foreign officers in Macedonia. The violence underpins a long-standing plan to close the 'Balkan Route' and keep people out of 'core' EU territory. Whoever is behind the violence, there is no shortage of border guards to mete it out – but justice is in short supply.

7 June
**The Canary cage: the making of deportation islands on Spain's Atlantic border**

In line with concerning recent EU border control proposals, a deliberate policy of inhumane detention, illegal mobility restrictions and an overreliance on deportation 'solutions' is converting the Canary Islands into makeshift deportation waiting rooms and a black hole for human rights.

# News

18 June
**Spain: New report calls for a halt to the use of rubber bullets**

Between 2000 and 2020 the use of rubber bullets by Spanish security forces has caused the direct death of one person and contributed to the death of 14 others; 11 people have lost an eye. A new report renews the long-standing call for the Spanish government to ban their use.

18 June
**EU: States slow to introduce legal changes easing biometric identity checks by police**

Member states are making little progress in changing national laws to ease biometric identity checks by the police, one of the key aims of the EU's 'interoperability' initiative.

17 June
**Greece: Legal case launched against Frontex director for "aggravated defamation"**

A legal complaint has been submitted against Frontex executive director Fabrice Leggeri for "aggravated defamation by the press" by the Greek Helsinki Monitor (GHM), on behalf of themselves and 27 people who were "illegally deported".

16 June
**EU: Drugs strategy includes actions to "tackle encryption" and postal snooping**

The Draft EU Drugs Action Plan 2021-25 is heading to the Council for approval, and amongst other things includes an action to "improve possibilities to tackle encryption," as well as the use of new technologies (including the near-ubiquitous "artificial intelligence") for "monitoring suspicious postal items... while preserving the fundamental right of privacy of correspondence."

16 June
**UK: Metropolitan Police branded "institutionally corrupt" by inquiry into murder of private detective**

London's Metropolitan Police engaged in a form of "institutional corruption" by delaying and denying access to documents and information held by the force that were sought by an inquiry into the unsolved 1987 murder of Daniel Morgan, a private detective.

16 June
**EU: Tracking the Pact: Council ready for negotiations with Parliament on European Agency for Asylum**

The Council has agreed its position - published here - on the proposed Regulation on the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), which would take the place of the European Asylum Support Office and have an extended remit and powers.

15 June
**UK: MPs must ensure protection for encrypted communications**

Over 30 organisations, including Statewatch, have signed a statement published in UK parliament's magazine The House, calling on MPs to ensure that the Online Safety Bill does not undermine or threaten the encryption of digital communications.


14 June
**UK and USA confirm continued cooperation on undermining encryption**

The UK and USA have outlined their continued commitment to military and security cooperation, including through ongoing plans to undermine encryption for digital communications.


10 June
**UN Special Rapporteur: report on the human rights impact of pushbacks**

Pushback practices are widespread and have become "a routine element of border governance", says the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants.


10 June
**EU: Short-sighted Commission consultation on plan against migrant smuggling**

The European Commission recently launched a consultation on the EU action plan against migrant smuggling (2021-2025). However, its strategy for the new plan did not involve a thorough evaluation of actions to date, and its questions for contributors "are clearly geared towards legitimising a pre-determined set of actions". Statewatch's submission called for public debate about the root causes of migrant smuggling and the impact, legitimacy and effectiveness of EU action taken to prevent and punish it.


9 June
**Greece rebuffs refugee travel abuse claims from northern Schengen states**

In response to a letter from six northern Schengen states calling for action to prevent the "secondary movement" of refugees from Greece, the Greek government has argued that "the focus needs to be placed on preventing primary flows," meaning stricter border controls.


8 June
**EU: Council Presidency discussion paper on artificial intelligence and internal security**

Final version of the Council Presidency's paper on the proposed Artificial Intelligence Act and the implications for internal security use of AI technologies, sent to COREPER and the Council to inform discussion at yesterday and today's Justice and Home Affairs Council meeting.


8 June
**The rise of antisemitism online during the pandemic: A study of French and German content**

A study contracted by the European Commission finds that the coronavirus pandemic "has only served to exacerbate a worrying trend in terms of online antisemitism."

8 June
**Frontex confronted with allegations of violence in North Macedonia**

Allegations that officials deployed on Frontex operations have participated in or condoned violence against people on the move in North Macedonia must be investigated, says a letter sent to Frontex today by Statewatch and Border Violence Monitoring Network (BVMN).

8 June
**Frontex: EU Court of Auditors finds agency inefficient and ineffective**

The European Court of Auditors (ECA) announced on Monday 7 June that its latest audit of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, Frontex, found that the body is not ready to effectively implement its mandate under the 2019 Regulation.

7 June
**Whip Greece into shape so we can resume migrant removals, northern Schengen states demand**

A letter from six northern EU member states, obtained by Statewatch, calls on the European Commission to take steps to make it possible to resume removals of asylum-seekers and refugees to Greece and put a halt to "secondary movements".

7 June
**EU: New powers for Europol: Presidency progress report and latest member state comments**

Discussions in the Council on granting extended powers to EU police agency Europol are pressing ahead, with a number of the "thematic blocs" in the proposal closed, according to an internal Presidency report published here alongside the member states' most recent comments.

7 June
**"The potential for abuse is too great": Global call to ban biometric surveillance in public spaces**

Statewatch is one of almost 180 organizations from across the globe calling for a ban on uses of facial and other remote biometric recognition technologies that enable mass and discriminatory targeted surveillance.

----------------------------------------

# Support the fight for civil liberties in Europe

Donate £  Donate €