



News

26 November (Issue 19/21)

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In this issue:

- we examine an internal Frontex report detailing a record number of deportations in the first half of 2021;
- a new report we published this week analyses algorithmic persecution in Turkey in the wake of the attempted July 2016 coup; and
- a host of materials from our Library & Archive are now available online.

Plus, all our other news, links and documentation from the last two weeks.

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Frontex-coordinated deportations hit record numbers

Frontex supported EU member states in removing over 8,300 non-EU nationals to their countries of origin in the first half of 2021, the largest ever number for a six-month period. However, the number of operations with at least one human rights monitor on board decreased by 7%, according to a report recently circulated to EU member states by the border agency. The report says that once COVID-19 related restrictions are no longer a barrier to deportations, “the Agency will play an even stronger role in assisting with an unprecedented number of returns, also taking into account possible backlogs in member States.”

Read more [here](#) and take a look at [our report *Deportation Union*](#), published last year, for detailed background and context.

Algorithmic persecution in Turkey

More than 13,000 Turkish military personnel have been dismissed since July 2016 on the basis of an algorithm used by the authorities to assess the alleged “terrorist” credentials or connections of military officers and their relatives in violation of multiple human rights. The algorithm, known as the ‘FETÖ-Meter’, is based on 97 main criteria and 290 sub- criteria, many of which violate individual privacy. It was deployed following the July 2016 coup attempt in order to root out alleged followers of the cleric Fethullah Gülen. Those identified by the algorithm were subject to mistreatment, torture and were unable to obtain judicial redress, leading them to exile in Europe.

Read more [here](#).

Historical materials on policing, racism and public order now available online

You may not know it, but *Statewatch* has an extensive Library & Archive containing hundreds of books and over 2,500 pamphlets, officials reports and ‘grey material’ on issues concerning civil liberties and the state. On Wednesday we took some of the key materials relating to policing and racism to an event in Bristol, and our friends at MayDay Rooms assisted us with digitizing them so they are available for all to see. We hope to add make many more items from the Library & Archive available online in the future.

You can find the digitized material [here](#).

Visits can be arranged to the Library & Archive. You can find more details and browse the catalogue [here](#).

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Home Office plans to offer UK visitors option to upload images and fingerprints for forensic immigration checks

Trabajadoras Transfronterizas con Derechos

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26 November 2021

[EU: Deportations at record levels as Frontex foresees an “unprecedented number” of post-pandemic removals](#)

Frontex supported EU member states in removing over 8,300 non-EU nationals to their countries of origin in the first half of 2021, the largest ever number for a six-month period. However, the number of operations with at least one human rights monitor on board decreased by 7%, according to a report recently circulated to EU member states by the border agency.

26 November 2021

[EU: Tracking the Pact: Consolidated text of revised Asylum Procedure Regulation proposal](#)

The Council has circulated an unofficial consolidated text of the revised proposal for an Asylum Procedure Regulation, which would replace a previous Directive on common procedures for international protection in the EU. Available here, it will aid understanding of the proposal for individuals and organisations working to protect individual rights.

25 November 2021

[Press release: Turkey: Algorithmic persecution based on massive privacy violations used to justify human rights abuses, says new report](#)

More than 13,000 Turkish military personnel have been dismissed since July 2016 on the basis of an algorithm used by the authorities to assess the alleged “terrorist” credentials or connections of military officers and their relatives in violation of multiple human rights, says a new report published today by Statewatch.

24 November 2021

[EU: Greek-led military exercise examined intervention in fictional country of "Seglia"](#)

An EU military exercise led by Greece in June this year tested the procedures and activities for launching an intervention in the fictional country of "Seglia", where incursions by the "Newborn Extremist State" and political interference from the country "Kronen" were leading to a deteriorating security situation with an impact on the EU's political and strategic interests.

18 November 2021

[EU ropes in intelligence agencies for enhanced border checks targeting Afghan nationals](#)

Intensified border security checks targeting Afghan nationals have been agreed by the Council of the EU, with the procedures requiring the extraction of mobile phone data and significant coordination with national intelligence agencies – despite the EU having no competences in the realm of “national security”.

18 November 2021

[Time theft as part of the state's anti-migration arsenal: expansive harms and policy](#)

A new book offers a broad geographic and inter-disciplinary analysis of how time is used to dehumanise, disenfranchise and disempower asylum-seekers, irregular migrants and people awaiting deportation.

17 November 2021

[EU: Tracking the Pact: High level diplomacy between Frontex and Western Balkan partners](#)

A meeting on 16 November 2021, co-organised by Frontex and the Slovenian Council Presidency, covered joint operations, information exchange and capacity building in a region seen by the EU as a "buffer zone" to deflect arrivals to its borders.

16 November 2021

[Interpol must change its practices to protect human rights](#)

Civil society organisations, elected representatives and other prominent public figures are calling on Interpol to take steps to prevent the abuse of international policing databases and alert systems by authoritarian and dictatorial regimes. A resolution sent to the policing organisation a week before its 89th General Assembly calls for the protection of human rights by the full implementation of recommendations made by the Council of Europe and European Parliament. Statewatch is one of the signatories of the resolution.

The Roundup

Material we have shared on our [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) accounts in the last fortnight.

InfoMigrants, 25 November

Germany: [New coalition announces "repatriation offensive" as part of revamped immigration policy](#)

The crackdown comes alongside measures to regularise certain undocumented people and to ease routes to citizenship and family reunification.

Channel Rescue, 25 November

UK: [Stop Priti Patel's Dangerous Pushback Policy](#)

"Seeking to turn around boats carrying migrants will inevitably risk the lives of children, women and men who want nothing more than sanctuary."

We believe the plans are not only morally wrong - they are also unlawful. So, we're bringing a case against Priti Patel, Secretary of State for the Home Office, to ensure that this inhumane and life-threatening policy is never approved or put into action."

ECRE, 26 November

[Joint Statement: Call on the EU: Restore Rights and Values at Europe's Borders](#)

"While we fully condemn the actions of Belarus, we urge a response from the EU, the EU's Member States, and all relevant European and international organisations that is in line with EU and international legal obligations and with standards of common decency."

The Guardian, 26 November

UK: [Channel deaths: Priti Patel disinvited to meeting with France](#)

"Boris Johnson's public letter to Emmanuel Macron on Channel drownings deemed 'unacceptable'"

The [letter from Boris Johnson](#), which has clearly gone down like a lead balloon with the French authorities, also suggested that the UK and France could fund "joint deployment of private security contractors" for operations against refugees in the Channel.

HumanRights360, 25 November

[THE DOCTRINE OF THE "INSTRUMENTALIZATION" OF REFUGEES. THE BORDERS OF EVROS IN THE ERA OF THE SECURITIZATION OF BORDERS"](#)

"The doctrine of the "instrumentalization" of refugees, which is constantly invoked by the political leaders of the European Union, deliberately removes from the refugees their human condition, and legitimizes the violations of international law and their human rights."

The Guardian, 25 November

[Interpol appoints Emirati general accused of torture as president](#)

"A general from the United Arab Emirates accused of complicity in torture has been elected as president of the international policing agency Interpol in the teeth of fierce objections from human rights groups."

The Independent, 25 November

UK: [Priti Patel has quietly been stuffing even more punitive anti-protest powers into the policing bill](#)

“Away from prying eyes, in the parts of parliament which journalists don’t pay much attention to, Priti Patel has effectively criminalised the act of protest. The Government waited until the final stages of a bill’s legislative process and then suddenly proposed a series of amendments, leaving reporters and human rights groups very little time to raise the alarm.”

ECCHR, 23 November

[Migrants and refugees in Libya face crimes against humanity: ICC must investigate, EU must stop support](#)

“Today, the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR), the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and Lawyers for Justice in Libya (LFJL), in collaboration with survivors, have filed a Communication to the International Criminal Court (ICC) on grave crimes committed against migrants and refugees in Libya which may amount to crimes against humanity. They urgently demand: the ICC must investigate the responsibility of armed groups, militias and Libyan state actors involved in the commission of such crimes including arbitrary detention, torture, murder, persecution, sexual violence and enslavement.”

Daphne Caruana Galizia Foundation, 20 November

Malta: [Courtesy translation of public inquiry report published](#)

“When the Public Inquiry into the circumstances of Daphne Caruana Galizia’s assassination terminated in July this year, the final report by the board was published in Maltese. As we are not aware of any government plans to have the report translated to enable access to an international audience in the interests of justice, transparency, and public accountability, we have commissioned an English translation of the Public Inquiry report.”

Council of Europe, 19 November

[Commissioner calls for immediate access of international and national human rights actors and media to Poland’s border with Belarus to end human suffering and violations of human rights](#)

“Although the situation is the result of the reprehensible actions by Belarus, this does not absolve Poland from its human rights obligations. An approach must be found that puts human beings first and ensures respect for their dignity and human rights.”

EUobserver, 18 November

[Revealed: EU plan to make 1,400 people-smuggling arrests in 2022](#)

“A leaked internal document has revealed the detail of dozens of operational plans to crack down on migrant smugglers next year, including a target to make over 1,400 arrests - mostly under the aegis of the EU’s border agency Frontex.”

EUobserver, 17 November

[EU top court slams Poland and Hungary again](#)

“Hungary and Poland were both slapped down again by the EU’s top court on Tuesday (16 November) for violating the bloc’s rules - in a further sign that the rule-of-law dispute between the EU and the two countries has become structural.”

Declassified, 17 November

Northern Ireland: [**BELFAST MURDERS: WHAT ARE POLICE TRYING TO HIDE?**](#)

“In an unprecedented and controversial move, the Northern Ireland police chief wants to censor a watchdog’s report into a mass murder before it is even published.”

Investigate Europe, 17 November

Greece: [**#Pressfreedom: I am the journalist being watched by the Greek secret service**](#)

“Greek Journalist Stavros Malichoudis found out through a newspaper article that the National Intelligence Service has been monitoring his work. He is working with our Greek collaboration partner, Reporters United. His reporting on migration has brought Investigate Europe a joint nomination for the European Press Prize. He asks: Is journalism a threat to democracy?”

Irish Independent, 17 November

[**Polish border guards deploy water cannon on migrants**](#)

“Polish border forces have said they were attacked with stones by migrants at the border with Belarus and responded by using water cannons against them.

Police said the migrants were given gas grenades and other weapons by Belarusian forces, who directed the entire violent operation with a drone.”

Politico Europe, 16 November

[**Hungarian law criminalizing asylum seeker help breaches EU law, top court rules**](#)

“Hungary’s law criminalizing support for asylum seekers and limiting the right to asylum violates EU law, the bloc’s highest court ruled on Tuesday.”

Article 19, 15 November

[**Poland: Access to public information must not be constrained**](#)

“The undersigned partners of the Media Freedom Rapid Response (MFRR) are highly concerned about new possible restrictions on the right to information in Poland that could further erode press freedom in the country. On 15 December 2021, the Constitutional Tribunal will hold a hearing on the constitutionality of core provisions of the bill that regulates access to public information.”

JUSTICE, 15 November

UK: [**JUSTICE publishes report on the Windrush Compensation Scheme for victims of the Windrush Scandal**](#)

“This JUSTICE Working Group will publish its report ‘Reforming the Windrush Compensation Scheme’ on 15 November 2021. It makes 27 recommendations to improve the process for those seeking compensation from the Home Office for the losses and hardships they suffered as a result of not being able to demonstrate their lawful immigration status.”

EurActiv, 15 November 2021

[**EU set to widen Belarus sanctions over migrant crisis**](#)

“EU’s chief diplomat Josep Borrell confirmed new details on sanctions as EU foreign ministers are set to widen punitive measures against Belarus on Monday (15 November) over what EU officials have called a “hybrid attack” at its eastern border.”

EUobserver, 15 November

[People helping migrants 'increasingly persecuted in EU'](#)

"A number of activists going on trial this week in Greece risk 25 years in jail - for having helped rescue people at sea."

OMCT, 15 November

[Europe: New report highlights increased criminalisation against migrants' rights defenders](#)

"In recent years, attacks on human rights organisations and activists working to defend migrants' rights have increased dramatically in Europe. Migrant deaths have also soared, with 1,146 people losing their lives in the Mediterranean Sea in the first half of 2021 alone, and more than 40,000 people having drowned since 2014. However, policies to deter migration and seal off borders continue to prevail over the imperative to respect human rights and save lives at both European Union and member State level."

Spiegel, 12 November

[EU: The European Commission Deletes Mass Amounts of Emails and Doesn't Archive Chats](#)

"Each month, the European Commission deletes several thousand emails and texts, and WhatsApp messages are not archived at all. Now, Commission President Ursula von der Leyen is, once again, facing uncomfortable questions about allegedly deleted text messages. An expert describes the practices as legally "questionable.""

Public Technology, 9 November 2021

[Home Office plans to offer UK visitors option to upload images and fingerprints for forensic immigration checks](#)

"The Home Office has outlined its long-term intent to adopt a system through which visitors to the UK can remotely upload images and fingerprint scans to enable forensic identity checks to be undertaken by immigration authorities."

APDHA, 26 October 2021

[Trabajadoras Transfronterizas con Derechos](#)

"Desde la APDHA os animamos a firmar este manifiesto por los derechos de las trabajadoras transfronterizas en Ceuta, cuya situación es intolerable: algunas llevan hasta 20 años trabajando a diario en Ceuta, sin que se les reconozca ningún derecho y tras el cierre de la frontera, llevan más de año y medio sin poder salir de la ciudad autónoma ni ver a sus familiares."

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