



## News

### 24 June (Issue 10/22)

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Welcome to our latest edition, featuring:

- **Fortress Europe: nearly 50,000 deaths since 1993**
- **Council guts plans for rights monitoring at borders**
- **Ireland ups support for Frontex deportations**

We also have reports on Europol's limited efforts at increasing transparency, a hearing of Frontex at the European Parliament that left a number of key questions unanswered, the Hungarian government's "nothing to see here" attitude to the rule of law, and more – plus [our extensive roundup of news from across Europe](#).

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## Fortress Europe: nearly 50,000 deaths since 1993

The anti-racist group UNITED has documented 48,647 refugee and migrant deaths since 1993, detailed in an updated version of its list of deaths that is being published to coincide with World Refugee Day, 20 June. The grim total is nearly 8,000 higher than the last time an update was released, on World Refugee Day in 2020, when the list recorded some 40,500 deaths.

Read more [here](#).

## **Council guts plans for rights monitoring at borders**

The Council of the EU is moving towards agreement on its preferred text for the proposed Screening Regulation, which was announced as part of the Pact on Migration and Asylum in September 2020. The original proposal contained provisions on a border monitoring mechanism which, despite some limitations, would have enabled improved scrutiny of the activities of national border agencies. However, it looks as if the Council's position will confirm longstanding plans to gut the proposed mechanism of most of its substance.

Read more [here](#).

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## **Ireland ups support for Frontex deportations**

At €328,000, Ireland's payment to Frontex for 2022 is significantly larger than in previous years, with the majority of the increase going to support for the agency's work on deportations. The country will participate in joint removal operations, as previously, and participate in a number of new meetings: the 'Return Data Experts & Analysts Working Group', 'Country Working Groups' and 'Workshops, meetings, trainings, seminars in the area of pre-return', amongst other things.

Read more [here](#).

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## News and publications

EU: Tracking the Pact: Council mandate for negotiations with the Parliament on Eurodac

EU: Tracking the Pact: Council position on Screening Regulation to gut border monitoring proposal

The fatal policies of Fortress Europe: nearly 50,000 documented deaths since 1993

Ireland increases payment to Frontex by tens of thousands of euros to boost deportations

Death at the French-Italian border raises multiple concerns, says new report

EU: Further support for Ukrainian refugees and wounded soldiers up for discussion at Council meeting tomorrow

EU: Rule of law: nothing to see here, Hungarian government tells the Council

Europol: small steps on transparency, but many documents still under lock and key

Frontex: Exchange of views leaves key questions hanging

# News

21 June

## [EU: Tracking the Pact: Council mandate for negotiations with the Parliament on Eurodac](#)

On 15 June the French Presidency of the Council transmitted to the COREPER (the Committee of Permanent Representatives) its proposed mandate for negotiations with the European Parliament on Eurodac, the database of asylum-seekers' fingerprints. The plan is to significantly expand the database by introducing new uses, new data categories, and lowering the age limit for inclusion.

20 June

## [EU: Tracking the Pact: Council position on Screening Regulation to gut border monitoring proposal](#)

The proposed Screening Regulation, part of the EU's Pact on Migration and Asylum announced in September 2020, will see most individuals who enter the EU in an irregular fashion detained at the borders with a view to their swift expulsion. On 15 June, the French Presidency of the Council circulated its proposed compromise text, which is likely to form the basis for negotiations with the European Parliament. We are making it available here, along with the preceding version of the text. It maintains plans to gut a proposed fundamental rights border monitoring mechanism of most of its substance.

20 June

## [The fatal policies of Fortress Europe: nearly 50,000 documented deaths since 1993](#)

The anti-racist group UNITED has documented 48,647 refugee and migrants deaths since 1993, detailed in an updated version of its list of deaths that is being published to coincide with World Refugee Day, 20 June.

20 June

## [Ireland increases payment to Frontex by tens of thousands of euros to boost deportations](#)

Ireland's participation in Frontex activities is governed by agreements that are renewed annually. A Frontex management board decision from March outlines Ireland's participation in operations and activities for 2022. The payment to Frontex from Ireland is significantly larger than in previous years, particularly in the realm of returns.

20 June

## [Death at the French-Italian border raises multiple concerns, says new report](#)

Border Forensics, a new organisation conducting investigations into violence at borders, presented its first investigation on 30 May. It examines the death of Blessing Matthew, who was found on 9 May 2018 on the shore of La Durance river in the French Alps, caught in the lock at Prelles in the locality of Saint-Martin-de-Queurière near Briançon.

15 June

## [EU: Further support for Ukrainian refugees and wounded soldiers up for discussion at Council meeting tomorrow](#)

The efforts going into providing supporting for Ukrainians fleeing the Russian invasion are, of course, utterly vital - but very telling with regard to the double standards for refugees from different parts of the world.

15 June

**[EU: Rule of law: nothing to see here, Hungarian government tells the Council](#)**

On 23 May the Council of the EU held a hearing with Hungary as part of the Article 7 procedure concerning the "clear risk of a serious breach" of the EU's founding values: human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights. The response from the Hungarian delegation? Don't worry about a thing.

15 June

**[Europol: small steps on transparency, but many documents still under lock and key](#)**

Last year, Europol committed to a number of transparency measures in response to an Ombudsman decision in a case filed by Statewatch. In March this year, MEP Patrick Breyer followed up with questions on the agency's fulfilment of these commitments. We publish Europol's answers here.

14 June

**[Frontex: Exchange of views leaves key questions hanging](#)**

The LIBE Committee Frontex Scrutiny Working Group (FSWG) held an exchange of views on Frontex's activities in non-EU countries today, though certain questions by members were left conspicuously unanswered.

# The Roundup

Material we have shared on our [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) accounts in the last fortnight, now categorised by theme:

- [Asylum and immigration](#)
- [Civil liberties](#)
- [Law](#)
- [Military](#)
- [Policing](#)
- [Privacy and data protection](#)
- [Racism and fascism](#)
- [Surveillance](#)

## Asylum and immigration

European Court of Human Rights, 21 June

[The forced return to Syria of a Syrian national with a valid residence permit was in breach of Turkish law and of the Convention](#)

*Akkad v. Türkiye* concerned forced and unlawful expulsion to Syria by the Turkish authorities under the guise of a “voluntary return”

The Conversation, 20 June

[West African borders have got firmer with EU help: what it means for local interests](#)

"Yet this “hard border” project takes place in a region where migration as a practice has a long history and is also an accepted part of modern life."

Deighton Pierce Glynn, 20 June

[Home Office's NRPF policy found unlawful for the third time in as many years](#)

"The ‘no recourse to public funds’ policy was introduced in 2012 as part of the ‘hostile environment’, and has led to thousands of children growing up in abject poverty"

Euronews, 16 June

[MEPs denounce fresh reports of migrant pushbacks at Greece-Turkey border Access to the comments](#)

"The European Commission must "condemn any use of violence" and ensure the rule of law is respected across member states when it comes to migration, a group of MEPs demanded on Thursday, over fresh reports of illegal pushbacks in Greece."

The Guardian, 15 June

[Patel seeks to curb modern slavery claims as Rwanda plan labelled 'government by gimmick'](#)

"Priti Patel has been accused by Labour of participating in a "government by gimmick" in the aftermath of the 11th-hour cancellation on Tuesday of the inaugural flight taking asylum seekers to Rwanda."

InfoMigrants, 15 June

[At least 80 migrants rescued in Mediterranean](#)

"Two private rescue ships, the Sea-Eye 4 and the Aita Mari, have carried out rescues relatively close to each other not too far off the Libyan and Tunisian coasts. Sea-Eye 4 rescued 63 migrants on Tuesday and Aita Mari carried out a rescue on Wednesday of 17."

EUobserver, 14 June

[EU migrant relocation: around 7,000 pledges made so far](#)

"A handful of EU states have so far pledged to relocate around 7,000 people seeking protection and arriving on European Mediterranean shores.

"It is somewhere within the realm of 7,000 to 8,000," an EU diplomat with knowledge of the issue, told EUobserver on Monday (13 June)."

Politico Europe, 14 June

[The rule of law is sinking in Greek waters](#)

"In European countries, the rule of law prevails, however difficult or unpleasant it may be, and criminal investigations proceed regardless of a suspect's identity or the popularity of their actions. But some EU members don't seem to understand this, using a similar rhetoric of victimhood or "patriotism" to avoid scrutiny — and some of this is taking place on Greek-Turkish borders. "

The Guardian, 14 June

[Rwanda asylum flight cancelled after 11th-hour ECHR intervention](#)

"Boris Johnson's plan to send an inaugural flight of asylum seekers to Rwanda has been abandoned after a dramatic 11th-hour ruling by the European court of human rights."

The Guardian, 14 June

[UN refugee chief accuses Truss of 'untrue' statements on Rwanda policy](#)

"Liz Truss has been accused by the UN's refugee chief of making "untrue" statements after claiming that critics of the UK government's Rwandan removals policy have failed to come up with alternative policies."

The Guardian, 12 June

[Liz Truss accused of ignoring evidence of rendition of UK citizen to Nigeria](#)

"The family of a British citizen have accused the foreign secretary of ignoring "overwhelming evidence" he was taken to Nigeria in an act of extraordinary rendition and failing to end his "unlawful" imprisonment there."

UN, 26 April

[New report by the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants](#)

"...the Special Rapporteur remains concerned at the extent of preventable loss of life and human suffering at international borders, both on land and at sea"

"Pushbacks, expedited return procedures, limited access to asylum and other human rights protections, lack of State-led humanitarian assistance, and the criminalization of irregularly arriving migrants – as well as human rights defenders"

## **Civil liberties**

UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, 22 June

[Greece: Migration policy having "suffocating effect" on human rights defenders says UN expert](#)

"Defenders working to ensure the rights of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants are respected, are under severe pressure. This includes migrants themselves"

Democracy Now, 14 June

[Doctors Call on U.K. to Block Extradition of Julian Assange to U.S.](#)

"A group of more than 300 doctors from around the world are calling on U.K. Home Secretary Priti Patel to block the extradition of Julian Assange to the United States. In a letter to Patel, the group known as Doctors for Assange says the WikiLeaks founder suffered a mini stroke last October and that his overall health is continuing to deteriorate in prison. The doctors write, "The extradition of a person with such compromised health, moreover, is medically and ethically unacceptable." Patel is expected to rule on Assange's extradition by Friday."

Express & Star, 13 June

[Grenfell in numbers on fifth anniversary of fire](#)

"In the five years since the Grenfell Tower fire, there have been four housing secretaries, three evacuated families are still awaiting permanent homes, and two phases of a public inquiry into the tragedy.

Grenfell survivors and bereaved family members will mark the fifth anniversary of the deaths of 72 people on June 14 2017."



Declassified, 6 June

[Priti Patel's sweeping new threat to free expression](#)

"Journalists who receive some funding from foreign governments are at risk of committing offences under a bill that carries a maximum sentence of life imprisonment. The risk also applies to individuals working for civil society organisations such as human rights groups."

## Law

Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, 22 June

[NI Human Rights Commission responds to the Bill of Rights Bill](#)

"Any attempt to reform the Human Rights Act, which has the result of weakening the enforceability of rights in Northern Ireland, will be opposed."

Guardian, 21 June

[Raab urged to let parliament scrutinise Human Rights Act replacement](#)

We joined Liberty and 150 organisations calling for rights removal bill to be subject to robust scrutiny: "It is highly worrying that government has rejected calls to ensure fullest scrutiny"

BBC News, 14 June

[EU set to take legal action against UK over post-Brexit deal changes](#)

"The EU is expected to launch legal action against the UK government on Wednesday over its decision to scrap some post-Brexit trade arrangements.

Ministers insist current checks on some goods travelling from Great Britain to Northern Ireland must end to avoid harm to the peace process.

They published a parliamentary bill on Monday aimed at overriding parts of the deal signed with the EU in 2020."

European Court of Human Rights, 14 June

[Inadequate legal response to homophobic murder: Bulgarian law must change](#)

Chamber judgement in Stoyanova v. Bulgaria unanimously finds violation of of Article 14 (prohibition of discrimination) taken together with Article 2 (right to life) ECHR.

European Court of Human Rights, 14 June

[Russian Foreign Agents Act 2012 not necessary in a democratic society](#)

Ecodefence and Others v. Russia judgement finds a violation of Article 11 (freedom of assembly and association) interpreted in the light of Article 10 (freedom of expression)

## **Military**

EurActiv, 9 June

### **[Spain wants NATO to flag migration as 'hybrid threat' in policy roadmap](#)**

“Spain is campaigning for NATO to pay more attention to non-military threats on its so-called southern flank, comprised of the Maghreb and Sahel countries under growing Russian influence, Albares told Reuters in the interview, even as it addresses the Ukraine conflict on its eastern border.

(...)

NATO insiders have told Reuters in recent weeks that, with an active conflict on its eastern flank and regions such as the Baltic states pushing for more resources, any firm commitment to the southern flank was unlikely.

Sources also said the issue of migration was too divisive to gain consensus at the summit, even if Spain has the backing in its campaign from other southern European nations such as Portugal and Italy.”

## **Policing**

Council of the EU, 10 June

### **[Council adopts two general approaches and a recommendation to improve operational police cooperation and information exchange](#)**

“To effectively fight crime and respond to new criminal threats, the Council adopted a recommendation on operational police cooperation. It also adopted the general approaches on an information exchange directive and the Prüm II regulation.”

The Detail, 31 May

### **[Calls for PSNI to stop strip searching children](#)**

“It was recently revealed by The Detail that, in 2021, there were 34 instances in which under-18s were strip searched by the PSNI and that two of the cases involved young people aged between 12 and 14.

No drugs, weapons or anything else harmful were found as a result of 91% (31/34) of the strip searches.”

## **Prisons**

CJJI, 17 May

### **[The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the criminal justice system – a progress report](#)**

“This report follows up on the ‘state of the nation’ report, published in January 2021, which outlined how the COVID-19 pandemic had severely disrupted services across the criminal justice system (CJS).

It is based on our combined inspection findings during 2021. The structure follows the flow of work through the CJS from policing to prisons. It sets out findings from our inspections, as well as cross-cutting themes, and highlights the successes of the CJS, but also the challenges that it has faced and still faces.

It finds that most agencies are not yet able to recover to their pre-COVID-19 position and warns that without a coordinated whole-system plan recovery is likely to be disjointed and risks further fracturing the criminal justice system in England and Wales.”

## **Privacy and data protection**

Open Rights Group, 17 June

[Brace yourselves: new UK data laws are coming](#)

"Government have announced plans to gut UK General Data Protection Regulation. They are proposing to remove protections the law affords to your private life, vulnerabilities, & aspirations"

Lawfare, 15 June

EU: [European Security Officials Double Down on Automated Moderation and Client-Side Scanning](#)

“This proposed regulation, which has been dubbed “chat control” by European digital rights groups, has major implications for the state of global content moderation. While governments and interest groups have for at least a decade exerted pressure against companies operating user-generated content platforms (mainly social networks, but also search engines and cloud storage providers) to deploy technical interventions to combat the spread of certain forms of content deemed to be socially harmful (especially child abuse imagery and violent extremist propaganda), this pressure has largely been informal and industry collaboration voluntary.”

## **Racism and discrimination**

Open Society Foundations, 20 June

[Demolition of Roma homes in Bulgaria: The urgent need for housing & anti Roma prejudice strategies](#)

"The destruction of housing has continued during the pandemic, leaving people homeless & unable to obtain documents that would prove their right to basic services"

EUobserver, 15 June

[Anti-Muslim hatred ignored by EU, activists say](#)

“The EU has a problem with anti-Muslim hatred and its institutions are doing little to help, some 41 civil society groups have said.”

The Independent, 15 June

UK: [Child Q: Four Met Police officers investigated after strip-searching Black schoolgirl](#)

“Four Metropolitan Police officers are being investigated after strip-searching a 15-year-old Black schoolgirl.

The officers have each been served with gross misconduct notices in relation to the incident which happened in 2020.”

The Independent, 15 June

UK: [Grenfell and Rwanda have something terrible in common – they highlight how we treat refugees in Britain](#)

“Our treatment of people fleeing war and persecution is what colonialism and systemic racism look like in real time”

## Surveillance

EUObserver, 22 June

[Court casts doubt on EU's flight-data regime](#)

“Tuesday's ruling said the way Belgium had interpreted the EU directive amounted to “undeniably serious interferences with the rights guaranteed in Articles 7 and 8 of the Charter””

Daily Mail, 9 June

[Julian Assange's lawyer settles over 'breach of her human rights'](#)

“One of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange's lawyers has reached a settlement with the Government after it accepted it was likely she was the subject of 'covert surveillance which breached her human rights', she said.

Jennifer Robinson welcomed a statement by the European Court of Human Rights which she said meant the UK Government has 'accepted her rights were breached by surveillance'.”

## Support the fight for civil liberties in Europe

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