



## **New powers for Europol: cart before horse**

### **EU: Council eyes role in “operationalising” Migration Pact**

### **Italy: Press freedom under attack as journalists face prison**

### **EU-Israel data agreement rings alarm bells**

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## **New powers for Europol: cart before horse**

Hounded by criticism from civil society and EU member states over its new proposal to increase the powers of Europol, the European Commission has belatedly published an “analytical document” in lieu of a formal impact assessment. The new proposal would lead to the storage of vast quantities of information by Europol on human smuggling and trafficking cases, intended to increase investigations and prosecutions. However, the Commission’s document offers a minimal analysis of the potential impact on individual rights, particularly of people in vulnerable situations, and the data protection safeguards at Europol are inadequate for the proposed changes.

Read the full analysis [here](#).

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## **EU: Council eyes role in “operationalising” Migration Pact**

“The effectiveness of this new legal framework hinges on its successful implementation. This will require the adoption and application of regulatory adjustments at national level, the development or enhancement of equipment and infrastructure, the implementation of new systems, processes and procedures, reinforced coordination at national and EU level, and increased operational support and financial allocation.”

Full story [here](#).

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## **Italy: Press freedom under attack**

Three Italian journalists working for the newspaper Domani - Giovanni Tizian, Nello Trocchia and Stefano Vergine - face up to nine years in prison. An investigation by the Perugia Public Prosecutor alleges that they requested and received confidential documents from a public official, and breached the secrecy of the investigation through the request and publication of information in those documents.

The articles in question concerned Italy's defence minister Guido Crosetto, who for years prior to becoming minister was paid by the arms industry as an advisor. Alongside multiple other organisations and media outlets, Statewatch has signed a statement calling on the Italian authorities to respect press freedom.

Read the statement [here](#).

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## EU-Israel data agreement rings alarm bells

At the beginning of the year, the European Commission approved the continuation of 11 personal data adequacy agreements with non-EU states. The approval allowed the continuation of unrestricted data flows with entities in the EU. In an open letter to the Commission, Statewatch and 10 other organisations raise a number of concerns regarding the agreement with Israel, arguing that problems with the rule of law and practices of mass surveillance by security and intelligence agencies call the adequacy agreement into question.

Read the full letter [here](#).

## Stand up against state secrecy

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## Upcoming events

London, 1 May

**[Report launch \(London\) – Bitter Legacy: State Impunity in the Northern Ireland Conflict' Report of the International Expert Panel](#)**

“The Norwegian Centre for Human Rights is launching a new report ‘Bitter Legacy: State Impunity in the Northern Ireland Conflict’. The event is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 1 May at the Garden Court Chambers, 57-60 Lincoln’s Inn Fields, London, WC2A SLJ, at 18:30.

Attendance is free. We would ask you to register using this [Google Form](#).”

## New material

[Asylum, immigration and borders](#)

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### Asylum, immigration and borders

[UK Parliament approves Rwanda deportation bill, ending weeks of legislative stalemate](#)

“British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak ‘s latest effort to send some migrants to Rwanda finally won approval from Parliament early Tuesday, hours after he pledged deportation flights would begin in July.”

And see: [Rwanda: Charities plan legal challenges to removals as law set to pass](#); [Migrant deportations loom after parliament passes UK-Rwanda plan](#); Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights: [Serious human rights concerns about United Kingdom’s Rwanda Bill](#)

[Italy-Albania asylum-seeker deal to cost €653 million, report finds](#)

“An agreement between Italy and Albania to have asylum claims processed outside the EU will cost an estimated 653 million euros over five years, the Italian research institute Openpolis has found.”

France: [Fabrice Leggeri, number three for the RN \[the far-right \*Rassemblement National\*\] in the European elections, is the target of a complaint for complicity in crimes against humanity](#)

“Two associations accuse the director of Frontex from 2015 to 2022 of having participated in the turning back of migrant boats by the Greek authorities to Turkey and in the interception of migrant boats by the Libyan coastguard.”

[Cyprus suspends asylum applications for Syrians as arrivals rise](#)

“Cyprus has suspended the processing of asylum applications from Syrians following a sharp increase in arrivals this month, authorities say.

(...)

In practice, the measure means asylum seekers will be confined to two reception camps offering food and shelter, with no other benefit.”

**[Frontex Director calls for “gender-sensitive borders” and now explains the concept](#)**

“Hans Leijtens wants more female employees in EU border troops and “women-sensitive” camps at the external borders. The concept is also being criticised.”

**[Italy: Diciotti case: the Court of Appeal of Rome denies the nature of a "political act" of the conduct carried out by the Italian Government](#)**

“The Court of Appeal of Rome has completely disregarded the fanciful reconstruction of the Italian State's responsibility for the detention of Eritrean migrants on the ship 'Diciotti', referred to in the resolution of the Senate of the Republic that denied authorisation to proceed against the then Minister Salvini. The judgment was positive on this point for the appellant migrants, upholding the first ground of appeal, while rejecting the other grounds with an unsupportable interpretation of the subjective requirement of serious misconduct on the part of the P.A., which was held not to exist since the current framework of international law of the sea gives rise to a jus cogens obligation to rescue shipwrecked persons at sea, while the obligation to provide the POS is left to the state authorities, who must provide it within a reasonable time.

**[The General Court partially annuls the Frontex decision refusing a request by Sea-Watch for access to documents](#)**

“In its judgment today, the General Court largely rejects the arguments put forward by Sea-Watch against Frontex’s decision. It notes, however, that Frontex failed to mention in its decision the existence of a number of photographs covered by Sea Watch’s request. That omission means that Frontex did not justify its refusal to grant access to those photographs. Consequently, the Court partially annuls Frontex’s decision in so far as it refused access to “all pictures and videos relating to air operations in the Central Mediterranean Sea on 30 July 2021”.”

**[EU: Solidarity Crimes, Legitimacy Limits: Punishing Civil Obedience as an Abuse of Power](#)**

“In this blogpost, I argue that the EU legislator’s disregard for the human rights impacts of the facilitation regime constitutes an abuse of power. Legislative measures that have the effect of subverting legally enshrined principles (Arts 2, 6 & 21 TEU) and suppress the rights of civil society and the migrants with whom they engage are incompatible with core democratic premises.”

**[Spain: APDHA denounces that "CIEs are racist prisons whose main function is to intimidate the migrant population"](#)**

“The report 'Human Rights at the Southern Border 2024. CIEs: spaces without rights for migrants' aims to shed some light on opaque and non-transparent spaces where the rights of detainees are systematically violated.”

**[Italy: Asylum welcome is vindicated: appeal judges exonerate Mimmo Lucano and Riace](#)**

“New writer Giovanna Procacci, with the help of Colin Gordon and Hazel Pennington, reports the wonderful news that an Italian court has overturned the prosecution of those wrongly sentenced for running the Riace project”

## Civil liberties

Germany: [Police shut down pro-Palestinian conference due to concerns of "potential antisemitic remarks and glorified violence"](#)

This follows an ongoing effort to stifle expressions of solidarity with Palestine through criminalisation efforts across the EU.

Dr Ghassan Abu Sitta, who was set to speak at the conference, was also refused entry into Germany and deported back to the UK.

To this, [he said](#): "Silencing a witness to genocide before the ICJ adds to Germany's complicity in the ongoing massacre."

Spain: **Terrorism charges send activists and journalist into exile**

The *Audencia Nacional* last year opened terrorism investigations into 12 individuals associated with the pro-Catalan independence *Tsunami Democratic*, which blockaded Barcelona's airport and a motorway into France.

The accused include the Director of *Òmnium Cultural* and a journalist for *La Directa*.

The journalist [calls the accusations](#) "a response from the sewers of the state to the exercise of my activity as a journalist, focused... on uncovering police espionage operations on social movements."

"It is a direct attack on my exercise of the right to obtain information from the most diverse sources."

There is an interview with the journalist Jesús Rodríguez, [here](#). For more information and to show your solidarity for Jesús Rodríguez see [this support group](#).

Among the activists accused is Josep Campmajó, who was forced to leave Spain over six months ago. A [support group for Campmajó](#) says he always acted in a nonviolent manner, yet now he is [charged with terrorism](#).

We signed [a statement with 19 other organisations](#) calling on Spain to drop the charges. Protesting is not terrorism, and misusing the accusation undermines international human rights and democratic standards.

## Law

UK: [Police forces check intelligence and criminal databases after errors discovered in O2 phone data](#)

"Police specialists are understood to be manually checking thousands of datasets supplied by the telco for intelligence purposes, counter-terrorism, or for use in criminal investigations.

Errors in communications data obtained from O2 by police and intelligence agencies mean that unique identity numbers – known as the International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) number – that identify each mobile phone handset are not reliably recorded."

## **Human rights violated by Swiss inaction on climate, ECHR rules in landmark case**

“Weak government climate policies violate fundamental human rights, the European court of human rights has ruled.

In a landmark decision on one of three major climate cases, the first such rulings by an international court, the ECHR raised judicial pressure on governments to stop filling the atmosphere with gases that make extreme weather more violent.”

## **Military**

### **EU’s forgotten top job: Ireland, Poland and Slovenia eye EU military body chair**

“The campaign to find the new chairperson of the EU’s highest military body, the EU Military Committee (EUMC), has started, with three countries fielding candidates for the post, one month before the vote takes place.

The EU’s 27 Chiefs of Defence (CHODs) are expected to elect the future EUMC chair on 15 May, replacing incumbent Austrian General Robert Brieger, who will complete his term in May 2025.”

## **Policing**

### **UK: The People’s Tribunal on Police Killings Callout to Families**

“The People’s Tribunal on Police Killings are making a national call out to any families whose loved ones have died at the hands of the police or after contact with the police.

The Tribunal has been established to unify the struggles taking place, create a platform for justice and take direct action.”

### **UK: EXPLAINER: Serious Disruption Prevention Orders**

“One reason these banning orders are alarming is that they are aimed at criminalising political organisers and placing them under restrictive surveillance for something they might do in the future. They are a “predictive policing” measure, where police get to say that there is a likely risk of someone breaking the law in the future.”

### **The Future of Biometric Technology for Policing and Law Enforcement: Informing UK Regulation**

“This CETaS Research Report explores the future of biometric technology for UK policing and law enforcement. It analyses technical trends and highlights where new regulatory measures may be required to facilitate responsible uses and restrictions of these systems for public safety purposes. It gathers insights from existing literature, research interviews with 35 experts, a workshop and incorporates the most up-to-date public survey on biometric systems – involving a nationally representative sample of 662 members of the UK population.”

### **European Police Chiefs call for industry and governments to take action against end-to-end encryption roll-out**

“Privacy measures currently being rolled out, such as end-to-end encryption, will stop tech companies from seeing any offending that occurs on their platforms. It will also stop law enforcement’s ability to obtain and use this evidence in investigations to prevent and prosecute the most serious crimes such as child sexual abuse, human trafficking, drug smuggling, homicides, economic crime and terrorism offences.”

### **INTERPOL welcomes new DNA legislation in Belgium**

“Belgium has enacted a new law considerably boosting its ability to solve cases of missing or unidentified deceased persons.

Until now, officials in Belgium were restricted from sharing DNA profiles to international databases for criminal missing persons investigations, essentially limiting their ability to find answers abroad.”

### **EU: New report by the Fundamental Rights Agency: Addressing Racism in Policing**

The report highlights structural issues in policing practices across the EU, arguing that "EU countries should ensure that their police forces comply with anti-racism provisions in EU and international law."

Though identifying gaps in existing frameworks, it proposes steps for action:

- Enforce national legislation
- Collect data on police misconduct
- Ensure oversight and protect whistleblowers
- Provide training and increase diversity

Find it [here](#).

### **Parliament debates Chinese police activity in Europe: Hungary’s case**

“A summit on law enforcement between China and Hungary took place in Budapest on Friday, February 16. During the summit, Interior Minister Sándor Pintér held talks with Wang Xiaohong and signed agreements allowing Chinese police officers to accompany their Hungarian counterparts on joint patrols in several locations across Hungary, which is a member of the EU.”

## **Privacy and data protection**

### **Grindr sued for allegedly revealing users' HIV status**

“Grindr, the world's biggest dating app for the LGBT community, is being sued for allegedly sharing personal information such as people's HIV status with third parties.

According to the claim, lodged at the High Court in London, "covert tracking technology" was deployed, and highly sensitive information was illegally shared with advertisers.”



## Racism and discrimination

### [The colonial biometric legacy at heart of new EU asylum system](#)

“On Wednesday (10 April), the EU is set to vote on a new set of asylum and migration reforms. Amongst the many controversial changes proposed in the new migration pact, one went almost unnoticed – a seemingly innocent reform of the EU’s asylum database, EURODAC.

Although framed as purely technical adjustments, the reality is far more malicious. The changes to EURODAC will massively exacerbate violence against people on the move.”

## Security and intelligence

### UK: [Manchester Arena bomb: Hundreds of survivors to sue MI5](#)

“More than 250 survivors of the Manchester Arena bomb are taking legal action against MI5, lawyers representing them have confirmed.

Twenty-two people died and hundreds more were injured in the blast in May 2017.

Legal teams representing many survivors injured in the explosion said they have submitted a group claim to the Investigatory Powers Tribunal (IPT).

MI5 said it would not comment on ongoing legal proceedings.”

And see: [The gaping hole in the Manchester Arena inquiry: The role of the British state](#)

## Surveillance

### **Israel's development and use of surveillance tech has a global impact on human rights**

An article by Tor Project "delves into the impact of Israeli surveillance technologies in Palestine, illustrating how localized instances of its use can have extensive repercussions."

To do so, it provides numerous examples of Israel's "alarming sophistication of surveillance capitalism," including:

- Israeli NSO and Voyager Labs tools use to surveil and oppress journalists and activists
- Israeli companies' contracts in Saudi Arabia for citizen data scanning
- Elbit Systems, a leading Israeli military tech exporter, global deployment of advanced surveillance tech
- Israel's deployment of AI-based surveillance systems, appealing to authoritarian regimes
- Mass surveillance by Israeli companies like Corsight and AnyVision

Importantly, it notes, "This pervasive surveillance technology doesn't end in Palestine, but it often starts with it."

Read the full article [here](#).

*Statewatch* together with *IMI* has highlighted the EU’s complicity in funding Israel's technologies.

Our [joint report](#) points to several examples that prove the concrete application of EU-funded technologies in the current war in Gaza.