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Statewatch coverage of the migrant crisis in the Mediterranean

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1. UN-UK-MEDIA: [UN Human Rights Chief urges U.K. to tackle tabloid hate speech, after migrants called cockroaches](#) (link):

"After decades of sustained and unrestrained anti-foreigner abuse, misinformation and distortion, and in the wake of a recent article in the Sun newspaper calling migrants cockroaches, the UN Human Rights Chief on Friday urged the U.K. authorities, media and regulatory bodies to take steps to curb

incitement to hatred by British tabloid newspapers, in line with the country's obligations under national and international law."

[UN human rights chief denounces Sun over Katie Hopkins 'cockroach' column - High commissioner launches scathing attack on tabloid columnist, comparing Hopkins migrant remarks with hate language used before Rwandan genocide](#) (Guardian, link):

"The UN's human rights chief has attacked the Sun newspaper for publishing an article by columnist Katie Hopkins, branding her use of the word cockroaches to describe migrants as reminiscent of anti-Semitic Nazi propaganda.

In a scathing and extraordinary intervention, the UN high commissioner for human rights, Zeid Raad Al Hussein, points out that the word cockroaches was used by both the Nazis and those behind the genocide in Rwanda, and urges the UK government, media and regulators to respect national and international laws on curbing incitement to hatred.

The Nazi media described people their masters wanted to eliminate as rats and cockroaches, said Zeid. Escaping Eritrea: 'If I die at sea, it's not a problem at least I won't be tortured': This type of language is clearly inflammatory and unacceptable, especially in a national newspaper."

2. EU: MED CRISIS: [Draft list of Member State "pledges" of military and other "assets"](#) (pdf)
Note so far Germany has only given 2 ships and UK warships are not included.

3. EU: MED CRISIS: [Dont Rock the Boat: EU leaders do as little as possible to address the migrant crisis](#) (EU Law Analysis, link)

"Yesterday the EU leaders, in the European Council, adopted a [policy](#) for addressing the recent crisis of large-scale migrant death tolls crossing the Mediterranean. It builds upon the recent 10-point plan adopted by ministers (discussed here), but builds upon it in some respects. There were also some interesting last-minute changes to the [earlier draft](#) of the text (all of which are shown in the annex below), indicating leaders' real priorities...

there is a specific commitment to triple the funds for search and rescue as regards existing EU operations. However, this is only within the mandate of Frontex and the head of the EU border agency has [stated](#) that this agency does not really have a search and rescue role.

It should be noted that since these operations are coordinated by Frontex, detailed rules of EU law will apply (discussed here) will apply. These rules do allow, in some cases, for returns of migrants directly from their rescue to non-EU countries as long as those countries are safe. It is unlikely that in the current situation, Libya would qualify as safe."

4. [Comparison between Draft and Final Statements](#) (pdf)

Although the statement limits fingerprinting to those who apply for asylum see Statewatch on EU plan for "systematic identification": [Fingerprinting by force: secret discussions on "systematic identification" of migrants and asylum seekers](#)

5. EU MED CRISIS: Press coverage:

- European Parliament: [European Council: Civil Liberties Committee Chair regrets lack of commitment by EU leaders on the number of refugees to resettle](#) (pdf): "Reacting to the final statement of the European Council held yesterday in Brussels, the Chair of the European Parliament's Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee responsible for dealing with migration, Claude Moraes (S&D, UK), welcomed the setting up of a voluntary resettlement scheme to those qualifying

for protection, but regretted the lack of commitment by EU leaders on the number of refugees to resettle. "Bolder pledges should have been made" at the summit, he said."

- [Open letter to David Cameron: Building the walls of fortress Europe has had deadly results - In this open letter, a coalition of 19 charities calls on the UK to ensure that a fully resourced search-and-rescue mission is re-established](#) (Independent, link)

- [EU to target migrant smugglers](#) (euobserver, link): "EU leaders on Thursday (23 April) declared war on migrant smugglers and promised to triple the monthly budget of the EU's sea surveillance mission, Triton. But broader efforts to address politically sensitive issues on a better distribution of asylum seekers and refugees largely fell to the wayside as leaders instead placed emphasis on giving the EU's surveillance mission Triton more cash, more boats, and more planes."

- [NGOs: Migration summit fell short of expectations](#) (euractiv, link): "EU leaders have missed a real opportunity to make a serious difference in the lives and deaths of the people suffering daily in the Mediterranean, say NGOs."

- [EU leaders will use military against refugees, warns leading MEP](#) (euractiv, link)

- [Coffin-carrying migrants march on European Council](#) (euractiv, link)

6. EU MED CRISIS: European Council: [Press release](#) (pdf): Final text does not even commit to tiny number of 5,000 resettlement places

7. EU: MED CRISIS: [MEPs condemn EU leaders shameful response to migration crisis in Mediterranean](#) (GUE/NGL, link):

"GUE/NGL MEPS have condemned EU leaders in the strongest possible terms for not responding to the spiralling death toll in the Mediterranean with a much-needed robust search and rescue operation as well as proposals for safe and legal access to the EU."

[Draft conclusions](#) from today's emergency summit in Brussels show that instead EU governments want to prevent migrants from gaining access to Mediterranean shores and return swiftly those who arrive in Europe."

8. Euromedrights: OPEN LETTER TO THE EU HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENTS: [No More Excuses for Deaths at Sea: Reform Policies, Save Lives!](#) (link):

"Ahead of the EU's extraordinary summit of 23 April 2015, the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN) is calling on the 28 Heads of States and Governments to urgently reconsider the proposed package of measures to tackle the humanitarian crisis in the Mediterranean. The EMHRN exhorts EU leaders to shift their focus away from surveillance, intelligence gathering and border controls towards a genuine human rights perspective with the protection of migrants and refugees at the heart of their concerns."

See also: [A deadly crossing: Hasans story](#) (AI, link) And: [Amnesty International's Blueprint for Action to end refugee and migrant deaths in the Med](#) (link)

9. EU: MED CRISIS: EUROPEAN COUNCIL MEETING 23 APRIL 2015, Brussels: [Agenda](#) (pdf) and [Background Note](#) (pdf)

See also: [Questions and Answers: Facts and Figures on cooperation with Africa How does the](#)

[EU cooperate with Africa on migration?](#) (pdf) and [An employment office in Bamako: the European Unions transformation of Mali into a migration control laboratory](#), by Stephan Dunnwald (Statewatch database) and see story below

See also; [Special EU summit on the Mediterranean crisis: euractiv tracker](#) (link)

10. EU: MED CRISIS: [Most migrants crossing Mediterranean will be sent back, EU leaders to agree - Exclusive: Confidential draft from summit reveals that only 5,000 migrants will be allowed to resettle in Europe with at least 150,000 likely to be repatriated](#) (Guardian link):

"EU's Frontex border agency, the head of Frontex, Fabrice Leggeri, said on the eve of the summit that saving migrants lives should not be the priority for his maritime patrols despite the clamour for a more humane response after the deaths of 800 refugees and migrants at the weekend."

See: Statewatch EU Council Draft Conclusions document: [Draft European Council Conclusions](#) (pdf)

11. EU-MED-CRISIS RESPONSE: [Draft European Council Statement](#) for 25 April 2015 Summit of Prime Ministers and Heads of State (pdf). includes:

- *"to increase the search and rescue possibilities within the mandate of FRONTEX; [p.m.: welcome pledges]*

But asks for "volunteer" Member States to join search and rescue - no commitment by all governments

and:

- *increased intelligence and police-cooperation with third countries*

- *systematic efforts to **identify, capture and destroy vessels** before they are used by traffickers. The High Representative is invited to immediately begin preparations for a possible CSDP operation to this effect, in accordance with international law*

- *increase support to Tunisia, Egypt, Sudan, Mali and Niger among others, to monitor and control the land borders and routes in order to prevent potential migrants from gaining access to Mediterranean shores,*

- *promote readmission of unauthorised economic migrants to countries of origin*

- *new **return programme for the rapid return** of irregular migrants*

- ***voluntary pilot project on resettlement, offering at least 5,000 places** to persons qualifying for protection*

- ***registration and finger-printing**" [emphasis added]*

12. EU-MED CRISIS: [EU borders chief says saving migrants' lives 'shouldn't be priority' for patrols - Coastal fleet missions off Italy not mandated or resourced for full search and rescue operations, and nor is EU, says head of Frontex agency](#) (Guardian, link)

"Triton cannot be a search-and-rescue operation. I mean, in our operational plan, we cannot have

provisions for proactive search-and-rescue action. This is not in Frontex's mandate, and this is in my understanding not in the mandate of the European Union, Leggeri told the Guardian."

And see today: Falling into line - but will Frontex's mandate be changed? [Frontex ready to implement European Council conclusions - Executive Director](#) (link): "My proposal is to increase as an immediate step air surveillance in the Mediterranean Sea south of Italy and Malta in addition to the vessels currently deployed, which is aimed at enhancing search and rescue capacities in the area, Leggeri said."

And see: [EU leaders to consider military crackdown on Libya human traffickers](#) (euractiv, link) and [EU to 'capture and destroy' migrant traffickers' boats](#) (euobserver, link): "the text [of the Draft Conclusions] does not mention changing Frontex's mandate, with human rights organisations regularly criticising the EU for focusing on protecting its borders rather than dealing with the humanitarian aspect."

13. CRISIS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN: German Marshall Fund: [The United States and the Future of Mediterranean Security: Reflections from GMFs Mediterranean Strategy Group](#) (GMF, link) This article is on the "Reading List" of the Background briefing on the Special European Council of 23 April 2015:

"Mediterranean security is set to pose key tests for both NATO and EU strategy in the years ahead. U.S. political and military engagement will be important elements in regional stability. But the relatively diffuse nature of Mediterranean security risks, a substantially reduced permanent military presence, and some marked differences in the European and U.S. approach to the region will complicate policy looking south."

See: [GMF Reflections](#) (pdf)

14. [The EU response to migrant deaths: protection and prevention or policy laundering?](#) (EU Law Analysis, link): "Overall, this is a very disappointing document. Its not only vague on crucial details but more importantly focusses less on the situation of the migrants (addressing the root causes which cause them to move, and protection from drowning and persecution) and more on border control and repression."

and see: [Joint Foreign and Home Affairs Council: Ten point action plan on migration](#) (pdf) which does not include a response to the humanitarian situation for "search and rescue" and [African Union Commission and European Commission meet to bring new impetus to the EU-Africa partnership](#) (pdf): "In the context of the ongoing crisis in Libya and the dramatic situation in the Mediterranean, we have to enhance cooperation with North African and Sub Saharan African countries to build migration and border management capacities."

15. ITALY: Associazione per gli Studi Giuridici sull'Immigrazione (ASGI) statement: [Italy and Europe must react immediately to stop the tragedy of the deaths in the Mediterranean:](#)

"Inactivity makes them accomplices of a slaughter: A failure to immediately adopt the measures listed above would entail a serious responsibility on Europe's part as, by forgetting its founding values, it remains objectively indifferent to the tragedies that are taking place at our borders."

16. MED: SEARCH & RESCUE: [Mediterranean migrant deaths: UK sends just five workers to assist EU - Government boosts contribution from one immigration officer to five, as Labour condemns immoral UK approach to search and rescue missions](#) (Guardian, link)

17. EU: LIBYA & SEARCH & RESCUE: European External Action Service: [Libya, a Political Framework for a Crisis Approach](#) (LIMITE doc no: 13829-18, pdf): "**three possible scenarios for the near future**; a stalemate, with no clear winner; an escalation of violence, in which one side might overcome the other following a full-scale civil war; or a cessation of hostilities and the resumption of the political process. **What these scenarios demonstrate is that the possibility for the EU to define its strategy and programme its activities depends highly on the outcome.** The first 2 scenarios are clearly not conducive to any major EU footprint and/or support programme. **Only a ceasefire agreement could eventually allow for a resumption of EU support**" [emphasis in original]

[Mass drowning prompts talk of EU search-and-rescue operation](#) (euobserver, link):

"The EU is mulling options to launch a fully-fledged search and rescue operation following the reported drowning of some 700 EU-bound migrants over the weekend. Speaking on the behalf of Latvia's EU presidency, interior minister Rihards Kozlovskis on Monday (20 April) said options should be explored for setting up a full-fledged search and rescue operation of the EU.

But Kozlovskis call for a EU-wide rescue mission is likely to meet resistance from national governments like the UK, which insist aid efforts are a pull factor for more people to make the perilous journey. The deaths and boating tragedies have historically been met with emotional statements from the EU and most governments but little in terms of action. How many more people will have to drown until we finally act in Europe? said European parliament president Martin Schulz in a statement."

And: [EU to launch military operations against migrant-smugglers in Libya](#) (Guardian, link): "The European Union is to launch military operations against the networks of smugglers in Libya deemed culpable of sending thousands of people to their deaths in the Mediterranean.... Dimitris Avramopoulos, the European commissioner for migration issues, said the operation would be civil-military modelled on previous military action in the Horn of Africa to combat Somali piracy. **The military action would require a UN mandate.**" [emphasis added]

18. EU: "FORTRESS EUROPE" RE-BORN: SEARCH & RESCUE CRISIS IN MED: [Joint Foreign and Home Affairs Council: Ten point action plan on migration](#) (pdf) which does not include a response to the humanitarian situation for "search and rescue" but which includes:

- "A systematic effort to capture and destroy vessels used by the smugglers" which would require a "civil-military" operation to be authorised by the Council

- "Member States to ensure fingerprinting of all migrants"

- "Establish a new return programme for rapid return of irregular migrants coordinated by Frontex from frontline Member States" and "Consider options for an emergency relocation"

See: [Mediterranean migrant crisis: EU sets out measures](#) (BBC News, link)

19. [Migrant deaths in the Mediterranean: What can the EU do?](#) (EU Law Analysis, link): "There is a moral imperative for the EU to act swiftly and effectively to address the issue."

and also [Watch the Med](#) (link): "Watch the Mediterranean Sea is an online mapping platform to monitor the deaths and violations of migrants' rights at the maritime borders of the EU"

And see: [EU ministers meet for crisis talks after hundreds of migrants drown in Mediterranean](#)

[- Italian prime minister Matteo Renzi says EU action must be a priority as death toll of drownings this year now stands at 1,500 50 times more than at same point in 2014](#) (Guardian, link)

20. EU: Response to deaths in the Mediterranean (19.4.15): [Press release](#) (pdf):

"the Foreign Affairs Council that will meet tomorrow in Luxembourg, will [discuss] the next steps the EU is going to take to tackle human trafficking and smuggling in an effective and truly European way."

21. EU: Search and rescue: [The Observer view on the human tragedy in the Mediterranean](#) (link) Editorial: "Europe cant afford to sit back and do nothing when thousands of migrants are dying every week in search of a new life in Italy and Greece... The fundamental causes of this crisis will take years to address. An urgent first step is to reinstitute EU-underwritten search and rescue operations" and see:

[Trivialising migrant deaths: why words matter](#) (EU Law Analysis, link): "The escalating tragedy of thousands of migrants lives being lost every year during attempted Mediterranean crossings is one of the most difficult issues facing the EUs immigration policy."

EU response: European Commission: [European Commission Statement on developments in the Mediterranean](#) (19-4-15,pdf): "**as long as countries of origin and transit do not take action to prevent these desperate trips, people will continue to put their lives at risk**" [emphasis added]

And see: [Statement of High Representative on capsizing of a migrants' boat in the Mediterranean Sea](#) (19-4-15, pdf): "Every single day, we have the duty to save human lives, sharing among all the 28 this duty and a responsibility that for too long has been left only to the southern countries.... I've decided to put the issue of migration as a formal point on the agenda of the Foreign Affairs Council I convened tomorrow in Luxembourg, where **I'll present a set of proposals for Libya, one of the main routes of illegal trafficking of migrants.**" [emphasis added]

Tony Bunyan, Statewatch Director comments:

"Migrants are fleeing from war, persecution and poverty which require long-term solutions. The underlying causes are wars and conflicts, persecution by oppressive and authoritarian regimes or "broken" states, poverty stemming from global inequality and exploitation and the long-term implications of climate change. And the political will to meaningfully address these issues is manifestly absent.

The response to the immediate and continuing tragedies should be obvious. The EU needs to launch an unequivocal and permanent search and rescue operation in the Mediterranean matched by a commitment by all EU governments to share responsibility for migrants' welfare."

And: [UNHCR - New Mediterranean boat tragedy may be biggest ever, urgent action is needed now](#) (link)

22. EU: [Rights groups: EU leaders dont care about drowning immigrants](#) (euractiv, link): "Rights groups lashed out at the EU on Wednesday for scrapping rescue operations in the Mediterranean, saying it had endangered the lives of thousands of desperate migrants making perilous journeys across the sea."

And see: CoE: [Parliamentary Assembly: Mediterranean migrant tragedy: PACE rapporteur calls for a co-ordinated European response](#) (link): "The humanitarian plight of these people has become

unbearable, said the rapporteur. The human rights of refugees, on the one hand, as well as the fight against unscrupulous traffickers, on the other, should be addressed at a European level as a matter of priority.

See: [Remarks by Commissioner Avramopoulos on the situation in the Mediterranean at the LIBE Committee in the European Parliament Brussels, 14 April 2015](#) (pdf): **Makes no mention or commitment to search and rescue.**

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