

# CHRONOLOGY OF VIOLATIONS

Thanks to the hard and often risky work of numerous organizations and human rights defenders, the OMCT has been able to characterize a succession of episodes of human rights violations against people on the move in Tunisia between May and December 2025. The chronology below reviews the evolution of the situation of people on the move, whose rights are continually violated and whose voices remain insufficiently heard. It includes the main episodes of violations, legal proceedings against defenders and human rights organizations of people on the move, as well as hate speech and statements.<sup>1</sup> Without claiming to be exhaustive, this chronology is the fruit of continuous monitoring and triangulation of information and sources<sup>2</sup> by the OMCT and its partners.

04/05

20  
25

AROUND A HUNDRED PEOPLE SETTING OUT FROM THE SFAX COAST ON SEVERAL BOATS **ARE INTERCEPTED BY THE TUNISIAN COASTGUARD** AND HAVE THEIR PHONES CONFISCATED BEFORE BEING FORCIBLY REMOVED TO THE BORDERS WITH ALGERIA.<sup>3</sup>



06/05

An anti-racism association in Tunisia **condemns the «prolonged and unjustified» detention of its president**. She was arrested in May 2024 as part of a series of repressive actions targeting human rights defenders in Tunisia.<sup>4</sup>

09/05

According to the world press freedom index, Tunisia **fell 11 places** to 129th out of 180.<sup>5</sup>

12/05

HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE ON THE MOVE OF SUB-SAHARAN ORIGIN DEMONSTRATE AROUND SFAX TO **DEMAND DIGNIFIED TREATMENT FROM THE TUNISIAN AUTHORITIES**.<sup>6</sup>

20/05

A man of Cameroonian nationality **is stabbed to death by Tunisian citizens** attempting to steal his belongings in the Ariana Governorate, Tunis.<sup>7</sup>



26/05

Forced displacement of people in 4 buses by the National Guard towards the Algerian border near Tozeur:

*«After we were dispersed at the border, I walked for at least two weeks I think, I had nothing...».*<sup>8</sup>



28/05

UN experts and special procedures send joint letter to Tunisian authorities regarding administrative and judicial harassment, arrest and detention of human rights defenders in Tunisia since 2024.<sup>9</sup>

29/05

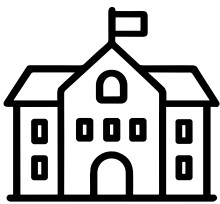
**AN INFORMAL CAMP** HOUSING OVER 3,500 PEOPLE ON THE MOVE IS DISMANTLED BY THE TUNISIAN NATIONAL GUARD AT EL AMRA, KM 21, IN THE GOVERNORATE OF SFAX.<sup>10</sup>

03/06

A deputy at the Assembly of People's Representatives (ARP) warns of *«the number of sub-Saharanans multiplying following childbirth»*, calling these births *«a great and imminent danger for Tunisia»*. He describes the situation in Tunisia as *«a metastasizing cancer»*.<sup>12</sup>

02/06

A Gambian man dies at El Amra, km 21, on the side of the road. He was reportedly killed by tear gas fired by the Tunisian National Guard.<sup>11</sup>



10/06

A member of parliament for the Sfax Sud constituency publishes a video warning against sending children of sub-Saharan migrants to school.<sup>13</sup>

20/06

The spokesman for the Tunisian National Guard announces that the Tunisian state has begun to provide air tickets to people on the move in an irregular situation, without going through the IOM.<sup>15</sup>

20/06

**AN INFORMAL SETTLEMENT** HOUSING OVER 1,500 PEOPLE ON THE MOVE IS **DISMANTLED BY THE TUNISIAN NATIONAL GUARD** AT EL AMRA IN THE GOVERNORATE OF SFAX. THIS IS THE 5TH SUCH OPERATION SINCE APRIL 2025. THE TUNISIAN AUTHORITIES HAVE PROVIDED **NO INFORMATION ON THE LOCATION OF THE RELOCATION.**<sup>14</sup>



01/07

A man suffering from tuberculosis dies in front of the IOM offices in Tunis.<sup>18</sup>

03/07

Dismantling of an informal camp by the Tunisian National Guard in the governorate of Sfax at km 36. Tents are burnt.<sup>19</sup>

14/07

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, declares that repression in Tunisia is even more severe than in Libya and that the authorities there no longer allow asylum seekers to register, making it difficult to consider Tunisia a «safe third country».<sup>21</sup>

15/08

250 people were reportedly detained at the port of Sfax. Some were released - notably pregnant women - while others were put on buses and deported to Libya and Algeria.<sup>25</sup>

30/06



A LAWYER AND MEDIA COLUMNIST IS SENTENCED TO TWO YEARS IN PRISON, SPARKING A WAVE OF INDIGNATION.<sup>16</sup> THE SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS EXPRESSES HER DEEP CONCERN AT THIS NEW SENTENCE.<sup>17</sup>

14/07

The Minister of the Interior reaffirmed that «Tunisia will never be a land of settlement or passage for irregular African migrants». He stressed that the operations to dismantle the informal settlements had been carried out with due respect for humanitarian principles, and had been accompanied by measures to facilitate the voluntary return of people on the move to their country of origin.<sup>20</sup>

25/07



Hundreds of Tunisians protest against the President of the Republic: «Tunisia has turned into an open-air prison...Even those who are not behind bars live in a state of temporary freedom, constantly at risk of being arrested for any reason».<sup>21</sup>

02/08

An academic denounces on social networks an act of racism by a cab driver who allegedly replied: «I'm not racist, but the law forbids me to take «Africans»».<sup>23</sup>

06/08



New legal development in the case of an anti-racism association whose president was arrested in May 2024. Several charges, previously dropped, are reintroduced against her and other members of the organization.<sup>24</sup>

24/08

The National Union of Tunisian Journalists denounces the closure of the "Instance nationale d'accès à l'information", which had been set up in 2017<sup>27</sup> and enabled many citizens and journalists to demand access to public data or reports.<sup>28</sup>

07/09

Between five and six boats that had left the coast of Sfax the previous day were intercepted by National Guard maritime units. According to corroborating accounts, the passengers arrested were deported to Libya.<sup>30</sup>

08/10

The Court of Cassation rejects the cassation appeal in the case against several Tunisian civil society activists involved in defending the rights of people on the move. All charges initially brought against them are upheld.<sup>36</sup>

24/08

An altercation between a group of people on the move reportedly caused the death of a man from sub-Saharan Africa in Sousse. The courts have ordered the opening of a judicial investigation into the man's stabbing.<sup>26</sup>



02/09

On the night of September 1 to 2, Tunisian authorities reportedly arbitrarily arrested 82 people on the move in the villages of Mazdour, Ksar Hellal and Jemmel, and deported them to the desert.<sup>29</sup>

28/09

55 people that departed from the coast of Sfax are intercepted by the Tunisian coastguard. During the interception, the boat overturned and all the people fell into the water, before being rescued and disembarked at the port of Sfax.<sup>31</sup> They were allegedly deported in Libya.<sup>32</sup>



01/10

A group of 40 people on the move of sub-Saharan origin, including 15 children and 7 pregnant women,<sup>33</sup> are forcibly moved to a desert area



in Tunisia close to the Algerian border.<sup>34</sup>

08/10

At the 76th plenary session of the UNHCR Programme Executive Committee, Tunisia reaffirms its categorical refusal of any «disguised settlement of irregular migrants» on its territory and calls for redoubled efforts to facilitate the voluntary return of people on the move or their resettlement in a third country.<sup>35</sup>

10/10

Interception by the Tunisian coastguard of a boat leaving Sfax with 35 people, after 3 days at sea. After disembarking at the port of Sfax, some were reportedly deported to Libya.<sup>37</sup>

06/11

A new Amnesty International report denounces the arrests of people on the move in Tunisia, dangerous interceptions at sea, deportations and forced internal and arbitrary displacements, and highlights the forms of torture and sexual violence suffered by people on the move transiting or residing in the country.<sup>39</sup>

22/11

Operation to dismantle informal settlements in the governorate of Sfax at km 22 by the National Guard, destroying boats and makeshift tents, leaving several dozen people homeless.<sup>45</sup>

03/11

A boat with 56 people on board departed from Zouara in Libya and was intercepted by the Tunisian coastguard. The people on board were reportedly deported to Libya and detained at the Al Assa detention center.<sup>38</sup>



12/11

**DISMANTLING OF AN INFORMAL SETTLEMENT BY THE NATIONAL GUARD AT KM 21. SIX PEOPLE ARE SERIOUSLY BURNED.**<sup>40</sup>

13/11

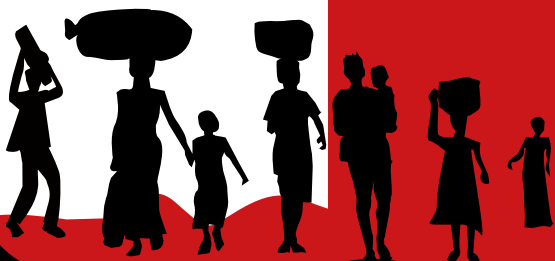
A group of people on the move, comprising 18 women and 24 children, is arrested in Tunis for begging and detained at the El Ouardia administrative detention center in the southern suburbs of Tunis<sup>41</sup>. On November 15, security forces reportedly tried to put them on buses to forcibly move them to desert areas, but the women protested, and the group was returned to the center.<sup>42</sup> On December 10, some of the women were returned to their respective countries of origin - notably Nigeria and Sierra Leone.<sup>43</sup>

22/11

Citizens' march in central Tunis to denounce injustice and demand the rule of law, regardless of political party. Demonstrators denounced arbitrary arrests and detentions, restrictions on press freedom and restrictions on civil society organizations.<sup>44</sup>

27/11

Tunisia is examined by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. In its concluding observations, the Committee recommends that the Tunisian state, among other things, take effective measures to monitor the spread of racist hate speech targeting sub-Saharan migrants, refrain from collective expulsions and respect the principle of non-refoulement.<sup>46</sup>



15/12

Opening of the trial of a civil society organization whose three employees have been in pre-trial detention for 19 months. The defendants are accused of housing and facilitating the illegal residence of migrants, within the framework of a partnership with the municipality of Sousse. Requests for their release have been rejected.<sup>47</sup>

23/12

13 people on the move of Sub-saharan origin are arrested in Tazarka, near Nabeul. They are charged with illegal entry into Tunisia and drug-related offences. **A member of the Tunisian Parliament denounces the significant increase in the number of people on the move in the Cap Bon region, particularly in Tazarka and Korba, and calls for their gradual repatriation.**<sup>48</sup>

# NOTES

1. As the monitoring work is carried out mainly in French and English, the extent of hate speech disseminated online and in the Tunisian media is not represented in this timeline.
2. Sources include interviews with civil society organizations on the ground and with experts working in Tunisia, a review of press articles and academic research papers, viewing and analysis of publicly available videos and photos, as well as referrals from partner organizations and human rights defenders.
3. **Alarm Phone on X.** This episode was also confirmed by OMCT through an interview with a key informant documenting episodes of shipwrecks and interceptions at sea in the central Mediterranean.
4. «**One year of detention for Saadia Mosbah: Mnemty denounces targeted repression**», 06/05/2025, Business News.
5. «**Saadia Mosbah: the imprisoned icon of Tunisian anti-racism**», 06/16/2025, Nawaat.
6. «**Tunisia: press freedom in free fall**», 09/05/2025, Reporters Without Borders.
7. «**Tunisie : recul alarmant dans le classement RSF 2025 sur la liberté de la presse**», 10/05/2025, Inkyfada.
8. **Refugees in Tunisia on X, Marino Dubois on Facebook**  
This episode was confirmed through Key Informant Interviews with humanitarian sources.
9. **Refugees in Libya on X.**
10. «**Nobody hears you when you scream: the dangerous turn of Tunisia's migration policy**», 06/11/2025, Amnesty International, p. 7.
11. Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders, the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, the Special Rapporteur on the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health and the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, AL TUN 3/2025, 28 mai 2025.
12. «**Migration: la Tunisie démantèle un camp illégal à El Amra abritant 3500 migrants**», 29/05, Tunisie Numérique.  
«**Dismantling of migrant camps in El Amra**», 29/05/2025, Business News.
13. **Refugees in Libya on X and Refugees in Tunisia on X**
14. «**Tarak Mahdi: migrants spread like a metastasizing cancer!**», 03/06/2025, Business News.  
«**More than 6,000 births of children of irregular African migrants recorded in a few months**», 03/06/2025, La Presse.tn.
15. «**La scolarisation des enfants de migrants est une menace pour l'Etat, selon Fatma Mseddi**», 11/06/2025, Business News.
16. «**El Amra: Démantèlement d'un cinquième camp de migrants**», 20/06/2025, Mosaïque FM.
17. «**Tunisian government offers return tickets to migrants in Sfax, without going through IOM**», 06/24/2025, InfoMigrants.
18. «**Condamnation de Sonia Dahmani: vague d'indignation et dénonciation d'un «déli de justice**», 30/06/2025, Business News.
19. **Mary Lawlor, UN Special Rapporteur HRDs on X**
20. **Marino Dubois on Facebook**  
This episode was confirmed through Key Informant Interviews with humanitarian sources.
21. **Marino Dubois on Facebook**  
This episode was confirmed through Key Informant Interviews with humanitarian sources.
22. «**Khaled Nouri: la Tunisie refuse d'être une terre de transit pour la migration irrégulière**», 15/07/2025, Nessma.
23. «**Filippo Grandi: "Migranti, la situazione è critica. Il piano Mattei diventi europeo"**», 14/07/2025, Corriere della Sera.
24. **Tunisia an «open-air» prison, sau protesters at anti-President Saied march**», 25/07/2025, Al Jazeera.
25. «**Refused in a cab because black: an academic denounces ordinary and repeated racism**», 02/08/2025, BusinessNews.
26. «**La justice relaunch les poursuites contre l'association Mnemty et Saadia Mosbah**», 06/08/2025, BusinessNews.
27. **Marino Dubois on Facebook**
28. «**Sousse: une enquête ouverte après le meurtre d'un migrant subsaharien**», 24/08/2025, Mosaïque FM.
29. The Access to Information Authority was an independent public body, with legal personality and financial autonomy, created by Organic Law n°2016-22 of March 24, 2016 on the right of access to information. Its nine members, elected by the Assembly and appointed by decree, represented various bodies: magistrates, lawyers, teachers, journalists, statisticians and civil society. INAI's mission was to guarantee the right of access to information, arbitrate between the administration and citizens, and promote transparency in public action.
30. «**Tunisie: fermeture de l'Instance d'accès à l'information, nouveau tour de vis du régime**», 24/08/2025, RFI.  
«**Disparition de l'instance d'accès à l'information : en Tunisie, un verrou de plus**», 21/08/2025, Inkyfada.
31. **Marino Dubois on Facebook**
32. **L'actualité on Facebook**  
This episode was also confirmed by OMCT through an interview with a key informant
33. **Alarm Phone on X**  
This episode was also confirmed by OMCT through an interview with a key informant documenting episodes of shipwrecks and interceptions at sea in the central Mediterranean
34. **Alarm Phone on X and L'actualité sur Facebook**  
This episode was also confirmed by OMCT through an interview with a key informant documenting episodes of shipwrecks and interceptions at sea in the central Mediterranean.
35. This episode was also reported by **Refugees in Libya on X**
36. This information was gathered by OMCT through an interview with a humanitarian source.
37. «**Tunisia: firm rejection of «disguised settlement» of irregular migrants**», 08/10/2025, Webdo.
38. **Cassation appeal rejected in activists' case**, Business News, 08/10/2025.
39. **Alarm Phone on X**  
This episode was also confirmed by OMCT through an interview with a key informant documenting episodes of shipwrecks and interceptions at sea in the central Mediterranean.
40. **Alarm Phone on X**  
This episode was also confirmed by OMCT through an interview with a key informant documenting episodes of shipwrecks and interceptions at sea in the central Mediterranean.
41. «**Tunisia. Widespread violations of the rights of refugees and migrants reveal a risk of EU complicity**», 06/11/2025, Amnesty International.
42. **Marino Dubois on Facebook and L'actualité on Facebook**
43. «**La situation est préoccupante: en Tunisie, des femmes et enfants migrants arrêtés et détenus arbitrairement pour mendicite risquent l'expulsion**», 19/11/25, InfoMigrants.  
See also **David Yambio on X**
44. The El Ouardia center comes under the authority of the Tunisian Ministry of the Interior's Department of Borders and Foreigners. It is unofficially used as a detention center for people on the move, although it is not registered or administered as a place of deprivation of liberty.
45. The OMCT was able to gather information on this episode through four interviews with key informants who documented the case and the violations.  
See also **L'actualité on Facebook**
46. «**A Tunis, une foule vêtue de noire fait front contre l'injustice**», 22/11/2025, Business News.
47. **L'actualité on Facebook**
48. **United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Concluding observations on the report of Tunisia, December 23, 2025, CERD/C/TUN/CO/20-22, §28.**
49. «**Tunisie: ouverture du procès de six membres de la branche tunisienne de France terre d'asile**», 15/12/2025, InfoMigrants.
50. «**Nabeul: MP Noura Chabrek calls for repatriation of irregular migrants massively present in Cap Bon**», 12/23/2025, Business News.

# CHRONOLOGY OF OPERATIONS AT SEA

The chronology below contains a selection of incidents, mainly shipwrecks, documented as part of the ongoing monitoring and triangulation of information by the OMCT and its partners. The events listed highlight the persistence of irregular departures from the Tunisian coast, interceptions by the Tunisian authorities of boats departing from Tunisia, and search and rescue operations involving boats departing from Libya and entering Tunisian territorial waters. The chronology below also highlights the high number of people who have lost their lives at sea during attempted crossings from Tunisia and points out that the operations in place do not guarantee effective access to assistance for boats in distress, nor adequate protection of human life at sea. Finally, this chronology highlights a lack of coordination between the authorities concerned, particularly between Tunisia, Italy, Libya and Malta.

05/05

20  
25

A BOAT WITH 45 PEOPLE ON BOARD, WHICH LEFT LIBYA ON APRIL 26, **SANK OFF THE TUNISIAN COAST BETWEEN MAHDIA AND CHEBBA, KILLING 14 PEOPLE, INCLUDING 3 CHILDREN.**<sup>49</sup>



17/05 - 18/05

Several humanitarian vessels carry out **rescue operations in the Tunisian search and rescue zone.** On May 17, through three rescue operations, the Ocean Viking rescued a total of 273 people and disembarked them at the port of Ancona in Italy.<sup>50</sup> On May 18, the NGO SOS Humanity rescued over 100 people in distress.<sup>51</sup> **At least 8 people die, including 4 children; their bodies are found along the coast of El Amra in Tunisia.**<sup>52</sup>

07/06

A humanitarian ship rescues 54 people from Libya off the Tunisian coast, having found **refuge on an oil rig after their boat sank three days earlier.** Among those rescued was a woman who had given birth to a baby boy the previous day on the oil rig.<sup>53</sup> **At least 21 people died in the sinking.**<sup>54</sup>

10/06

**«DOZENS OF BODIES» ARE FOUND ON THE BEACHES OF SFAX AND MAHDIA.**<sup>55</sup>

30/06

A boat from La Louza, 80km from Sfax, sinks about 70km from Lampedusa. The Italian coastguard rescued 87 people, including 23 women and 10 children, and recovered the body of a woman who had died in the wreck. At least **5 other people are reported missing** in the Tunisian-Maltese rescue zone.<sup>56</sup>



22/08

Sinking of a boat off the coast of Sfax with 131 people on board: **25 people die and 26 are missing, including 5 children.**<sup>63</sup>

18/09

A boat off the Tunisian coast overturned, **killing 39 people** - most of them from Cameroon.<sup>65</sup>

11/07

A boat with 64 people on board left Sfax on July 8 and sank: 27 people were rescued by the Italian coastguard; 33 by the Tunisian coastguard; while 4 were reported missing.<sup>57</sup> Up to 30 people are said to have thrown themselves into the water to reach the Italian ship, in the hope of being taken to Europe rather than Tunisia. SOS Humanity condemns the Tunisian and Italian coastguards' **lack of assistance to the 4 people reported missing.**<sup>58</sup>

29/07

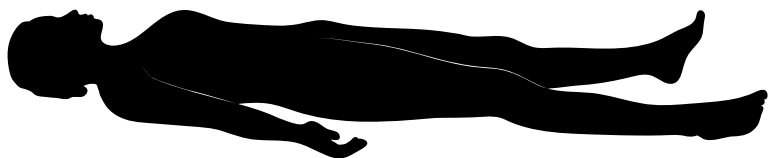
A BOAT THAT LEFT SFAX ON JULY 26 WITH AROUND 90 PEOPLE ON BOARD SANK, **KILLING TWO CHILDREN AND ONE ADULT.**<sup>59</sup> THE SHIPWRECKED PEOPLE WERE RESCUED BY A MERCHANT SHIP AND LANDED IN ITALY.<sup>60</sup>

07/08

A boat with 52 people on board, which set sail from Sfax on August 4, broke down after three days at sea. **Three people threw themselves into the sea in an attempt to reach a merchant ship seen in the distance and were reported missing.** The others were rescued by a fishing boat and landed in Italy.<sup>61</sup> A six-year-old child, whose condition had deteriorated during the days spent drifting at sea without food or water, died in Palermo hospital on August 19.<sup>62</sup>

15/09

**A 20-year-old woman loses her life in a shipwreck off Lampedusa.** The boat, which had set sail from Sfax, was carrying around fifty people who were rescued by the Italian coastguard.<sup>64</sup>



03/11

A boat with 64 people on board from Abu Kamash in Libya is intercepted by the Tunisian coastguard.

Those intercepted were reportedly severely beaten and detained in Sfax.<sup>67</sup>

04/12

A boat leaving the coast of Sfax, carrying 50 people including 25 unaccompanied minors, is rescued by the Italian coastguard off Lampedusa. During the crossing, 5 people fell over-board and are missing.<sup>69</sup>

19/12

A boat carrying 64 people, including pregnant women and children, had engine problems off the coast of Sfax and was rescued by the Tunisian coastguard. Two other boats were intercepted off the coast of Sfax. In all, around 109 people are landed in Sfax and then deported to Libya.<sup>71</sup>

22/10

40 people on the move from sub-Saharan Africa, including 12 children, die when their boat sinks off the coast of Mahdia. 30 people were rescued by the Tunisian coastguard.<sup>66</sup>

07/11

A BOAT FROM SIDI MANSOUR IN TUNISIA CARRYING 64 PEOPLE, INCLUDING 9 CHILDREN, SINKS 10KM OFF THE COAST. 59 PEOPLE ARE RESCUED BY THE TUNISIAN COASTGUARD, AND 3 ARE REPORTED MISSING, INCLUDING TWO CHILDREN.<sup>68</sup>

16/12

A boat leaving the coast of Sfax with 56 people on board, including two women and two babies, breaks down. The distress call to the Tunisian coastguard was reportedly

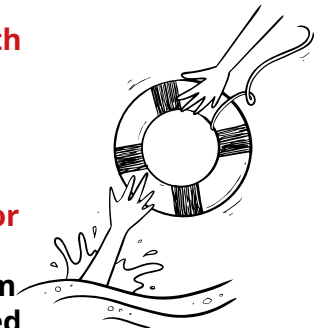


answered: «If you're Sudanese, we're not coming to save you.» After more than 20 hours in distress at sea, the people were rescued by the Tunisian authorities and brought back to the port of Chebba. They were then deported to the Libyan border.<sup>70</sup>

19/12

Sinking of a boat from Libya with 117 people on board, including Egyptians, Eritreans, Somalis and Sudanese, not far from the border between Tunisian and Libyan waters. Only one survivor was rescued by a Tunisian fisherman. Despite appeals from civil society, it has been reported

that the Tunisian and Libyan authorities have not launched any search and rescue operations.<sup>72</sup>



# NOTES

49. IOM Missing Migrants Project 2025
50. Dipartimento per le Libertà Civili e l'Immigrazione, *Cruscotto statistico al 21 maggio 2025*. In total, based on public information from the Italian Ministry of the Interior, 393 people arrived by sea in Italy on May 17 and 483 on May 18, 2025. See also «Migranti sbarcati al porto di Ancona: saranno distribuiti in 5 regioni. A bordo un caso di tubercolosi», *Ancona Today*, 05/21/2025.
51. «Mediterranean: more than 350 migrants rescued in two days», 05/19/2025, InfoMigrants. «More than 270 migrants rescued off Tunisia by the vessel Ocean Viking», 18/05/2025, RFI. «273 migrants rescued off the Tunisian and Maltese coasts», 18/05/2025, Kapitalis.
52. IOM Missing Migrants Project - Excel Table 2025
53. «Around 50 migrants, including a woman who had just given birth, rescued from an oil rig off Tunisia», 10/06/2025, InfoMigrants. See also Alarm Phone on X. This episode was also confirmed by an interview conducted by OMCT with a search and rescue organization at sea.
54. IOM Missing Migrants Project – Excel Table 2025
55. "Tunisie: des dizaines de corps de migrants retrouvés sur des plages de Madhia et Sfax", 11/06/2025, InfoMigrants. «Death concealed on Tunisian coasts», 10/06/2025, FTDES.
56. "Méditerranée: un mort et plusieurs disparus dans un naufrage au large de Lampedusa", 30/06/2025, InfoMigrants. «Migrant boat sinks in Tunisian-Maltese rescue zone», 06/30/2025, Kapitalis.
57. "Migranti in mare alla vista della motovedetta tunisina, in 27 salvati dalla guardia costiera", 12/07/2025, Repubblica.
58. "Tunisian and Italian coast guards may have left 4 people behind in the Mediterranean, SOS Humanity says", 18/07/2025, InfoMigrants.
59. SeaWatch on X and AlarmPhone on X. This episode was also confirmed by OMCT through an interview with a key informant documenting episodes of shipwrecks and interceptions at sea in the central Mediterranean.
60. "Méditerranée: deux enfants meurent lors du sauvetage d'une embarcation de migrants en difficulté", 30/07/2025, InfoMigrants.
61. Marino Dubois on Facebook. This episode was also confirmed by OMCT through an interview with a key informant documenting episodes of shipwrecks and interceptions at sea in the central Mediterranean.
62. "Lampedusa, morte cerebrale per una bimba di 6 anni sbarcata sull'isola", 19/08/2025 - Corriere della sera.
63. L'actualité on Facebook and IOM Missing Migrants Project – Excel Table 2025
64. L'actualité on Facebook. This episode was also confirmed by OMCT through an interview with a key informant documenting episodes of shipwrecks and interceptions at sea in the central Mediterranean.
65. Refugees in Tunisia on X
66. «Tunisia: 40 migrants, including babies, drown when their boat sinks», 22/10/2025, InfoMigrants.
67. Alarm Phone on X. This episode was also confirmed by the OMCT through an interview with a key informant documenting episodes of shipwrecks and interceptions at sea in the Central Mediterranean.
68. Alarm Phone on X. This episode was also confirmed by the OMCT through an interview with a key informant documenting episodes of shipwrecks and interceptions at sea in the Central Mediterranean.
69. "Mer Méditerranée: cinq migrants portés disparus au large de Lampedusa", 05/12/2025, InfoMigrants.
70. "Group gets intercepted by Tunisian National Guard and sold to Libyan Border Guard for fuel: when does this violence end?", 04/02/2026, Alarm Phone. This episode was confirmed by interviews with search and rescue organizations conducted by the OMCT.
71. Alarm Phone on X ; Marino Dubois on Facebook ; L'actualité on Facebook. This episode was also confirmed by the OMCT through an interview with a key informant documenting episodes of shipwrecks and interceptions at sea in the Central Mediterranean.
72. "Alarm Phone fears yet another deadly shipwreck in the Central Mediterranean", 24/12/2025, Alarm Phone. «Central Mediterranean: 116 people reported missing in biggest shipwreck of the year», 12/30/2025, InfoMigrants.

# CHRONOLOGY OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

relating to migration and asylum in  
the Mediterranean region

The chronology below presents the main meetings, agreements and political declarations in terms of cooperation and political dialogue on border management and migratory flows between Tunisia, the states with which it shares land and sea borders, and its partners between May and December 2025, as well as court rulings and political developments affecting people on the move in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

20  
25

06/05

THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TUNISIA RECEIVES THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM), AND REAFFIRMS TUNISIA'S REFUSAL TO BE «A TRANSIT POINT OR A PLACE OF SETTLEMENT FOR IRREGULAR MIGRANTS».<sup>73</sup>

12/05 - 13/05

The leader of the SSA (Support and Stability Apparatus) armed group in Libya is killed in clashes. The United Nations Support Mission in Libya urges all parties to stop fighting.<sup>74</sup> The Government of National Unity in Libya proclaims **the dissolution of the Directorate for Combating Illegal Migration (DCIM)**, and the appointment of a new head for the Internal Security Agency (ISA).<sup>75</sup>

20/05

The European Commission proposes **rules to facilitate the<sup>76</sup> application of the safe third country concept by member states**. This measure is intended to ease the pressure on national asylum systems.<sup>77</sup> Human rights NGOs warn that the changes could weaken asylum protections and transfer responsibility for handling refugees to countries outside the EU.<sup>78</sup>

28/05

500 Sudanese are repatriated from Kufra, Libya, to Sudan, in the first truck convoy organized by local authorities.<sup>79</sup>



01/07

Denmark announces that it intends to use its presidency of the EU Council **to step up the outsourcing of asylum applications** and the restriction of the scope of European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) judgments.<sup>81</sup>

08/07

On their arrival in Benghazi, eastern Libya, the European Commissioner for Migration, the Italian Minister for Home Affairs and a delegation of Greek and Maltese officials **were declared «persona non grata» and expelled by the Government of National Stability (GNS)**. They had all visited the country to discuss the recent increase in people on the move from Libya to Europe.<sup>84</sup>



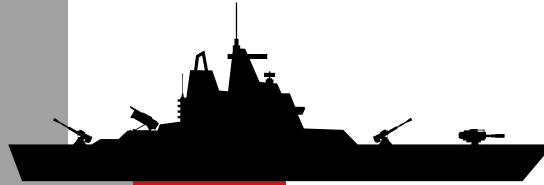
16/07

The Tunisian Foreign Minister receives the British Under-Secretary of State for the Middle East. Both parties express their willingness to strengthen their partnership, **including on migration and security issues**.<sup>87</sup>



23/06

**GREECE DEPLOYS WARSHIPS OFF THE COAST OF LIBYA TO STEM THE INFLOW OF PEOPLE ON THE MOVE, ARRIVING IN PARTICULAR ON THE ISLANDS OF CRETE AND GAVDOS.**<sup>80</sup>



08/07

The European Commissioner for Migration visits Libya with ministers from Italy, Greece and Malta to urge the Libyan authorities **to step up their efforts to prevent departures to Europe**, following a sharp increase in crossings from Libya.<sup>82</sup> On this occasion, Libya **unveils a national plan to combat irregular immigration**: the main lines of the plan are the strengthening of controls in cities, at borders and at sea, targeted expulsions and the regularization of people on the move to meet the needs of the local job market.<sup>83</sup>

09/07

In response to the sharp increase in arrivals from Libya, Greece announces that it is temporarily **suspending the examination of asylum applications from people on the move** arriving from North Africa.<sup>85</sup>

16/07

The European Commission presents its budget proposal for the 2028-2034 multiannual financial framework. The European Union plans to allocate **almost 34 billion euros to managing migratory flows and securing its borders**, an amount three times higher than the previous multiannual budget.<sup>86</sup>

17/07

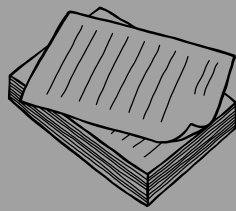
Some thirty associations call on the Italian government to **cease systemic efforts to prevent the work of search and rescue NGOs**.<sup>88</sup> The signatories call for the immediate cancellation of the Piantedosi decree.<sup>89</sup>

31/07

The President of the Republic of Tunisia receives the Italian Prime Minister. The meeting focused on the shared desire to further strengthen bilateral cooperation in a number of areas, including migration.<sup>91</sup>

21/08

IOM and the African Union renew their strategic cooperation to advance migration governance in Africa through a new three-year agreement. The agreement «reaffirms the commitment of both organizations to ensure that migration contributes to development, stability and prosperity across the continent».<sup>93</sup>



23/09

Tunisian Foreign Minister Mohamed Ali Nafti meets European Commissioner for Home Affairs and Migration Magnus Brunner. The Tunisian Foreign Minister points out that Tunisia favors the development of voluntary return programs for «illegal migrants»; the European Commissioner for Home Affairs and Migration expresses the willingness of European institutions to strengthen cooperation with Tunisia, in particular via the IOM.<sup>95</sup>

29/07

The President of the Republic of Tunisia decides to extend the application of decree no. 2025-481 of September 13, 2024, extending the proclamation of a border buffer zone. This buffer border zone includes the southern part of Tunisia's Saharan zone, the south-western part of the north-ern part of Tunisia's Saharan zone covering the strip adjacent to the Algerian border, and the south-eastern part of Tunisia adjacent to the Libyan border.<sup>90</sup>

04/08

The Special Rapporteur on Human Rights publishes his report on the outsourcing of migration, noting that such measures entail a risk of human rights violations. The report highlights the lack of transparency, the importance of independent monitoring and addresses the issue of accountability for such violations.<sup>92</sup>

04/09

Interior Minister Matteo Piantedosi meets Libyan Undersecretary of Defense Abdul Salam Al Zoubi to «strengthen military and security cooperation between the two countries»: «Libya is a strategic partner in the Mediterranean, and constant dialogue between our countries is essential to meet common security challenges. Our cooperation in managing migration and security challenges continues (...)».<sup>94</sup>

24/09

The European Union hands over two boats to the Tunisian navy as part of the «Support for search and rescue operations at sea in Tunisia» project, financed by the EU and implemented by CIVIPOL with technical support from several European partners.<sup>96</sup>

26/09

42 humanitarian and rights organizations call on the EU to end its partnership with Libya, in a letter addressed to the EU Commissioner for Home Affairs and Migration and the Commissioner for the Mediterranean.<sup>97</sup>

07/10

Tunisian Defense Minister meets Algerian President in Algiers. The meeting focused on prospects for enhanced military cooperation and the fight against cross-border threats and concluded with the signing of a defense cooperation agreement.<sup>99</sup>

15/10

The Italian Parliament approves the three-year renewal of the 2017 Italy-Libya Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation on migration. Opposition parties opposed it, calling for an end to all cooperation with Libya. Several human rights NGOs also voiced their concerns.<sup>101</sup>



02/10

EU leaders issue a joint declaration underlining the need for a comprehensive approach to migration routes and innovative solutions to illegal migration. They pledge to strengthen border security, combat trafficking and ensure effective returns to countries of origin.<sup>98</sup>

14/10

The European Court of Human Rights holds the Greek coastguard responsible for the death of 16 people on the move who lost their lives in a shipwreck in March 2018: *«The Greek authorities failed to take the necessary measures to rescue the persons concerned, whereas they should have been aware of the immediate danger from the moment they were informed of the incident.»*<sup>100</sup>

16/10

Lawyers filed a complaint with the International Criminal Court against around 120 European leaders, including Macron and Merkel, accusing them of crimes against humanity linked to EU migration policies in Libya. According to them, these policies have caused the death of 25,000 migrants and the abuse of 150,000 others, victims of detention, torture, rape and slavery in Libya.<sup>102</sup>

29/10

Médecins Sans Frontières is ordered by the Libyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs to leave Libya by November 9, 2025. It was the last international association providing care to people on the move in the west of the country.<sup>104</sup>



22/10

The European Union and Egypt held their first summit in Brussels. Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sissi highlights cooperation with the EU on the fight against irregular migration. Ursula von der Leyen announces €5 billion in European aid and enhanced cooperation.<sup>103</sup>

05/11

Thirteen search and rescue organizations<sup>105</sup> announce the formation of the Justice Fleet and decide to suspend all operational communication with the Joint Rescue Coordination Center in Tripoli, which refuses to communicate with the Libyan Coast Guard.<sup>106</sup>

27/11

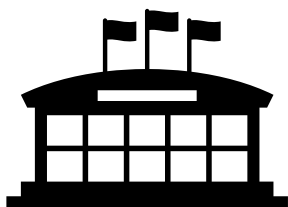
The European Parliament adopts a resolution on the rule of law and the human rights situation in Tunisia, with particular reference to the case of Sonia Dahmani. The Parliament condemns the situation and «demands her immediate and unconditional release» and calls for the release of «all those detained for exercising their right to freedom of expression». <sup>108</sup>

02/12

Libya's Minister of the Interior announces plans to speed up the return of people on the move in an irregular situation to their countries of origin: «In December, «thousands of migrants» will be repatriated to Chad, Somalia, Mali and Syria, on the basis of «two weekly flights»». <sup>111</sup>

08/12

The Council of the European Union approves the creation of return centers outside the EU's borders, where rejected asylum seekers can be sent. The European Parliament is expected to vote on the matter in March 2026. <sup>113</sup>



24-25/11

At the seventh Africa-Europe Summit, the Tunisian Foreign Minister reaffirms the need for a global approach to migration based on shared responsibility between North and South. He also warned against irregular migration fueled by trafficking networks, praising cooperation with IOM. The meeting concluded with a **joint Africa-Europe declaration setting out priorities for future cooperation**. <sup>107</sup>

28/11

Adoption and official launch of a new Pact for the Mediterranean <sup>109</sup>, which aims to **create a common Mediterranean area** strengthening ties between the EU and southern Mediterranean countries, including Tunisia. <sup>110</sup>

07/12

The EU ambassador to Libya and the Italian Admiral of the Iriini fleet meet General Khalifa Haftar in Benghazi, eastern Libya. The topic discussed was strengthening cooperation, particularly **in terms of land and sea border security, and the fight against transnational migrant smuggling and trafficking networks**. <sup>112</sup>

08/12

The Council of the European Union agrees on **a new system for distributing asylum seekers in Europe**. <sup>114</sup> The scheme is designed to reduce pressure on states along the main migration routes, including Italy, Spain, Greece and Cyprus. The other member countries will either have to take in some of the asylum seekers or pay a financial contribution of €20,000 per person they choose not to relocate to the countries under pressure. <sup>115</sup>

09/12

Italy supplies four new boats to the «General Administration for Coastal Security», a Libyan authority under the Ministry of the Interior responsible for maritime security and combating immigration, working with the Libyan coastguard. <sup>116</sup>

10/12

27 member states of the Council of Europe **call for a revision of the European Convention on Human Rights**,<sup>119</sup> in particular articles 3 and 8, which **guarantee the right of everyone not to be subjected to torture**, enshrine the principle of non-refoulement and protect respect for private and family life.<sup>120</sup>



18/12

Adoption of the European Union's plan for resettlement and humanitarian admission, placing refugee resettlement at the heart of the EU's new approach to asylum and migration. However, the newly adopted plan **drastically reduces the number of people who will be resettled over the next two years**.<sup>123</sup>

10/12

Second International Conference of the Global Alliance to Fight Migrant Smuggling, held in Brussels. Fifty delegations adopt a declaration to strengthen cooperation against migrant smuggling<sup>117</sup>. The President of the European Commission highlights a **clear drop in arrivals of people on the move in the EU**, with a 26% decrease since the beginning of the year on the main migration routes.<sup>118</sup>

11/12 - 12/12

The President of the Republic of Tunisia receives the Prime Minister of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria and the Algerian Minister of Foreign Affairs, further underlining the shared desire to consolidate cooperation between the two countries.<sup>121</sup> A series of cooperation agreements are signed in various fields.<sup>122</sup>

18/12

The Grand Chamber of the Court of Justice of the European Union delivers two judgments explicitly recognizing **the vulnerability of asylum seekers and reinforcing Frontex's legal responsibility** in refoulement operations.<sup>124</sup>

26/12

Meeting in Algiers of the Quadripartite Steering Committee, comprising Algeria, Italy, Libya and Tunisia, on the implementation of a joint program for the return of people on the move in an irregular situation to their countries of origin. The meeting defines **a joint project for the year 2026 to strengthen cooperation** in this field.<sup>125</sup>



# NOTES

73. «Kaïs Saïed reaffirms Tunisia's refusal to be a transit land for irregular migrants», 06/05/2025, Business News.
74. « Armed clashes erupt in Libya's Tripoli after reported killing of armed group leader», 13/05/2025, Reuters.
75. «Libya. Government of National Unity must hold militia leaders to account in wake of Tripoli violence», 05/13/2025, Amnesty International.
76. Legal debates on the «safe third country» concept have focused on «effective protection» and the conditions that must be met for a third country to be considered safe but have not questioned the legality of the basis on which the «safe third country» concept is founded. Indeed, the «safe third country» concept is based on the idea that states' obligations towards people who have not been granted the right to enter and/or stay in the country where they are seeking asylum do not go beyond the principle of non-refoulement, i.e. the prohibition on being returned to a territory where they risk being subjected to torture and ill-treatment. States would be obliged to allow people to apply for asylum - in order to respect the principle of non-refoulement - but its granting would be a discretionary act of the state (in accordance with their national legislation) rather than a right of the individual to receive it (in accordance with international law.)» See : The Safe Third Country Concept in International Agreements on Refugee Protection: Assessing State Practice», UNHCR
77. «Commission proposes to facilitate the application of the safe third country concept», 20/05/2025, European Commission.
78. «EU looks to broaden application of third safe country concept», 21/05/2021, InfoMigrants.
79. Jihed on X and As borders become even more brutal, new routes of escape emerge - Alarm Phone | Alarm Phone
80. «Greece deploys warships off Libya to stem migrant arrivals», 26/06/2025, InfoMigrants.  
«Migration: Greece sends warships near Libyan territorial waters», 06/23/2025, EuroNews.
81. «Denmark, which takes over the EU presidency, wants to further tighten European migration policy», 06/27/2025, InfoMigrants.
82. "EU and Greece to press Libya on migrant crossings via Mediterranean as numbers surge", 01/07/2025, EuroNews.
83. «Libya launches plan against irregular immigration», 08/07/2025, Mosaique FM.
84. «Persona non grata: EU migration commissioner expelled from Libya», 08/07/2025, EuroNews.  
"Libya's eastern-based government bars entry of EU migration commissioner, three ministers", 08/07/2025, Reuters.
85. «Grèce: face au flux de migrants depuis la Libye, Athènes suspend les demandes d'asile», 10/07/2025, InfoMigrants.
86. European Commission, «The 2028-2034 EU budget for a stronger Europe». See also European Commission, "EU budget 2028-2034 for a stronger Europe", 16/07/2025.  
Also European Commission, "EU 2028-2034 proposed budget triples funds for migration, border management and internal security", 17/07/2025.  
«Tunisia: possible increase in European aid for migration management», 18/07/2025, Webdo.
87. «UK under-secretary Hamish Falconer in Tunis: london says it wants closer ties», 16/07/2025, Business News.
88. «Migration: more than thirty associations call for withdrawal of Piantedosi decree», 07/17/2025, Business News.
89. This Italian decree-law n°1/2023189, commonly known as the Piantedosi decree, governs search and rescue operations at sea. A lack of coordination between humanitarian vessels and the maritime authorities recognized as competent for rescue at sea (in this context Tunisia) can be used to justify the detention of humanitarian vessels by the Italian judicial authorities or even prevent potential disembarkations in Italy of people rescued in the Tunisian SAR zone. The Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights, Dunja Mijatović, had called on the Italian government to consider withdrawing or revising decree-law no. 1/2023 in view of the risks of hampering NGOs' search and rescue operations at sea. See Letter to Italy's Minister of the Interior», Council of Europe, January 2023.
90. «Extension of the decree proclaiming a border buffer zone», 29/07/2025, BusinessNews.
91. «Migration, cooperation, Palestine: what Carthage had to say after Meloni's visit», 07/31/2025, BusinessNews.  
«Tunisia - Italy: convergence on migration, divergence on Palestine», 01/08/2025, Kapitalis.
92. Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, The outsourcing of migration governance and its effects on the human rights of migrants, A/80/302, August 4, 2025.
93. IOM, «IOM and African Union renew strategic partnership on migration governance in Africa», 21/08/2025.  
«IOM - African Union renew accord on migration governance in Africa», 28/08/2025, InfoMigrants.
94. Il Viminale on X
95. «Migration : Tunis et Bruxelles prônent une approche concertée et solidaire», 24/09/2025, Business News.
96. "L'Union européenne remet deux embarcations de recherche et de sauvetage à la marine tunisienne", 24/09/2025, Business News.
97. "Mer Méditerranée: une quarantaine d'ONG réclament, une nouvelle fois, la fin du partenariat entre l'UE et la Libye", 26/09/2025, InfoMigrants.
98. Joint Letter Commission, Septembre 2025.
99. «Tunisia and Algeria strengthen military cooperation», 07/10/2025, Business News.
100. «European Court of Human Rights holds Greek coast guard responsible for deaths of 16 exiles in 2018 shipwreck,» 16/10/2025, InfoMigrants.
101. "Migranti, il governo rinnoverà il Memorandum Italia - Libia : la camera bocchia le mozioni delle opposizioni", 15/10/2025, L'Espresso.
102. "Lawyers ask ICC to investigate 122 European Officials for crimes against humanity in Mediterranean", 16/10/2025, ICTJ.
103. Joint Statement EU - Egypt Summit, 22 octobre 2025, Bruxelles.
104. «Libya: the NGO Médecins sans frontières summoned by the authorities to leave the country before November 9», InfoMigrants, 29/10/2025.
105. CompassCollective, Louise Michel, Mediterranean Saving Humans, Mission Lifeline, Pilotes Volontaires, RESQSHIP, r42- Sail and Rescue, Salvamento Marítimo Humanitario, Sea-Eye, SEA PUNKS, Sea Watch, SOS Humanity, Tutti gli Occhi sul Mediterraneo.
106. "Search and rescue organisations suspend communication with Libyan rescue Coordination Centre", 05/11/2025, Sea-Watch.
107. Joint Declaration – 7th African Union (AU) - European Union (EU) Summit.  
"Afrique - Europe : la Tunisie appelle à une mobilité légale et responsable", 25/11/2025, Webdo.
108. «European Parliament warns Tunisia and calls for end to political trials», 27/11/2025, Business News.  
European Parliament, JOINT MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION on the rule of law and human rights situation in Tunisia, particularly the case of Sonia Dahmani, 26 novembre 2025.
109. European Commission, Launch of the Pact for the Mediterranean, 28/11/2025.
110. "Le Pacte de la Méditerranée: un nouvel accord pour relancer le partenariat", 28/11/2025, African Manager.
111. «Libya wants to speed up returns of migrants to their countries of origin», 03/12/2025, InfoMigrants.
112. Nicola Orlando on X -EU Ambassador to Libya
113. Council of the European Union, "Council clinches deal on EU law about returns of illegally staying third-country nationals", 08/12/2025.  
See also Council of the EU, «Press release: Council clinches deal on EU law concerning returns of illegally staying third-country nationals», 08/12/2025.  
irrégulier", 08/12/2025.

- «Immigration: les Vingt-Sept ouvrent la voie aux «hubs de retour» hors des frontières de l'UE», 09/12/2025, InfoMigrants.
114. ECRE, «Editorial: Migration policies drifting even further away from evidence, stranded ever closer to inhumanity», 11/12/2025.
115. «EU reduces asylum seeker relocations from countries under migratory pressure», 08/12/2025, Euro News.
116. Sergio Scandura on X
117. Joint Declaration of the Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling, 10 décembre 2025.  
Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, "The Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling reinforces its commitments in its second Conference", 11/12/2025.  
"Firm stand against migrant smuggling: global alliance convened in Brussels", 10/12/2025, Europol.
118. European Commission, "Keynote speech by President von der Leyen at the second Conference of the Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling", 10/12/2025.  
"Migrant arrivals to EU dropped sharply on key routes since 2023", 12/12/2025, InfoMigrants.
119. "Who is it going to be next time? : ECHR rethink is "moral retreat", say right experts", 13/12/2025, The Guardian.
120. «At the Council of Europe, several member countries are calling for a revision of the ECHR to facilitate migrant expulsions», 11/12/2025, InfoMigrants.
121. "Tunis-Alger: Saïed pour la consolidation de la coopération", 11/12/2025, Mosaïque FM.
122. «Tunisia - Algeria: signing of a body of cooperation agreements», 12/12/2025, Business News.  
"Tunisie - Algérie: détail des 25 accords signés à la Kasbah", La Presse, 12/12/2025.
123. Council implementing decision (EU) 2025/2628 of 18 December 2025 on the Union Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Plan (2026 - 2027)
124. "Asylum-seekers as vulnerable applicants – the CJEU's approach to causation and evidence in the Frontex appeal judgements", 08/01/2026.
125. «Algeria, Italy, Libya and Tunisia united for the voluntary return of migrants», 26/12/2025, Business News.  
«Italy and Tunisia strengthen cooperation on migration and the Mattei plan», 07/01/2025, Agenzia Nova.