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Key Points

- ◆ As of 4 Dec 2016, 172 229 irregular migrants have been intercepted in the Central Mediterranean, which represents a -16% increase compared to the same period of 2015.
- ◆ Increasing number of arrivals in **October and November** compared to the same months in previous years.
- ◆ Most of the incidents involved rubber dinghies and small wooden boats coming from **Libya**.
- ◆ [REDACTED] arriving in Italy in the reporting period.
- ◆ The number of arrivals from **Algeria** in one single week represents -20% of the total of arrivals from this country in 2016. [REDACTED]
- ◆ [REDACTED]
- ◆ First reported case where the criminal networks were smuggling migrants directly on a NGO vessel

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Main Trends

During the period under analysis, **67 illegal immigration incidents** were reported (**26 incidents in week 47** and **41 in week 48**) involving the apprehension of **5 871 irregular migrants** (3 025 apprehensions in week 47 and 2 846 apprehensions in week 48). In particular:

- **48 boats** arrived from **Libya** involving 5 075 migrants
- **11 boats** from **Algeria** involving 204 migrants on board
- **4 boats** from **Turkey** involving 550 migrants
- **3 boats** from **Tunisia** with 13 migrants on board
- **1 boat** from **Greece** with 29 migrants on board

Thus far in 2016, the number of migrants apprehended in the Central Mediterranean totalled **172 229** which represents a **~16% increase** compared to the same period of 2015 (147 913). As illustrated in Figure 1, the number of arrivals increased in **October and November** compared to the same months in 2015. Despite tough weather conditions during this period of the year, **migrant arrivals continued unabated mainly from Libya.**

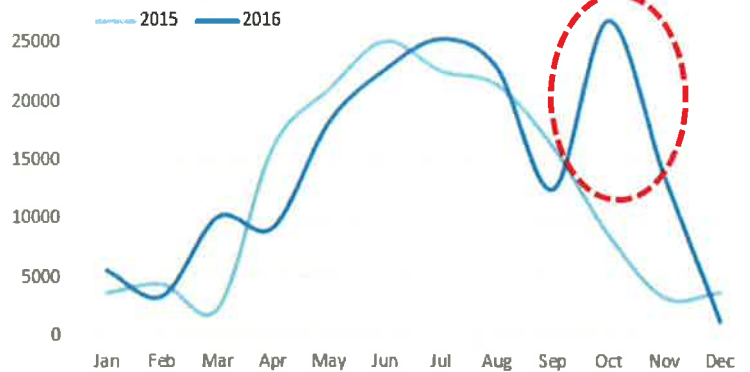
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and for that reason they are encouraging the migrants to sail even when the sea is rough because they will be rescued soon after their departure. In 2015, the **average number of migrants in each rubber dinghy was 108**. Thus far in 2016, using the same type of rubber dinghy, the average number of migrants has increased to 121 in each dinghy. By overcrowding the migrant boats and **encouraging them to sail in inclement weather** the smugglers are further endanger-

Figure 2: One of the migrants' rubber dinghies capsized. Source: Frontex.



Figure 1: Number of arrivals in 2015/2016. In the red circle the peak in Oct and Nov 2016.



ing migrants' lives. According to IOM¹, the number of fatalities in 2016 has increased by **~48%** compared to the same period in 2015. For instance, on 21 November one incident involving two overcrowded rubber dinghies was reported; these boats had departed from Zawiya (Libya). When the migrants were on the high seas,

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Soon afterwards, a huge wave hit both dinghies and the dinghies immediately capsized, with all the migrants falling into the water with only a few surviving (Fig 2). In addition in the period under analysis, open sources² reported that a wooden boat carrying migrants was shipwrecked approximately 15 km from the Libyan coast with dozens of people feared missed (Fig 3). Two days later, Libyan open sources² reported that dozens of corpses had been found on Libya's coastline.

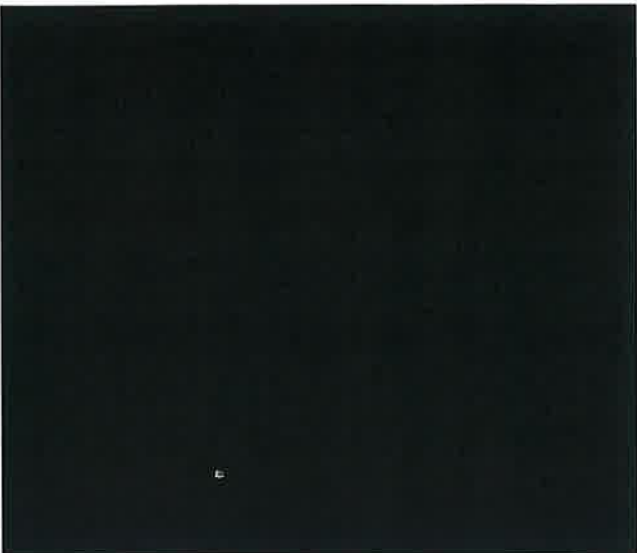
Figure 3: Shipwrecked wooden boat on 3 Dec approx. 15 km from the Libyan shore. Source: Facebook.



¹ <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/mediterranean>

² <https://www.facebook.com/%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%A4%D9%86-%D9%81%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%B7%D9%86%D9%8A%D9%86-%>

Once again Libya is the main country of departure with ~86% of irregular migrant arrivals during the reporting period. Most of the incidents continue to involve rubber dinghies that had departed from Libya bound for Italy.



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It is especially noteworthy that one incident from Greece was reported after 14 weeks without arrivals from this country. In this specific case, 29 migrants managed to disembark undetected on mainland Italy. Even if this is an isolated case,

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It is worth noting that there have been no arrivals from Egypt since September. The Egyptian authorities are prosecuting two maritime inspection officials accused of belonging to the smuggling network³ that was involved in the most recent incident where a fishing boat capsized off the coast of Egypt in September. Furthermore, the Egyptian authorities have reported the discovery of a network which is accused of illicit international trafficking in human organs⁴. Apparently, some of the victims have

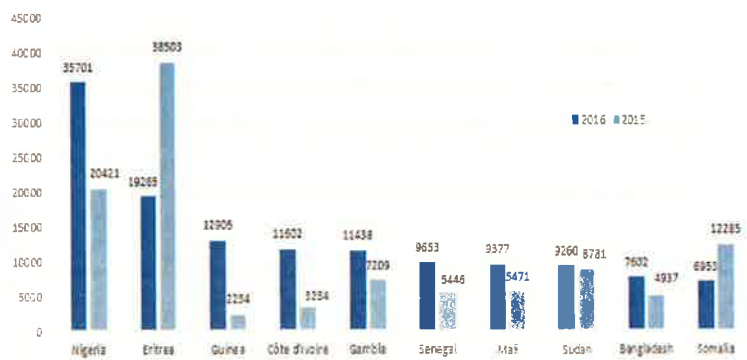
been migrants. As previously reported, with these measures the Egyptian authorities are trying to tackle smuggling activities in Egypt.

During weeks 47 and 48, irregular migrant arrivals were also reported from Algeria, Turkey and Tunisia, with the following locations being identified as the main departure areas/points in each country; Annaba in Algeria, Sfax and Kerkenah Islands in Tunisia and Izmir in Turkey.

Main Nationalities

Thus far in 2016, the most common nationalities reported within the framework of the JO Triton have been from the following countries: Nigeria, Eritrea, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Senegal, Mali, Sudan, Bangladesh and Somalia. During the reporting period the majority of the migrants arrived from Western and Central African countries,

Figure 5: Main nationalities from 1 Jan to 4 Dec 2016/2015



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In terms of the price paid by migrants to be smuggled from Libya to Italy, the amount varies depending of the specific deal agreed between the migrant and the smuggler.

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[Redacted]

This suggests that the demand for smuggling services is high which allows the smuggling networks to increase the price for certain nationalities without a decrease in the number of migrants wanting to be smuggled to the EU.

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³<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-egypt-idUSKBN13S0MC>
⁴<http://en.aswatmasriya.com/news/details/18112>

Main Findings

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As previously mentioned, the **overall increase** in the number of detections in 2016 compared to the same period in 2015 is **directly related** to the **increase** in the number of arrivals in **October and November**. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] the number of arrivals in October and November 2016 is the **highest ever recorded** in these months in the **Central Mediterranean route** since the beginning of Frontex joint operations.

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

2

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

First reported case where the criminal networks were smuggling migrants directly on a NGO maritime vessel

It is also worth highlighting that during the reporting period and, according to the Italian authorities, during a SAR operation, which was being carried out by two NGOs vessels *Minden* and *Topaz Responder*, there was a small fibreglass boat in the area displaying a Libyan flag with persons pretending to be fishermen. At a certain point, this fibreglass boat approached one of the NGO vessels ‘*Minden*’ and transferred two Libyan citizens from the small boat to the EU vessel claiming that they were migrants. The NGO vessel took them aboard and let the Libyan boat leave the area. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the migrants stated that the crew aboard the small Libyan boat were the people smugglers.

This is the first reported case where the criminal networks directly approached an EU vessel and smuggled the migrants directly into Europe using the NGO vessel. Identification, and arrest of smugglers as well as seizure

or disposal of the migrants’ boats are crucial steps in tackling and curbing smuggling activities in the Central Mediterranean.

Figure 11: Libyan smugglers approaching the NGO vessel to transfer the two Libyan migrants. Source: MOAS



Main trends by country of departure in 2016

In 2016, the breakdown by migratory routes in the Central Mediterranean shows an increasing trend (~16%) of arrivals from Libya which has remained the main country of departure. Moreover, the number of arrivals increased from Egypt, Turkey, Tunisia and Algeria but decreased from Greece.

The following map shows the volume of the migratory flows by country of departure since the beginning of 2016 compared to the same period in 2015

