



Border Violence
Monitoring Network

ILLEGAL 2026 PUSHBACKS AND BORDER VIOLENCE REPORTS

MONTHLY
REPORT
APRIL

Special Detention Facility of Serres.
Source: Detention Landscapes



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2026

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Other contributors:



TABLE OF CONTENTS

APRIL 2026

METHODOLOGY AND TERMINOLOGY	6
REPORTING NETWORK.....	6
METHODOLOGY.....	6
TERMINOLOGY	6
ABBREVIATIONS.....	6
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	7
UPDATE ON THE SITUATION.....	10
BOSNIA - HERZEGOVINA .	11
General observations, arrivals and departures	11
Conditions in Lipa TRC.....	11
Surveillance and violence on the Bosnian-Croatian border.. ..	12
Frontex expansion and EU support to securitisation in Bosnia	12
EU “return hubs” and possible implications for the Una-Sana Canton	13
SERBIA	14
Deterrence as policy	14
GREECE	16
Detention conditions and hunger strike in Sintiki	16
Refugee status under review.....	17
Deadly start of the month and pushbacks in Greece and the Aegean	18
Crete.....	18
Increasing securitisation.....	18
Samos	19
Conditions at the Samos CCAC and quarantine section	19
Reports of suspension of vaccinations.....	19
Civil society actors denied access to the camp.....	20
Lesvos	20
Opening of the Vastria CCAC postponed again.....	20
Kos.....	20
New arrivals and translation in the CCAC.....	20
Impact of Greece’s new migration legislation	21
A persistent issue: barriers in access to healthcare.....	21
FRANCE	22
Shelter systems increasingly inaccessible in Calais	22
Months of targeted evictions on Calais’ largest living site	22
“Recycled” tents and the humanitarian legitimisation of evictions in Dunkerque	23
Border deaths continue on the Franco-British border	25
ITALY.....	26
Arrivals by sea.....	26
Pushbacks, pullbacks and deportations.....	27
Dead and missing.....	27
The Barnamiche system.....	28
Civil resistance.....	29
Pushbacks and arbitrary detention at the French-Italian border.....	31
Urban policing and evictions in Menton and Ventimiglia..	32



Methodology and Terminology

REPORTING NETWORK

BVMN¹ is a collaborative project between multiple grassroots organisations and NGOs working along the Western Balkan Route and Greece, documenting violations at borders directed towards people on the move. The partners have a common website database, used as a platform to collate testimonies of illegal pushbacks which are gathered through interviews.

METHODOLOGY

The methodological process for these interviews leverages the close social contact that we have as independent volunteers with refugees and migrants to monitor pushbacks at multiple borders. When individuals return with significant injuries or stories of abuse, one of our violence reporting volunteers will sit down with them to collect their testimony. Although the testimony collection itself is typically with a group no larger than five persons, the pushback groups which they represent can exceed 50 persons. We have a standardised framework for our interview structure which blends the collection of hard data (dates, geo-locations, officer descriptions, photos of injuries/medical reports, etc.) with open narratives of the abuse.

TERMINOLOGY

The term pushback is a key component of the situation that unfolded along the EU borders (Hungary and Croatia) with Serbia in 2016, after the closure of the Balkan

Route. Pushback describes the informal expulsion (without due process) of an individual or group to another country. This lies in contrast to the term “deportation”, which is conducted in a legal framework. Pushbacks have become an important, if unofficial, part of the migration regime of EU countries and elsewhere.

ABBREVIATIONS

BiH - Bosnia and Herzegovina
HRV - Croatia
SRB - Serbia
SLO - Slovenia
ROM - Romania
HUN - Hungary
AUT - Austria
MNK - North Macedonia
GRC - Greece
BGR - Bulgaria
TUR - Turkey
EU - European Union

¹ BVMN is a network of watchdog organisations active in the Balkans, Greece, Turkey, Poland and France, including Rigardu, Mobile Info Team, Collective Aid, Blindspots, I Have Rights, Center for Legal Aid, Mission Wings. Legal Centre Lesvos, We Are Monitoring, InfoPark, Human Rights Observers and Calais Food Collective.



Executive summary

This report gathers updates from the month of April and brings together first-hand testimonies and observations from a range of countries in Europe to look at the way states and other actors are affecting systemic violence towards people crossing borders. Updates come from the different Member Organisations of BVMN, as well as other partners like Glocal Roots and *borderline-europe*.

One more month has passed since the closure of Bosnia's only designated Temporary Reception Centres (TRC) for families and unaccompanied minors in August 2025 (Borići) and February 2026 (Ušivak). Despite this, the continued lack of adequate protection and separation of unaccompanied minors and adults in the remaining Lipa TRC keeps putting children at increased danger. Meanwhile, as state support structures for people on the move in Bosnia-Herzegovina further shrink, violence and securitisation at the country's border with Croatia make it harder and harder to leave. Old cruel tactics by the Croatian police - including the use of dogs to attack people on the move, physical violence and the confiscation of clothes and shoes even in harsh weather - are increasingly reported by pushback survivors alongside pervasive technology, used for years (but always expanding) to facilitate illegal expulsions and other human rights violations.

Similarly, this month, the Hungarian government implemented a €19.64 million upgrade to the security of its border with Serbia, through an EU-funded electronic surveillance system. As security narra-

tives spread, and the semblance of any protection-based migration governance disappears, the safety of people on the move diminishes, forced to become increasingly invisible, limiting their access to support and exposing them to higher levels of impunity-ridden violence. This is the case in Serbia, where people on the move are constantly pushed underground while contact with solidarity organisations continues to decrease. This securitised approach, that prioritises deterrence over protection, would hardly be possible without the unwavering support of the EU, which continues to provide Serbia, Bosnia, and other countries in the region with the necessary equipment and funds to further fortify their borders.

This month, we are confronted, once again, with the worst consequences of border securitisation in the Aegean Sea, as we report on the death of at least 20 people off the coast of Bodrum (Turkey) on April 1st, and the recovery of 28 bodies on the Libyan coast near Zuwara. They are some of the last victims of the EU migration regime in this sea, where over 1,000 people have lost their lives since the beginning of 2026 alone. The authorities' response to this state-made tragedy: further securitisation. Thus, the increase in arrivals to Crete has been met with announcements by the Greek government regarding the construction of new detention centres on the island, the provision of drones for surveillance purposes and an increase in the number of Greek Coast Guard units.

As a result of this deterrence policy, those who make it to Greece after facing the



Executive summary

dangerous journey, continue to encounter detention, inhumane conditions and further violence. In April, detainees in the Special Detention Facility of Serres, in Sintiki, initiated a hunger strike, protesting the arbitrariness of and lack of information about the length of their detention, and the overall terrible conditions at the facility. Many understand these conditions as a deliberate effort by the authorities to pressure them into consenting to deportation, currently the only clear prospect for release. Meanwhile, people arriving on Samos keep reporting on the terrible conditions in the quarantine zone of the CCAC, including overcrowding resulting in people sleeping on the floor. Furthermore, it has been reported both on Samos and Kos that children are not receiving the necessary vaccinations.

In France, we look at the lack of reliable and adequate shelter alternatives for people on the move, and particularly single men, in the midst of ongoing evictions. Thus, as different parts of the largest living site in Calais have been evicted seven times since November 2025 -latest on May 11th-, followed by increasing deforestation and rockfill operations, organisations documented 546 refusals of accommodation requests to the Reception and Assessment Centres between November 3rd 2025 and March 29th 2026. The inadequacy of winter emergency measures was especially concerning. For example, as evictions continued despite the harsh weather, during the 90-day winter period, a gymnasium intended to provide emergency shelter was reportedly open for only 25 days. The production of these hostile conditions

is absolutely deliberate. The policy of non-fixation aims to keep people away but, as the French state continues to pursue agreements with the UK to further “secure” the border between both countries, crossing the Channel also becomes increasingly difficult. This month, we report on the deaths of six people in two shipwrecks as a result of this deadly regime.

In the Central Mediterranean, at least 131 people died and 156 people were reported missing this month. The actual figures are likely to be significantly higher. Despite the extent of the tragedy, which repeats itself month after month, hardly any media coverage can be found in Italian or European platforms. Furthermore, at least 2,017 people were intercepted in the central Mediterranean in April. In all of the documented cases, people on the move were taken back to Libya, in illegal actions - pull-backs and pushbacks - sponsored by the EU. EU support to these practices persists despite the extensive evidence of human rights violations against migrants and people on the move in Libya. This month, we share information from a recently published report on a human trafficking network operating in Libya and Tunisia that especially targets migrant women. This network is sustained by numerous actors, including several detention centres in Libya.

Lastly, we include updates from Italy's border with France, where an average of 30 people are pushed back everyday, at the border crossing between Menton and Ventimiglia. Many are forced to spend the night in detention at the French border police post, and report on unhygienic and



Executive summary

harsh conditions. Meanwhile, the urban policing and “ICE-style” raids happening in the cities close to the border, even targeting people on their way to work, constitutes an alarming picture of what might soon become full-fledged EU law, as part of the new Deportation Law.

UPDATE ON THE SITUATION



**Border Violence
Monitoring Network**



Bosnia – Herzegovina

General observations, arrivals and departures

In April 2026, movements through the two Bosnian Temporary Reception Centres (TRCs) generally increased over the course of the month, with a notable rise in both arrivals and departures during mid-April following a slower start. This upward trend reflected growing mobility and assistance needs at the centres. Toward the end of the month, both arrivals and departures declined moderately, though levels remained higher than at the beginning of the reporting period. On average, the TRCs recorded approximately 650 arrivals and 440 departures during the month of April. The main countries of origin are Sudan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Egypt, and Morocco. Families came mainly from Western Asia (Iran, Iraq, Kurdistan, Turkey, Palestine). It is important to keep in mind that these numbers do not represent the full picture: people on the move in the area of the northern border of Bosnia also rely on private accommodation in the city or live temporarily in squats near the border.

Two notable trends observed among the population on the move in the Bihać area are the increase in numbers and the diversification of countries of origin. Solidarity actors in the region have observed many Chinese nationals transiting through Bosnia. A qualitative, though not yet quantitatively significant, trend concerns the transit of families from countries of origin not commonly recorded along the Balkan route, such as Vietnam, Myanmar, and Cuba, in addition to the already mentioned China.

Conditions in Lipa TRC

The population at the Lipa TRC also increased during the month of April, averaging around 700 people, including single men, unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), and families. UASC represented approximately 9% of the camp population, while families and single women accounted for around 5%.

Weather conditions in Lipa during April remained cold, with occasional snowfall, further exacerbating the structural vulnerabilities of the camp's inhabitants. People living inside the camp shared complaints regarding the quality of the food, the irregular opening hours of the market inside the facility, and the limited availability of adequate medical assistance. Healthcare services inside the camp rely on the availability of medical staff already employed at the city hospital and cannot be considered adequate for the size and needs of the population.

Another ongoing structural issue is the lack of proper separation between the areas designated for unaccompanied minors and those available for single men. Since families and unaccompanied children were transferred to Lipa in September 2025, after the closure of the previous dedicated facility, no significant changes have been implemented to safeguard these vulnerable groups and prevent risks of trafficking and abuse.



Bosnia – Herzegovina

Surveillance and violence on the Bosnian–Croatian border

In April, the Bosnian–Croatian border was repeatedly described by people on the move in Bosnia as a space of surveillance, detection and immediate force. A man from Morocco said that after two nights in the woods in Croatia, police detected the group with drones before arriving with dogs and pushing them back harshly. An Afghan man used similar language, referring to cameras in the forest, and dogs used by the police to find people who were trying to stay hidden. The securitisation of this border, and the trend towards [increased use of technology](#) has been ongoing for several years. A [recently published report](#) by BVMN looks at the way the natural environment, including rivers, mountains and forests, are also weaponised by state authorities against people on the move at this border.

People on the move living inside the Lipa camp, in facilities for minors, and in the city of Bihać continue to share testimonies of violent pushbacks at the Bosnian–Croatian border. In these conversations, words and gestures by people who have experienced illegal pushbacks most often point to three main violent practices by the authorities: baton beatings, especially on arms and backs, destruction of phones and confiscation of clothes and shoes.

These testimonies are systematically reported by both adult men and unaccompanied minors, with nearly everyone describing similar experiences. Meanwhile, families and women have more often

reported systematic pushbacks without physical violence.

With regards to the use of physical violence, this month, one person described a potential tactic reportedly employed by some Croatian officers, consisting of making a wound on the upper part of the foot, possibly with a knife. Another man reported that his jacket had been torn by police dogs during the pushback. The aggressive [use of police dogs](#) by Croatian authorities during illegal pushbacks has been reported to BVMN [for years](#).

The increasing securitisation and continuous violence at this border keeps pushing people on the move into more dangerous crossings. [On March 31st](#), Croatian emergency services rescued around 30 people on the move after several boats capsized on the flooded Sava River near Babina Greda in eastern Croatia and the northeastern border of Bosnia–Herzegovina. The incident occurred overnight during an attempted crossing from Bosnia. Rescue teams carried out a large-scale operation in flooded woodland areas and swamps along the river. Eight people were hospitalised, mainly due to hypothermia, while authorities stated that there were no confirmed deaths.

Frontex expansion and EU support to securitisation in Bosnia

[The EU is boosting Frontex deployment in Bosnia](#) with a gradual expansion towards full operational capacity of 116 officers after the agreement between the agency and Bosnia was signed in November 2025. The



Bosnia – Herzegovina

involvement of the EU becomes clearer against the [backdrop of the April 27th EU equipment](#) handover to the Bosnian Border Police in Sarajevo. The donation included specialised magnifiers for document checks, heartbeat detectors for concealed passengers, and a patrol boat for river operations. It was presented as part of a broader effort to strengthen operational preparedness and border management under the EU4FAST (“EU Support to Strengthen the Fight against Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking in Human Beings in the Western Balkans”) project. The official language framed the package as technical support, but in practice, it reflects a wider border infrastructure that people in Bosnia experience as an expanding system of detection, interception and control.

EU “return hubs” and possible implications for the Una-Sana Canton

The Una-Sana Canton is not yet directly linked to the [newly-approved EU deportation law](#) and its recent decision on “[return hubs](#)”. However, its proximity to an EU external border suggests that it may be selected as a location for a return hub, especially considering the existence of the relatively recent Lipa TRC structure. For these reasons, it will be of vital importance to monitor the developments of these EU decisions, as BiH is a strong candidate as a third country within the EU’s border externalisation agenda.



Deterrence as policy

Collective Aid did not observe a significant change in the number of people on the move transiting through Serbia since the previous month. This is reflected in [official statistics](#) (by the Hungarian authorities), which indicate that levels have stayed roughly the same.

More broadly, the lower number of people in transit observed since the start of this year can be linked to expanding deterrence initiatives such as [EU4FAST](#). Programmes of this kind exemplify the EU's continued shift away from protection-centred humanitarian responses toward increasingly securitised border governance. Rather than reducing migration, these measures force movement further underground, leaving fewer people visible to solidarity and humanitarian actors while increasing vulnerability and precarity.

We observed the intensification of policing and surveillance directly. This month, the Hungarian government upgraded border security along the Serbia–Hungary frontier through an EU-funded electronic surveillance system. The project introduces major technical and infrastructural upgrades along the Schengen external border, including an integrated telecommunications network to ensure the “[fast and reliable transmission of data from surveillance devices operating along the border](#).” The €19.64 million investment, funded by the EU and co-financed by the Hungarian government, signals a continued prioritisation of surveillance and exclusion over protection.

Meanwhile, during a visit to Bujanovac camp in southern Serbia – designated for families and children on the move – we observed a concerning lack of care for vulnerable residents. During NFI distributions outside the camp, urgent unmet needs for basic items such as hygiene products and underwear were evident. Conversations with a Palestinian father residing in the centre indicated that children were not regularly visited by teachers and that access to essentials, including central heating, was limited. At the same time, humanitarian presence continues to shrink and face increasing restrictions and criminalisation. During a visit to the Preševo reception centre, local police prevented our team from speaking to residents or carrying out an NFI distribution after camp security had permitted people to exit and engage with our staff. Such restrictions increasingly undermine the legitimacy and capacity of frontline organisations supporting people on the move across Serbia and the wider Balkan Route.

Anti-smuggling framework, such as what EU4FAST claims to be, must be primarily based on robust human rights protections, safe access to services, real availability of safe and legal migration pathways and accountability for state violence. In Serbia, we continue to observe shrinking humanitarian provision alongside ongoing reports of [pushbacks](#) during field visits to informal settlements near Belgrade. These conditions heighten, rather than reduce, exposure to exploitation and violence.

Violence and exclusion at the EU's external borders do not reflect a commitment to



Serbia

protection; they function as mechanisms of deterrence, leaving people on the move increasingly vulnerable. The EU's anti-smuggling agenda, while simultaneously enabling pushbacks and border violence, risks deepening the very harms it claims to prevent: driving movement underground, reducing access to protection, and increasing exposure to exploitation.



Detention conditions and hunger strike in Sintiki

On April 7th, people held in the Special Detention Facility of Serres, in Sintiki, initiated a hunger strike. Videos shared with BVMN show more than 50 men protesting, shouting “No food!” and calling for freedom. The hunger strike was reportedly cut short less than 2 days after it started, by threats from the facility’s authorities of physical violence and electricity cuts.

BVMN has been regularly reporting about undignified conditions in, as well as the change of legal status of the structure of the Special Detention Facility of Serres over the past months, including in [December](#), [October](#) and [August](#) 2025. Today, most of the [700 people](#) in the facility have been detained for around 9 months, without any other prospect for release than signing for so-called “[voluntary return](#)”. Over recent months, BVMN received reports from individuals who were detained in the facility, claiming that the conditions of their detention were deliberately and indirectly used by the authorities to pressure them into consenting to deportation.

Some reports shared with BVMN mentioned inhumane treatment before reaching the facility, during transfer from Crete. [Descriptions](#) refer to a 12-hour journey from Athens to Sintiki, without being provided neither food nor water, inside “mini buses which had cells closed from outside, in each cell they put four persons. [...] we felt like dying inside until we arrived [...] in Sintiki. The place was tight and small, and during the 12 hour trip people started

vomiting. [...] Our bodies rottened after all these days.”

Other reports pointed to a serious lack of information provision inside the detention facility – and, in some cases, an apparent refusal by authorities to respond – regarding the reasons for and duration of detention, as well as procedures for appealing asylum decisions: “*Since we arrived here our situation is getting worse, including psychologically, because we don’t know what is going on with the rules, everyday things change, some people get released. It is very stressful.*”

This overall uncertainty is reportedly compounded by appalling detention conditions. Most people reported never receiving any clothes, which resulted, according to members of the “Mahalas” group of the “Open Anti-Racist Assembly in Western Thessaloniki” quoted by [Efsyn](#), in men having to “*walk around with rags or women’s clothes - dresses - (out of necessity and not choice) and suffer from the cold.*” While a market is reportedly visiting the facility, products sold are described as unaffordable for detainees, who explained having to rely on people accommodated inside the open section of the facility – and therefore allowed to exit – to buy cheaper items for them. People also reported overcrowding of the structure, with up to 25 people at times being accommodated in containers comprising only 8-9 beds. This reportedly resulted in people having to sleep on the floor.

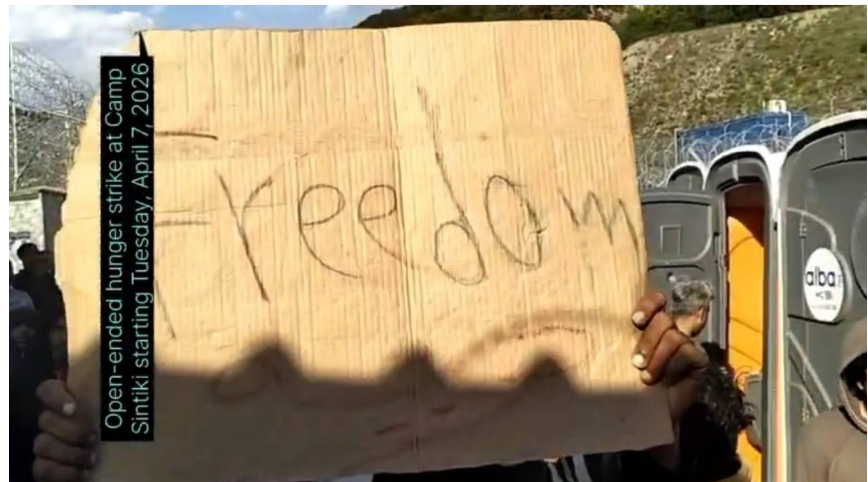
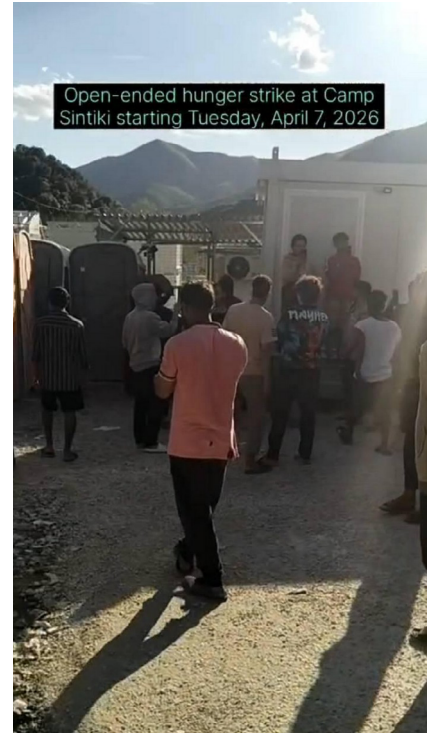
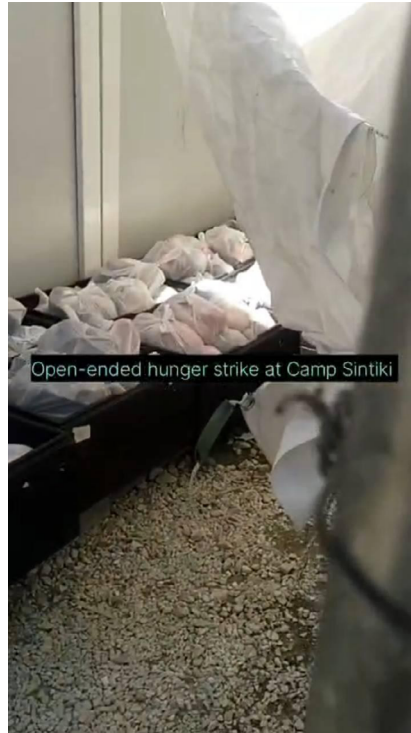
Additional information related to detention conditions included a lack of air ventilation or heating system, a highly restric-



Greece

ted access to healthcare inside and outside the facility, the poor quality and quantity of the food provided, as well as unsanitary hygienic conditions, affecting detainees' both mental and physical health: *"I am also mentally and psychologically affected, because of the bad smell of the space. The space where I stay is not cleaned. [...] There is nobody coming from outside to clean. We clean by ourselves. We don't get items for cleaning the space, we use mostly water."*

This strong psychological distress has been manifest through enquiries from people held in Sintiki Mobile Info Team (MIT) has been receiving over the past months, with a concerning number reporting suicidal thoughts. The "Mahalas" group also [refers](#) to "disciplinary measures, psychological pressure, and intimidation", resulting, according to the article, in actual suicide attempts. This points, once again, to the profound failure of the Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum's "prison or return" approach: instead, a tragic third outcome is emerging.



Screenshots from videos shared by detainees in Sintiki. Source: Anonymous

Refugee status under review

The suspension of asylum decisions for Syrian nationals after the fall of Assad's regime in December 2024, lasting for several months, left many in a legal limbo, unprotected and unable to access basic rights. Now, other actors have flagged that



Greece

a number of Syrian nationals (primarily single men from Damascus and Aleppo) have been informed that their refugee status is under re-examination to assess whether they still meet the required criteria. According to a [Greek news portal](#), the Ministry of Asylum and Migration might have already revoked the positive asylum decision for 1,203 Syrian people in the period from March 1st to April 9th. To date on Samos, one Syrian refugee has had their refugee status revoked and has appealed the decision, awaiting the outcome. This is a concerning development with potentially serious implications for refugee protection.

Deadly start of the month and pushbacks in Greece and the Aegean

The sea routes to Europe continue to be the most dangerous migration paths in the world, with thousands of people dying in them every year. According to IOM, over 1,000 people have lost their lives in the Aegean Sea alone from the beginning of 2026, making it one of the [“deadliest start to a year since 2014”](#). More restrictive migration laws and violent border practices force people to choose alternative routes, while [increasingly risking](#) health and life.

April began with a devastating tragedy on the first day of the month, when [a boat capsized](#) off the coast of Mugla’s Bodrum district as it was attempting to flee the Turkish Coast Guard. Twenty people, all Afghan nationals, including one baby, lost their lives, while one person remains missing. This month, [28 bodies](#) of people on the move were also recovered on the Libyan coastline near Zuwara.

Beyond these tragedies, we continue to hear from people who have experienced pushbacks and pullbacks, and other violent and intimidating encounters with Turkish or Greek Coast Guards.

The scale of such practices has also been revealed in a [BBC investigation](#) published in April, which drew on testimonies, official documents and video material to document the widespread practice of enforced disappearances of people on the move at Greece’s land border with Turkey. [Recent Frontex reports](#) have similarly described violent pushbacks along the Evros border.

Crete

Increasing border securitisation

Amid increasing arrivals to Crete as the main [point of entry](#) for third-country nationals seeking protection in Greece in 2026, the Greek government is [taking measures](#) to reinforce border security on the island. The announced [changes](#) include an increase in the number of Greek Coast Guard units on the island and provision of pursuit and offshore vessels, two Heron drones for surveillance purposes, and 500 new recruits, as well as an expansion of Frontex aerial operations. [Discussions](#) are also happening between the Minister of Migration and Asylum Thanos Plevris and Frontex’s Executive Director Hans Leijtens regarding arrivals from Libya to Crete and Frontex’s surveillance and movement recording. In parallel, following a visit to Rethymno, the Greek Minister of Maritime Affairs and Insular Policy, Vassilis Kikilias used [an Instagram post](#) to frame



Greece

the government's approach to the island around narratives of protection, focusing on combating "modern smugglers", and ensuring the "safety of citizens and visitors". He added that "Crete is [a] top priority".

These steps follow previous [announcements](#) from Minister Plevris regarding the construction of new migration facilities in Crete. Detention facilities are [reportedly](#) meant to be located in Chania and Heraklion, with some [transformations](#) already being carried out in the Former Agia Exhibition Centre in Chania, despite opposition from local authorities. These new facilities are [intended](#) to be used as a deterrent, in particular for individuals who are not deemed to have a "refugee profile".

In addition, Minister Plevris [recently](#) mentioned the possibility of suspending, once again, the examination of asylum applications for people arriving from North Africa. This suspension (Law 5218/2025), which [was described](#) by Amnesty International as "unlawful and discriminatory", ordered the immediate deportation of individuals without registering their asylum claims, [leading](#) to their automatic detention and the denial of access to asylum procedures. The [Greek Ombudsman qualified](#) the implementation of the ban as "partial", "fragmented" and "discriminatory", and highlighted its non-compliance with EU and international standards.

Samos

Conditions at the Samos CCAC and quarantine section

Throughout April, the population of the Samos CCAC remained stable at approximately 1,200 residents (according to statistics from the Ministry). Clients of I Have Rights continued to raise serious concerns about conditions inside the facility, particularly regarding their experiences in quarantine.

Multiple clients reported troubling living conditions during their quarantine period. Several people described having to sleep on the floor due to a lack of mattresses and blankets. One client notably recounted how his pregnant wife and him had to sleep on the floor for four nights. Clients also reported being left for days in the wet clothes they arrived in without receiving any dry ones, while many expressed fears for their safety due to the absence of locks on the doors:

"During the night for two girls it is very dangerous and scary for us"

After the end of the quarantine period, conditions in the CCAC remain poor. One client described the response he received when raising concerns about the state of the camp:

"At the beginning we told the guards that it (the container) is dirty and wet, they said this is it, if you want you can stay or sleep outside."

Reports of suspension of vaccinations

Worrying reports have emerged from other civil society actors indicating that people are no longer being vaccinated at the camp or the hospital, including children and newborns. This troubling deve-



Greece

lopment is another indicator of the severe lack of healthcare access for people on the move, and raises serious concerns for their wellbeing and safety. Additionally, the absence of vaccination for children also prevents them from enrolling in school.

Civil society actors denied access to the camp

I Have Rights and other organisations on the island have been denied permission by camp authorities to accompany a delegation of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) visiting Samos on May 7th to visit the CCAC. Despite this, I Have Rights will meet with the MEPs and brief them on the situation that people on the move face on the island. This refusal is yet another instance of Greek authorities limiting transparency and restricting civil society actors' ability to monitor and report on reception conditions.

Lesvos

Opening of the Vastria CCAC postponed again

The opening of the Vastria CCAC on Lesvos has, once again, been postponed until next year. In an [open letter](#), Community Peacemakers teams (CPT), Legal Center Lesvos and Collective Aid, together with over 20 other organizations, opposed the ongoing construction of the facility. They warned, as they have done for years, about probable human rights violations and environmental catastrophes that may result from the opening of the centre. The remoteness of the camp would leave residents even more hidden from the public that

they currently are, while isolating them from supplies, access to support organisations and institutions for formal and informal education, as well as connection to the local community. Furthermore, with the newly passed law (5226/2025) extending "administrative detention" time from 18 to 24 months, residents will be even more restricted in their rights.

This month, the Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum initiated the renting of areas to build desalination plants in order to ensure water supply for the Vastria CCAC. Consequences of these plans [include](#) possible changes to and endangering of the marine ecosystem resulting from leading brine (highly concentrated saltwater produced in the process of desalinating sea water) back into the sea. Furthermore, the location of the CCAC in a highly flammable pine forest carries the risk of wildfires.

In the meantime, residents from the Mavrovouni CCAC have reported on increasing police harassment around the camp's opening and closing times, as well as of evictions of residents with positive asylum decisions before the stipulated 30 day period, resulting in homelessness.

Kos

New arrivals and translation in the CCAC

The situation in Kos continues to be overlooked and lacking in most of the aspects where the government ought to be providing services. In the Kos CCAC, there are currently 541 people, mostly single men and a few families, 256 of which are recog-



Greece

nised refugees. 22 new people arrived on April 25th, but most arrivals seem to be going to Rhodes at the moment. However, this month a person also arrived in Kos by swimming for the first time, an Algerian asylum seeker. This story only further highlights the absolute lack of an adequate process for seeking protection, which forces so many people into extremely dangerous situations just for the chance to access the asylum procedure.

From May 1st onwards, the approximately 150 Bangladeshi asylum seekers who have been living in the CCAC since the end of December will finally have access to a Bengali to English translator.

Impact of Greece's new migration legislation

BVMN partner organisation Glocal Roots is already witnessing some of the effects of the new migration legislation passed by the Greek government in September (Law 5218/2025), which, among other changes, expanded the grounds for detention. The team has already seen several instances where people coming from designated "Safe Countries of Origin" (SCO), have been directly transferred to the island's Pre-Removal Detention Centre after the refusal of their second appeal for asylum. There have also been recent cases of criminalisation of asylum-seekers from SCOs in Kos. Furthermore, the increased restrictions on the asylum procedure imposed by the new law are making individuals more vulnerable to scams and exploitation, including exorbitant legal fees or overpricing of official documents.

While the full extent of the consequences of this piece of legislation are yet to be seen, these cases already warn of the potential for increased violations of the rights of people on the move seeking safety.

A persistent issue: barriers in access to healthcare

In April, the limited access to healthcare has continued to be an issue affecting the everyday life of people on the move on the island. This month, five people needed to be transferred to the hospital for X-rays and blood tests. Moreover, as is the case in other islands in the Aegean, organisations in Kos have also witnessed the lack of age-appropriate vaccinations for children in the CCAC. The 7-year-old child with epilepsy who was transferred to a hospital in Athens after years of no access to medication, as mentioned in the [previous BVMN monthly report](#), continued to receive treatment while his family was split between Athens and Kos for weeks. In an instance where the vulnerability of the patient was so evident, we saw a clear lack of timely assessment to help the family reunite. Lastly, there was a case where a 1-year-old baby who was injured from a fall, was sent back to the CCAC - 13km away - in their mother's arms, without an X-ray or scan, any follow-up or instructions for the baby's health.

As the state continues to provide inadequate and insufficient services to people on the move, Glocal Roots remains the sole place for support and community for many on the island.



France

Shelter systems increasingly inaccessible in Calais

On April 9th 2026, associations and solidarity groups supporting people on the move at the Franco-British border organised a press conference in Calais to denounce the worsening lack of access to emergency accommodation in the region. Drawing on observations made throughout the winter; organisations highlighted the saturation of shelter systems and the increasing exclusion of single men from accommodation services.

Women and newly arrived families now only receive one night of emergency accommodation through the state emergency hotline (115), compared to three nights until 2022, while single men are, in practice, almost entirely excluded from the service. Reception and Assessment Centres (CAES), presented by the authorities as accommodation solutions, also remain largely inaccessible to many people on the move. In this context, organisations documented 546 refusals of accommodation requests submitted by single men between November 3rd 2025 and March 29th 2026. The inadequacy of winter emergency measures was also highlighted. In particular, during the 90-day winter period, a gymnasium intended to provide emergency shelter was reportedly open for only 25 days.

Several organisations also shared figures illustrating the scale of unmet needs. Between November 2025 and March 2026, the emergency shelter system operated by Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) accom-

modated 581 people whose requests for shelter had previously been denied by state services or the département. Among them were 345 children, travelling either with family members or alone. In total, MSF documented 1,054 refusals of accommodation by public authorities during this period. La Margelle, an accommodation centre operating in Calais, similarly reported hosting 388 single men over the winter who had not been informed about the existence of CAES facilities. The structure also received particularly vulnerable people, including survivors of shipwrecks, relatives of deceased persons, and individuals leaving hospital without housing solutions. Far from providing durable protection, emergency accommodation in Calais increasingly functions as a selective and insufficient mechanism that leaves many people on the move without access to shelter.

Months of targeted evictions on Calais' largest living site

The eviction of Calais' largest living site on [November 20th 2025](#) marked the beginning of a series of police operations carried out over the following months. While the legal basis for the actions conducted in November and December remains unclear, subsequent interventions were partly authorised through an ex parte order issued by the judicial court of Boulogne-sur-Mer in January 2026. The order expired on April 8th 2026.

In total, seven operations targeted different areas of the living site following a recurring pattern. Police forces reportedly arri-



France

ved early in the morning to force inhabitants to leave, before cleaning companies seized tents, blankets and personal belongings left on site. According to multiple testimonies collected by organisations present on site, people often did not have enough time to recover their possessions. Authorities presented these operations as “humanitarian interventions” accompanied by shelter alternatives. Buses were reportedly mobilised to transport people to CAES facilities, accommodation centres intended for people wishing to seek asylum in France. However, several testimonies indicate that such alternatives were not systematically offered to all inhabitants. Moreover, many considered these solutions unsuitable, due to concerns that registration in France could lead to their asylum claim falling under the Dublin Regulation, increasing the risk of transfer back to France from another European country.

In the absence of adequate accommodation, after each operation, people repeatedly returned to the living site, only to find it further damaged. Over the months, organisations observed increasing deforestation and rockfill operations, rendering parts of the area entirely uninhabitable. These repeated interventions not only destroy shelters but also disrupt access to essential services concentrated around the living site, including food distributions, medical support and social assistance. As a result, they contribute to deepening precarious living conditions while failing to provide sustainable alternatives.

Following the expiration of the judicial order in April, residents reportedly infor-

med authorities of their presence on the site in an attempt to be notified of future procedures and defend their rights before a judge. However, according to organisations present on site, these efforts proved ineffective. On May 11th 2026, the living site was once again evicted, and people were not given the opportunity to defend themselves before a court of law. Solidarity organisations further report that no prior social assessment or effective information procedures were implemented before the eviction, despite legal obligations governing such operations.

“Recycled” tents and the humanitarian legitimisation of evictions in Dunkerque

In April 2026, Human Rights Observers (HRO) documented at least five eviction operations carried out under judicial decisions in the Dunkerque area, resulting in the eviction of at least 55 people and the dismantling of informal markets on three occasions. During these operations, HRO observed six 30m³ dumpsters partially filled with personal belongings, including tents, blankets, backpacks and clothing. Testimonies collected from people on the move describe repeated confiscation of belongings and daily police harassment. One person living in an informal settlement stated:

“The police come to destroy everything, to put even more panic and fear on people.”



France

A recurring issue documented during these operations concerns the seizure of tents and their subsequent redistribution through a system coordinated by the association AFEJI under state mandate. According to the Dunkerque sub-prefecture, approximately 85% of tents present during evictions are “abandoned” by their occupants. Cleaning companies reportedly collect and sort the tents on site before reusable ones are transferred to AFEJI warehouses for refurbishment and redistribution to vulnerable people on the move.

However, organisations present on the ground consistently challenge the characterisation of these tents as voluntarily abandoned. People are frequently absent during evictions because they are attempting crossings, accessing healthcare, collecting food or water, or are otherwise away from the settlement. In some cases, individuals may also be returning from failed crossing attempts or rescue operations at sea. Upon returning to their living site, many report finding their tents confiscated or destroyed together with other personal belongings. Organisations further observe that even when people are present during evictions, procedural safeguards remain largely absent. According to testimonies collected in Loon-Plage, inhabitants are generally awakened by police early in the morning without prior notice, interpretation or explanation of the procedure. No inventory of belongings is reportedly conducted and no official eviction reports are distributed, despite legal obligations requiring such measures. Lastly, individuals are not effectively informed about

the fate of seized belongings or the possibility of recovering them.

Until recently, confiscated tents were reportedly destroyed. Their redistribution now creates a cyclical system of confiscation and redistribution in which tents originally distributed by solidarity organisations are seized during evictions, often damaged or destroyed in the process, and later redistributed through state-mandated humanitarian actors to other displaced people. Associations operating in the Dunkerque area further report that single men, who constitute the majority of residents of informal settlements, continue to face significant difficulties accessing redistributed tents.



Excavator destroying informal shops in Loon-Plage on April 29th. Source: HRO



France

Furthermore, the dismantling of informal markets resumed in April after several months without such operations. These markets, organised by residents of the living sites, partially compensate for insufficient access to food and humanitarian resources in the area. Their repeated destruction further destabilises already precarious living conditions and reduces access to basic survival resources.

Through the language of “revalorisation” and humanitarian assistance, authorities increasingly present weekly evictions as protective or supportive measures. Observations by solidarity organisations present in the Dunkerque area nevertheless indicate that these operations continue to function primarily as mechanisms of dispossession and displacement. The repeated confiscation, destruction and redistribution of essential items, combined with the absence of procedural safeguards and the continued dismantling of informal survival structures, perpetuate conditions of extreme precarity while reinforcing forms of spatial exclusion and displacement affecting people on the move.

Border deaths continue on the Franco-British border

April 2026 was marked by the deaths of six people at the Franco-British border.

On April 1st, two people died during a shipwreck in the Channel. A second shipwreck on April 9th caused the deaths of four other people. On April 20th, another man died following injuries caused by a bladed weapon.

These deaths occurred alongside the continued intensification of evictions and police operations targeting people on the move in Calais and Dunkerque. In April alone, HRO documented at least 10 evictions of living sites, 217 people expelled from informal settlements, the seizure of 93 tents and the dismantling of informal markets in Dunkerque.

These figures illustrate how deaths at the border cannot be understood as isolated tragedies occurring separately from everyday border governance. Repeated evictions, confiscation of survival equipment, exclusion from shelter systems and increasing border militarisation all form part of the same policy environment, one that systematically produces precariousness, exposure to danger and, ultimately, death.



Arrivals by sea

According to figures from *borderline-europe*, 2,283 people on the move arrived in Italy by sea in April 2026. This represents an increase of 1.1% compared to March 2026 and a decrease of 63.9% compared to April 2025.

The majority of these people, 2,047 individuals, or 89.7%, arrived in Sicily, primarily Lampedusa¹. In three cases, the crossing to Italy was via the Ionian route, the eastern Central Mediterranean. 75 people arrived in Tuscany and 68 people in Abruzzo. A further 71 people arrived in Liguria and 22 people in Sardinia.

According to our records, 1,247 people (54.6%) were confirmed to have been rescued by Italian authorities. A total of 479 people (21.0%) were rescued by civilian maritime rescue services.

According to data from *borderline-europe*, Frontex was involved in the rescue of 327 people (14.3%) during this month. This represents a sharp increase compared to March 2026, when Frontex was involved in only 3.1% of rescues. 181 people (7.9%) reached Italian territorial waters (12 nautical miles off the coast) independently, without having been intercepted or rescued beforehand. For 27 people (1.2%), no information was available regarding the manner of arrival or rescue.

According to official figures from the Italian Ministry of the Interior, 2,391 people arrived in Italy in April. We were able to verify slightly lower arrival figures for this month, but we would like to note that there is no access to the background information or sources of the figures published by the Ministry of the Interior.

Overview of the data collected by <i>borderline europe</i>²	
Arrivals of people on the move in Italy by sea	2283
Arrivals of people on the move in Sicily	2047
Rescue by Italian authorities and Frontex	1574
Rescues by NGOs	479
Rescue by private/commercial vessels	22
People arriving independently	181
Arrivals without information on arrival/rescue	27

A particularly large number of people arrived between April 20th and 22nd. According to our figures, a total of 543 people

¹ Unless otherwise stated, all percentages quoted refer to the total number of people who arrived in Italy by sea this month

² The figures are provided without guarantee, as the number of unreported cases could be significantly higher



arrived on Lampedusa over these three days. On April 20th, 206 people reached Lampedusa in five separate arrivals. Whilst four of these boats were rescued by the Italian authorities or Frontex, [one boat carrying 70 people reached the island of Isola dei Conigli, located close to Lampedusa, under its own steam](#). The people were intercepted by the Italian Guardia di Finanza immediately upon arrival and taken to the hotspot facility on Lampedusa. To avoid overburdening the reception system on Lampedusa, 40 people were transferred to Sicily on the same day. Two days later, on April 22nd, 290 people on the move reached Lampedusa. Of these, 183 persons were rescued by the civil fleet: [90 persons were rescued in three separate operations by the NGO RESQSHIP, 18 persons by the NGO Compass Collective and 75 persons by the NGO Solidaire](#).

Pushbacks, pullbacks and deportations

Based on our figures, 2,017 people were intercepted in the central Mediterranean this month. All of the cases we documented involved people being towed back to Libya. These figures are approximate, as the actual number of cases is likely to be far higher. On April 22nd alone, there were 496 interceptions³, in which people from at least ten different boats were stopped by the Libyan authorities against their will and taken back to Libya.

In addition, a [mass deportation took place from eastern](#) Libya this month: 175 people from Bangladesh were flown out under military supervision after having been detained in detention centres in Tripoli and Benghazi. The deportation was carried out in cooperation with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). [borderline-europe's Scirocco of April 24th](#) reported on the Italian government's exploitation of "voluntary return". Italian Interior Minister Piantedosi celebrated this mass deportation on his social media accounts. Whilst these returns are portrayed as "humanitarian" and "voluntary", they mask coercion and the violation of rights, as several [civil society organisations](#) have criticised.

Dead and missing

In the Central Mediterranean, people continued to lose their lives to the violent European border regime. According to data from [borderline-europe](#), 131 people died whilst attempting to cross the Central Mediterranean in April and 156 people were reported missing this month. Here too, the actual figures are likely to be significantly higher.

This is the deadliest start to a year in the Central Mediterranean since records began in 2014. [According to official IOM data](#), 796 people have already lost their lives or gone missing on this route in 2026. These numbers should be taken as a minimum. The Central Mediterra-

³ Interceptions are violent pushbacks or pullbacks at sea back to a third country. For example, the so-called Libyan Coast Guard, which is largely funded and equipped by Italy and other EU member states, carries out interceptions by seizing boats on their way to Europe and forcibly returning them to Libya.



nean thus remains one of the deadliest migration routes in the world. However, the deaths in the Mediterranean are not isolated tragedies, but must be understood as the direct consequence of political decisions, and Europe's complicity must be clearly acknowledged. A detailed analysis of the EU's responsibility for the deaths in the Mediterranean can be read in [borderline-europe's Scirocco dated April 17th 2026](#).

Moreover, the start of this month has once again highlighted how little attention is paid in Europe to the victims of this deadly system. In early April, two serious shipwrecks occurred, in which at least 21 people died and 81 others have since been reported missing. These cases received hardly any media coverage. Instead, civilian sea rescue operations are being increasingly restricted and face an uncertain financial future. The fact that deaths in the Mediterranean go largely unnoticed, whilst those who save lives are criminalised and undermined, shows the value placed on the lives of people on the move in the European public sphere. For those affected, this prioritisation has real consequences: the lack of rescues means that deaths continue at Europe's external borders.

In the context of shipwrecks in the Mediterranean, a distinction is usually made between 'dead' and 'missing' persons. Only those [whose bodies have actually been](#) recovered are counted as dead. The fate of many others remains uncertain, as their bodies are never found and thus, they cannot be officially declared dead. This practice obscures the true scale of

the humanitarian disaster, as the actual number of victims remains unknown.

For relatives in particular, this is a huge challenge, as they are unable to find out what has become of their loved ones. Even the bodies that are recovered often remain unidentified, as they are frequently unrecognisable after days in the sea and DNA samples are rarely taken. At the same time, there is no central, comprehensive database to systematically record existing information and facilitate cross-referencing. As a result, many victims remain nameless and their relatives are left without certainty. Civil society organisations such as [Memoria Mediterranea](#) and relatives have been drawing attention to these shortcomings for years and are undertaking the practical work of searching, identifying and commemorating the victims. In April, the issue was also given a platform in the European Parliament when the [Sicilian public prosecutor Salvatore Vella](#), speaking at the event 'The Right to Identity: Towards a European Framework for Missing Migrants', called for better means of identifying bodies and for a centralised database.

Trigger Warning: Sexual violence **The Barnamiche system**

The human rights situation in North African transit countries remains dire for people on the move, particularly those from sub-Saharan regions. This month, we want to draw particular attention to the situation of refugee women in Tunisia and Libya. A report published this month by Researchers X, ["Women State Trafficking:](#)



[Gender-Based Violence, Expulsions, and Sale of Black Migrant Women from Tunisia to Libya](#)”, uncovers systemic patterns of human rights violations and human trafficking between Tunisia and Libya. This system relies on blocking departures and the systematic trafficking of people. This dynamic is also supported by substantial financial resources from the EU, which externalises its border policy to Tunisia and Libya. The report is based on 33 interviews with those affected and identifies key hubs, including a Tunisian National Guard barrack in El Meguissem, as well as several detention centres in Libya, including Al Assah, Bir Al Ghanam and Characharah in Tripoli.

Three recurring forms of violence are described:

1. Dehumanisation through systematic humiliation and neglect,
2. Sexual and physical violence, particularly against women and children,
3. Forced prostitution as part of an organised system of exploitation.

In Tunisia, arbitrary arrests based on skin colour are a documented practice. In Libya, the lack of medical care, deprivation of food, torture and extortion are widespread. Witnesses report miscarriages resulting from prison conditions, as well as systematic violence at the hands of security forces.

Particularly serious is the so-called Barnamiche system: an organised human trafficking network in which women are sold in Libya after being abducted from

Tunisia. This market is structured, partly catalogued and clearly gender-specific – women fetch higher prices, which points to a targeted demand for sexual exploitation. Many of those affected are forced into situations of forced labour or forced prostitution. Detentions and pushbacks in Tunisia support a system whose ‘demand’ lies in Libyan detention centres, marked by extortion, and sexual and economic exploitation. This network is sustained by numerous actors and is, in some cases, normalised locally as part of the economy. The report once again highlights how problematic the EU’s cooperation with Libyan and Tunisian actors is. The externalisation of European migration policy through the [EU-Tunisia Memorandum of Understanding \(2023\)](#) and the [Malta Declaration with Libya](#) demonstrates that these policies cannot be separated from the structural human rights violations committed in Libya and Tunisia.

Civil resistance

In April, six vessels from the civilian fleet were in operation in the central Mediterranean and rescued a total of 479 people in distress at sea.

The crew of the Life Support (Emergency) carried out two rescues in a single operation: following two missions in quick succession in the Libyan Search and Rescue zone, they took a total of 68 survivors on board, including 16 unaccompanied minors. The Nadir, operated by [RESQSHIP](#), also brought [a total of 90 people to Lampedusa during a night-time multiple rescue operation](#).



Italy

April once again highlighted the conditions under which civilian sea rescue operations take place in the Central Mediterranean: whilst people had to wait for days to be rescued following shipwrecks, NGO vessels continued to be blocked by administrative measures. This pattern continues despite courts having repeatedly confirmed in older, comparable cases that such measures were unlawful.

On April 1st, Alarm Phone [was](#) informed of a group of people stranded on the Didon platform in the Gulf of Gabès, some 75 km off the coast of Tunisia. In recent months, the platform has repeatedly served as a makeshift refuge for people who, following shipwrecks, were unable to continue their journey across the Mediterranean. After the authorities failed to intervene, the [Sea-Watch vessel Aurora rescued 44 people from the platform on April 3rd](#). The group, which included women and children, had already been stranded there for five days without sufficient supplies. The following day, the Aurora did not head for the port of Porto Empedocle, designated by the Italian authorities, but instead [took the rescued people to Lampedusa](#). Sea-Watch cited a lack of fuel and the critical situation on board as the reasons for this. On April 13th, it was announced that [the ship would be detained for 45 days](#); the organisation also faces a fine of up to 10,000 euros. The Sea-Watch 5 had also already been [detained during this period](#).

Just a few weeks later, the situation repeated itself on the Didon platform. On April 21st, a [group of 47 people were once again stranded there](#). The sailing ship

Nadir, operated by RESQSHIP, evacuated them on the evening of that day. That same night, the crew rescued a further 43 people from two unseaworthy boats and brought a total of 90 survivors safely to Lampedusa on April 23rd.

Other rescue vessels were also in action in April. Emergency's Life Support rescued 71 people on April 8th. The Italian authorities directed it [to the distant port of La Spezia](#), which meant a three-day journey and significantly prolonged the time on board for those rescued, including minors. The ship reached the port on April 12th.

At the end of April, the [Compass Collective's Trotamar III](#) was also detained in Lampedusa for [15 days and fined €7,500](#) after rescuing 18 people and bringing them ashore. The authorities alleged that the crew had failed to coordinate the rescue with the Tunisian authorities. [The NGO strongly](#) refuses this, stating that it had informed the relevant rescue coordination centres in Rome and Malta. The Tunisian coastguard was deliberately not involved because, otherwise, those rescued would have faced the threat of being returned to Tunisia – a place that cannot be considered safe for those seeking protection. With the detention of the Trotamar III, four NGO rescue vessels had already been blocked by the Italian authorities since March 30th.

Alongside these operations, several significant court rulings were handed down in connection with the so-called Piantedosi Decree. On April 3rd, the court in Trapani, Sicily, ruled that the detention of the [Mare Jonio, operated by Mediterranea Saving](#)



[Humans](#), in October 2023 was unlawful. The court made it clear that Libya is not a safe port and that [NGOs are not obliged to coordinate with Libyan militias](#). At the end of April, a court in Massa, Tuscany, also ruled in favour of Open Arms in another [case dating from September 2023](#): here too, an administrative detention order was declared unlawful. The court found that the additional rescues took place in a genuine emergency, did not cause any delay in reaching the designated port, and therefore there was no reason for a sanction.

These verdicts show that many measures taken against civilian rescue organisations are legally untenable. However, their effects often only become apparent years later – after ships have already been blocked, operations prevented, and thus potential rescues of people in distress thwarted. Criminalisation weakens civilian structures and ties up resources, regardless of the eventual outcome of the proceedings.

In another case, legal responsibility was also recognised retrospectively in April. The long-running legal dispute before the Italian Court of Cassation regarding [the so-called 'Children's Shipwreck' case](#) of October 11th 2013 came to an end. In that case, [268 people](#), including 60 children, lost their lives off Lampedusa. Although the criminal offences are now time-barred, the court confirmed the moral and legal shared responsibility of Italian naval and coastguard officers. It was established that the Italian vessel *Libra* [had intervened too late](#), despite repeated calls for help and requests from Malta.

Even though the verdict came 13 years later and cannot undo the injustice suffered, it shows that the fight for truth and accountability continues – for those who have died and for those who, to this day, die, go missing or are forgotten as a result of political misconduct. Lawyers for the civil claimants see this confirmed liability, despite the statute of limitations, as a potential basis for future lawsuits against Italian authorities, even if no criminal consequences can now result from it. So late as this recognition may be, it can nevertheless help ensure that the fight for justice does not come to nothing and may speed up future proceedings. In today's political climate, it remains essential that failure to rescue or delayed rescue must not go unpunished.

In mid-April, Sea-Watch filed criminal complaints against the Libyan coastguard in Italy and Germany [on charges of piracy](#). This followed an incident on September 25th to 26th 2025 in international waters, during which the patrol boat *Ubari* harassed the Sea-Watch 5 with [dangerous manoeuvres](#) whilst it was carrying out a rescue operation, threatened it with armed force and fired at least one shot. Sea-Watch sees this as evidence of increasing aggression on the part of the Libyan forces and points to the shared responsibility of Germany and Italy due to their cooperation with Libya.

Pushbacks and arbitrary detention at the French-Italian border

The southern part of the French-Italian border, especially the territory around the cities of Menton (in France) and Ventimi-



Italy

glia (in Italy), has been a common crossing area for people on the move for a long time. In this region, the number of people arrested in France soon after crossing increased in April, with an average of 30 documented pushbacks and up to 25 people detained overnight – in the containers and cells managed by the French border police – per day. People on the move who get arrested after crossing to France are usually brought to the border police post of the PAF (*Police aux Frontières*) in Menton and subsequently made to walk the steep mountain road to Italy; the closest city, Ventimiglia, located 9 kilometres away.

Most of the people who have been arrested and pushed back in this area report having spent almost half of their time in Europe in detention, without access to translation of information about their rights in custody. This lack of understandable legal information and interpretation services is common in the French border police post in Menton. Many testimonies also describe the terrible hygienic conditions in the cells of the French border police, a lack of access to food and water when detained overnight, as well as the extremely cold temperatures in the facility, with no adequate covers provided. In fact, those released during the midday heat are frequently still shivering after spending the night in detention. Furthermore, some testimonies highlight the lack of access to essential medical care, as was the case, on April 10th, of a person who was detained with several broken ribs. Despite this, the appeal of several French human rights organisations to investigate the conditions of detention in the French border police facility has been rejected by the judges.

The testimonies collected also describe the seizing of phones during detention by the French police, who are often described as rude and racist. The authorities reportedly provide “zero information” about the reasons for and prospective length of the detention period. In addition, Italian police officers, who are also present at the border and partly operate inside the French border police post, are issuing expulsion papers from Italian territory to those who are pushed back to Italy by the French police. Most of the people affected have recently arrived in Europe and have received no information regarding the potential legal consequences of these papers, including further detention and deportation from the Schengen zone after 7 days, or about the possibility to appeal the decision.

People are increasingly often pushed back to Italy very early in the morning or in the late evening, after the last bus driving to Ventimiglia has already passed. As the number of people pushed back to Italy begins to rise (including minors who are being denied their legal right to seek protection in France once in French territory), a pattern has been observed involving some local residents pushing them to accept overpriced driving services to Ventimiglia. These drivers have also been seen giving out false information regarding the unavailability of public buses.

Urban policing and evictions in Menton and Ventimiglia

In the early morning of April 15th, the informal tent settlement located under a motorway bridge in Ventimiglia was evic-



Italy

ted by French police. During the operation, the authorities confiscated all belongings of those dwelling under the bridge (including telephones), and residents were left with only the clothes they were wearing. This informal settlement, which was later destroyed by bulldozers, constituted the only available shelter for men on the move in Ventimiglia.

On the other side of the border, the urban areas of Menton and Nice have seen several “ICE-style” police checks of racialised people on their way to work (frequently in working clothes), as well as in cafes. Many of these people are then forced to leave their vehicles in France and pushed back to Italy, where they are sometimes issued expulsion papers by the Italian police.



**Border Violence
Monitoring Network**



**Border Violence
Monitoring Network**

Network structure and contact

BVMN acts as an alliance of organisations in the Balkans and Greece. BVMN is based on the efforts of member organisations working in the field of documentation, media, advocacy and litigation.

We finance the work through charitable grants and foundations, and are not in receipt of funds from any political organisation.

The expenditures cover transport subsidies, several part-time paid coordination positions and some costs incurred by member organisations for their contributions to our shared work.

To follow more from the Border Violence Monitoring Network, check out our website for the entire testimony archive, previous monthly reports and regular news pieces. To follow us on social media, find us on Twitter handle @Border_Violence and on Facebook.

For further information regarding this report or more on how to become involved, and for press and media requests please email us at mail@borderviolence.eu.



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