



Border Violence
Monitoring Network

2026 ILLEGAL PUSHBACKS AND BORDER VIOLENCE REPORTS

MONTHLY
REPORT
JUNE

Frontex van spotted at
the Serbian-Bosnian Border.
Source: Anonymous



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Other contributors:



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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 June 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, Mülteci-Der and borderline-europe.

Despite the decade-old living archive of evidence – by BVMN and many others – of pushbacks in the Western Balkans and beyond, the illegal and inhumane practices by authorities remain tragically in fashion, and accountability, elusive. Testimonies shared this month by people on the move in Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina portray a well-functioning machinery of violence, trained year after year to perpetrate racist and systematic abuse at the borders. The survivors described humiliation, forced undressing, attacks with unleashed dogs, threatening with guns, physical violence – including kicking a pregnant woman in the stomach until she started bleeding –, and destruction of documents and other belongings at the hands of Croatian and Hungarian police. In the case of Hungary, the arrival of Frontex officers may have stopped the physical violence, but did not prevent the illegal pushback. In this context, the strengthening of the collaboration between Frontex and Bosnia-Herzegovina this month, and the continuous EU financial and technical support for the “fight against irregular migration” in the Balkans, only shows the EU’s unwavering commitment to violent externalisation and securitisation over human rights.

A little further south, in the Aegean, this commitment – and the abuses it carries – becomes ever less veiled. As reports describing the disabling of engines of boats carrying asylum-seekers and other deadly practices by the Hellenic Coast Guard accumulate, the Greek Minister for Migration and Asylum referred to criticism by human rights organizations as a “badge of honor”. He also threatened to suspend asylum applications if the increase in arrivals in Crete continues. This report contributes to this egregious “badge of honor” with descriptions of extremely poor conditions in reception and detention centres, including in Corinth, where people transferred from Samos depicted a lack of sufficient meals and adequate shelter and the presence of bedbug infestations. This month, an outbreak of tuberculosis, and another one of scabies in unaccompanied minors after a transfer from Crete to Samos, also underscored the dangers of the chronic lack of adequate medical assistance for people on the move in the country. Furthermore, 16 people who had been sentenced to up to three years and seven months of imprisonment and a fine, for charges of insubordination and property damage after protests at the Special Detention Facility of Serres in November 2025, have had the poor conditions at the facility recognised as mitigating circumstances during their appeal hearing.

In Turkey, we look at the new report published by Mülteci-Der on the “Irregular Migrant Reception and Referral Centres” (GÖKSEM) which, despite their number and seemingly extensive use, remain surrounded by a lack of transparency, indepen-



Executive summary

dent monitoring and public statutory regulation. In the context of the start of the implementation of the new Pact, which is already leaving many in a legal limbo in the Greek islands, their analysis provides timely insights into pre-screening procedures and externalisation policies.

It is through these externalisation policies that the EU keeps funding not only detention centres in Turkey, but also deterrence practices in Tunisia and Libya, primary departure points for the crossing to Italy. This support has continued over the years despite the widespread evidence of systematic human rights violations against people on the move in both North African countries. This month, for the first time in history, Tunisia is standing before the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights over human rights violations against foreign nationals, including arbitrary detention, torture, violations of the right to life, mass expulsions and human trafficking. Meanwhile, several new instances of pullbacks and intimidation tactics by the Libyan authorities in the Mediterranean have been recorded. In one of these cases, on June 4th, the civil rescue boat *Louise Michel* responded to a distress call only to find that the two boats had already been intercepted by the so-called Libyan Coast Guard and towed back to Libya. As pushbacks and pullbacks continue to be condoned, encouraged and aided by Italian and European authorities, people continue to die in this ever surveilled part of the Mediterranean Sea. Thus, this month, European policies have also resulted in the deaths of at least 65 more people and the disappearance of 82 others in the Central Mediterranean only.

Lastly, in France, we keep on reporting on the evictions of the largest informal living site in Calais, hosting 600-800 people, which intensified in May. This month, on June 2nd, a judge gave out a legal ruling ordering a judicial operation to completely dismantle the living site. The eviction that followed lacked any offer of alternative accommodation for the inhabitants, contrary to law, and was met with a week of protests and sit-ins by people on the move and members of solidarity organisations. The regular practice of expulsion and harassment at the living sites was also matched with increased discrimination in public transportation. This month, higher police surveillance on the buses was observed, together with racial profiling and segregation practices by bus drivers, who would regularly organise separate lines for people on the move and restrict their access to public transport. Many buses were even cancelled when police were not present and there were people assumed to be people on the move at bus stops. The daily climate of hostility and racism is exacerbated by the increasingly frequent visits by far-right activists and groups from England, who often go to living sites, film people on the move without their consent and post defamatory videos on social media.

UPDATE ON THE SITUATION



**Border Violence
Monitoring Network**



Bosnia – Herzegovina

Border violence and pushbacks

Throughout June, BVMN's member organisation Collective Aid held dozens of conversations with people on the move who had attempted to cross the Croatian border, as well as with individuals reflecting on their journeys before arriving at the Blažuj Temporary Reception Centre (TRC). Across these conversations, accounts of pushbacks consistently documented physical and verbal violence.

In a conversation with the Collective Aid team in front of the Blažuj TRC outside Sarajevo, a man from Egypt recalled his attempt to cross the Croatian border. Travelling in a group of 27 people, he described being pushed back by around ten Croatian police officers who arrived with unleashed dogs. He told Collective Aid that, in an effort to protect the more vulnerable people he was travelling with, he moved to the front of the group, where he was beaten by the officers and bitten by the dogs. He explained that, following the assault, the police took his phone and forced him to strip naked to search him for money, which they then confiscated. He recalled asking the police for water, only for them to open a bottle and pour it out in front of him. Without food or water, he made his way back to the Blažuj TRC. He spoke to Collective Aid about how humiliated the experience made him feel, explaining that he is now planning to return to Egypt because he cannot face making the journey again.

In further conversations, Collective Aid spoke to people on the move from Algeria

who also described being pushed back by Croatian police. They reported being beaten with belts, stripped of their clothes, and forced back into Bosnia-Herzegovina. They explained that having clothes taken during pushbacks is common and that, in some cases, people are also thrown into rivers. One man told Collective Aid,

"This is only what we see ourselves, and there is a lot more happening that we don't see."

Severe physical violence, [forced undressing](#) – often in dangerously cold conditions – and [pushing people into rivers](#) are old practices that have been systematically used by Croatian officers over the years, as shown [again](#) and again in the testimonies collected in the [BVMN database](#). Despite the illegal, widely documented and methodical character of these practices, little has been done by national and EU authorities to stop the violence, support the victims and respect human rights. Rather, national and regional institutions have fostered impunity and securitised narratives while further hindering any available routes left for those seeking safety.

Camp conditions in the Blažuj TRC

During the month of June, people on the move consistently reported to Collective Aid the intensity of the heat inside the Blažuj TRC, particularly in the residential containers. Many explained that staying inside becomes unbearable after 11 a.m. because there are no fans or air conditioning. As in previous months, bed bugs continue to be a persistent problem, with



Bosnia – Herzegovina

residents regularly reporting bites. Collective Aid also spoke with a member of the LGBTQIA+ community who described feeling unsafe inside the Blažuj TRC, fearing that other residents would discover his sexual orientation.

EU and Frontex developments

Bosnia-Herzegovina saw significant developments in its relationship with Frontex at the beginning of June. These developments built upon the comprehensive Status agreement signed between the EU and the Western Balkan country around a year ago, on June 11th 2025. Firstly, Hans Leijtens, Executive Director at Frontex, visited Serbia and BiH between June 1st and 3rd, in an effort to deepen cooperation with authorities.

In BiH, Leijtens met with EUFOR Commander Major General to discuss building support towards regional security and stability. [EUFOR](#) is an EU-led military deployment launched in December 2004. Following this meeting, [a Letter of Intent](#) was established to enhance operational coordination and information sharing between Frontex and EUFOR. During this visit, Frontex also signed two transfer agreements, providing IT equipment to the Bosnian Border Police and supporting both the National Coordination Centre and border check operations.

Furthermore, on June 18th, Ambassador Luigi Soreca, EU Special Representative to BiH, together with other officials, handed over 12 specialized vehicles worth 790,000 KM (around 400,000€) to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Federation of BiH and the police Administration of the Ministry of Interior of

the Sarajevo Canton. [These](#) donations from the EU include eight police vehicles, two transport vans, and two off-road vehicles aimed at “strengthening the capacity” of police agencies in dealing with irregularised migration.

Lastly, on June 17th, Frontex published its [Annual Risk Analysis 2026–2027](#). Throughout the report, Frontex frames migration primarily through the language of security and risk, identifying challenges such as an “*accelerating complexity of the geopo-*



Frontex van spotted at the Serbian-Bosnian Border. Source: Anonymous



Bosnia – Herzegovina

litical environment”, “hybrid threats”, and “cross-border crime”, while arguing that the EU must adopt a “proactive and adaptive approach” to border management. These types of narratives, which equate migration with risk and contribute to the creation of extremely harmful stereotypes and ideas with regards to people on the move, are integral to the maintenance of the deadly European migration regime that prioritises security over protection through countless human rights violations.



Violence at the border with Hungary

This month, BVMN's member organisation Collective Aid observed a regular turnover of people on the move at informal living sites around Belgrade, and heard many stories of attempts to cross into the EU via Hungary. Often, these individuals had been pushed back into Serbia two or more times and intended to try again. We saw a broken nose, a sprained ankle, and heard stories of beatings at the hands of Hungarian police. One specific account was detailed in a testimony collected by a member of our Serbia team.

In the [testimony](#), told by a Moroccan man, systemic violence and ritualised degradation were utilised by the Hungarian police, who threatened the man with a gun, humiliated and beat him, destroyed personal belongings and paperwork, and denied water and interpreters while the man was in detention. Furthermore, he reported that a police officer kicked a pregnant woman in the stomach, causing her to bleed. The respondent recounts he told the police officer to shoot, telling him:

"It's better for me to die than this life here".

Frontex officers reportedly arrived at the scene approximately ten minutes after the Hungarian authorities. According to the respondent, the Frontex officers did not use violence, and the Hungarian police stopped beating the group once Frontex arrived. Since Frontex officially suspended its operational activities in Hungary in 2021, their reported presence during this incident raises concerns. While it is

positive that Frontex officers, in their monitoring role, may have initially contributed to preventing further fundamental rights violations by the Hungarian authorities, they nevertheless failed to prevent the subsequent pushback or to ensure that the individuals were granted access to the asylum procedure.

In recent months, we have reported on the range of violence experienced by people on the move in Serbia, including gun violence, as well as the impact of intensified deterrence measures deployed at the Serbia-Hungary border. Systemic violence, pushbacks, and the criminalisation of asylum-seeking at the Serbia-Hungary border have been documented by [Collective Aid](#), [Human Rights Watch](#), and other organisations for over ten years.

[During the first six months of 2026](#), the Hungarian authorities have documented that at least 1,252 people have been "prevented" from crossing the Hungarian border, and 787 people have been pushed back into Serbia by the Hungarian police. This is a considerable decrease compared to the first six months of 2025, when 4,880 people were "prevented" from crossing, and 2,251 people were pushed back, indicating a 75% and ~60% decrease, respectively.

The deterrence tactics deployed and intensified by the Hungarian police in collaboration with the EU, Frontex, and Serbian authorities for over ten years have been ineffective in completely stopping people on the move from attempting to enter the EU via the so-called Western Balkan route through Serbia and Hungary. [The Frontex](#)



Serbia

[Annual Risk Analysis 2026-27](#) maintains the Western Balkan route as a dominant pathway into the EU.

For as long as there are no accessible safe routes and no legal procedure offering effective protection against pushbacks and refoulement, we will continue to hear testimonies of systemic violence at the Serbia-Hungary border, and bear witness to the pushback-detention-camp cycle experienced by people on the move in the region.



Trial in Sintiki

On June 30th, the Court of Appeal of Serres recognized the poor conditions at the [Special Detention Facility of Serres](#), in Sintiki, as mitigating circumstances during the appeal hearing of 16 defendants prosecuted for insubordination and property damage in connection with protests and attempted escapes from the facility in November 2025.

The events date back to November 12th, 2025, when several third country nationals (TCNs) detained in the structure [started a protest](#) over restricted access to their right to asylum, as well as poor detention conditions. Tensions escalated. Reportedly, some detainees attempted to escape, some material damage was caused and two police officers were injured. As a result, 30 individuals detained at the detention centre – 29 Egyptian and one Bangladeshi nationals – were arrested under charges including insubordination, aggravated property damage and attempted escape. They were taken to court within the two days following the event, and sentenced to up to three years and seven months of imprisonment and a fine of €450 each. Tellingly, the defendants appeared before the Court wearing slippers despite the winter weather, a stark indication of the conditions in the detention facility. They were then transferred to various prisons throughout Greece.

It is worth noting that this was not the first of such events. Between August and late November 2025, [reports](#) indicate that multiple protests, [hunger strikes](#) and [attempted](#)

[escapes](#) were organised in the facility. Some of these episodes were reportedly met with police violence or imprisonment. BVMN has been repeatedly [reporting](#) on the undignified detention conditions inside the structure over this same period, including related to overcrowding, restricted access to healthcare and impossibility for detainees to cover their basic needs.

On June 30th, 16 of the 30 convicted individuals [appeared](#) before the Court of Appeal in Serres – 8 reportedly submitted their appeal two days after the deadline while detained in prison without interpretation services, and 6 did not lodge an appeal. The defendants were acquitted of the charge of aggravated property damage and the three-year prison sentence originally imposed to most was reduced by one year. The Court imposed a sentence of 14 months of imprisonment for insubordination, despite the lack of evidence establishing the participation of the convicted people in the attempted escape. However, recognition that the episode had been motivated by conditions of extreme destitution rather than petty motives is a positive step, yet again highlighting appalling conditions in the Sintiki facility. Nevertheless, following the completion of their prison sentences, the individuals are expected to be transferred back to a detention facility pending deportation.

The case illustrates several concerns regarding the effective access to justice for TCNs in detention. Reported shortcomings relating to access to interpretation and information, the ability to effectively exercise their right to an effective remedy, and



the lack of evidentiary basis of the prosecution raise serious questions about whether the proceedings afforded all defendants the procedural safeguards required under the right to a fair trial. Although the Court of Appeal ultimately reduced the sentences and acknowledged the role that conditions of extreme destitution played in the attempted escape, the case underscores the need to ensure that reception and detention policies are fully aligned with the legal obligations of the Greek state, including the prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment. To this end, greater emphasis should be placed on ensuring adequate living conditions, access to basic rights and essential services, and humane, rights-based accommodation.

Systematic violence in the Aegean

June was marked by a perceptible increase in structural as well as verbal and physical violence at the borders. This month, the [Turkish Coast Guard](#) published information about 43 incidents, consisting of so-called apprehensions and rescues, involving 942 people, including 152 children. 15 of these incidents have been rescues, involving 324 people, among them, 60 children. On the Greek side, [reports](#) of violent pushbacks have been accumulating, describing the [disabling of engines](#), as well as [being towed](#) and [shot at](#) by the Hellenic Coast Guard.

At the same time, the public political discourse against migration is getting harsher and stronger, with the Greek Minister for Migration and Asylum, Thanos Plevris, [threatening to suspend asylum](#)

[applications](#) if the increase in [arrivals on Crete](#) continues. He referred to criticism by human rights organizations as a “[badge of honor](#)”, and commented that “every time U.N. envoys express concern over [his] legislation, it makes [him] proud”. These words clearly showcase the impunity surrounding explicit plans to further human rights violations against people on the move.

Moreover, in the context of the implementation of the new Pact, the move towards increased detention and returns also comes with growing border technology and surveillance, currently in the form of [expansion of patrolling](#) around the island of Crete in response to rising arrival numbers. Moreover, Frontex is in the process of developing a [new app](#), which will seemingly handle alternatives to detention, such as electronic reporting and geographical restrictions.

Lesvos

Issues with screening procedures and reduced oversight

In line with the implementation of the new Pact on June 12th, asylum seekers face rising hurdles. The screening procedures in the Lesvos CCAC have been put on halt for most of June, since the new screening platform has not been running, leaving people stuck in the camp and with limited access to services provided inside. The new Vastria CCAC – still under construction – promises further isolation and even less oversight, given its remote location and the Greek government’s plan to provide legal



Greece

counseling exclusively through members of the Greek Bar Association. The Minister for Migration and Asylum also [commented](#) on the legal representation of criminalized people on the move by members of NGOs, questioning their morality and standing in the law processes and advocating for the control of NGO work through the state.

Samos

Camp conditions and transfers

The month of June saw an increase in the population of the Samos CCAC, rising from 1,130 residents at the start of the month to 1,251 by the end. This was compounded by a transfer of approximately [300 people from Crete](#) on June 11th, which triggered [hostile responses](#) from the Deputy Regional Governor and the Mayor of Eastern Samos. In the aftermath of this transfer, several people were reportedly infected with tuberculosis, alongside an outbreak of scabies among unaccompanied minors. Given the chronic lack of adequate medical assistance, these outbreaks raise serious concerns for residents' health and wellbeing and serve as another reminder of the harsh living conditions faced by people on the move residing in the CCAC.

Another transfer took place during this period, this time from Samos to Corinth, which once again highlighted the terrible conditions within camps across Greece. Multiple clients of I Have Rights reported a lack of sufficient meals, bedbug infestations, and being forced to live in tents. Clients testified:

"To be honest, life in this camp is really not good. From both a health and social perspective, the situation is very difficult. It is very different here. There are not even containers here; people are living in tents/tarpaulin shelters, and almost everyone is suffering from bedbugs. The entire camp has bedbugs. We have bites and sores everywhere and we are suffering because of it."

"It's really not good for me here. There are four of us in one room, and at night nobody gets any sleep because we have to take turns keeping watch and trying to kill the fleas, and we don't even have enough space for our things. As for food, we're so hungry in the evening because they give us a bowl of food every 12 hours until the next day, before giving us another bowl. What really bothers us here is that we aren't even given a bed sheet."

Following an intervention by our lawyer with the camp authorities, conditions were reported to have improved individually.

Meanwhile, conditions in the Samos CCAC itself have not improved. At the end of June, civil society organisations in Samos, including I Have Rights, sent a joint letter to the camp authorities raising serious concerns. These included the continued refusal to vaccinate children and newborns since March 2026 (at least 10 babies), restrictions preventing single parents from exiting the CCAC without all their children, denial of food and water to residents with special reception needs remaining in the camp after 30 days post their asylum decision awaiting their docu-



ments, and the ongoing non-payment of the legally mandated cash assistance since May 2024. In response, the camp authorities denied all allegations.

costs and space. This is shocking and reveals a lack of humanity, even in death.

Messy implementation of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum

Worryingly, our team has observed that, as of the time of writing, no person who has arrived on Samos since June 12th (the date the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum entered into force in Greece) appears to have been registered, with the asylum application process being effectively frozen due to the authorities' lack of preparedness. This is corroborated by [Greek press reporting](#), which described an informal suspension of asylum applications at local asylum offices, attributing it to failures in connecting the new Eurodac and EU databases.

Although the implementation of the Pact is not something to wish for, as we have highlighted in [multiple statements](#) (2, 3), this legal limbo leads to massive de facto detention of newly arrived people, who are left without access to the asylum procedure to which they are entitled.

Bodies left in the morgue for years

It has come to light that [11 bodies have remained in the morgue of the General Hospital of Samos for years](#), without receiving a proper burial. Among them is at least one person on the move who has been identified by a family member and whose relative's request for burial in Samos has gone unanswered as the local municipalities each reject responsibility for burial



New Report on Turkey's opaque migrant "screening and referral system"



A sign for the Konya GÖKSEM Centre. Source: [Yandex](#)

The Izmir-based Association for Solidarity with Refugees, "Mülteci-Der" (Mültecilerle Dayanışma Derneği) has published a new [information note](#) examining Turkey's Irregular Migrant Reception and Referral Centres (GÖKSEM). GÖKSEM centres have become an increasingly important component of the country's migration control system, though little has been stated in detail regarding their purpose, and no independent monitoring has taken place in any of these facilities – of which there were 26 by the end of 2023, according to a [European Commission report](#). Introduced in late 2023, GÖKSEMs appear to function as an initial screening and referral stage for people on

the move that have been apprehended at borders and during inland enforcement operations, before they are either released or transferred to Removal Centres (Geri Gonderme Merkezleri – GGMs).

Mülteci-Der's report provides one of the first dedicated analyses of these facilities, highlighting concerns regarding their legal basis, transparency, procedural safeguards and independent oversight. While focused on Turkey, it also offers a timely contribution to wider discussions about pre-screening procedures and migration governance, particularly in light of the New EU Pact on Migration and Asylum and the continued expansion of EU externalisation policies.

The report shows how the establishment of Irregular Migrant Reception and Referral Centres (GÖKSEMs) in Turkey at the end of 2023 shares several similarities with, but also differs in important respects from, the screening model introduced under the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum.

Under the Turkish legal framework, administrative detention pending deportation may only be carried out in removal centres, where procedural safeguards established by law, including access to a lawyer and legal aid, apply. However, GÖKSEMs were introduced without any corresponding amendment to the legislation. Unlike the EU Screening Regulation, which provides a clear legal framework, even if highly problematic, procedural safeguards, and independent fundamental rights monitoring – at least, on paper –, GÖKSEMs currently lack an explicit statutory basis. Their operation reportedly



Turkey

relies on an internal regulation that has not been made public, raising concerns regarding legal certainty, transparency and accountability. This creates doubts about the legal basis for deprivation of liberty, access to procedural safeguards and the protection of fundamental rights during the screening process.

The rationale behind their establishment remains unclear. Nevertheless, they appear to function as an initial reception and assessment mechanism for migrants apprehended by law enforcement authorities, including the police, gendarmerie and coast guard. Rather than conducting the initial assessment in the often inadequate facilities of these authorities, individuals are transferred to GÖKSEMs, which are generally located within the compounds of removal centres and operated by the Presidency of Migration Management, before being referred to further procedures. In practice, individuals may be released, particularly if they already have a registration record with the migration authorities, or transferred to removal centres. According to monitoring findings, people belonging to some vulnerable groups, such as women, have also been released under alternatives to detention. However, observations indicate that vulnerability assessments are not conducted in a systematic or comprehensive way.

GÖKSEMs are not operated in a transparent manner. The exact number of facilities currently in operation is unknown, and there is no publicly available information on the conditions within these centres or on the procedures carried out there. Likewise,

no official data or statistics are published regarding the number of people processed through GÖKSEMs or the outcomes of these procedures. According to monitoring findings, individuals are generally held in GÖKSEMs for one to two days, and only in exceptional cases for up to three days, before being either released or referred to another procedure.

Until recently, people apprehended at the border or found in an irregular situation within the country were typically held by law enforcement authorities, either at police or gendarmerie facilities or, coast guards. In periods of high apprehension rates, people were held in temporary locations such as sports halls, wedding halls, or other public buildings designated by the authorities. GÖKSEM centres appear to have been introduced, at least in part, to replace these ad hoc practices by creating dedicated facilities for the initial processing of apprehended migrants. In practice, this should mean that the initial period spent in law enforcement custody has been shortened, with the assessment of whether an individual will be transferred to a Removal Center or released now taking place at GÖKSEM centres. Yet, this change has not been monitored.

There is little publicly available information on the procedures followed within GÖKSEM centres, making it difficult to determine whether they provide more effective individual assessments or stronger procedural safeguards than the previous system. As with many other aspects of GÖKSEM, its funding sources remain unclear. They are mostly located



Turkey

in the premises of removal centres, some of which were funded by the EU.

Overall, from a rights-based perspective, GÖKSEM centres represent a negative development in the context of migrant detention in Türkiye. Although they are officially described as pre-acceptance and referral facilities rather than detention centres, individuals are effectively deprived of their liberty without a clear legal basis, as GÖKSEM centres are not explicitly regulated under Turkey's migration legislation. Their operation is also marked by a lack of transparency and independent oversight, with little publicly available information on their functioning and almost no access for independent monitoring bodies. Consequently, even basic aspects of the system – including the number and capacity of GÖKSEM centres, the conditions within them, the procedures followed in practice, and the treatment of children and other vulnerable groups – remain largely undocumented.



Eviction of the largest living site in Calais

Calais is currently composed of several informal living sites that are evicted regularly. The largest of them, known to its residents as the “Hospital jungle”, has existed since June 2024 and is inhabited by about 600 to 800 people at the moment, according to solidarity organisations. Throughout the month of May, evictions were carried out [several times a week](#). However, on June 2nd, a judge from the Boulogne Judicial Court gave out a legal ruling ordering a judicial operation to completely dismantle the living site. This order was justified on the basis of the illegal presence of people on private land. This land is owned by the Calais town hall but is not open for public use.

The Human Rights Observers team was present during the eviction on June 2nd, but access to the site was quickly restricted by the police on the ground. Legally, alternative accommodation must be offered during eviction procedures; a duty normally carried out by the association AUDASSE, which runs emergency housing shelters. However, contrary to usual practice, no AUDASSE shelter buses were present during this operation. Consequently, no solution was put in place by the prefecture for the people evicted from the living sites that day. It should also be noted that these shelters are by no means an adequate solution as they are designed to keep people on the move away from the coast and are not suited for their administrative situations.

Although expulsions were planned on the same living site for the rest of the week, they ended up not taking place. According to the sous-prefecture, the administration’s headquarters in Calais, the operations were suspended to allow for the sorting of personal belongings seized during the operation and their restitution. It was estimated that 73 tons of items were collected by the cleaning team during the eviction. The sous-prefecture also announced that it would consider certain recommendations from support organisations such as starting interventions after 9h30, having less police forces present, and evicting sites by sectors. These adjustments do not, in any way, change the violence people on the move face in Calais.

Protests and sit-ins

On June 2nd, a week of protests and activism began, with the goal of denouncing the eviction of the Hospital living site. Starting at 7h30, people on the move and members of solidarity groups and organisations formed a rally to condemn the systematic police harassment. However, it did not prevent the expulsion from taking place. The police were heavily armed with batons, helmets, and shields.

Still, sit-ins took place on the living site [every day](#) until June 5th to protest any future evictions. The following week, on June 12th, a [protest](#) was organized together with the Secours Catholique. These events remind us of the importance of always standing in solidarity and supporting initiatives started by people on the move themselves, through which to voice their experiences and demands directly.



Daily police presence in buses

During the month of June, we noticed high police surveillance of public transportation. This is likely due to the weather conditions during the summer, more favourable for Channel crossings. Human Rights Observers decided to conduct several observations outside and inside buses to collect data on police presence in public transportation. We noticed a significant change in how the bus company functioned. The police and bus drivers would regularly organise separate lines and a sorting of passengers discriminating against people on the move by restricting their access to public transport. Many buses were even cancelled when police were not present and there were people assumed to be people on the move at bus stops. Drivers would systematically close their doors when people on the move arrived and would count them as they got onto the bus. These practices are solely based on drivers' perception of them as non-white and assuming their administrative situation. This illegal racial profiling is done by drivers but also by police agents who arbitrarily frisk, ID check and arrest people, creating a climate of daily police harassment in Calais.

The following is an extract of a testimony from an activist on the Opale coast on June 15th, demonstrating the segregation practices on these bus lines.

"We weren't many, a few families, young people, women and men. An ordinary bus ride. Until a call... From who knows who... With the bus driver, to announce the presence of 50 "migrants" at the next stop.

To my surprise, the driver stopped the bus to announce that 50 migrants would enter the bus at the next stop, and if "WE" would not want to be mixed with "THEM" we could move to the front of the bus. Most people did not want to be mixed with "THEM" and moved to the front of the bus".

This testimony is not the only one that was collected, proving the existence of a segregation practice on buses, creating a real discrimination between passengers. These buses, meant to be a free and accessible public service, are instead used to enforce repressive border policies.

State violence continues during the heatwave

Last [January](#), we documented the State's decision to evict informal living sites in the heart of winter. Despite the activation of the extreme cold weather safety plan in the North, the evictions continued as if nothing had changed, disregarding meteorological conditions and the basic principles of human dignity. Six months later, while France faces extremely high temperatures and the North region is placed in the red zone, the prefecture seems to fall back in its ways, continuing evictions during a severe heatwave.

The vulnerability of people on the move during heatwaves is well documented. On living sites, availability of water is very limited, shade is rare, and it is almost impossible for people to access colder spaces. In this context, the systematic expulsion of living sites further endangers a population already suffering from weather



conditions. These evictions result in forced displacement of people under the heat, confiscation of personal belongings, and the disruption of the distributions by the associations, which often provide essential water and healthcare.

These associations have called out the government through an open letter to the Préfet of the North département. They demand specific measures to tackle the effects of the heatwave for the inhabitants of informal living sites and alert of the consequences of expulsions in this context. They call for an end to police operations in these living sites during the heatwave.

The British far right back on the French coast

For the past 2 years, people on the move and solidarity organisations in Calais and Dunkerque have been regularly met with incursions by British far right activists. Since January 2026, several of these individuals received orders to leave the French territory. Unfortunately, these measures have not dissuaded the whole of the British far right movement. During the month of June, several incidents concerning racist activists from England were reported in the Dunkerque region. These people often go to living sites, film people on the move without their consent and post defamatory videos full of hatred on social media. As the recent far right riots in the region have demonstrated, these activists are violent and the danger of their presence on the coast should not be underestimated.

Pushbacks and detention at the border police station in Menton

The southern zone of the French-Italian border, especially the territory around the cities of Menton (F) and Ventimiglia (It), continues to be crossed by people on the move in many ways. The amount of people who are then arrested in France, brought to the border post and subsequently made to walk the steep mountain road to Italy (9 kilometers away from the city) is still the highest in this whole border. Many people on the move who have recently arrived in Europe after the life-threatening crossing of the Mediterranean, as well as some of those who come from the Balkan route, describe the experience of being pushed back from France to Italy as the peak of despair on their journey.

Moreover, as the borders of the EU become increasingly and violently externalised leading to a decrease in arrivals of people seeking protection in Europe, more and more people who had been living in the EU for many years are also subjected to pushbacks from France to Italy.

For a few weeks now, the French border police has been giving out official reports (procès verbal) to the people who have been detained, that is: a formal record of statements and events happening during the detention period. However, according to testimonies, these reports do not include any documentation about the lengthy interviews that the detainees are subjected to in the border police post. These interviews comprise personal questions, as well as questions about travel routes.



France

The documents provided also exclude any mention of the systematic extraction of personal data from the detainees' phones. In some observed cases, the record stated that the detainees had access to translation and the possibility to inform somebody about their detention, even though this was not the case.

Some people who were pushed back from France to Italy experienced prolonged hours of detention at the border facility, such as 11, 13 or 17 hours – as was the case for some people at the end of the month.

Arrivals

According to data collected by border-line-europe, 2,732 people on the move reached Italy by sea in June 2026 representing a slight increase of 6,84 %¹ compared to May's figures. However, compared to data from the previous year, a sharp decrease in arrivals is evident (61,75% lower), continuing the trend already observed in previous months. The majority of people (2,009 individuals, or 73,54 %) arrived in Sicily – primarily Lampedusa. Even though overall a wider distribution of arrivals across the country can be observed, with rising numbers in Sardinia (113), Calabria (267), Tuscany (116), Lazio (94) and Liguria (43), Sicily remains by far the primary point of disembarkation.

According to our figures, in June, 1,539 people (56,33 %) were rescued by Italian authorities, while a total of 489 people (17,90%) were rescued by civilian sea rescue services. Frontex was involved in the rescue of 38 people (1.39%). 74 people (3%) reached Italian territorial waters (12 nautical miles off the coast) independently, without having been intercepted or rescued beforehand. For a total of 444 people (18,7%), no information was available regarding the manner of arrival or rescue.

According to official figures from the [Italian Ministry of the Interior](#), 2,758 people arrived in Italy in June. We were able to verify somewhat lower arrival figures for

this month, but we would like to note that we do not have access to the background information or sources underlying the figures published by the Ministry of the Interior.

The general decrease in arrivals, which could already be observed during previous months, is not a dynamic specific to the region of Italy but is rather part of a bigger global trend. As the [Global Trend Report 2026](#) from UNHCR has shown, for the first time in a decade, the number of people on the move seems to have decreased – 4% compared to 2024. However, this is not due to an improvement in living conditions or the resolution of crises that force people to leave their homes, but rather to a politically driven deterioration in the conditions faced by people on the move, which makes it increasingly difficult for them to seek a better life in a safe and dignified manner. While the number of people leaving their homes has declined, the number of people being, most of the time forcibly, returned to their country of origin increased by 50% compared to 2024. While this is a clear sign of the ongoing dehumanization of migration policy that prevails in most asylum-granting countries, this figure becomes particularly alarming when one considers that 39% of people seeking international protection are children and adolescents (aged 0 to 17).

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



Overview of the data collected by <i>borderline europe</i>²	
Arrivals of people on the move in Italy by sea	2,732
Arrivals of people on the move in Sicily	2,009
Rescues by Italian authorities and Frontex	38
Rescues by NGOs	489
Independent arrivals of people in the move	74
Arrivals with no information on arrival/rescue	444

Routes to Europe: Tunisia

The transit countries Libya, Tunisia, and Algeria serve as the primary departure points for the crossing to Italy. In May, at least 1,610 (67%) of the people who arrived in Italy departed from Libya, 81 (3%) from Tunisia, and 49 (2%) from Algeria. For 598 people (25%), the point of departure is unknown.

The human rights situation for people on the move in North African transit states, particularly for those from sub-Saharan Africa, remains dire. In this report, we want to focus on the situation in Tunisia, where a particular event has marked the month

of June: for the first time in history, Tunisia is standing before the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights over [human rights violations against foreign nationals](#).

The allegations, brought before the court by four survivors, concern [arbitrary detention, torture, violations of the right to life, mass expulsions, human trafficking, gender discrimination and racism](#).

This lawsuit amounts to far more than isolated individual cases; rather, it stands for systematic and violent practices by Tunisian authorities, which thousands of people on the move have been reporting from the country for years. You can read more about these systematic patterns of human rights violations in [borderline-europe's April CMI](#).

It is now up to the African Court to [assess the incidents according to the Court's Charter](#) and determine Tunisia's responsibility. What concrete consequences a possible finding of guilt against the country would have remains uncertain. Nevertheless, the lawsuit already makes an important contribution to legal memory and once again increases pressure on the EU and Italy to end its existing migration cooperation with Tunisia.

The Tunisian government introduced the concept of "voluntary returns" a year ago in order to facilitate mass deportations, as alleged in the lawsuit. Since then, around [4,500 people](#) from countries south of the

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



Sahara have been “voluntarily” returned to their countries of origin. These numbers have since become a benchmark for the Tunisian government’s performance. However, the returns take place against a backdrop of [extreme racism against migrants, their high vulnerability, and overt political pressure](#); for many, returning to their country of origin represents [the only option](#). There is little to suggest voluntariness here.

The ongoing human rights violations against sub-Saharan migrants in Tunisia are once again clearly evident this month. A verdict handed down on [June 26th](#) against six human rights activists makes this plain: Tunisian authorities are using the justice system to silence any attempt at solidarity from civil society.

Six members of the anti-racist organization “Mnemy” (Arabic for “my dream”) were sentenced to prison terms [ranging from 1 to 8 years](#). The charge: baseless [allegations of economic crimes](#). The most popular face among those convicted is the organization’s founder, [Saadia Mosbah](#). For decades, she has fought against racism and for the rights of people on the move from sub-Saharan Africa in the country. Now, after two years of pre-trial detention ([the legal limit in Tunisia is 14 months](#)), marked by [various racist incidents](#), she must spend a further eight years in prison.

This trial amounts to far more than a personal injustice: it represents an attack on human solidarity and fits into Tunisia’s systematic strategy of criminalizing commitment to human dignity and silencing people who stand up against structurally entrenched racism.

Despite consistent reports of this kind, Tunisia has become one of the linchpin of the EU’s strategy to externalize its borders. In July 2023, [the Memorandum of Understanding between the EU and Tunisia](#) was signed, which was also strongly supported by Italy. Since then, the agreement has provided financial support to the North African state in exchange for tightened coastal controls and the prevention of departures.

Push and pullbacks

This month, we recorded 1,090 interceptions³ in the Central Mediterranean, where boats were often forcibly pushed back to the North African coast. Most of the intercepted individuals we documented were towed back to Libya, and some to Tunisia. This month’s number represents a sharp decrease compared to May 2026, when we recorded 2,301 interceptions. However, this trend cannot be directly attributed to a decrease in the actual number of interceptions taking place, but rather to a decline in key information sources that have ceased publishing the necessary data. Especially given the lack of data this month, it can be assumed that the actual number of cases

³ Interceptions are violent forced returns at sea 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 regular interceptions of boats on their way to Europe and forcibly returns them to Libya.



is significantly higher, as many interceptions go undocumented and the fate of those affected remains unknown.

Dead and Missing

In June, the number of dead and missing people in the Central Mediterranean rose significantly compared to May. According to our figures, 65 people died whilst fleeing across the Central Mediterranean in June and 82 people are recorded missing. The estimated number of unrecorded cases is assumed to be significantly higher.

Most of the deaths have been documented along the Libyan coast, where the bodies of people who died during their attempt to cross the Mediterranean are washed ashore. After a boat carrying 61 people capsized on [June 10th](#) off the eastern coast of Libya while en route to Crete, 11 bodies were recovered, while 40 others remain missing. The ten people on the move who survived the tragedy were reportedly [taken to Tobruk prison](#), in Libya, where they are likely to be exposed to severe human rights abuses, forced labour as well as practices of torture.

On June 7th, another [deadly tragedy](#) took place in the Mediterranean that could have been prevented had the European political authorities lived up to their moral, political and legal responsibility. A boat that had set sail from the Libyan coast, also carrying around 61 migrants, capsized in the waters east of Malta. After the shipwreck, 48 people were rescued by the fishing vessel *Tuncany Sagun-2*, which was in the area. When the Italian Coastguard arrived, they

recovered 11 dead bodies. At least 2 people were declared missing.

According to [reports from Sea Watch](#) this massacre could have been prevented had Maltese and Italian authorities acted timely. The NGO accuses the authorities of having actively decided to intervene when it was already really late, even though they had been well aware of the dangerous situation hours before the actual start of the rescue operation. *"From the tracking data we were able to verify in the area of operations, it appears that a Maltese aircraft was already on the scene at 10.33. Subsequently, other Maltese, Italian, Frontex and Eunavfor Med aircraft were also tracked in the same area. When Sea-Watch's surveillance aircraft, Seabird 1, reached the area at 16:42, an Italian patrol boat, two Maltese vessels and the fishing boat that had carried out the rescue were already on the scene. 'We spotted several bodies on the Italian patrol boat, inside body bags. We also witnessed the transfer of survivors from the fishing vessel to the Maltese vessels and the medical evacuation of at least one person, carried out by a Maltese helicopter",* said the NGO.

The deliberately delayed response by Italian and European authorities to boats in distress has become a structural practice documented for years and unprecedented in its inhumanity. The massacre known as the ["Cutro shipwreck"](#) - in which 94 people, including 35 children, lost their lives only a few hundred meters off the Italian coast in February 2023, after Frontex and the Italian authorities failed to provide timely assistance despite having sufficient information



- is perhaps one of the most prominent and clearest examples illustrating the extent and consequences of this deadly practice.

The ongoing [Cutro trial](#), initiated in the aftermath of the shipwreck, in which Italian authorities stand accused of failing to render assistance, has in turn come to symbolize the authorities' inability and unwillingness to accept responsibility for what happened. More than three years after the disaster, justice remains elusive, depriving the victims' families of even the possibility of closure.

[The appeal](#) initiated by Member of the European Parliament Mimmo Lucano (The Left), held in Brussels on June 24th, during which relatives of the Cutro victims once again publicly demanded that the authorities acknowledge their responsibility, should be a symbol of shame for both the European Union and the Italian government. The fact that survivors and the families of those who died or remain missing are still forced to [demand basic measures](#) - including the identification of victims, psychological support for relatives, meaningful involvement in legal proceedings, dignified burials, and the repatriation of bodies - is cruel, shameful and utterly unworthy of democratic institutions committed to upholding human rights. Rather than fulfilling the promises they made, political authorities appear completely unwilling to take meaningful responsibility. Furthermore, as this month's latest shipwreck has once again tragically demonstrated, little has changed in the way authorities respond to people in distress at sea. People on the move

continue to be deliberately left to die in the Mediterranean, while those responsible seemingly have little reason to fear legal or political accountability.

As documented in our previous reports, death rates this year are significantly higher than last year. [According to](#) the latest data from the United Nations International Organization for Migration, 824 people lost their lives in the first five months of 2026 in the central Mediterranean alone - the route connecting North Africa with Italy and Malta. When looking at the entire Mediterranean, the numbers are again significantly higher. The arrival of a "[ghost boat](#)" near Nardò in mid-June served as yet another stark reminder that the documented figures reflect only a fraction of what is actually happening in the Mediterranean. When analyzing and interpreting the data, it is crucial to always keep in mind *that what we do not know* is most likely greater than *what we currently know*. [Mediterranea](#) estimates that when including the so-called "ghost shipwrecks," this year's total death toll is likely to rise to as many as 1,500: Almost 700 lives lost at sea, leaving no trace, no stories to be told, no outcry.

Intimidation and criminalization of sea rescue

In total, 7 ships of the civil fleet were involved in rescues in the central Mediterranean in June and were able to rescue 489 people from distress at sea (18% of arrivals). While the New EU-Pact on Asylum and Migration that came into force on June 12th focuses on deterrence and



border controls, civil society continues to work to save human lives.

This month too, the organization [Alarm Phone](#) reported various incidents of shipwrecks and people in distress at sea. Meanwhile, the [Aurora 2](#) joined the civil fleet. According to Sea Watch, the organisation's new ship is meant to be a response to Italy's restrictive policy of systematically detaining civilian rescue ships. Since 2023, there have been more than [40 such detentions](#). With the addition of the Aurora 2, the NGO ensures that rescue missions can continue even if one of its ships is detained.

On the night of June 16th, the ship set out on its first rescue mission; a total of [40 people in distress](#) off the coast of Lampedusa were rescued and were able to dock shortly thereafter at their designated port in Lampedusa.

On June 23rd, another incident occurred in the Maltese SAR zone. Here, [Alarm Phone reported](#) 42 people in distress at sea, without drinking water and with a broken engine. While people were spotted overboard, the [Aurora 2](#) made its way to the scene with support from Seabird. The situation escalated when Libyan military vessels [passed through the Maltese SAR zone unhindered](#) and reached the boat in distress. Before the civil rescue boats could provide assistance, the people were forcibly returned to Libya, the country they had fled. To this day, it [remains unknown](#) whether everyone survived this incident. Although the Maltese authorities were clearly informed about these cases, they once again evaded their international

responsibility to save human lives and left the fate of people in distress in the violent hands of Libyan authorities.

The *Louise Michel* encountered a similar illegal interception, as well as intimidation tactics by the Libyan authorities. On June 4th, the boat received a distress call from a Frontex aircraft and set out late in the evening toward an overcrowded dinghy. During a [difficult rescue of 47 people](#), including two pregnant women and small children, the so-called Libyan coast guard also reached the rescue site. It began disrupting the process and [threatening the civilian rescue ship by continuously circling the boats](#). Despite this alarming intimidation attempt, all people on board were fortunately able to be brought aboard. Shortly afterward however, the ship responded to another distress call involving two boats nearby, but upon arrival only empty rubber dinghies were found, as [Libyan authorities had intercepted the rescue first](#) and taken the people back to Libya. Later, the *Louise Michel* did not head to the port of Taranto assigned by Italian authorities, but instead brought the rescued people to Crotona in Calabria. The NGO justified this with a lack of fuel and insufficient drinking water on board.

Alongside the increasing criminalization and political deterrence strategies, this month we can also report on a positive event for civilian sea rescue. After the ship of the NGO SOS Méditerranée was [detained by Italian authorities at the end of 2023](#), and the penalty was supplemented a year later with a fine, the court in Bari ruled at the end of June that [the fine was unlawful](#).



Italy

Further rulings from the court regarding this matter are expected [in September](#). Thus, June ends with two contrasting realities: the ongoing failures of state actors that continue to hinder humanitarian aid, and a legal victory for sea rescue, a reminder, once again, that civil resistance at sea remains indispensable.



**Border Violence
Monitoring Network**



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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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