

HRW criticizes Italy, EU's Libya migrant policy

Author:

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CAIRO: Human Rights Watch is urging Italy and the EU to condition their support to Libya on tangible improvements in detention conditions for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

The New York-based rights group says in a report Monday that unquestioning foreign support for Libya's coast guard leads to migrants being held in "arbitrary, abusive detention."

It condemned such efforts to stem migration to Europe as contributing "to a cycle of extreme abuse" against people fleeing war and poverty.

The report documents "severe overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, malnutrition, and lack of adequate health care" in detention centers, including at least four instances of violent abuse by guards.

It says children have also been seen to be held in poor conditions.

Millions of migrants have applied for asylum in Europe, but some countries have toughened their asylum laws and tried to deport more people than they did previously.

On Sunday, a private rescue boat carrying dozens of migrants said that for a second day several nations had not given permission for it to enter a safe port, while another vessel filled with panicky migrants and described as taking on water in the southern Mediterranean was helped by a cargo ship.

The Dutch-flagged boat Sea-Watch 3, run by a German non-governmental group, said it had contacted Italy, Malta, Libya and the Netherlands asking where it could land the 47 migrants it had taken aboard. Sea-Watch tweeted that Libyan officials hung up when it asked for a port assignment.

An Italian state TV reporter aboard Sea-Watch 3 said the rescue took place Saturday about 50 km off the coast west of Tripoli in Libya's search-and-rescue area. Libya-based human traffickers launch flimsy or rickety boats crowded with migrants hoping to reach Europe and its opportunities for better lives.



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Boat with migrants rescued off Libya looks for port to dock
Boat carrying over 300 migrants rescued off Libya reaches Spain

[Egypt arrests 24 in demolition protests near pyramids](#)

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Mon, 2019-01-21 (All day)

CAIRO: Egyptian security officials say police have arrested 24 people who tried to prevent authorities from demolishing illegal buildings near the Giza pyramids.

They say police used tear gas to disperse residents and shopkeepers in the Nazlet el-Samman village on Monday after they scuffled with police escorting the demolition workers.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to brief the media.

Monday's violence follows a recent announcement that a private Egyptian company will take charge of running the historical site that includes the Great Pyramid and the Sphinx, which are visited by millions every year. Many of the village's residents make a living off visitors, hawking souvenirs and offering horse rides. Tourists have long complained of being harassed or overcharged.



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[Five experts killed clearing Houthi landmines for Saudi charity in Yemen](#)

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Mon, 2019-01-21 (All day)

SANAA: Five international experts working for a Saudi project to remove landmines in Yemen have been killed while transporting recovered explosive devices.

The Masam Project said two South Africans, a Croatian, a Bosnian and a Kosovar were killed on Sunday while transporting the materiel in Marib province to a remote location where it could be safely detonated. A British national was wounded.

The project, part of the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSRelief), began last year and seeks to remove unexploded ordnance from Yemen.

[#KSrelief](#) mourns the loss of five demining experts working with [#Masam](#) project in [#Marib](#), who have lost their lives while attempting to bring safety and security to the Yemeni people.

– KSrelief (@KSRelief_EN) [January 21, 2019](#)

The Houthi militia, which sparked the war in 2014 when it seized the capital Sanaa, is accused of planting vast quantities of landmines to halt pro-government forces reclaiming territory.

The experts “lost their lives while attempting to bring safety and security to the Yemeni people, and their service to mankind will not be forgotten,” the Masam Project said.

The men died when an explosion took place in one of the pick-up trucks that were being used to move collected mines and explosives at about 5am.

The Yemeni government expressed “deep sorrow” for the incident and said the Houthis had killed and wounded thousands of Yemenis by planting landmines.

“The Cabinet expressed heartfelt condolences to the victims’ families, wishing the injured immediate recovery,” the government statement said.

KSRelief said it extended its deepest condolences to the “courageous” victims of the tragedy who were clearing Yemeni territory of landmines “indiscriminately planted by the Houthi militias.”

“KSRelief joins with the rest of the international community in mourning the loss of these highly-committed professionals.”

Masam Project has cleared more than 40,000 landmines but more than 1 million may have been planted during the conflict by the Iran-backed Houthis.

On Monday, UN envoy Martin Griffiths arrived in the capital, Sanaa, on an unannounced visit to discuss the “complex situation” in and around the coastal city of Hodeidah,

Yemen’s warring parties agreed to a cease-fire in the port last month.

Also under discussion from Monday will be disagreements between the Houthi militia, who hold Hodeidah, and Retired Dutch Maj. Gen. Patrick Cammaert, who is heading a UN mission charged with monitoring the cease-fire.

The Yemeni military and the Arab Coalition, which includes Saudi Arabia, has accused the Houthis of hundreds of violations of the agreement, which have killed almost 50 civilians and wounded hundreds more.







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8,683 landmines cleared in Yemen in DecemberKSRelief launches \$40m landmine clearing project in Yemen

[Egypt says security forces killed 14 militants in Sinai](#)

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Sun, 2019-01-20 (All day)

CAIRO: Egyptian security forces say they've killed 14 militants and seized a ton of explosives in an operation in the restive northern part of the Sinai Peninsula.

They said on Sunday that their offensive involved clashes with Islamic militants in desert areas outside the city of el-Arish, adding that the extremists had intended to plant roadside bombs in areas between there and the cities of Rafah and Sheikh Zuweyid.

Other weapons caches including explosives were found in the more central Sinai Jabal Al-Halal mountain area.

The officials spoke anonymously as they weren't authorized to brief reporters.

The army has been battling extremist insurgents led Daesh militants in north Sinai for years. The area is off limits for journalists, diplomats and other observers so information from there cannot be independently verified.



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[Boat with migrants rescued off Libya looks for port to dock](#)

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Sun, 2019-01-20 (All day)

ROME: A private rescue boat with dozens of migrants aboard sought permission for a second day to enter a safe port Sunday, but said so far its queries to several nations haven't succeeded. Another vessel crowded with migrants and taking on water, meanwhile, put out an urgent, separate appeal for help in the southern Mediterranean.

Sea-Watch 3, run by a German NGO, said Sunday it has contacted Italy, Malta, Libya as well as the Netherlands, since the boat is Dutch-flagged, asking where it can bring the 47 migrants it had taken aboard. Sea-Watch tweeted that Libyan officials had hung up when it asked for a port assignment.

An Italian state TV reporter aboard Sea-Watch 3 said the rescue took place Saturday about 50 kilometers (30 miles) off the coast west of Tripoli in Libya's search-and-rescue area. Libya-based human traffickers launch flimsy

or rickety boats, crowded with migrants hoping to reach Europe and its opportunities for better lives.

Separately, Sea-Watch tweeted Sunday afternoon that it had been urgently contacted by a boat with 100 migrants aboard that said it was taking on water, 12 nautical miles (22 kilometers) from the current location at sea of Sea-Watch 3.

The distressed vessel reported navigational problems and had among the migrants a child “unconscious or deceased,” Sea-Watch said. Subsequent communication said the boat was “taking in water” and asked Sea-Watch to call for help, “regardless of what this would mean concerning a possible return to Libya,” Sea-Watch said.

The aid group later said Malta on the phone confirmed “that they will come back to us” regarding the distress call, but it wasn’t immediately clear what kind of assistance the Maltese might give.

Migrants dread the prospect of being returned to Libya, where they have reported torture including beatings and rapes in overcrowded detention centers.

The governments of Malta and Italy have been refusing to allow private rescue boats rescuing migrants to dock. Both contend that in recent years they have taken in many migrants rescued at sea and that fellow European Union nations must agree to take their share of these asylum-seekers.

Earlier this month, Malta transferred to land 49 migrants who had been aboard Sea-Watch 3 as long as 19 days but refused the boat port entry. They were allowed to set foot on the southern Mediterranean island only after an EU-brokered deal found several countries willing to take them as well as other migrants, who had been rescued at sea earlier in separate operations by Malta.



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