



ANALYSIS DOCUMENT

SECURITY AND MIGRATION

ECONOMIC INTERESTS AND VIOLATIONS OF BASIC RIGHTS

THE CASES OF LIBYA, NIGER AND EGYPT





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Italy and Europe are responding to the extraordinary migrant crisis currently under way, by sealing European borders and externalizing migration control to the countries of origin and transit of migrants. This is leading to a dangerous extension of security policies and the associated budgets. The Italian and European chapters of the ISF are growing rapidly and becoming increasingly focused on the management of Europe's internal and external borders, through measures such as distribution of biometric systems, increase in civil and military missions for border control from Libya to Niger, the expanding role of the Frontex Agency in repatriation, interoperability of identification systems, development of increasingly sophisticated surveillance systems. Border management is becoming more and more a business, pushing European and national policies increasingly in the direction of a repressive management of migration.

Those who end up paying the highest price are the migrants, who are forced to choose longer and more dangerous routes, while those who profit are the companies dealing in security and European politicians who appeal to the public fear of an invasion to bolster their electoral results. The increasing subservience of European politics to the interests of the security business is palpable in the corridors and salons of the conferences taking place from Madrid to Brussels, from Rome to Casablanca, dedicated to security and border control, from *Security Research Event* to *World Border Security Congress*, where representatives of the European Commission and of the main companies working in security meet to discuss how to «expand the European security market», in the words of the participants to the SRE in Brussels.

The policy of the Italian government is perfectly in line with the above scenario, both in its political statements as in its practical decisions, such as the establishing of externalization funds. Its goals are clear: curtailing arrivals by sea by collaborating with Niger, Libya and Tunisia, and facilitating repatriation with the help of Tunisia and Egypt. The price in human lives that this policy entails does not appear to be a problem.

In relation to funding, there seems to be full continuity between the last two Italian governments: the two military missions for border control in Niger and Libya, approved in February 2018, have been extended by the current League-Five Star Movement government, and so was the Africa Fund, refinanced with €80 million for the 2018/19 period. Also worrying is the Ministry of Interiors project for an international training center (ITEPA)¹, which calls for the «training of border Police of 22 African Countries to contrast clandestine immigration and human trafficking», to be established in Egypt, a country in which the political climate is becoming increasingly authoritarian.

The consequences of this trend in Italy and Europe are extremely serious: from the normalization and banalization of the systematic violation of International Conventions to a democratic risk associated with the increasing lack of transparency in fund management. Politicians appear increasingly willing to respond to the interests of the security companies, for whom border management is only a market in which to invest and make money, like war, and the cost in human lives is irrelevant.

The present report will examine, in the first section, the increase in funding and the underlying

1 - <http://www.interno.gov.it/it/notizie/itepa-formazione-polizia-frontiera-italiana-e-quella-22-paesi-africani>

political and economic interests, and then will highlight the dangerous increase in the violation of basic rights it entails, taking as an example Italy's and the EU's relations with three countries that typify externalization policies: Libya, Egypt, and Niger.

THE BUSINESS OF BORDER MANAGEMENT IN EXTERNALIZATION POLICIES

In the previous reports on externalization policies² we have evidenced how the institutionalization of externalization policies as the main instrument for the management of migratory flows occurred through the institution of ad hoc funds: € 6 billion given to Turkey in exchange for its commitment to seal its border with Greece and Syria, and the creation of the EUTF, Fiduciary

Fund for Africa, which on 31 December 2018 had arrived at a total of € 4.3 billion. Of these, 3.7 billion came from the EU budget instruments: mainly the European Development Fund, but also the ICF (*International Cooperation Fund*) the ENP (*European Neighborhood Policy*), from the DG Home, the DG Echo, to which € 500 million from Member States were added.

At the moment, Italy is the top contributor to this fund among Member States with almost €128 million³. The 2018 final report generically mentions the projects financed through this instrument, without taking into account other ones that various international networks, associations and the European MPs themselves believe to be the most dangerous, in Libya, Egypt, and Sudan. The European Court of Auditors itself has expressed reservations on the lack of coherence, the absence of monitoring systems and the true efficacy of the Fiduciary Fund⁴.

The above trend seems to be on the rise. In the MFF - the Multiannual Financial Framework of the EU, currently under discussion - political proclamations are being translated into practical measures: the European Commission has proposed quadrupling the funding for migration and border management, bringing it from the € 5.6 billion of the 2014-2020 period to € 35 billion for the 2021-2027 period. Of the above, 9.3 billion will be used to establish a new Fund for Integrated Border Management Fund - IBMF, which basically doubles the present budget of the External Borders Fund and the Internal Security Fund. The External Action Fund, which often includes projects for the externalization of border control, is also to be increased by 22% at € 123 billion.

The European budget reflects also the current interest in increasing repatriations, for which 5 billion euros have been set aside, a fund that will increasingly be managed by Frontex, whose budget has grown by 33% in little less than a decade, from 5 million in 2005 to 320 million in 2018. It is especially on expanding the staff of the Frontex agency that the Commission, the EU Council and the Parliament have concentrated in this remaining period before the elections, publishing the new statute of the Agency, which expands the staff to 10,000 units⁵.

This increase in funding has coincided with a decrease in the number of immigrants arriving on European soil. Who then is interested in expanding the border control budget? Certainly all the Italian and European institutions who have used migrants as the scapegoat for their failures in other sectors. The *zero landings* policy in the European capitals serves to justify the banalization of the systematic violation of basic rights and of the International Conventions signed by European member states. The border has become a business, from biometric control systems, to walls, to maritime

2 - <https://www.arci.it/rapporto-sulle-esternalizzazioni-alle-frontiere/>

3 - https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/sites/euetfa/files/ar_2018_fr.pdf - PAG 44 contributo italiano all'EUTF

4 - <https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/Pages/NewsItem.aspx?nid=11272>

5 - <https://ilmanifesto.it/criminalizzare-limmigrazione-serve-al-mercato-della-sicurezza/>

and terrestrial interception systems, to surveillance technology.

In browsing the pamphlet *Border Security Report*⁶ or the conference of the same name held in Madrid in March 2018, the message is clear: «we need walls!». But who is “we” and why do we need them? Browsing through the list of the participants in the various conferences on security taking place without pause in Rome, Brussels or Casablanca, one easily sees how, behind the obsession with security lies an interest in the European market, which is fueled by ad hoc constructed fears: «preventing mass migrations, the evil of terrorism and any kind of transborder crime» is the phrase used in the above mentioned document. The stated purpose of the *Security Research Event*, held in Brussels in December 2018, was that of bringing together the world of security research, the representatives of the Commission, and security companies, to identify the best uses of the technology being developed. A similar objective was that of the meeting *Border Security* held in February 2019 in a hotel in Rome⁷. In this case, the opening speech on the new generation of border control systems was given by the representative of Leonardo s.p.a. (ex-Finmeccanica). It centered on systems of maritime and areal interception and was followed by a presentation of the new generation of biometric systems for areal and terrestrial borders. The first day of the conference ended with the intervention of the International Organization for Migration which, based on the concept of “migratory crisis,” introduced its proposal for border management, which we will examine in detail in the section on Niger.

The more recent conference was held in Casablanca⁸ and extended the dialog to representatives of African States, sanctioning the union between border business and externalization policies, which requires an active role on part of the countries of origin and transit, and the acquisition on their part of technological systems with European money.

These new developments bring about a new form of colonialism, based on “supporting” the Countries of origin and transit of migrants. The policy opens a new market for European private businesses and large international groups which, as has long been the case with the war industry, are all too willing to collaborate with dictatorships and fake democracies. The novelty is represented by the fact that this new border control market, unlike that of war, can be used also for internal electoral purposes.

In the European scenario described above, Italy plays a central role. Its efforts are focused on the countries that are most involved in the central Mediterranean route: Libya above all, followed by Niger and Egypt.

6 - <http://world-border-congress.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/BSRMarApr2018.pdf>

7 - https://www.smi-online.co.uk/defence/europe/border-security#tab_programme

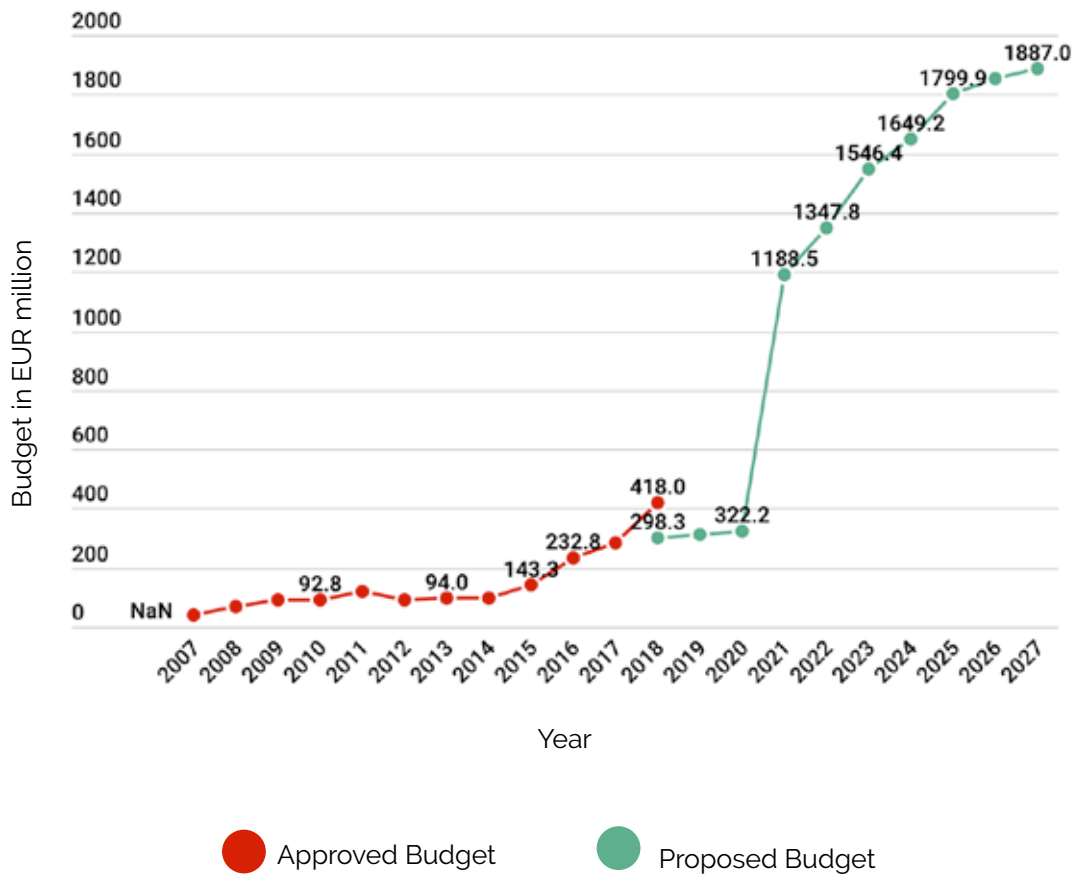
8 - <http://world-border-congress.com/>

MEMBER STATES' CONTRIBUTION TO EUTF

Contributing Member	Expected Contribution (EUR)	Contribution Received (EUR)
Austria	8,000,000	8,000,000
Belgium	12,000,000	11,000,000
Bulgary	550,000	550,000
Cyprus	100,000	100,000
Croatia	600,000	600,000
Denmark	30,159,899	30,159,899
Estonia	1,600,000	1,600,000
Finland	5,000,000	5,000,000
France	9,000,000	9,000,000
Germany	182,500,000	178,500,000
Ireland	15,000,000	10,950,000
Italy	112,000,000	112,000,000
Latvia	600,000	600,000
Lithuania	400,000	400,000
Luxemburg	4,100,000	4,100,000
Malta	475,000	400,000
Norway (<i>EUR equivalent of NOK amount</i>)	15,026,178	15,026,178
Netherlands	26,362,000	26,362,000
Poland*	10,550,748	10,550,748
Portugal	5,000,000	5,000,000
UK	6,000,000	2,800,000
Czech Republic*	10,411,624	10,411,124
Romania	100,000	100,000
Slovakia*	10,350,000	10,350,000
Slovenia	100,000	100,000
Spain	9,000,000	9,000,000
Sweden	3,000,000	3,000,000
Switzerland	4,100,000	4,100,000
Hungary*	9,450,000	9,450,000
Visegrád Group (CZ, HU, PL, SK)*	35,000,000	35,000,000
Total external contribution	491,535,449	479,210,449

* The total € 35 million contribution by the Visegrád Group is the sum of individual contributions from the Group's member states

BUDGET FRONTEX





LIBYA

The drastic diminution of landings on the Italian soil, the systematic repelling of migrants towards the inferno they are running away from and the rise in the percentage of people dying in the course of the voyage is the result of two combined factors: the externalization of SAR operations to the Libyans and the criminalization of the NGOs active in the Mediterranean, mainly by the Italian government. The *Memorandum of Understanding* signed by Italy and Libya in February 2017 has established the political framework within which the various measures were enacted that have led to the present situation. The repelling of migrants “by proxy” took place in spite of the flagrant violation of human rights and maritime Conventions by Italy. While the official strategy of the Italian government has been that of supporting the Libyan coastal guard to help it intervene in the Mediterranean and force the boats to turn back, the unofficial one consists in transforming traffickers in the new controllers of the Libyan borders. The strategy has worked because it served both European interests and those of the various militias in search of internal legitimization⁹.

The combination of these two factors drastically curtailed departures from Libya, while the few who succeeded in departing have been forced to turn back. Migrants are now stuck in the Libyan inferno, locked in detention where they are subject to inhuman and degrading treatment, including torture and rape, for long periods of times without knowing when and if they will ever be freed. Trips are becoming more expensive, migrants are forced to travel at night, which greatly increases the danger. In some areas of the country, kidnappings for ransom are on the rise. The stories told by migrants about their detention in Bani Walid coincide: detained in warehouses, they are tortured every day, while the kidnappers demand ransoms to their relatives up to \$ 10,000.

The decrease in arrivals on the Italian soil is the only thing the Italian government seems interested in. In July 2017, Italy was made responsible for coordinating a €46 million project, through its Ministry of Interiors in collaboration with their Libyan counterpart DCIM (General Directorate for Combating Illegal Immigration), the Ministry of Defense, the Land Borders Guards (LBG), the Libyan Coastal Guard, and the Port Security authority (LCGPS). The funding comes mainly from the Fiduciary Fund to which Italy contributes directly and only in small amounts from internal funds. Using a system of Chinese boxes, the funds go through the Italian MAECI to the European budget and then return to the Italian Ministry of Interiors, where they serve to support the externalization of border control to Libya. The objective is explicitly stated: training the Libyan Coastal Guard so that it can establish a SAR zone and institute a coordination center (MRCC) in Tripoli. The Italian and European authorities take into no account the fact that Libya is not a safe port and that, once intercepted, migrants are taken to detention centers where they are subject to violence and abuse. These crimes against the humanity have been confirmed by hundreds of direct witnesses, by international organizations, by the United Nations, and by all main international institutions, yet continue to be denied by the Italian government and by the EU.

In March 2018, the budget of the Italian military missions included the MIASIT, the *Bilateral Mission of Assistance and Support* program for the government of Fayez Serraj. The mission calls for the use of 400 soldiers (of which 300 already present in Libya as part of the Ippocrate mission) and 130 terrestrial, naval and aerial vehicles (already present in Libya as part of the Mare Sicuro mission). The total budget is of €35 million for nine months of mission, and the official objective is still that of supporting the Libyan Coastal Guard in intercepting migrants at sea. In June 2018, the IMO announced that a

9 - <https://globalinitiative.net/the-human-conveyor-belt-broken/>

SAR Libyan zone has been officially declared. From that moment, the Italian MRCC functions simply as a switchboard, transferring distress calls from migrant boats to the Libyans. More than 15,000 migrants have been forced back to Tripoli, notwithstanding the fact that Tripoli is no longer a safe port, as officially declared also by the Italian Tribunale per il Riesame di Ragusa. Italy and Europe continue to follow their policy of externalization in Libya despite the tragic fate that awaits intercepted migrants is by now well known.

Without any official assessment of the first phase of the project having been circulated, on December 13, 2018, the second instalment of funds for Libya was approved (EUTF)¹⁰, to be managed by the Italian Ministry of Interiors in collaboration with ICMPD for a total of 45 million euros, of which 10 million coming from the Development Funds and the other 35 million from Visegrad countries, who are in the front line in building walls¹¹. The project continues to focus on the development of the institutional capacities of the Libyan authorities to whom the management of the border is entrusted. Four new naval vessels are included as well as the support to the establishing of a Libyan MRCC. Close on the heels of the project approval, as reported by *AltraEconomia*, a 9.3 million euros tender was announced on the website of the Ministry of Interiors for 20 inflatable boats (14 twelve meter boats and 6 9 meter ones) for the Libyan police: this money in reality comes for the first phase of the Fiduciary Fund managed by the Italian Government, although the second phase has begun already. On March 5, 2019, the Central Direction for Immigration and Police launched a new tender for 30 all-terrain vehicles for «institutional needs associated with the contrasting of the phenomenon of irregular immigration»¹² for €2 million: in this case too, the 46 million to be used come from the first phase of the project. A few days later, on March 12, there was a tender for 10 'minibuses', also destined for Libya, on the website of the Ministry of Interiors¹³. Italy however is not the only country providing border control vehicles to Libya: the French Defense Minister, Florence Parly, also announced, on February 12, 2019 that her country intended to donate 6 patrol boats to the Al Sarraj government¹⁴.

Recent audio documents¹⁵ have shed evidence on Italy's true role in Libya and the true capacity of the Coastal Guard of saving human lives: Libyan militaries aboard an Italian ship who do not answer calls or, if they do, are unable to communicate in Italian. A farce, if it were not that the result is that men, women and children are drowning because of this incapacity to provide assistance in the Mediterranean. The naval unit that according to the Government had only a support function, seems to have in reality a much more central role in the operations directed by Tripoli.

The European "presents" to the Libyans are used by them to constantly violate international, maritime and human rights conventions, and are all the more dangerous in the light of the civil war that is developing in the country. As noted by the newspaper *Avvenire*, there are images of the patrol boats provided by Italy with heavy machine-guns fixed to turrets, suggesting a military use of the vessels, which exposes Italy to a condemnation for violation of the UN embargo on war weapons¹⁶. Some of Sarraj's comments also suggest a military use of the satellites provided by Italy to "contrast immigration"¹⁷. The current conflict has made even more unbearable the already tragic life conditions of the

10 - https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/region/north-africa/libya/support-integrated-border-and-migration-management-libya-second-phase_en

11 - <http://www.interno.gov.it/it/sala-stampa/comunicati-stampa/riunione-tripoli-gestione-integrata-frontiere-e-dellimmigrazione>

12 - <https://www.poliziadistato.it/statics/23/disciplinare-gara-gommoni-libia-signed.pdf>

13 - <https://altreconomia.it/appalti-libia-frontiere-terra/>

14 - <https://altreconomia.it/italia-libia-appalti-minibus/>

15 - https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2019/02/22/paris-livre-des-bateaux-a-tripoli-pour-contrer-les-migrants_5426590_3210.html

16 - <https://www.avvenire.it/attualita/pagine/esclusivo-la-verita-sui-respingimenti-in-mare>

17 - https://www.africa-express.info/2019/04/18/il-premier-libico-sarraj-insistesatelliti-italiani-ci-aiutano-contro-haftar/?fbclid=IwAR2eF5lmY080tZlmCTFVK6-6dUzDf6l7EWOKbmzKNGlzyDhgXzQqilu_lkl



migrants, trapped in an inferno of horror and bombs. Not to be underestimated is the fact that the logistic, political and military support provided to Al Serraj has contributed to the destabilization of the Libyan situation, pushing in the direction of a military solution, rather than a negotiated one, to the crisis that had been going on for years, with a heavy cost in terms of human lives. The interests of the people and of the international community has been increasingly sacrificed, as all too often in the last few decades, to the market interests of big business and to the electoral interests of various political groups and movements.



NIGER

A LABORATORY OF INVISIBLE BORDERS

Niger has become a crucial crossroads in the increasingly complex international situation. Placed at the intersection of migratory routes to Libya and from Algeria, it is surrounded by open or latent conflict zones that have been increasingly eroding the already fragile borders of the country. The nearby Nigeria, with the incursions of the Boko Haram; Mali, in which for years a low-intensity war has been going on; the Burkina Faso, which serves as refuge for Jihadists group with tensions that could explode at any moment; Libya with its civil war; Algeria, which is experiencing a difficult period of transition.

In this unstable situation, the country has been resorting to the help of Western powers, which have turned it into a strategic outpost for the control of the region, and a de facto European border designed to stop migrants before arriving at the Libyan border. In exchange for funding and international support, the Niger government has offered land for numerous military bases and agreed to collaborate on migration control. It is no chance that the present Ministry of the Interiors, Bazhoum, the interlocutor of the representatives of the EU and member states who have arrived in the capital during those years, is the only candidate for the succession to the President Mahamadou Issoufou.

Ample funds have arrived in Niger to help it control its 5,000 kilometer long border. They come mainly from the container of the Fiduciary funds of which Niger is the top beneficiary among African countries. The tracks of the Teneré are patrolled by Nigerien militaries but also by French ones, and the local police forces are trained and equipped by the Europeans. The border between the repression of terrorism and migration control is blurred. In a mission carried out in December 2018, as part of a mission by the Parliamentary Group of GUE / NGL, a representative of ARCI was able to meet with the representatives of the European Agency EucapSahel in the fortress they have built in the heart of Agadez. Born as part of the antiterrorism strategy in the region, EucapSahel has expanded its mission to include migration control, gaining access to the rising funds dedicated to this goal. The objective is that of reinforcing the technical capacity of local police force by providing training and equipment, and ensuring regional coordination through the G5 Sahel forces entrusted with both terrorism and migration control.

In these two areas there is continuous overlapping. In Niamey, we met with a representative of FILAP who, in collaboration with the Italian Carabinieri and the French and Portuguese Police, is coordinating the GAR-SI-SAHEL project, with a total budget of 41 million euros entirely provided by the Fiduciary Funds for Africa. This is yet another police operation for territorial control financed through funds that were mostly reserved for development, distorting their original purpose. According to a representative of the project, the mission, which on paper seems to be more focused on migration control, is actually more directed against possible attacks from the outside or internal crime. In this case too, the largest part of the project consists in the training of rapid intervention units for activities of investigation and judiciary operations.

There is then the question of Italian militaries. After having been approved by the Italian Parliament in February 2018, and initially refused by the Niger Ministry of Defense, on September 20, 2018, the operation MISIN (Missione di supporto nella Repubblica del Niger) aimed at reinforcing the Niger military forces was launched. The Italian military forces were assigned to the strategic area of Madama, in the north of the country, a privileged observatory of nearby Libya and of migrant routes, which however was already occupied by French military who seem not to appreciate the Italian presence. As reported by the journalist Antonio Mazzeo¹⁸, the Minister Elisabetta Trenta, during an official visit to Niger on

18 - <https://romperelerighe.noblogs.org/post/2019/04/11/niger-lavventura-italiana-antimigranti-si-trasforma-in-business-delle-armi/>

February 26, made to renew the commitment of the Italian force in the country, explained that the Italian mission is meant to reinforce the capacity of Niger forces «to contrast the phenomenon of illegal trafficking and the threats to security, as well as reducing the uncontrolled flow of migrants towards the country». During a visit to Niamey, the Minister also announced the delivery of medical products to the Niger military forces worth 167,000 euros. To the present day, of the 400 units called for in the project approved in February 2018, only a few dozens have arrived in Niamey.

The control of terrorism, migration, or drug trafficking overlap in a confused and often dangerous fashion, both in the case of European forces and of locals ones, in theory and in practice. The stated goal is that of controlling the borders and knowing who enters and exits the country. The application of law 036/2015 against the trafficking of human beings has basically interrupted the route towards Libya, reducing the flow through Agadez, and forcing the remaining migrants to take alternatives routes, such as through Chad and Mali, travelling through the desert and increasing the risk to their lives. In the name of this law, although Niger is at the heart of the CEDEAO space in which a free circulation protocol with neighboring countries exists, control posts on the Nigerien border have multiplied. Traffickers therefore choose new ways of traveling to avoid controls: they carry less water and less food to travel more light, avoid water wells where the risk of being stopped is greater, and this increases the vulnerability of migrants and the risk of deadly accidents.

Niger has turned into a model country and is cited as positive example of externalization policies. It is no chance that Niamey was the capital chosen by Frontex, in November 2018, as the first of the eight “Risk Analysis Cells” outside of Europe. The project of the agency is that of opening another seven, in the first 12 months, in Ghana, Gambia, Senegal, Kenia, Nigeria, Guinea and Mali as part of the AFIC (Africa-Frontex Intelligence Community). In the case of Niamey, the objective is to train and equip the Nigerien police, so that they can collect data and carry out identifications to be passed to the European agency.

As evidenced in an exclusive Mediapart inquiry by journalist Giacomo Zandonini, there is a contradiction between the official version of the agency, according to which risk analysis offices are independent and the fact that, in the documents to which the French newspaper gained access, it is indicated that every cell will have an email address on the Frontex server and that information will be shared with the EU through a digital platform¹⁹. It is easy to foresee the consequences: the data will be used to consolidate anti-immigrant policies and propaganda, in favor of the new business tied to externalization and, in the long term, to facilitate the expulsions of those who travel through Niger.

This lack of transparency on the mechanisms translates into a lack of transparency on juridical responsibilities. A border control project is financed with a total of 4 million euros by the DG DEVCO of the European Commission, as is often the case in externalization. Once again, development funds are deviated from their main objective, that of improving life conditions in one of the poorest countries in the world, to finance a border control project. The one implemented by Frontex is only a part of the data collection and border management system whose center is in Niger.

Another key actor is IOM, International Organization for Migration. Mainly known in the region for its voluntary repatriation operations and the campaigns against the dangers of migrant routes, in reality it has had a growing role in the restructuring of the Nigerien network of border checkpoints. As indicated in the brochure of the agency,²⁰ «in 2016 the IOM Migration and Border Management Unit built the first border checkpoint in Kongokiré, in the region of Tillabery, followed by a second one in Gaidam, in the region of Diffa, inaugurated in May 2017. In 2015, the same Unit of the IOM gave 6 vehicles to the

19 - <https://romperelerighe.noblogs.org/post/2019/04/11/niger-lavventura-italiana-antimigranti-si-trasforma-in-business-delle-armi/>

20 - <https://www.mediapart.fr/journal/international/280219/au-niger-l-ue-mise-sur-la-police-locale-pour-traquer-les-migrants>

National Police for patrolling the region of Diffa, along with GPSs and satellite telephones».

The most outstanding element of the border management system proposed by IOM is MIDAS, used by the Niger government to collect data and information on immigration, to improve border management capability. Already adopted by 23 countries worldwide, MIDAS collects, processes, stores and analyzes data on travellers in real time, thanks to an extensive border network. It allows countries to monitor more effectively people entering and exiting the country, and offers a solid statistical base for migration policies.

On the Facebook page of OIM Niger, on November 1, 2018, a notice was posted announcing the creation of a new mobile border checkpoint for Niger authorities developed by using Canadian funds to improve control in the Agadez region. The MBP - *Mobile Border Post* - is a cross between a truck and a camper, suited to the desert, equipped with two mobile offices and sophisticated weather-resistant systems. Information on the vehicle is provided on the website of the *World Border Security Congress*, which specifies that when accompanied by a jeep and two motorcycles it qualifies as a Mobile Border Unit (MBU).

The multiplication of control systems in the country leads migrants traveling north invisible and more vulnerable to aggressions and accidents. The only visible migrants are the repatriated ones. Among these are the Sudanese, running from the Chad refugee camps and Libyan violence who, in the hope of being accepted in Europe, live in the container camp 15 km from the city of Agadez. There are then the refugees from Libya also waiting to being accepted in Europe and the thousands of sub-Saharan Africans who are regularly repelled from Algeria's borders. The migrants who have experienced this fate in little over a year are almost 15.000²¹.

Abandoned by traffickers about 10 km from the nearest town, they are forced to travel in the desert for hours, already exhausted by the violence they were subject to when arrested by the Algerian police and by the long voyage from Algeria to the south, locked in a truck like so much cattle. Having arrived at "point 0", those who decide to try once again the trip to the north stop here in the desperate hope of being able to find the money for voyage. Those who cannot take it anymore and have no other option go to Assamaka where, if they declare they want to return home, they are taken by IOM to the centers of Agadez and Niamey and then to the capitals of their countries of origin.

We have met about 10 of them in the IOM center in Agadez. A youngster from Guinea told us he had already gone through Agadez, upon returning from Libya. He remained there for nine months, seven of which in prison. He had made it onto a boat, but the Libyan Coastal Guard had taken him back to the port of Tripoli and from there to the detention center of Sabratha. A militia had sold him to another detention center but he managed to escape by paying 2.000 dinars his only objective being that of leaving Libya. He had heard of the possibility of going to Spain through Morocco. Having entered Algeria to reach Maghnia he was arrested in one of the increasingly frequent raids in Algeria. They loaded him onto a truck and took him away without giving him any food and without ever stopping. All he had was receipt from a photography store, a few photocopies, and a handwritten note on which the Algerian police had noted the amount of money they had confiscated from him. All the money he had. He was holding onto the note, well knowing that all it demonstrated was that he had been cheated yet another time in his journey through violence and despair.

²¹ - <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/MDE2895122018ENGLISH.PDF>



ITALY-EGYPT

COLLABORATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION

History has shown how externalization has found a fertile terrain in countries of origin or transit governed by authoritarian regimes. This was the case of Italy and Libya under Gaddafi, who opened and closed the valve regulating migrations depending on how negotiations on his international rehabilitation were going. More recently, there is the example of Erdogan who sealed Turkey's border in return for Europe's silence on the violations of human and democratic rights in Turkey. Or that of Al-Bashir's Sudan who, to make people forget about his three arrest warrants, has actively collaborated in controlling his borders, implementing Rapid Support Forces (RSF) to stop Eritrean refugees.

Egypt is certainly one of these examples: a loyal partner of the EU and of Italy in preventing departures from its coast – on various occasions Al Sisi has boasted that no boats have left Egypt's shores since 2016 –, in particular, for his collaboration with readmission procedures and for having accepted to make Cairo the center of a border police training program for all of Africa.

While the political climate in the country was already heavily influenced by the state of emergency (continually renewed since March 2017), the laws against the right to demonstrate and the repression of the right to information, the elections of March 2018 marked a point of no return. All potential opposition candidates were forced to stand down through threats, intimidations and arrests. The only other candidate besides Al-Sisi was a member of the government party, who incidentally continued to declare himself in favor of re-electing the Al Sisi. Once re-elected, president Al-Sisi modified the Egyptian constitution, extending the duration of the presidential mandate and placing the judiciary under control of the executive. Following well-known script, a transitory article in the new constitution allows Al-Sisi to remain in power till 2030. A mock-referendum placed the final seal on this constitutional farce in April 2019.

More in general, in the course of 2018, the government has intensified control and repression of any opposition, including political and civil associations, human rights, women's rights, and pacifist groups, trade unions, ethnic and religious minorities, migrants LGBTQI activists, lawyers, bloggers, journalists, and so on. Independent NGOs involved in human, civil and women's rights have been prosecuted, many of them forced to close or leave the country, and their members incarcerated, or restricted in their movements. Hundreds of people have been persecuted on account of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Forced anal examination is continued to be practiced to verify homosexual behavior, even if it is considered as torture by the UN Convention against Torture.

The Egyptian Commission for Rights and Liberty has documented 1520 cases of forced disappearance in Egypt between July 2013 and August 2018, twelve of them children. At least 230 cases occurred between August 2017 and August 2018. Many disappearances are not reported by the families for fear of reprisals. More than 60,000 political prisoners are currently being detained in Egyptian prisons. At least 129 people have died in jail in 2017. Preventive detention of people as they await for trial is a common praxis and often used to keep political prisoners in jail indefinitely without trial.

Fifteen thousand civilians have been prosecuted by military courts since 2014, including dozens of minors. In 2017, these illegitimate trials passed 112 death sentences. Since 2013, thousands of death sentences have been passed by Egyptian regular courts. Egypt is the sixth country in the world for number of executions and the third for number of death sentences passed in 2017. In the course of only four months, from December 2017 to March 2018, the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies has documented the execution of 39 people.

Notwithstanding this situation and the still open Regeni case, Italy continues to collaborate with Egypt

on migration, as well as on the economic and political level. On migration, there is a bilateral agreement signed in October 2007 to facilitate the expulsion of Egyptians from Italy, as well as an agreement with the Police Academy of Cairo for the training of border guards from 22 African countries.

THE ITALY - EGYPT READMISSION AGREEMENT

Egypt always collaborated with Italy on repatriations. The first bilateral agreement was signed in 2000, followed by one in 2004 and another one in 2007, which is still in place, and has never been questioned in spite of the authoritarian trend in Egypt and the lack of collaboration on the Regeni case.

The 2007 agreement allows Italy to expel people without having identified them (the same clause is found in the August 2006 agreement between the Italian and Sudanese police). In the presence of substantial proof of Egyptian nationality, Egypt has only 7 days to respond to Italy's expulsion request and silence gives assent. In case of circumstantial evidence, the days are 21. Only after having arrived in Cairo can Egypt send back the subjects in case they turned out to be non-Egyptian nationals. There is thus an obvious risk that the agreement be used to illegally send non-Egyptians to Egypt, a country known for not respecting the basic human rights of foreigners and of its own citizens.

The number of expulsions towards Egypt suggests the agreement is working, a datum that is not very encouraging when one considers the conditions of the country and the impossibility of controlling whether expelled citizens are subject to inhuman or degrading treatments, something which is unfortunately all too likely in the current situation.

- In 2018, 294 Egyptian citizens were repatriated over a total of 6398 expelled.
- Italy organized 3 charter repatriation flights to Cairo for a total of 60 expulsions. The remaining 230 were carried out using regular flights.
- Of the 150 Egyptians detained in the Italian CPRs, 94 were repatriated.²²

The Italian Guarantor for the Rights of Prisoners in a 2018 statement issued the following comment on forced repatriations to Egypt: "the national Guarantor of the rights of people deprived of liberty, Mauro Palma, notes that, in the very moment in which, after the confirmation of the lack of collaboration by Egyptian authorities on the investigation of the people responsible for the torture and murder of Giulio Regeni, forms of institutional cooperation with Egypt are being suspended, there is a feeling that, on the contrary, the collaboration between the two Countries in the matter of forced repatriations is being intensified. To this one must add that, as underlined in the 2018 Report to the Parliament, the national Guarantor, as the authority responsible *latu sensu* of the protection of the rights of people deprived of personal liberty, expresses his strong reservations on the opportunity of organizing forced repatriation flights towards Countries, such as Egypt and Nigeria, that have not established a national mechanism for the prevention of torture (Egypt insofar as it has not signed the OPCAT and Nigeria insofar as it has signed it but still not implemented its clauses on the National Mechanism of Prevention)²³.

The fact that Italy continues to expel people to Egypt, using a repatriation procedure that does not allow for any monitoring of the risks undergone by citizens expelled to a country that daily violates

²² - Dati estrapolati dalla Relazione al Parlamento 2019 del Garante Nazionale dei Diritti delle Persone Detenute o private della libertà personale http://www.garantenazionaleprivatiliberta.it/gnpl/it/pub_rel_par.page

²³ - <http://www.ristretti.org/Le-Notizie-di-Ristretti/migranti-mauro-palma-qpicco-di-rimpatri-forzati-verso-legittimo>

human rights, in which there is a difficulty of access on part of Egyptian citizens to asylum demands also in the areal border crossings, and in which the Egyptian regime actively collaborates in readmitting its citizens, is of extreme gravity and a flagrant violation of the International Conventions signed by our country.

COLLABORATION IN THE TRAINING OF AFRICAN BORDER POLICE ITEPA - INTERNATIONAL TRAINING AT EGYPTIAN POLICE ACADEMY

In September 2017, the Italian government signed a “technical agreement” on migration with the Egyptian one, to be implemented by the Italian State Police, and in particular the Central Directorship for Immigration and Border Police, financed with the Funds for Internal Security - Borders and Visa for a total amount of 1,819,528.75 euros for two years²⁴.

As documented by AltreEconomie, the agreement was signed in Italy by the present central director of Immigration and Border Police, Massimo Bontempi, and for Egypt, by major general Ahmed Adel Elamry, head of the Police Academy and assistant to the Ministry of Interiors. The project consists in the opening of a Center for international training on migration for 360 border officers from 22 African countries (Algeria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Ivory Coast, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Djibouti, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Libya, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Tunisia) at the Egyptian Police Academy in Cairo.

After little more than 6 months, on March 20, 2018, the pilot project was officially launched in Europe. Besides Italians, Egyptians, and the various African participants, the representatives of the European Commission and of the Frontex agency were also invited. Various themes were discussed, ranging from “programs for common training in security and border control” to “repatriation procedures (including assisted voluntary repatriation),” to identifying fake documents, which often exceeded the specific responsibilities of the national police, both Italian and Egyptian. These activities should be implemented by a “Italian – Egyptian group of experts” designated by the two Countries, which is said to be already “meeting regularly,” while the technical hardware and the support to training activities is provided by Italy.

On July 10 and 11 2018, the ITEPA project was presented during a meeting organized by Italy and Egypt at the Khartoum Process. The first day was dedicated to the sharing of “good practices” in border management, the second to a visit to the Egyptian Police Academy²⁵.

Other meetings will certainly be held in Cairo, considering that a € 70,000 tender has just been won for hotel services in relation to the training courses for the ITEPA project to be held in Cairo in 2019.

In conclusions, it seems evident that notwithstanding the authoritarian developments in Egypt and the controversies between the two countries, Italy is financing the training of border control in Cairo for countries like Eritrea and Sudan, which systematically violate human rights and persecute their own citizens.

²⁴ - <https://fondosicurezza.interno.gov.it/it/notizie/progetto-4224-isf-2-borders-and-visa>

²⁵ - <https://www.khartoumprocess.net/news-and-events/news/76-thematic-meeting-on-law-enforcement-and-capacity-building-10th-11th-july-2018-cairo-egypt>

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