The Crisis of Migration in the Mediterranean Basin and the Struggle for Influence

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Abstract

The dilemma of migration in the Mediterranean basin has exacerbated and has become one of the most interesting phenomena, by researchers and politicians, due to the tragic human situation that left it behind and still is. After the international struggle between the great powers over influence in the two regional regions of Africa, the Sahel and the Sahara, and Libya and Syria, in which the collapse of the state led to an acceleration of the pace of migration across them, and the flight of the population from the state of war and the devastation it left behind, to the neighboring regions-countries in search of safe havens. In this regard, the conflicting powers over influence and control in the Mediterranean basin did not care except with the calculations of their interests and the requirements of their influence, and their control geopolitically and geo-economically, until the collapsed Libya turned into a wide passage for the passage of large numbers of migrants fleeing the harsh climate,   And from the deteriorating life in their countries, and from the loss of human security, in search of a comfortable life that they dream of in the countries of the European Union, which in turn suffered severe suffering in dealing with those crossing the Mediterranean, Because it falls between a humanitarian duty that requires increased financial expenditures, and a security concern that warns of the possibility of this migration destabilizing its security and deepening its social and cultural gap.

Keywords: migration, human security, Libyan crisis, national borders.

Introduction

The phenomenon of uncontrolled migration to the European Union (EU) across the Mediterranean Sea has been a longstanding concern that has persisted among members of the community for a considerable period of time. This article is an analysis of the migration crisis. In the recent times, the former route served as the predominant transit pathway and final destination for undocumented migrants. There is a significant population residing within its borders, numbering in the tens of thousands, who are now seeking the opportunity to migrate to another EU member state or awaiting asylum. In contrast, Libya, similar to Turkey, is perceived by migrants as a gateway to a more favorable socio-economic environment. It is noteworthy that the primary Central Mediterranean route traverses through Libya. The maritime passage through the Mediterranean is favored by individuals hailing from nations in Africa and the Middle East. [1]

Overview and Background of the Crisis of Migration

This article addresses two case studies. Consequently, the analysis will focus on examining the factors influencing migration patterns across the Mediterranean region as well as exploring its unique characteristics. Greece, as an EU member state, has been significantly impacted by the migration issue. During the period spanning from 2015 to 2020, a substantial proportion of migrants made attempts to join the European continent through its borders. [2] The subsequent case study pertains to Libya, which serves as the primary transit point for a significant majority of individuals attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea in order to reach the European continent. The implementation of measures by the European Union and its member states aimed at mitigating migratory flows across the Mediterranean Sea has yielded notable results in terms of reducing such movements. [3] Nevertheless, a considerable number of individuals residing in Spain, Italy, and Greece are actively pursuing refuge, stability, or improved living conditions within the European continent.

European efforts to mitigate migration by fortifying national borders and extending detention facilities outside their territorial boundaries have inadvertently contributed to the proliferation of smuggling networks, which facilitate the passage of migrants via checkpoints and borders, ultimately enabling their embarkation on vessels in the Mediterranean Sea. Upon reaching Europe, individuals are confronted with a renewed set of obstacles and perils. The absence of adequate housing, residing in unhygienic environments, or residing in temporary settlements for migrants has a substantial impact on the safety and security of migrant and the receiving nation.

The migration crisis that transpired subsequent to 2014, widely regarded as the most significant challenge for the European Union in this domain, was precipitated by a multitude of alterations and a diverse array of factors that unfolded in the MENA region. These factors encompassed, among others, the revolutions in North Africa and the Middle East and their resultant outcomes, including the toppling of governments in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya. [4] Additionally, the crisis was exacerbated by the presence of unstable states plagued by civil strife or the activities of terrorist organizations.

The Significance of the Mediterranean Basin in the Migration Process:

In 2014, the European Union experienced a significant influx of migrants, with an estimated total of 261,000 individuals entering the region without proper supervision or regulation. It is noteworthy that the migration pressure was most pronounced on the routes traversing the Mediterranean Sea, specifically the Central Mediterranean (with a total of over 159,500 individuals), the Eastern Mediterranean (with over 46,500 individuals), and the Western Mediterranean (with around 6,000 individuals). In 2014, a total of 212,000 individuals arrived in the European Union (EU) by sea, whereas 49,000 individuals entered through land routes. [5] This data substantiates the prevailing preference among migrants for water-based migration pathways.

The magnitude of unregulated migration to the European Union had a fourfold increase in 2015. Empirical research indicates that over one million individuals successfully traversed the sea, thereby affirming the Mediterranean basin's pivotal role in facilitating migratory movements. The research additionally facilitated the identification of the "first-entry" countries, namely Greece (853,650), Italy (153,842), and Spain (3,845), which were the initial

destinations for refugees. [6] The primary mode of arrival for migrants in these three nations was predominantly through maritime routes. The Eastern Mediterranean and Central Mediterranean routes were predominantly utilized in the context of Greece and Italy, whereas the Western Mediterranean route was primarily employed in the case of Spain.

Illegal migration takes place in three distinct regions of the Mediterranean Sea, namely the western, central, and eastern sectors. Migration in the Western region encompasses the movement of individuals from Morocco and Algeria to Spain via two enclaves, namely Ceuta and Melilla. [7] In the present scenario, individuals hailing from Morocco, Algeria, Nigeria, Cameroon, and Senegal have been identified as the most prevalent maritime border crossers. The phenomenon of unauthorized migration in this particular maritime region was additionally facilitated by illicit networks active in Mali and Nigeria. Migration in the eastern region of the Mediterranean Sea encompassed the movement of individuals from Turkey to Greece, where Syrians, Afghans, and Iraqis constituted the most prominent migrant cohorts. [8]

The primary maritime migration routes situated in the Central Mediterranean region were predominantly concentrated along the coastlines of Libya and Tunisia. Although the Eastern Mediterranean route experiences the biggest volume of maritime travel, it is noteworthy that the central region exhibits the highest incidence of drownings. [9] The findings show that the severe transportation challenges faced by migrants were the main cause of this situation. Smuggling organizations, driven by financial motives, orchestrated departures on vessels that were excessively crowded, leading to instances when those being transported frequently fell into the water or perished due to asphyxia. Numerous documented incidents of maritime boats succumbing to the perils of overcrowding have been recorded, predominantly transpiring inside the confines of the Central Mediterranean region.

The migration problem has necessitated various measures by members of the community in order to tackle its underlying factors and mitigate its consequences. In the present study, the authors want to highlight the operational actions conducted in the Mediterranean region. The subject matter pertains to the endeavors undertaken by the European Union agency known as Frontex as well as the activities associated with the Common Security and Defense Policy. [10] Specifically, the focus lies on several operations conducted in different regions of the sea. These include operations Aenas and Triton, which are centered in the middle portion of the sea, as well as operations Hera, Minerva, and Indalo, which are carried out in the western sea. Operation Poseidon is also implemented in the eastern sea.

The Cases of Libya and Greece

Greece has had challenges managing growing migratory movements since the early 1990s. The primary factor contributing to the heightened migration can be attributed to the swift economic progress seen by the region, coupled with its accession to the European Union and subsequently the Schengen Area. [11] Migration flows to Greece can be categorized into two distinct groups. The initial phase involves transit traffic, wherein individuals migrate to other European Union nations (primarily Italy, Spain, France, Germany, or the United Kingdom). Immigrants typically spend a few weeks or months recuperating from the challenges of their journey, awaiting the arrival of other family members, or seeking employment opportunities to finance their onward travel. The second category encompasses immigrants who have made a deliberate choice to relocate to Greece and establish permanent residency.

The migratory crisis that commenced in 2015 coincided with the persistent economic and social crisis in Greece that originated in 2008. In 2015, the Greek government's public debt amounted to 176% of its gross domestic product (GDP). Consequently, the government of Greece was actively pursuing a third bailout program from the European Central Bank (ECB) in order to implement more reforms. The imperative to consolidate the efforts of entities responsible for border security and refugee assistance was a substantial obstacle for Greece. [12]

The primary migratory pathway towards Greece is along the border shared with Turkey. Alternative transportation routes to reach various destinations can be accessed either through terrestrial means, specifically by utilizing the Evros River, or via maritime routes originating from multiple cities, including Izmir. The issue pertaining to the Greek-Turkish boundaries is not just attributed to their permeability but also to the bilateral dynamics between the two nations. The number 10 Furthermore, the persistent strain in ties has resulted in a dearth of collaboration on matters pertaining to border control and migration.

A total of around 229,000 instances of unauthorized border crossings were documented during the initial six months of 2015 in Greece. Based on data provided by the European Parliament, it was seen that a total of over 106,000 individuals attempted to gain entry into Italy, while a comparatively smaller number of less than 8,000 individuals sought entry into Spain throughout the same timeframe. The numbers based on data provided by Greek law enforcement authorities, Greece, with a population of less than eleven million, serves as the primary land route for the unauthorized transit of migrants, predominantly originating from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya, and Albania. [12]

In the year 2015, there was a significant rise in the number of individuals attempting to unlawfully cross the Greek border, with a reported figure of 911,000 individuals. This is a substantial increase of 1,081% when compared to the previous year, when only 77,000 such incidents were recorded in 2014. During the spring and summer seasons, a daily influx of over 300 individuals was observed on the Greek islands of Kos and Lesbos, with Samos and Chios also serving as popular destinations. In the month of October, Frontex documented a total of 150,000 instances of individuals attempting to cross the border between Greece and Turkey. This figure represents a significant increase compared to the previous year, when only 8,500 attempts were reported during the same period. [13]

It is important to acknowledge that, until now, Greek society's support for migrants has primarily revolved around the principle commonly referred to as solidarity. A limited number of groups that directed their efforts towards immigrants prior to the migration crisis were not officially registered, nor did they adhere to commonly recognized standards for providing humanitarian assistance. The efforts undertaken by the individuals were centered around establishing connections with immigrants, guided by the ideas of self-reliance and collective support. Hence, throughout the initial half-year period, the Kara Tepe camp situated on the island of Lesbos primarily consisted of an undeveloped area hosting tents, lacking any form of official administration by either local or government officials. The immigrants received assistance from community members and unaffiliated entities that offered immediate medical and nutritional support, among other forms of aid. Humanitarian organizations, including UNHCR and Médecins Sans Frontières, commenced their operations in Lesbos during the latter half of 2015. [14] This development occurred subsequent to UNHCR's declaration of a state of emergency, prompting the European Union to allocate financial aid to Greece for the purpose of extending humanitarian assistance to refugees. Lesbos had emerged as the focal point of the European migration crisis. During the third quarter of 2015, Frontex experienced a notable

augmentation of 114 officers who were sent to assist the Greek services in various tasks such as border protection as well as the registration and identification of refugees. [15]

The agreement on migratory cooperation between the European Union and Turkey, which was signed in March 2016, has emerged as a fundamental component of EU migration policy. It has played a crucial role in substantially diminishing instances of irregular movement along the Greek-Turkish border. The closure of the Balkan Corridor in 2016 resulted in the apprehension of approximately 204,000 individuals by the police and port authorities for their involvement in illegal attempts to cross the Greek border. This figure represents a significant decrease of 77.5% compared to the previous year. Additionally, 950 individuals involved in human smuggling activities were detained, which marks a decline from the 1,500 detentions recorded in the preceding year. The months of January to March 2016 had the most notable surge, accounting for 80% of all registered immigrants during that year. Furthermore, the predominant method of crossing the Greek border continued to be through sea routes. Over 40% of individuals who migrated to Greece via water routes were minors. [16]

Based on data provided by Frontex, the number of unauthorized migrants that entered Greece in 2017 amounted to about 42,000 individuals, representing a notable decline of over 140,000 in comparison to the previous year. Notably, the majority of these migrants originated from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Nevertheless, a notable issue that arose related to the protracted duration required for the processing of asylum petitions. This delay was mostly attributable to the overwhelming influx of applications and the resultant overcrowding of refugee shelters. In the year 2018, there was a notable surge in unauthorized endeavors to traverse the Greek border by terrestrial means. The number of individuals held amounted to 56,500, exhibiting a notable rise of 34%. Similar to the preceding year, the majority of those detained were of Syrian, Afghan, and Iraqi origin. [24] In the year 2019, Greece witnessed the arrival of a significant number of individuals, surpassing 83,000 in total. Among these arrivals, over 50,000 individuals opted for sea routes as their means of entry. [20] This influx constituted more than 60% of all unauthorized border crossings inside the European Union. In contrast, there was a notable decrease observed in the year 2020, with a documented count of merely 20,000 individuals, primarily consisting of Syrians, Turks, and Afghans. Identifying a definitive cause for the abrupt decline is challenging, while it is noteworthy that the overall volume of attempted border crossings into the European Union has fallen by over 16,000 individuals. Additionally, it is evident that the COVID-19 epidemic has played a significant role in this phenomenon. [21]

The examination of Libya as a case study within the framework of migration presents a multifaceted illustration of a nation that has experienced destabilization subsequent to the year 2011. An exceptional surge in forced migration that reached record levels accompanied the 2011 Libyan revolution. As a result, the ongoing crisis in Libya has emerged as one of the most intricate migration crises globally. [22] Despite the European Union's extensive actions and significant financial investments in democratic transition, Libya is the sole country in North Africa that continues to undergo a transitional phase. The state in question is often seen as a failed state, as its trajectory of transition differs significantly from that of other Arab nations where the toppling of dictatorships occurred in the wake of the Arab upheavals initiated in 2011[25]. Since that time, Libya has faced challenges related to political power struggles, the presence of terrorist organizations, and an economic crisis. One of the major issues the country has been grappling with is migration, which occurs through multiple routes, including those originating from East Africa or the Middle East. The primary direction of migration is from the southern regions of Libya towards the northern areas, with additional routes towards southern Europe, although these are less visible due to geographical factors. The migratory activity

observed during this particular time frame is not solely linked to unregulated migration but also encompasses the issue of human trafficking. [15]

Refugees frequently travel to Libya via the East Africa region, with a sizable portion of them coming from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, and Sudan. [16] Ethiopia and Sudan have emerged as significant transit nations along this pathway, owing to their well-established migrant routes and sophisticated smuggling networks. As an illustration, those seeking shelter or migrating from Somalia frequently gravitate towards Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. In this location, individuals from Ethiopia and Eritrea often converge with them, with the shared objective of engaging the services of a smuggler to facilitate their journey to Khartoum, Sudan, and thereafter onward to Libya. The degree of danger is contingent upon regional political occurrences and undergoes dynamic alterations, hence leading to regular swings in specific routes. Migrants and refugees originating from West Africa frequently traverse through the nations of Mali or Niger before proceeding towards Libya, perhaps by way of Algeria. [23] The aforementioned routes exhibit a high degree of intricacy and considerable duration, necessitating a sequential approach to their completion. A considerable number of individuals opt to go from Mali to Agadez, Niger, via bus, a reasonably straightforward journey facilitated by the ECOWAS free movement policy.

Niger has emerged as the primary transit nation for refugees and migrants originating from West and Central Africa, with data from 2016 indicating that an estimated 120,000 to 150,000 individuals passed through this pathway. Based on the findings of the examined reports, it is estimated that a majority of the refugees and migrants originating from West Africa who successfully arrived on the Italian island of Lampedusa in 2014 traversed through Agadez. The estimated number of individuals undertaking this journey is believed to be over 80,000. [10] Migrants originating from Niger or Mali who arrived in Algeria typically embarked on subsequent journeys, either towards the Libyan coast or, less commonly, within Algeria itself, driven by apprehensions about surveillance and apprehension. During the initial phase of the examined period, Chad emerged as a significant alternative pathway to Libya, predominantly utilized by individuals from Chad, western Sudan, and Cameroon.

Syrians were the main users of the Middle Eastern migratory route, using a combination of land, sea, and air routes with a primary focus on Jordan to access Libya, as well as possibly Algeria and Egypt[27]. Before 2013, Algeria, Libya, and Egypt had not imposed visa requirements on Syrian nationals, thereby facilitating their flying travel. Nevertheless, the influx of Syrian individuals entering Libya via air transportation significantly declined subsequent to the outbreak of war and the subsequent closure of Tripoli Airport in 2014. A portion of individuals opted to travel to Sudan, a country that waived visa requirements until 2020. [9] Sudan experienced significant political changes following the ousting of its former leader, Omar al-Bashir, in 2019. Subsequently, these individuals proceeded to travel to Greece from Sudan. In the latter part of 2020, the estimated number of Syrian refugees residing in Sudan will be approximately 100,000. Syrian individuals who have migrated to Libya, having traversed Sudan and Egypt, have formulated intentions to proceed with their migration towards Europe, predominantly by means of the Central Mediterranean route originating from the Libyan coastline. A significant number of individuals engage in the practice of smuggling in Libya as a result of their lack of acquaintance with the local topography, particularly the desert landscape, and the numerous checkpoints that necessitate passage. Typically, refugees and migrants are sent to a port situated in the vicinity of Tripoli, located between the Tunisian border and nevertheless, the departure points exhibit flexibility as they vary, with individuals arriving in Europe via sea routes. Among these arrivals, a total of 181,436 individuals reached Italy. In 2016, the Central Mediterranean route, which spans between Libya and Italy, exhibited the highest level of peril among all migration routes. [13] Out of the total number of migrants

who went missing throughout all routes, amounting to 5,082 individuals, a staggering 4,579 migrants tragically lost their lives or remained unaccounted for just along this route.

Conflict between Great Powers and the Struggle for Influence in Mediterranean as a Big Raison of the Migration

The European Union (EU) adopts a strategy aimed at preventing the Mediterranean Migration Crisis (MMC) through the implementation of law enforcement measures focused on enhancing the security of the EU's external borders, notably its maritime boundaries, with the objective of curbing illegal immigration and human smuggling activities. The mission has been delineated in many meetings at both the European Union (EU) level and the EU Council, including the Tampere meeting in October 1999, the Laeken meeting in December 2001, the Seville meeting in June 2002, and the Thessaloniki meeting in June 2003.[30] It is noteworthy to acknowledge that certain actions have been undertaken exclusively by certain Southern European countries, such as the Guardia Finanza, which primarily focuses on the prevention of illegal immigration and cross-border crime via sea in Italy. The primary institution responsible for addressing unauthorized immigration across the Mediterranean in Spain is the Guardia Civil. [31] At the multilateral level, the responses have entailed collaborative endeavors carried out by naval forces from European nations. In January 2003, a joint naval operation known as Operation Ulysses was initiated by the navies of France, the United Kingdom, Spain, Portugal, and Italy. The primary objective of this operation was to combat the issues of undocumented migration and human trafficking occurring across the Straits of Gibraltar and from the western Sahara region towards the Canary Islands. This information was reported by El Pais on January 28, 2003. [15] The naval forces of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) have also played a prominent role in managing immigration in the Mediterranean region. In 2002, NATO deployed its Mediterranean fleet to the eastern Mediterranean as part of its "Operation Active Endeavour." The primary focus of this operation was to combat terrorism, but it also aimed to address the issue of irregular migration and human trafficking across the Mediterranean. [31] In addition to these initiatives, collaborative enforcement efforts in the Mediterranean region have been implemented, typically including countries from Southern Europe and North Africa. In December 2003, the governments of Spain and Morocco announced their intention to initiate collaborative patrols along Morocco's Mediterranean and Atlantic coastlines. The strategy consisted of three key components, specifically: the deployment of liaison officers at airports and border check points, the establishment of collaborative anti-trafficking teams, and the implementation of coordinated patrols along both land and sea borders. As a consequence of these actions, Spain provided Morocco with a financial assistance package totaling over 400 million Euros over a span of three years. [20] In a similar vein, an agreement was established in July 2003 between Italy and Libya with the aim of collaboratively addressing the issues of illegal immigration and people smuggling originating from Libya. Within the framework of this collaborative effort, Italy advocated for the lifting of restrictions pertaining to the arms embargo imposed on Libya since 1986, which were implemented due to allegations of the country's involvement in supporting terrorist operations. The objective has been to enhance Libya's capability to procure military-grade equipment for the purpose of border security. In October 2004, the European Union (EU) reached a decision to remove the aforementioned restrictions imposed on Libya. Consequently, this action facilitated Libya's procurement of various equipment, including radars and night vision systems, with the aim of enhancing border security against irregular migrants.[14] Significantly, the cooperative strategies employed to address the issue of Mediterranean migration have faced criticism for their perceived intention of the European Union (EU) to shift the responsibility of immigration control to southern Mediterranean nations.

Consequently, these countries are being coerced into assuming the roles of "gatekeepers" or "buffer states," often in exchange for financial aid or enhanced relations with European countries or the EU. The European Union's approach to the Mediterranean crisis has mostly focused on the securitized development narrative rather than prioritizing the humanitarian dimension.

Conclusion

The examination of migration patterns across the Mediterranean Sea poses many challenges to the implementation of European integrated border control. Upon careful examination of the events that have transpired in recent years, it is imperative for the authors to underscore that the migrant crisis spanning from 2015 to 2020 posed a formidable obstacle for the European Union, necessitating prompt and effective resolutions. During the aforementioned five-year period, the number of individuals who arrived in the European Union via sea surpassed 1.5 million. These individuals had a reasonable expectation of receiving appropriate assistance from European nations. Regrettably, the number of individuals who have fallen prey to human smuggling and perished during their journey to Europe stands at approximately 14,000;

According to the data reported by Frontex, Greece emerged as the predominant entry point for migrants seeking access to the European continent. Despite being infrequently selected as a preferred destination by individuals from Middle Eastern and African nations due to economic and societal factors, it nonetheless serves as a significant transit point route to Europe. One contributing factor to this phenomenon is its geographical positioning, characterized by its proximity to Turkey and the presence of several islands that facilitate maritime transit. Additionally, it is noteworthy that this country is the sole member of the European Union and the Schengen area within the region. According to official data, during the examined timeframe, a total of 1,316,500 individuals, constituting over 10% of the Greek populace, made attempts to enter Greece through both maritime and terrestrial routes originating from Turkey. The decline in the volume of illicit border crossings between Greece and Turkey can be primarily attributed to heightened efforts by Greek authorities, the implementation of Frontex operations, and the fortification of the border by Turkey in accordance with the EU-Turkey Statement. This development also signifies Turkey's newfound adherence to the agreements previously established with Greece.

The provision of financial and humanitarian assistance by entities such as the European Union (EU), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has played a crucial role in mitigating the migrant crisis in Greece. This assistance has been vital in preventing the emergence of a significant humanitarian disaster. Greece is home to numerous substantial refugee facilities, such as those situated on the islands of Kos, Chios, Lesbos, and Samos. Additionally, there are numerous temporary shelter sites dispersed across the country.[28]

The analysis of the Libyan case reveals a notable deterioration in the circumstances, particularly during the latter part of 2019 and early 2020, concerning those seeking refuge in Europe via the Mediterranean Sea. The United Nations has identified people from sub-Saharan Africa as being particularly vulnerable, and this situation has had a particularly negative impact on them. Within facilities under the Department for Combating Illegal Immigration (DCIM) of the Government of National Accord and protected by paramilitary groups, numerous migrants are subject to forcible detention. Frontex, the border and coast guard agency of the European

Union, frequently assumes the duty of repelling and detaining asylum seekers in Europe in coordination with the Libyan coast guard, raising questions about legality. The level of collaboration between Italy and the Government of National Accord (GNA) in Tripoli experienced a notable increase subsequent to the signing of a memorandum of understanding in 2017[29]. German diplomats who made comparisons to concentration camps demonstrated that the conditions in the detention centers had already attracted significant awareness. Amnesty International's report highlights a distressing setting that they refer to as a "hellish landscape of detention." In June of last year, Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) made the decision to withdraw from two government detention centers as a result of instances of violence and the provision of inhumane treatment.

However, despite the legal provisions outlined in the Geneva Convention and EU regulations that explicitly forbid the repatriation of individuals seeking refuge in hazardous regions, as well as a judgment by the European Court of Human Rights that highlights instances of torture and mortality in Libya, this practice persists. According to reports, on October 1, 2021, there were purported actions taken by militias affiliated with the Interior Ministry targeting individuals involved in drug and human trafficking. There have been no official reports of arrests in this regard; however, it has been documented that a significant number of migrants, over 5,000 individuals, have been subjected to forceful detentions. Among these detainees, there are around 540 women, some of whom are pregnant, as well as 215 children. Numerous individuals seeking sanctuary and migrating populations are subjected to violations of their human rights, encompassing unwarranted confinement, physical and psychological torment, coerced work, and sexual assault. Moreover, the perilous journey over the Mediterranean Sea from Libya to Europe is facilitated by intermediaries involved in smuggling and human trafficking.

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