

UN says EU's Treatment of Libyan Migrants 'inhuman'

A statement from the UN has described the EU policy of intercepting people crossing the Mediterranean and returning them to prisons as "inhuman". According to UN human rights high commissioner Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein "The suffering of migrants detained in Libya is an outrage to the conscience of humanity. The European Union's policy of assisting the Libyan coastguard to intercept and return migrants in the Mediterranean is inhuman."

The EU is aiding the Libyan Coast Guard by intercepting boats crossing the Mediterranean, and returning them to prisons where they face the possibility of forced labour or extortion. The EU's policy includes boats in international waters, which human rights groups claim is a breach of human rights. Over 20,000 people are now being held in custody, which is up 7000 from September.

Europe turning into a dead end for desperate migrants

There are reports of violence, sexual assault and inhumane conditions in detention centres across Libya, where migrants are being detained before returning home. People have described beatings from guards as well as rape and sexual violence. The UN has urged Libyan authorities to take action to stop detaining migrants and put an end to the abuse of detainees.

Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein said that "We cannot be a silent witness to modern day slavery, rape and other sexual violence, and unlawful killings in the name of managing migration and preventing desperate and traumatized people from reaching Europe's shores. The increasing interventions of the EU and its member states have done nothing so far to reduce the level of abuses suffered by migrants," Hussein said, adding that instead, there appeared to be a "fast deterioration in their situation in Libya".

These comments follow recent news that 13 European and African countries have pledged to improve conditions for migrants being held in Libya. Ministers from the countries impacted by the migration have expressed their concerns over the "ongoing human tragedy" of the Mediterranean route. "The participants intend to address the challenges posed by the alarming situation along the migration route

to North Africa,” A representative from Switzerland said in a statement.

Is Europe exporting its refugee crisis to North Africa?

With the support of the EU, Italy has been training the Libyan coastguard to intercept more boats crossing the Mediterranean as part of a deal. This controversial deal has resulted in Italy’s arrivals falling 70% since July. The UN has criticized the EU for its role in deported migrants whilst knowing the conditions they face. The EU’s response to the UN’s statement is that Brussels is providing funding to protect those being held in Libya. “We believe that the detention centres in Libya must be closed. The situation in these camps is unacceptable,” the spokesperson said in a statement.

Source: <http://eu-policies.com/competences/regional-policy/un-says-eus-treatment-libyan-migrants-inhuman/>

[Disclaimer]