

## EU has outsourced migration control to authoritarian governments and booming security industry, finds new report

(Amsterdam, 14 May 2018) – The European Union has abandoned its enshrined commitment to human rights, democracy, freedom and human dignity by massively expanding its border externalisation efforts, argues a new report by the Transnational Institute and Stop Wapenhandel (Dutch Campaign Against Arms Trade). The EU's collaboration with neighbouring states on migration control has bolstered authoritarian regimes, provided a boom in profits for security and arms firms, diverted resources from development and undermined human rights.

The report, *Expanding the Fortress*, examines the rapid growth in border externalisation measures and agreements that began in 1992 and has accelerated since 2015. It has become a central objective of EU foreign relations including its aid and trade policies. The measures have included training of security forces; donations of helicopters, patrol ships and vehicles, surveillance and monitoring equipment; development of extensive biometric systems; and agreements on accepting deported people.

The report looks closely at 35 countries that the EU prioritises for border externalisation efforts and finds that:

- 48% (17) have an authoritarian government and only four can be deemed democratic
- 100% (35) pose either extreme or high risks for exercise of human rights
- 51% (18) are categorised as 'low' in human development indicators

Yet despite this, the European Union and its member states have not only signed agreements legitimising the governments and turning a blind eye to human rights violations, they have provided financial, training and material support to precisely the state security organs most responsible for repression and abuses of human rights.

The report looks in particular depth at how this cooperation has played out in Turkey, Libya, Egypt, Sudan, Niger, Mauritania and Mali, supported by the EU as a whole but also individual states notably France, Italy, Spain and Germany. The results have been state regimes emboldened to repress civil society in general, and a consistent pattern of increased violence and repression of refugees. Vulnerable refugees have been forced to look for other, often more dangerous routes and to rely on ever more unscrupulous traffickers which has led to an even higher death toll in the Mediterranean and the deserts of Northern Africa.

The increased funding for border control, however, has been a boon for arms and security firms that are increasingly investing in border security and surveillance technologies. Prominent winners of border security contracts include French arms giant Thales and European firm Airbus, both major arms exporters to the region, biometric suppliers Veridos, OT Morpho and Gemalto, German arms firms Hensoldt and Rheinmetall, Italian firms Leonardo and Intermarine and Turkish defence companies Aselsan and Otokar. There are also a number of semi-public companies and international organisations such as Civipol in France that provide consultancy, training, and management of border security projects that have thrived.

Researcher and author of the report, Mark Akkerman said: “This report reveals a policy of EU interaction with its neighbouring region that has become almost single-mindedly obsessed with migration control regardless of its costs for the country or for forcibly displaced persons. It is a narrow and ultimately self-defeating concept of security because it does not tackle the root causes that cause people to migrate and by reinforcing military and security forces in the region, is likely to exacerbate repression and stoke the conflicts that will lead to more people being forced from their homes. It’s time to change course. Rather than externalising borders and walls, we should be externalising real solidarity and respect for human rights”.

## NOTES

- The report is embargoed until 14 May 2018 and will be available at [www.tni.org/expandingfortresseurope](http://www.tni.org/expandingfortresseurope)
- A summary of the report is available in English, French, Italian, German, Spanish, Dutch, Arabic and Catalan.
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