



**GLOBAL
NET**

**STOP
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CASE 06-04 of the Global Net – Stop the Arms Trade

Murderous Walls – Profiteers of Isolation

Part 04: Maghreb- Countries, Egypt, the Sahel, East Africa

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Part 1: War and Displacement in Northern Africa

Since the end of the colonial era, many conflicts have broken out on the African continent over mineral resources such as oil, gold, diamonds and rare earths, as well as ethnic disputes between groups that had been forced by the colonial powers into states with arbitrarily drawn borders. Ethnic conflicts arose, as in Nigeria with the secessionist war over Biafra and later in Rwanda with hundreds of thousands of deaths, or as conflicts waged in the context of East-West conflict, for example in Angola and Mozambique. Some of these conflicts continue to the present and are partly responsible for the migration movements that lead through the Sahara to the coasts of the Mediterranean. The subcontinent of Africa north of the equator is still an area where more armed conflicts are fought out than anywhere else in the world in territories of comparable size¹. The number of refugees is correspondingly large, growing with each new conflict.



Figure 1: The Maghreb countries in a wider sense: Morocco, Western Sahara, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya; Graphic: Wikipedia

The current situation: since 2000, there has been fighting in Libya, in Mali and the Sahel, in certain areas of Central Africa, in northern Nigeria, in South Sudan and in Somalia, and, since 2021, in the Moroccan-occupied territories of Western Sahara and in the province of Tigray in northern Ethiopia. All of these conflicts have caused a significant portion of the people who have lived in these countries to flee northward, from where they attempt to escape to Europe via the Mediterranean Sea or the Red Sea and the Arabian Peninsula (see also GN-STAT Case 6-2 Saudi Arabia).

At the same time, the countries through which the refugees are crossing are arming themselves with border security systems, drones, desert-ready trucks and armored vehicles, armed border patrols and military coast guards. The funds for these mostly come from the European Union, which is striving to push its external borders further and further into Africa. The beneficiaries of their orders are primarily European defense and electronics companies such as Airbus, the French Thales Group, the Italian company Leonardo S.p.A. and the German corporations Rheinmetall, Thyssenkrupp and Hensoldt.

¹ Berghof-Stiftung: Kriege weltweit <https://www.frieden-fragen.de/entdecken/weltkarten/kriege-weltweit-2020.html> Accessed 5.5.2021

In **Mali**, after decades of relative calm and stability, age-old ethnic conflicts between populations of settled farmers and herders on the one hand and nomadic peoples such as the Tuareg on the other have flared up again. In January 2012, this conflict reached a new level of escalation. Tuareg rebels proclaimed the secession of the state of Azawad from Mali. At the same time Tuareg and Islamists engaged in heavy fighting in which the Islamists made territorial gains. The deployment of Malian and French troops under Operation Serval and the recapture of lost territory brought a fragile cease-fire in 2013. That same year, the United Nations launched MINUSMA, a peacekeeping mission in which other European contingents - including one from Germany - participated. Since MINUSMA's launch, 220 of the roughly 15,000-strong force have already died. Despite a peace agreement signed in 2015, the destabilization of the country continues unabated. Since President Keita was forced to resign in August 2020, a transitional government was to run things in the capital Bamako for an initial 18 months.

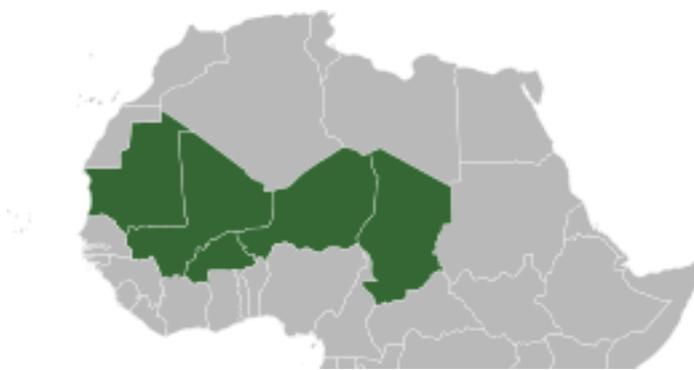


Figure 3: Sahel countries: Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Chad; Graphic: Wikipedia

The crisis in **Mali** caused nearly half a million people to leave their homes by 2013, according to estimates by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), and that number was expected to rise again by 2020, with the UNHCR including internally displaced persons in Mali.⁴ In late May 2021, the Malian military staged another coup and detained members of the transitional government.

In **northern Nigeria and Chad**, terrorist attacks by the radical Islamic Boko Haram and its cross-border offshoots have not only cost thousands of lives in recent years, but also triggered a huge wave of refugees. According to estimates by the Doctors of the World organization, more than two million people in the Chad basin and in provinces in northern Nigeria have abandoned their homes and fled north and west.⁵ Until now, Chad and its President Idriss Déby have been a safe bank for the West in the fight against Islamist terrorism. Whether this will continue is in question after Déby's death in April 2021.⁶

⁴ UNO Flüchtlingshilfe: Unruhen in Mali. <https://www.uno-fluechtlingshilfe.de/hilfe-weltweit/mali> Accessed 20.5.2021

⁵ Ärzte der Welt: Nigeria. <https://www.aerztederwelt.org/unsere-projekte/afrika/nigeria> Accessed 30.4.21

⁶ Wikipedia: Boko Haram. https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boko_Haram Accessed 30.4.21



Figure 4: The Province of Tigray in Northern Ethiopia; Graphic: Wikipedia

In **northern Ethiopia**, in the province of **Tigray**, a conflict broke out at the end of 2020 that had already repeatedly led to ethnic tensions since the country's independence. Ethiopia is a multi-ethnic state with some 80 ethnic groups and languages. The government under Nobel Peace Prize laureate Abiy Ahmed, which had been in power since 2018, refused to hold parliamentary elections in August 2020, citing the Corona crisis. As a result, the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), the dominant party in Tigray province, which felt it had been cheated out of electoral victory in

the region, took up arms. The central government in Addis Ababa retaliated with full force. The neighboring country of Eritrea, which has sided with Abiy since the peace agreement with Ethiopia, also sent troops. Thousands of refugees have arrived in southern Sudan, where camps are still filled with Sudanese refugees from the civil war. The same is true of the camps in Tigray itself, where thousands of Eritrean refugees who had fled repression in their country are staying. Reports of human rights violations against the Tigrean population, of murders and rapes, accumulated in the international press. In early May 2021, Abiy declared the conflict over. However, human rights violations continue. The United Nations refugee agency has appealed for millions in donations to avert a humanitarian catastrophe. "Already, there are 9.52 million internally displaced people in the 'Greater Horn of Africa Region,' according to the United Nations. Around 30 million people are already suffering from hunger." reported the German news magazine DER SPIEGEL in mid-April 2021.⁷

For more than 30 years, **Somalia** on the Horn of Africa has been considered a "failed state," a failed state torn apart by civil war. Regional ruling clans and militias such as the Islamist Al-Shabaab continue to prevent the formation of a nation state. In parts of the country, hunger prevails, and many inhabitants die of curable diseases due to a lack of medicines. In 2016, according to UNHCR, there were nearly one million refugees outside the country, plus 2.6 million internally displaced persons. This places Somalia 5th on the list of countries with the most internally displaced people in the world. They live in 2000 refugee settlements spread throughout the country. Over 60 percent of them are children. Somalia, in addition to the prevailing violence by armed clans and militias, is plagued by extreme drought and recurrent plagues of locusts that destroy crops. 2.2 million people suffer from constant food shortages.⁸

The UN recently summarized the total number of people displaced from their countries by warlike conflicts in northern Africa saying, "Seven of the ten countries

⁷ Fritz Schaap: Rache und Macht in DER SPIEGEL (Printausgabe) v. 24.4.2021

⁸ UNO Flüchtlingshilfe: Unruhen in Somalia. <https://www.uno-fluechtlingshilfe.de/hilfe-weltweit/somalia> Accessed 1.5.21

from which the most people fled in 2018 are on the African continent...By the end of 2019, the number of refugees in Africa (at) about 6.3 million is almost three times higher than in 2008 (2.3 million). The number of internally displaced persons has increased from 6.4 million in 2009 to over 18.5 million." ⁹

Part 2: The Way Through the Desert

A large proportion of the people who want to leave Africa are fleeing northward, having to cross the Sahara to get either to the beaches of the Maghreb states of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia, or to Libya and Egypt, from where they hope to cross by boat or ship to Spain, Italy or Greece. This is made more difficult for them every year, as the countries concerned have concluded a series of agreements with the European Union aimed at preventing flight across the Mediterranean or making their borders impassable in advance - by supplying border security equipment such as radar, thermal imaging cameras, body scanners, as well as reconnaissance aircraft and drones, patrol boats and personnel carriers for border guards, through to wheeled armored vehicles designed to prevent groups of refugees from continuing their journey across the desert. This makes the journey a life-threatening undertaking for thousands. The number of people who do not survive the desert crossing is "outrageous," says Vincent Cochetel, the UNHCR's special envoy for the Mediterranean and Libya. ¹⁰ According to findings by the IOM, the International Organization for Migration, from 2014 to the end of 2017, there were more than 15,600 drownings in the Mediterranean and another 6,042 deaths on land routes to and in Europe. Between 2014 and 2018, the IOM estimates that more than 30,000 people disappeared while traveling through the Sahara, SPIEGEL reported in 2019.

¹¹

The survivors on the overland route are refugees and migrants who, after weeks or months of wandering through the blazing hot desert, are happy to have arrived in one of the supposedly safe Maghreb countries to seek refuge and work. But many of them are intercepted by Moroccan, Algerian or Tunisian border guards before reaching this destination and are locked up in camps or "repatriated". Algeria, the country with the highest imports of arms and border security technologies from Europe (see the following chapter), has a reputation for executing repatriations of refugees to their home countries in a particularly brutal manner. According to many eyewitnesses,

⁹ UNO Flüchtlingshilfe: Flüchtlinge in Afrika <https://www.uno-fluechtlingshilfe.de/hilfe-weltweit/afrika> Accessed 1.5.21

¹⁰ Marcel Leubecher: „Die Dunkelziffer ist ungeheuerlich“ in: DIE WELT online of 6.11.20 <https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article203062144/Tod-in-der-Wueste-Die-Dunkelziffer-ist-ungeheuerlich.html> Accessed 10.5.2021

¹¹ Lucia Heisterkamp: „Wie private Retter versuchen, Migranten aus der Todeszone zu holen“ in : Spiegel Online, 30.08.2019 <https://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/alarmphone-sahara-wie-private-retter-versuchen-migranten-aus-der-todeszone-zu-holen-a-1282608.html> Accessed 22.5.2021

migrants are loaded onto trucks, driven near the borders to Niger or Mali, and forced to make their way back to their countries of origin on foot, without food or water.¹² Countless refugees - already weakened from the outward journey - do not survive the return trip.¹³

"Here in the desert, Algeria has abandoned more than 13,000 people in the past 14 months, including pregnant women and children, stranding them without food or water and forcing them to walk, sometimes at gunpoint, under temperatures of up to 48 degrees Celsius," according to a report from the AP news agency, quoted in the daily newspaper DIE WELT in June 2018. "Nearly all of the more than two dozen survivors the AP news agency spoke to told of people in their group who simply could not go on and disappeared into the Sahara. 'There were dead women, men,' said Janet Kamara, who was pregnant during the walk. 'Other people got lost in the Sahara because they didn't know the way.' The destination for most, the AP report said, was Niger. The luckier of the migrants trudge across desolate, 15-kilometer-wide no-man's land to Assamaka - not so much a village as a collection of warped buildings, half-sunken in the sand. "The less fortunate wander disoriented and dehydrated for days until UN rescue teams find them. And untold numbers of people perish along the way."¹⁴ But only larger groups of those dying of thirst or starvation attract the attention of the world press, as in 2016, when 34 migrants, including 20 children, were found dead in the Niger desert.¹⁵

An increasing proportion of those who cross the Sahara at the risk of their lives are war refugees from Western Sahara, Mali, Libya, northern Nigeria, Chad, South Sudan and northern Ethiopia. They are often prevented from fleeing by high-tech border protection facilities, helicopters and military vehicles from the same arms companies that supply weapons or military equipment to areas where war is currently being waged or armed conflict is imminent. This applies, among others, to the three largest European arms companies **Thales-Group** in Paris, **Leonardo S.p.A.** in Rome and **Rheinmetall AG** in Düsseldorf, as well as to the increasingly important military electronics company **Hensoldt** in Taufkirchen near Munich.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Sofian Philip Naceur: Algerien setzt tausende Menschen in der Wüste aus in: DER STANDARD INTERNATIONAL vom 14.10.2020 <https://www.derstandard.de/consent/tcf/story/2000120919692/algerien-setzt-tausende-menschen-in-der-wueste-aus> Accessed 14.4.2021

¹⁴ „Sie haben uns die Wüste geworfen, ohne Telefone, ohne Geld“ in: Die Welt of 25.6.2018 <https://www.welt.de/politik/ausland/article178184444/Abgewiesene-Migranten-Sie-haben-uns-in-die-Wueste-geworfen-ohne-Telefone-ohne-Geld.html> Accessed 14.4.2021

¹⁵ 34 Migranten in Sahara verdurstet Deutsche Welle TV Autoren-Kürzel kle/ml (afp/rtr) <https://www.dw.com/de/34-migranten-in-sahara-verdurstet/a-19332739> Accessed 18.5.2021

Part 3: Arms and Border Security: The Profiteers of Isolation

In its 2019 annual report, the defense contractor **Hensoldt Holding** openly describes the company's role in Algeria's border security as follows: "Algeria borders Niger in the southwest, where the jihadist terrorist organization Boko Haram continues to cause unrest...In order to contain the smuggling of weapons and people in particular, Algeria has protected its southeastern border with technology from HENSOLDT. The Algerian Border Guard is using SPEXER 2000 radar as well as NightOwl line cameras on border towers. The radars cover a 120-degree sector at a range of up to 40 kilometers. Vehicles, pedestrians or low-flying objects are automatically detected and can be further observed with the cameras from up to 25 kilometers away. NightOwl cameras consist of a sensor head with thermal imager, a daylight camera, and a platform for panning and tilting the sensor head. Thus, radar, optronics and radio networked via software provide an integrated solution for securing wide stretches of Algeria's southeastern border."¹⁶

There is no information on how many African refugees from sub-Saharan Africa have been tracked down by SPEXER radars in the Algerian desert and then apprehended and "repatriated".

Hensoldt was also instrumental in electronically securing Tunisia's border with Libya, although Tunisia is not one of the traditional transit routes for refugees from Sahel countries. "In 2015, when two serious terrorist attacks shook Tunisia, Germany expanded its military cooperation with the North African country, pledging to supply military equipment for 1.2 million euros and to increase training for Tunisian soldiers ... In 2017, German arms deliveries to Tunisia increased significantly. In particular, trucks, wheel loaders and parts for armored vehicles were delivered. In addition to five Spexer ground surveillance radars, Germany also delivered ten used Dingo-2 armored personnel carriers in 2017, BICC's Tunisia Country Report for 2020 breaks down.¹⁷ In total, German aid to Tunisia's border guard amounted to 34 million euros by the end of 2017, Deutsche Welle reported at the end of 2017.¹⁸ Hensoldt AG is regarded as a wunderkind in the industry, arousing covetousness among leading

¹⁶ Hensoldt Annual Report 2019 <https://annualreport.hensoldt.net/de/> Accessed 11.5.2021

¹⁷ BICC-Länderbericht Tunesien 07/2020

http://www.ruestungsexport.info/user/pages/04.laenderberichte/tunesien/2020_Tunesien.pdf Accessed 17.5.2021

¹⁸ Grenzschutz zu Libyen: Berlin rüstet Tunesien weiter auf Deutsche Welle 15.12.2017

<https://www.dw.com/de/grenzschutz-zu-libyen-berlin-r%C3%BCstet-tunesien-weiter-auf/a-41817209> Accessed 17.5.2021

military electronics and defense companies in Europe. In 2021, the Italian Leonardo Group took a 25.1% stake in the holding company.¹⁹

The French **Thales Group** has also long gained a foothold in North Africa with regard to border security. Peter Obermark, head of Thales Germany until 2016, explained the business Thales conducts in an interview: "Thales is, for example, the contractor for the entire border security of Morocco in the direction of Algeria. This is an 80-million-euro project ... Border security is becoming increasingly important and attractive to companies as a market - in both the European and Asian regions."²⁰

At the same time, Thales is a major equipment supplier to the Moroccan armed forces. "Thales Group has been a long-standing partner of the Royal Armed Forces in Morocco for nearly 30 years," the company's homepage states in the chapter "Defence in Morocco." And further: "Systems and equipment are widely used in the Royal Air Force, the Army, the Royal Gendarmerie and the Royal Navy. The main areas addressed are highly secure communication, optronics (night vision), radars, combat systems and security."²¹ It is not possible to find out exactly which systems are involved and what they are called on the homepage - presumably they are subject to military secrecy. Morocco and Algeria have been in a "frozen conflict" over the Western Sahara for decades, which could turn into a hot one at any time. And which then in turn is likely to trigger large refugee movements, which are to be hindered or prevented by the products of the same companies. This shows the full amorality of these deals.

Leonardo S.p.A., Europe's second-largest defense contractor with headquarters in Rome and subsidiaries in the United Kingdom, also appears to be focusing on Algeria in North Africa. In 2016, the company signed a contract with the Algerian Ministry of Defense for a joint venture to build three Augusta-Westland type helicopters for various applications "including transport, medical evacuation, surveillance and control." The press release left open for the time being whether more than three helicopters may be produced. Leonardo also equips Algeria with its long-range KRONOS radar systems, which are suitable for use both on land and at sea.²²

¹⁹ Hensoldt AG welcomes LEONARDO as a new major shareholder, Pressemitteilung Hensoldt AG 24.April 2021 <https://investors.hensoldt.net/websites/hensoldt/English/3080/news-detail.html?newsID=2083297> Accessed 17.5.2021

²⁰ Mobilität und Sicherheit in einer vernetzten Welt – Interview mit Peter Obermark, Thales Deutschland in: Hardthöhenkurier news 9 (undatiert) https://www.hardthoehenkurier.de/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=791:raytheon-kompetenter-partner-fuer-ausbildungsgestaltung-und-unterstuetzung Accessed 14.5.2021

²¹ Defence in Morocco/ Thales Group <https://www.thalesgroup.com/en/middle-east-africa/morocco/defence-morocco> Accessed 17.5.2021

²² The Kronos Family: the most advanced multifunction and multission radar systems. Leonardo S.p.A. <https://www.leonardocompany.com/en/news-and-stories-detail/-/detail/la-famiglia-kronos>

That leaves among the biggest profiteers from the North African foreclosure projects, besides Hensoldt Holding, further German companies: **Rheinmetall AG, Krauss-Maffei Wegmann, Thyssenkrupp Marine Systems** and the **Lürssen shipyard**.

Rheinmetall, as the largest German defense company, is also the largest contractor for defense projects in Algeria in terms of volume. Back in 2011, a joint venture was established between Rheinmetall, the MAN Group and two Algerian companies for the construction of 980 "Fuchs 2" troop transport tanks. Contract value €2.7 billion. Until 2020, 120 units of the three-axle wheeled tank, which is in service with a number of NATO and Eastern European countries, were to be assembled in Algeria each year.²³ With its three movable axles and high ground clearance, the Fuchs tank is particularly suitable for fast operations in sandy terrain.

In 2019, there were reports that Algeria had also ordered the "Boxer" wheeled tank - a joint development by Rheinmetall and Krauss-Maffei Wegmann, which already build the Leopard II main battle tank for the German Bundeswehr and other NATO armies in a long-standing cooperation - again as a joint venture with Algerian companies (i.e. delivery of the subassemblies from Germany and assembly in Algeria at the same plant where the Fuchs 2 had already rolled off the production line). The "Boxer" is larger and heavier than the Fuchs and has four movable axles. The special feature is that different modules can be mounted on the eight-wheeled chassis to equip it as a transport, medical or infantry fighting vehicle, wrote Handelsblatt in 2019. And further: "Algeria justified its wish list with the threat posed by the desolate situation in neighboring Libya, in the Sahel region and the danger of armed Islamic groups. For the German arms industry, these were welcome billion-dollar orders, and Berlin also hoped to improve its defense against refugees entering Europe."²⁴ An infantry fighting vehicle can - by the way - be equipped with a tank gun, grenade launchers, heavy machine guns and other weapons to become a main battle tank. This once again shows the ambiguity of European arms deliveries to Saharan countries and neighboring states: Weapons of war for potential border conflicts on the one hand and for the defense against refugees that cause these conflicts on the other - all incompatible with the War Weapons Control Act.

Accessed 19.5.2021

²³ Deutschland gibt Rüstung für Algerien frei. Handelsblatt of 3.7.2011

<https://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/international/grenzsicherung-deutschland-gibt-ruetzung-fuer-algerien-frei/4352684.html?ticket=ST-1739620-F0M56UiUjAVhXQdHcMKh-ap3>

Accessed 21.5.2021

²⁴ Gerhard Hegmann: Deutsche Panzerproduktion in Algerien soll ausgeweitet werden DIE WELT vom 12.5.2019

<https://www.welt.de/wirtschaft/article193367965/Radpanzer-Boxer-Rheinmetall-baut-angeblich-Produktion-in-Algerien-auf.html>

Accessed 21.5.2021

Egypt received the fourth Class 209 submarine from thyssenkrupp Marine Systems for deployment in the Mediterranean in September 2020. The submarines are each equipped with 14 torpedoes. Also in production: three Meko A200 class frigates armed with guns, missiles and torpedoes, to be delivered by 2024. With an order volume of 2.5 billion euros, Egypt is currently one of the largest customers of the German defense industry. One can only speculate about the motive for the orders. Does Egypt want to use military means to secure a share of the huge natural gas reserves in the eastern Mediterranean? After Turkey's threats of war against Greece in early 2021 over access to the region's mineral resources, this is quite conceivable. One thing is certain: even with the armament of its navy, Egypt is in a position to seal itself off against real or imagined enemies - and against refugees.

The **Lürssen shipyard** in Bremen was commissioned to build 35 patrol boats for the Saudi Arabian Navy, nine of which have already been built in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. After the murder of Saudi dissident Jamal Khashoggi in 2018, the German government stopped all outstanding arms deals with the Saudi royal family. Since then, the nine boats were waiting to be delivered to Saudi Arabia. In November 2020, the German Ministry of Economics then gave the go-ahead - not for Saudi Arabia, however, but for Egypt. The contract value for the nine patrol boats plus a further boat for coastal protection: around 130 million euros.²⁵

Patrol boats serve a dual purpose: If they are armed, for example with machine guns, cannons or missiles, they can deter aggressors or smugglers from landing on the coast. Conversely, they can prevent refugees from leaving the country by sea - as the Libyan coast guard has been doing for many months.

Incidentally, Amnesty International gave Egypt a similarly devastating human rights report card as Algeria, the second main recipient of German and European arms in northern Africa. The human rights violations described in the Amnesty country reports also concern the handling of refugees.²⁶

CONCLUSION

²⁵ „Patrouillenboote der Peenewerft dürfen exportiert werden“ NDR-Nachrichten Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 2.11.2020 <https://www.ndr.de/nachrichten/mecklenburg-vorpommern/Patrouillenboote-der-Peenewerft-duerfen-exportiert-werden,peenewerft224.html> Accessed 20.5.2021

²⁶ Ägypten 2020 Amnesty Report of 7.4.2021

<https://www.amnesty.de/informieren/amnesty-report/aegypten-2020> Accessed 20.5.2021
und Algerien 2017/18 Amnesty-Report vom 22.2.2018

<https://www.amnesty.de/jahresbericht/2018/algerien> Accessed 20.5.2021

We have described how the many conflicts and wars in northern and central Africa are exacerbating the already dramatic refugee situation. We have seen that arms companies, which have supplied and continue to supply weapons to the conflict regions, are among the profiteers of the billions of euros in sealing-off measures that the affected states have invested and continue to invest to ward off or divert mass migration. We have analyzed how human rights are disregarded and violated in this process and how the European governments that accompany and promote the process violate their own guidelines and principles.

Incidentally, this also applies to the European border protection agency **FRONTEX**, which has repeatedly been accused of violating the EU Commission's principles on how to treat refugees. For example, since the beginning of 2021, media in Central Europe have increasingly reported on how refugees were prevented from fleeing across the Mediterranean under the eyes of FRONTEX and forced to return to the African mainland with the help of the Libyan or Greek coast guards - a clear violation of international agreements on asylum law.²⁷

Critics also accuse FRONTEX of being in a process of armament and militarization. For example, military drones have recently been deployed to monitor the Mediterranean. The FRONTEX staff is to be increased to up to 10,000 men and women in the next decade, the officers are to be given uniforms and - if the EU states can agree on this – will be uniformly armed. So far, they do not carry weapons. Tenders for manufacturers of pistols and police equipment are being prepared.²⁸

The calculations for sales and profits are likely to be accurate to the euro and cent - as with all arms projects paid for by the taxpayer and delivered to countries that do not take human rights very seriously.

But who the refugees or migrants were who died of thirst in the desert, drowned in the sea or lost their lives, their health or their human dignity in the prisons and torture chambers of Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Ethiopia and Eritrea, and how many more will be affected in the coming months and years - that will probably remain forever in the dark.

²⁷ Tödliche Kollaboration – Frontex und die libysche Küstenwache in: Tagesschau vom 29.4.2021
AutorInnen Shafagh Laghai und Lara Straatmann
<https://www.tagesschau.de/investigativ/monitor/frontex-rueckfuehrungen-libyen-101.html>
Accessed 21.5.2021 und Libyens Küstenwache fängt fast 1000 Migranten ab - Deutsche Welle vom 29.3.2021
<https://www.dw.com/de/libyens-k%C3%BCstenwache-f%C3%A4ngt-fast-1000-migranten-ab/a-57044304> Accessed 21.5.2021

²⁸ FRONTEX hat ein Waffenproblem, Autor: Matthias Monroy, CILIP Institut und Zeitschrift vom 29.9.2020
<https://www.cilip.de/2020/09/23/frontex-hat-ein-waffenproblem/> Accessed 21.5.2021

ADDITION: More and more walls and fences in Europe - at the borders Spain/Morocco, Belarus/Lithuania as well as Greece and Bulgaria/Turkey

The fact that European states are now trying to seal off their own borders against migrants from Africa, Syria, Afghanistan and other conflict areas has been observed for some time in Southern and Eastern Europe. On several occasions, refugees have become pawns in political blackmail attempts. In the **Spanish enclave of Ceuta**, for example, around 6,000 Africans, including many children, managed to reach Spanish soil in May 2021 because the Moroccan government - presumably out of anger at Spain's stance in the conflict over Western Sahara - had briefly opened the border in Ceuta. The Spanish border police sent most of the refugees back to Morocco, but around 400 unaccompanied minors had to stay in Spain because their parents could not be found. The children were housed in an overcrowded reception center.²⁹

Political blackmail is also at play in the latest intra-European border dispute between **Belarus and Lithuania**. Starting in early summer 2021, dictator Lukashenko had thousands of refugees from Syria, Afghanistan and other Asian conflict regions brought to the border in Lithuania by buses and chartered planes, from where they were to continue their migration to the EU. Lukashenko considered this a response to the sanctions imposed on his country by the EU. Since then, the number of refugees apprehended from Asian and African countries has quadrupled, and Lithuania is building a barbed-wire fence hundreds of kilometers long with guard towers along the Bela-Russian-Lithuanian border, which until then had been a Green Border between friendly nations.³⁰

Greece and Bulgaria are doing something similar at the border with Turkey. Construction has been underway since President Erdogan announced in 2020 that he would open his borders to migrants in response to threats of sanctions from the EU, exacerbating the situation in Greece, which had already taken in 1.2 million refugees between 2015 and 2020. Along the Evros border river, Greek companies have built a 27-kilometer-long, four-and-a-half-meter-high steel wall with electronic surveillance by high-tech cameras and drones.³¹ And a special feature: the procurement of so-called sonic cannons. They are capable of directing a blast up to 190 decibels or a high-frequency whistling sound over several kilometers at individuals and groups to prevent them from crossing the border. By comparison, a

²⁹ ORF News from 18.5.2021 <https://orf.at/stories/3213459/> accessed 24.8.2021

³⁰ Der Spiegel Nr 22/2021 Zwischen den Fronten by Christina Hebel and Christoph Reuter (print edition of 14.8.2021)

³¹ Griechenland geht gegen Geflüchtete vor, in Frankfurter Rundschau vom 9.3.2021, Autor Ferry Batzoglou <https://www.fr.de/politik/27-kilometer-mauer-gegen-fluechtlinge-griechenland>

rocket launch produces 140 decibels, and eardrums burst above 200 decibels. Human rights groups in Greece and other countries have already protested the use of sound cannons, calling them a violation of the United Nations Convention Against Torture.³² Manufacturers of sonic cannons include the U.S. company Genasys Inc. in San Diego³³ and a German company in Kassel.³⁴

32 Viel Lärm um Griechenlands Grenzschutz in Der Standard v. 5.6.21 Autorin Kim Son Hoang <https://www.derstandard.de/story/2000127160372/viel-laerm-um-griechenlands-grenzschutz> abgerufen am 24.8.2021

33 Wikipedia Genasys <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genasys> abgerufen am 24.6.21

34 Made in Kassel: Schallkanone wehrt Angreifer ab <https://www.hna.de/kassel/schallkanone-wehrt-angreifer-5185287.html> abgerufen am 24.8.21