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EU's refugee relocation plan about to end

Two years ago, the European Union asked member states to accept refugees seeking asylum in Italy and Greece in order to alleviate the pressure on those countries.

The relocation scheme will end on Friday. It was a test of European solidarity. But a total of only around 30,000 people were actually relocated, which is less than a fifth of the number the EU had hoped.

Al Jazeera, EU's refugee relocation plan about to end, 21 September 2017, available from <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/09/eus-refugee-relocation-plan-set-170921191040678.html>

Refugees drown as boat capsizes in Black Sea

At least 21 refugees and migrants drowned on Friday and up to nine others were missing after a Europe-bound boat sank off Turkey's Black Sea coast, the Turkish coastguard said.

Forty people who had been on the fishing boat were saved.

Al Jazeera, Refugees drown as boat capsizes in Black Sea, 22 September 2017, available from <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/09/fifteen-dead-refugee-boat-capsizes-black-sea-170922145614016.html>

Baghdad says Erbil airport off limits for international flights from Friday evening

The director of Erbil airport in Iraqi Kurdistan says she has been told by Baghdad that all international flights will be banned from six pm local time on Friday. The Iraqi government told the Kurds they had until the Friday deadline to allow central government control of the Kurd's two airports at Erbil and Sulaimaniya, or face an embargo. The embargo is among Baghdad's first concrete responses to the Iraqi Kurd's referendum on independence, which mobilised 92% support.

Euronews, Baghdad says Erbil airport off limits for international flights from Friday evening, 28 September 2017, available from <http://www.euronews.com/2017/09/28/baghdad-says-erbil-airport-off-limits-for-international-flights-from-friday>

European Commission seeks to resettle 50,000 refugees

The European Commission has unveiled a new plan that would allow for 50,000 refugees - mostly from a host of African countries - to be resettled to Europe over the next two years.

The proposal on Wednesday by the European Union's executive branch involves admitting asylum seekers under the bloc's resettlement programme, which was introduced at the height of a major refugee crisis in 2015.

Al Jazeera, European Commission seeks to resettle 50,000 refugees, 27 September 2017, available from <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/09/european-commission-seeks-resettle-50000-refugees-170927170931800.html>

US: Refugee cap at 45,000 in 2018, marking all-time low

Senior officials in the Trump administration have briefed Congress on the president's plans to cut the number of refugees allowed into the US. Donald Trump wants to cap the number next year at an all-time low of 45,000 refugees.

Al Jazeera, US: Refugee cap at 45,000 in 2018, marking all-time low, 28 September 2017, available from <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/09/us-refugee-cap-45-000-2018-marking-all-time-170928080419237.html>

HRW: Jordan 'summarily deporting Syrian refugees'

Human Rights Watch has accused the Jordanian government of summarily deporting hundreds of registered Syrian refugees, despite the possible harm they may face by going back to their war-torn country

The US-based rights advocacy group released a 27-page document that chronicled the deportation of 400 refugees during the first five months of 2017. It has also called on other countries to increase their assistance to Jordan, which has hosted more than 650,000 Syrian refugees.

Al Jazeera, HRW: Jordan 'summarily deporting Syrian refugees', 03 October 2017, available from <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/10/jordan-summarily-deporting-syrian-refugees-hrw-171002131634501.html>

Amnesty urges halt to Afghan refugee returns from EU

Human rights group Amnesty International is urging European nations to stop sending Afghans who do not qualify for asylum back to what it describes as their “deeply unsafe” home country.

The call comes after a steady rise in violence over recent years as the Taliban has gained ground across the country.

Amnesty claims the number of Afghans returned from Europe almost tripled between 2015 and 2016 to nearly 9,500.

“No part of Afghanistan is safe to returned people so we’re actually calling for a moratorium on returns until such a time as the country could be deemed safer,” said Iverna McGowan of Amnesty International’s EU office.

Afghans have been among the main groups of asylum seekers in Europe second only to Syrians. Amnesty said the Afghan government should not cooperate with sending people back, despite its dependence on foreign aid.

Euronews, Amnesty urges halt to Afghan refugee returns from EU, 05 October 2017, available from <http://www.euronews.com/2017/10/05/amnesty-urges-halt-to-afghan-refugee-returns-from-eu>

Refugees in Greece feel like 'prisoners and hostages'

Nearly 200 refugees and migrants are reaching Greek shores each day, putting the arrival rate at the highest since March 2016, according to the UK-based charity Save the Children.

"Slow asylum processes mean people are stuck on the islands indefinitely, and families with children are having to live in makeshift shelters with water shortages, poor sanitation and insufficient toilets," Save the Children said in a recent press release. "Rats and insects have infested living areas, and improvised electrical wiring poses danger to children."

Al Jazeera, Refugees in Greece feel like 'prisoners and hostages', 03 October 2017, available from <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/10/refugees-greece-feel-prisoners-hostages-171001064707203.html>

UN: Myanmar violence may be 'crimes against humanity'

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Committee on the Rights of a Child called on Myanmar authorities to "promptly and effectively investigate and vigorously prosecute cases of violence against women and children" in northern Rakhine.

Al Jazeera, UN: Myanmar violence may be 'crimes against humanity', 04 October 2017, available from <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/10/myanmar-violence-crimes-humanity-171004083223963.html>

DR Congo children find refuge in Zambia

Children in the Democratic Republic of Congo are bearing the brunt of escalating violence between Congolese security forces and armed groups in the country.

Out of the 3,360 refugees who have fled into northern Zambia since August 30, at least 60 percent are children, according to the UN refugee agency (UNHCR).

After walking hundreds of kilometres alone for weeks, many are traumatised and show signs of malnutrition.

Al Jazeera, DR Congo children find refuge in Zambia, 08 October 2017, available from <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/10/dr-congo-children-find-refuge-zambia-171008104220891.html>

Armed faction captures key Libyan port of Sabratha as concern for migrants grows

More than 3,000 migrants were arrested in smugglers camps near the Libyan city of Sabratha on Saturday and transported to detention centres set up to combat illegal immigration.

The arrests come after a week of heavy fighting in the port and a day after an armed alliance claimed victory over Italian-backed militias who had been paid to stem the flow of migrants to Europe.

Euronews, Armed faction captures key Libyan port of Sabratha as concern for migrants grows, 08 October 2017, available from <http://www.euronews.com/2017/10/08/armed-group-captures-key-libyan-port-of-sabratha>

Civilians evacuated from Syria's Raqqa as fighting intensifies

Fighting is intensifying in Syria in a major operation to recapture areas under ISIL control. The battleground is around the cities of Raqqa and Deir Az Zor, where thousands of people are trapped. Syrians who managed to escape to makeshift refugee camps face shortages of food and medicine.

Al Jazeera, Civilians evacuated from Syria's Raqqa as fighting intensifies, 14 October 2017, available from <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/10/civilians-evacuated-syrias-raqqa-fighting-intensifies-171014144948548.html>

Protests against citizenship for migrant children in Italy

Around 1,000 people have protested in Rome against giving citizenship to the children of migrants. It's in response to the so-called 'ius soli' bill, which would grant citizenship to children born on Italian soil who have completed five years in the school system.

Euronews, Protests against citizenship for migrant children in Italy, 14 October 2017, available from <http://www.euronews.com/2017/10/14/protests-against-citizenship-for-migrant-children-in-italy>