

IECLO MONTHLY WRAP JULY 2026

COURT OF JUSTICE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION (CJEU)

Commission endorses Malta's €60 million Social Climate Plan to support vulnerable households and small companies in the clean transition

The European Commission has endorsed Malta's Social Climate Plan, which will provide financial support to ensure a fair and inclusive clean transition. The plan focuses on helping vulnerable households improve the energy efficiency of their homes through measures such as insulation, heat pump water heaters and photovoltaic systems with battery storage. It will also improve sustainable transport, including community transport services and support for vulnerable micro-enterprises to access electric vehicles and charging infrastructure. Overall, the plan aims to reduce energy poverty, lower greenhouse gas emissions and protect vulnerable groups from the social impacts of the transition to cleaner energy and transport. It was developed in consultation with national stakeholders and the European Commission.

Nearly half a tonne of cocaine seized in sea operation co-led by Frontex

Operation White Sea VI, co-led by Frontex, targeted criminal networks using maritime routes to smuggle cocaine into Europe. The international operation led to the seizure of 454 kg of cocaine and the arrest of five suspects, with hundreds of vessels monitored and inspected. Authorities focused on several smuggling methods, including dropping drugs into the sea for smaller boats to collect, transferring shipments between vessels, hiding drugs on ships or attaching them to their hulls, and involving crew members in the trafficking.

Frontex supported the operation through maritime and aerial surveillance, vessel tracking, inspections and coordination between participating countries and international partners. The operation also addressed a growing trafficking method in which large ships drop cocaine at sea for smaller boats to retrieve before reaching European shores.

Fighting child sexual abuse online: interim measure protecting children now reinstated

The Council has approved a temporary regulation allowing online service providers to voluntarily detect, report and remove child sexual abuse material (CSAM) from their platforms. The measure aims to protect children, support the identification and prosecution of offenders, help rescue victims and prevent the further spread of abusive content online. The regulation provides a temporary derogation from certain data protection rules applicable to electronic communications, allowing providers to carry out these activities lawfully. Its purpose is to fill the legal gap until a permanent EU framework for preventing and combating online child sexual abuse is adopted. The measure is separate from and does not prejudice the ongoing negotiations on the long-term legislation.

COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Iran: Council sanctions an additional six individuals over serious human rights violations

The Council has imposed restrictive measures on six additional individuals in Iran for serious human rights violations. The sanctions target five judges of the Revolutionary Courts accused of prosecuting religious minorities, political dissidents and human rights activists through harsh sentences, including death penalties and long prison terms. The measures also target an Iranian hacker linked to the Ashiyane cyber group, accused of carrying out cyber-attacks against opponents, reformists and foreign institutions in support of the Iranian authorities' repression. The sanctions include asset freezes, EU travel bans and a prohibition on making funds or economic resources available to the listed individuals. The EU also maintains restrictions on the export of equipment that could be used for internal repression. Overall, the EU reiterates its support for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the Iranian people.

Fighting child sexual abuse online: interim measure protecting children now reinstated

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EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Humanitarian aid: the EU must condemn violations of international humanitarian law

The European Parliament has adopted a resolution on EU humanitarian aid, stressing the need to protect humanitarian principles and international humanitarian law. MEPs condemn the obstruction and politicisation of humanitarian assistance, as well as attacks and killings of humanitarian workers, which can constitute war crimes. They call for stronger investigations, prosecution of perpetrators and better monitoring and documentation of violations of international humanitarian law. The resolution also addresses the global humanitarian funding crisis, expressing concern about reductions in aid budgets and the risk that geopolitical priorities could divert resources from the most vulnerable countries. Parliament calls for EU humanitarian assistance to be needs-based, effective and accountable, with greater support for displaced people and host communities, investment in long-term solutions and stronger links between humanitarian aid, development and peace.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

New study on the collection of EU statistics on trafficking in human beings

The EU Anti-trafficking Hub has published a study on the collection of statistics on trafficking in human beings, highlighting both existing good practices and remaining challenges across EU Member States. Reliable and comparable data is essential to understand the scale and trends of human trafficking. Although Member States have established systems for collecting and reporting

information on victims, offenders and forms of exploitation, differences in definitions, methodologies, reporting practices and data-sharing systems can make EU-wide comparisons difficult. The study recommends improving the quality, consistency and comparability of data, including better reporting on presumed victims, victims and offenders, stronger cooperation between national authorities, improved coordination mechanisms and more effective data-quality checks.

Main asylum and migration developments of 2025 explored in new EMN Asylum and Migration Overview

The European Migration Network (EMN) has published the Asylum and Migration Overview, providing a comprehensive overview of developments in asylum and migration across EU Member States and other participating countries. The report highlights a decline in irregular arrivals and first-time asylum applications, while the number of Schengen short-stay visas issued increased. At the same time, countries continued to develop legal migration pathways for highly qualified workers, students and researchers, while introducing stronger controls to prevent misuse and address security concerns. Asylum and migration management remained focused on improving the efficiency of asylum procedures, reception systems and border management. Digitalisation played an important role in modernising migration systems and administrative processes. Integration policies continued to prioritise employment, language learning and recognition of skills, with particular attention to people displaced from Ukraine. Measures were also strengthened to protect vulnerable groups, including unaccompanied minors and victims of human trafficking. Finally, the report highlights the growing importance of international cooperation, particularly in addressing labour shortages, combating irregular migration and trafficking, supporting returns and developing partnerships with third countries.

EUROPEAN BORDER AND COAST GUARD AGENCY (FRONTEX)

More than 1000 arrests in global operation targeting human trafficking networks

Operation Global Chain, a major international crackdown targeting human trafficking networks across five continents, has led to over 1,000 arrests and the identification of more than 2,000 victims, including 162 children. Executed between 8 and 12 June 2026 under the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT), the action mobilized more than 40,000 officers from

59 countries alongside Europol, Frontex, and INTERPOL. Authorities focused on dismantling networks involved in sexual exploitation, forced labor, forced begging, and forced criminality. The joint operation resulted in 1,024 arrests—334 specifically for trafficking offenses—alongside 2,070 identified victims, 465 new criminal investigations, and 80 cases of document fraud. Investigative data shows that adult women comprised the vast majority of identified victims, with 64.2% targeted for sexual exploitation. Among child victims, sexual exploitation was even more prevalent, accounting for 86.4% of cases. Authorities noted that protecting young victims remains particularly challenging as exploitation often involves family members. Operational coordination hubs in Skopje and Rio de Janeiro enabled real-time intelligence exchange, allowing international authorities to inspect over 565,000 individuals and 360,000 identity documents. Frontex Executive Director Hans Leijtens highlighted that human trafficking represents a grave violation of human dignity and underscored that cross-border cooperation is essential to dismantling organized networks and offering victims a pathway to justice.

Counterfeit goods worth more than EUR 17 million seized in Frontex-led operation across Europe

During Joint Action Days (JAD) Pirates 4, a major international operation led by Frontex, border guards, police, and customs officers across Europe intercepted more than 1.7 million counterfeit and undeclared items valued at over €17.4 million. The crackdown took place between 15 and 26 June 2026 across land borders, ports, airports, and logistics hubs. Co-led by Bulgaria and Europol, the initiative brought together authorities from 12 EU Member States alongside Serbia, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom, with additional support from INTERPOL and the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO). The operation resulted in the seizure of over 1.35 million counterfeit products worth €12.2 million—ranging from everyday consumer goods like clothing, cosmetics, and electronics to high-risk items such as pharmaceuticals, tobacco, and vehicle parts. Additionally, officers confiscated over €5.2 million in illicit and undeclared goods, including fuel, firearms, stolen vehicles, exotic wildlife, and cultural artifacts, while detecting 10 fraudulent documents and refusing entry to 51 individuals. Coordinated via a headquarters center in Warsaw under the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT), JAD Pirates 4 targeted key trafficking routes in the Balkans, Black Sea, and Mediterranean. Frontex Deputy Executive Director Lars Gerdes emphasized that counterfeit trade directly funds organized crime and poses severe health risks, highlighting how joint border operations disrupt criminal networks before hazardous products enter the market.

Frontex and Europol strengthen cooperation to fight cross-border crime

Frontex and Europol have signed a new working arrangement in Dublin to step up joint efforts against migrant smuggling, human trafficking, terrorism, and transnational crime. Replacing their 2015 agreement, the updated operational framework aligns inter-agency collaboration with expanded mandates and contemporary EU data protection law, incorporating key recommendations from the

European Data Protection Supervisor. Signed by Frontex Executive Director Hans Leijten and Europol Acting Executive Director Jürgen Ebner during an informal meeting of EU Justice and Home Affairs ministers, the agreement took effect immediately.

The partnership strengthens operational synergy across four main areas: targeted information exchange, shared situational awareness via EUROSUR, joint operational coordination under EMPACT, and mutual training and research initiatives. Strict safeguards govern the exchange of operational personal data, ensuring transfers remain strictly necessary, proportionate, and monitored by both agencies' Fundamental Rights and Data Protection Officers. Officials emphasized that seamlessly linking border security intelligence with law enforcement investigations is critical to disrupting organized crime networks, dismantling smuggling operations, and safeguarding the EU's external borders.

Nearly half a tonne of cocaine seized in sea operation co-led by Frontex

Operation White Sea VI, an international maritime crackdown targeting drug trafficking networks across Europe's Atlantic and northern waters, resulted in the seizure of 454 kg of cocaine and the arrest of five suspects. Executed between 8 June and 5 July 2026, the month-long initiative was run by Belgian Customs and co-led by Frontex and Danish Customs. The operation mobilized authorities from 14 countries, supported by Europol, MAOC-N, the United States, and Latin American liaison officers, monitoring 691 vessels and conducting 117 targeted inspections.

The joint action specifically disrupted a prevalent smuggling tactic where large vessels drop cocaine into open waters for smaller craft to collect before reaching land. Operating under the EMPACT framework, Frontex provided extensive aerial surveillance, deployed Standing Corps officers for ship inspections, and hosted the operational coordination center at its Warsaw headquarters. Authorities emphasized that multi-agency maritime intelligence and real-time cross-border tracking remain vital to intercepting illicit drug shipments before they penetrate European ports.

Frontex joins World Customs Organization to target cash and valuables smuggling in Southeast Europe

Frontex partnered with the World Customs Organization (WCO) to conduct Balkans Action Days, a pilot operation targeting the smuggling of undeclared cash and physical valuables across borders in Southeast Europe. Held between 20 and 24 July 2026, the joint initiative involved border and customs authorities from Bulgaria, Greece, North Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia. Standing Corps

officers from Frontex supported national teams on the ground by assisting with physical searches of passenger baggage at key border points.

The five-day crackdown led to the detection and seizure of €221,770 in euros, \$20,000 in U.S. dollars, 100,000 Turkish lira, and over two kilograms of silver jewelry. Officials highlighted that despite the shift toward digital payments, cash smuggling remains a primary method for financing transnational crime, including drug trafficking, illicit trade, and migrant smuggling. By pooling border management and customs expertise, the joint operation reinforced efforts to intercept illicit financial flows in Southeast Europe before they enter the formal banking system.

EUROPEAN DEFENCE AGENCY (EDA)

EDA names five finalists for loitering munition challenge

The European Defence Agency (EDA) has selected five European companies—Helsing (Germany), Destinus (Netherlands), C-Astral (Slovenia), UAVision (Portugal), and Spirit Aeronautical Systems (Greece)—as finalists for Stage 2 of its Sentinel Strike Challenge. Each company received a €30,000 Stage 1 prize and will advance to field testing during the EU OPEX26 campaign at the Santa Margarida training area in Portugal. Five additional runners-up received €10,000 each.

Selected from over 140 applicants, the finalists will test their loitering munition systems under realistic and contested conditions to compete for €1.8 million in total prizes. Evaluated directly by EU military personnel, the initiative uses field experimentation rather than traditional procurement to gather comparable performance data on emerging drone technologies before Member States make future defense investment decisions. Overall winners will be announced in 2027.

EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGION

Next EU budget for migration management needs to better match local needs

The European Committee of the Regions (CoR) has adopted a formal opinion demanding that EU funding for asylum, migration, and integration under the 2028–2034 Multiannual Financial Framework directly address the operational needs of local and regional communities. Drafted by rapporteur Arnoldas Abramavičius, the position stresses that municipalities and regions bear primary responsibility for practical integration services—such as housing, healthcare, education, language training, and employment—while dealing with issues like disinformation and the state-sponsored weaponization of migration along eastern borders. Responding to proposed EU budget reforms that

merge thematic funds into broad National and Regional Partnership Plans (NRPPs), the CoR warns against centralizing governance and reducing local authorities to mere policy implementers. The assembly calls for predictable, accessible, and place-based financial support, alongside dedicated technical assistance for border, rural, island, and demographically affected regions facing severe migratory pressures and administrative constraints

Statement on court proceedings against Istanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu

Representatives from the European Committee of the Regions and the European Parliament, including Jelena Drenjanin, Nacho Sánchez Amor, and Magdalena Adamowicz, have issued a joint statement expressing strong solidarity with imprisoned Istanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu as his main defense hearings commence on 6 July. Held in pre-trial detention since March 2025 on politically motivated charges, İmamoğlu faces over two thousand years in prison and is forced to defend himself in three simultaneous cases, raising grave concerns regarding judicial fairness. The signatories, highlighting his recognition as the 2026 Mayor Paweł Adamowicz Award laureate for defending local democracy, denounced the broader backsliding of democratic freedoms in Türkiye, where around 45 opposition mayors and local officials have been detained, arrested, or suspended since 2024. Urging Turkish authorities to uphold democratic standards, the EU representatives called for the immediate release of İmamoğlu and all politically targeted local leaders.

EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS (FRA)

FRA flags fundamental rights challenges as Migration and Asylum Pact takes effect

FRA's second Migration Bulletin highlights ongoing fundamental rights challenges at the EU's external borders and for people displaced from Ukraine. Key concerns include risks to life, violence, summary returns and limited access to asylum. Investigations into alleged rights violations remain insufficient, although judicial scrutiny and monitoring have increased in some Member States. The Pact on Migration and Asylum introduces new obligations for Member States to protect the fundamental rights of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees.

Search and rescue NGOs in the Mediterranean continue to face legal action

The Mediterranean remains one of the world's deadliest migration routes, with many people dying or going missing while trying to reach Europe. NGOs carry out search and rescue (SAR) operations in the Central Mediterranean, but they face increasing legal and administrative obstacles, including fines, vessel detention and criminal or administrative proceedings, particularly in Italy. FRA highlights two key priorities: protecting humanitarian search and rescue activities from criminalisation and maintaining a clear distinction between humanitarian assistance and migrant smuggling; and strengthening SAR operations to prevent deaths while fully respecting fundamental rights, especially the principle of non-refoulement. Overall, the report calls for greater rescue capacity, safe disembarkation, effective protection pathways and stronger respect for the fundamental rights of people seeking safety in Europe.

EUROPOL

1024 arrests in global operation against human trafficking

A massive international operation coordinated by Europol, Frontex, and Interpol across 59 countries has dealt an unprecedented blow to global human trafficking networks. The crackdown, code-named “Operation Global Chain,” has led to the arrest of 1,024 suspects and the safeguarding of 2,070 vulnerable victims, of which the vast majority trafficked for sexual exploitation. This intervention carried extraordinary strategic importance, not only due to its vast transcontinental scale, but primarily because it struck at the heart of the new digital recruitment methods used by traffickers to manipulate their victims. The crucial significance of this operation lies in proving that only unified intelligence and global cooperation can dismantle these otherwise invisible criminal networks, restoring dignity and fundamental rights to thousands of individuals who would otherwise remain beyond the reach of individual national jurisdictions

28 arrests in international strike against child sexual exploitation

A major international operation coordinated by Europol and global law enforcement partners across multiple countries has dealt an unprecedented blow to dark web child exploitation networks. The crackdown, targeting hidden online forums, has led to the arrest of 28 key suspects and the immediate safeguarding of several minor victims exposed to severe abuse. This intervention carried extraordinary strategic importance, not only due to its complex cross-border reach, but primarily because it struck at the heart of the sophisticated cryptocurrency transactions and encrypted channels used by offenders to remain anonymous. The operation resulted in the permanent shutdown of key illegal platforms and provided law enforcement agencies with vast data reserves to identify further suspects across international borders.

Counter-terrorism operation disrupted Islamic State Khorasan Province activities

An intense week-long operational initiative driven by Europol's European Counter Terrorism Centre (ECTC) alongside eight European law enforcement agencies and the US FBI has severely disrupted Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP) support networks. Focusing on high-risk individuals of Chechen and Central Asian origin, the targeted action directly enabled multiple arrests through urgent intelligence exchanges via the SIENA secure network. Investigators processed more than 100 gigabytes of operational data, establishing the identities of key suspects and advancing critical ongoing cases across several jurisdictions. This joint action highlights a shift toward real-time data

sharing and immediate tactical coordination, establishing a reinforced operational framework designed to neutralize transnational terrorist infrastructures before they materialize into active threats.

EPPO

Germany: EPPO carries out searches in probe into subsidy fraud involving EU migration and integration funds

On 1 July 2026, the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) in Munich coordinated coordinated raids and searches targeting an organized subsidy fraud scheme involving EU funds for migration, asylum, and integration. Investigations revealed that managers of non-profit organizations submitted falsified documentation and inflated expense reports to improperly obtain millions of euros from the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF). The operation led to the seizure of financial records, digital devices, and high-value assets aimed at recovering misappropriated public capital. By freezing illicit assets and securing digital evidence, the EPPO neutralized a scheme that directly diverted crucial EU funding away from humanitarian and social integration initiatives.

Portugal: EPPO indicts 15 suspects over fraud involving RRF-funded projects for public education institutions

The EPPO in Porto indicted 12 individuals—including four public officials—and three corporations on 14 July 2026 for rigged public tenders in education. The criminal scheme targeted RRF-funded contracts worth over €3.5 million intended for IT and cybersecurity equipment for universities and secondary schools. Perpetrators used insider access to leak confidential procurement details and set up shell companies to simulate open market competition. The formal indictment and execution of financial freezing orders directly secured the recovery of funds and initiated criminal prosecution against the key public and corporate actors responsible for the systemic misappropriation of EU education resources.

Romania: EPPO conducts searches in probe into €4 million hospital procurement fraud

On 21 July 2026, the EPPO in Bucharest conducted 12 searches at a municipal hospital and private corporate premises regarding a €4 million ERDF-funded procurement fraud. The investigation uncovered rigged technical criteria in tender documents designed to favor specific suppliers of advanced medical equipment at inflated cost structures. The execution of search warrants and seizure of digital records halted pending payments under the contracts and preserved evidence for formal bribery and fraud charges.

Italy: EPPO seizes €20 million in probe into suspected RRF fraud involving fake training courses

On 21 July 2026, the EPPO in Milan executed freezing orders seizing approximately €20 million in bank accounts and insurance policies linked to five companies in an investigation into suspected RRF subsidy fraud. The investigation, carried out with the Carabinieri, centers on a €40 million fraud scheme involving Italy's "Fondo Nuove Competenze", where public subsidies intended for employee training were fraudulently claimed using fictitious training activities. The execution of targeted asset

freezes secured €20 million in suspected criminal proceeds and formally notified 84 corporate representatives across Italy of ongoing criminal proceedings for aggravated fraud against EU financial interests.

Poland: New arrests and second request to lifting immunity of Member of Parliament in ongoing corruption investigation

In an ongoing corruption probe led by the EPPO office in Katowice, the European Chief Prosecutor submitted a formal request to the Polish Parliament to strip the immunity of an active MP to authorize pre-trial detention. Law enforcement simultaneously executed new arrests of key suspects implicated in trading in influence and political favors regarding public fund allocation. The operational measures included targeted searches resulting in the seizure of crucial evidentiary documentation and digital assets. This prosecution underscores the strategic importance of combating public-office crimes and systemic corruption, upholding legal accountability across all institutional levels.

EUROJUST

Eurojust supports arrest of high-value target suspected of smuggling 625 people into Europe

On 5 August, a high-value target suspected of smuggling more than 600 migrants to Western Europe was arrested in Belgrade as part of a joint operation involving the German and Serbian authorities, coordinated by Eurojust and Europol. The criminal network is believed to have facilitated the movement of mainly Syrian nationals from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina towards Germany and other Western European countries through several routes across Central Europe. According to the investigation, migrants were charged between EUR 2,000 and EUR 10,000 for their journey. The arrested suspect is believed to have played a central role in the network and to have been involved in at least 37 smuggling operations between June 2023 and June 2024. The investigation was supported by Eurojust through a Joint Investigation Team (JIT), which facilitated the exchange of information between the German and Serbian authorities and contributed to the identification and arrest of the suspect. The operation forms part of broader efforts to dismantle the criminal network, following the arrest of five other members in coordinated actions carried out in Germany, the Netherlands and Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2025. Europol also provided operational and analytical support throughout the investigation.

Growing number of data requests and complex legal landscape among key challenges for accessing electronic evidence

The latest SIRIUS Electronic Evidence Situation Report highlights the growing challenges faced by law enforcement and judicial authorities in accessing electronic evidence in cross-border criminal investigations. More than half of criminal investigations now involve requests for electronic evidence,

such as text messages, e-mails and data from online applications. At the same time, the volume of data requests has increased significantly, reaching 3.5 times the level recorded in 2018, with emergency requests also on the rise. The report points to several legal and technical obstacles, including the difficulty of identifying where data is stored, the distribution of servers across different countries and the absence of harmonised data retention rules. Against this background, the EU e-Evidence legislative package is expected to make cross-border access to electronic evidence faster and more effective by introducing clearer and more streamlined procedures. At the same time, the report stresses the importance of ensuring that greater investigative efficiency is accompanied by adequate safeguards for fundamental rights. The SIRIUS Project, jointly implemented by Eurojust and Europol, continues to support authorities and service providers in navigating the complex legal framework and adapting to the new e-Evidence system.

New Swiss Liaison Prosecutor Flavia Roy starts at Eurojust

On 11 August, Flavia Roy was appointed as the new Liaison Prosecutor for Switzerland at Eurojust. Her appointment will strengthen cooperation between Swiss authorities and their EU counterparts in complex cross-border criminal investigations. Roy has been working at Eurojust since November 2024 as Deputy Liaison Prosecutor and recently joined the Agency's Economic Crime Team, where she contributes to the fight against fraud, swindling and money laundering. She previously served as a Public Prosecutor and Investigative Judge in Switzerland, bringing extensive experience in international criminal cooperation to her new role.

OLAF

OLAF helps dismantle major counterfeit nicotine pouch factory in Lithuania

On 7 August, Lithuanian authorities, supported by intelligence provided by OLAF, dismantled a large-scale illegal factory producing counterfeit nicotine pouches in Kaunas. The operation led to the seizure of more than 330,000 boxes of products bearing the trademarks of well-known brands, as well as significant quantities of nicotine and other raw materials intended for production. The investigation began after OLAF identified indications of illegal manufacturing and shared the relevant information with the Lithuanian Customs Criminal Service. Authorities subsequently uncovered a sophisticated production facility equipped for the manufacturing, packaging and labelling of counterfeit nicotine pouches. The network is believed to have supplied markets in the Baltic and Scandinavian countries, as well as the United Arab Emirates. The case highlights the role of cross-border cooperation in tackling illicit production and counterfeit trade. Beyond the economic damage caused to legitimate businesses, the operation also raised concerns over consumer safety, as the products were manufactured outside regulated supply chains and involved the handling of highly toxic nicotine.

UNDP

UNDP and UNHCR urge investment as Afghanistan face sustained refugee returnee

Since 2023, more than 6 million Afghans have returned to the country, including around 2.9 million in 2025. More than 750,000 people have already returned so far this year, with a further 2.5 million expected by the end of 2026. Afghanistan is facing one of the world's largest return movements, placing immense pressure on communities grappling with acute poverty, climate shocks and limited economic opportunities. UNDP and UNHCR directors urge international community does not turn away from Afghanistan, warning that declining attention could deepen poverty and fuel further undermining of fragile gains. The two UN chiefs also underscored new joint efforts to expand access to legal identity documentation, which is essential for accessing services, economic opportunities and long-term reintegration. After years outside the country, fewer than half of returning Afghans possess documentation linking them to Afghanistan. Through their complementary mandates, UNHCR and UNDP support returnees from reception and protection at the border through reintegration, livelihoods, social cohesion and economic recovery in the communities where they settle. Afghanistan remains one of the world's most fragile economies. Heavily dependent on agriculture, the country is acutely exposed to the impacts of climate change. Recent returnees are among the most vulnerable, with 92 per cent unable to meet their basic needs. In provinces receiving large numbers of returnees, only 3 per cent have formal employment, while 78 per cent rely on casual labour.

Ending AIDS as a public health threat is within reach

Over the past two years, an unprecedented funding crisis in global health has caused major cutbacks to HIV programmes - notably around prevention - undermining efforts to end AIDS. UNAIDS data from 62 countries shows that the number of people receiving pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) at least once declined by 38% between 2024 and 2025, including in countries heavily affected by HIV. Last year 570,000 people died from AIDS-related illnesses. At the same time, the advent of new long-acting prevention tools that are almost 100 percent successful at preventing HIV transmission could revolutionize the response if they become more widely accessible. UNDP has supported several grantees from its Power of Prevention program in Southern Africa. Five key population-led organizations will be sharing their experiences supporting the rollout of long-acting prevention in diverse communities in Malawi, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

UNEP

European Parliament seals landmark ban on poor-quality used vehicle exports

The EU Parliament has given final approval to a new vehicle circulatory rule along with a ban on the export of high-emitting, unsafe used vehicles, as every year million of used vehicles leave European ports bounds for Africa. These new rules are backed by five years' worth of evidence, elaborated by UNEP, documenting the environmental toll of high-emission, unroadworthy vehicles. The findings were eye-opening: used vehicles supply up to 90 per cent of fleets in many low- and middle-income countries – in Kenya and Nigeria, some 95 per cent of vehicles added to the roads each year are second-hand imports – and a significant share of those vehicles leaving EU ports are of poor quality. New rules' principles are simple: if a vehicle is not cleared to drive on Europe's road, it should not be allowed on anywhere else. The findings were eye-opening: used vehicles supply up to 90 per cent of fleets in many low- and middle-income countries – in Kenya and Nigeria, some 95 per cent of vehicles added to the roads each year are second-hand imports – and a significant share of those vehicles leaving EU ports are of poor quality.

More countries are embedding Just Transition pledges into laws

On the first anniversary of the International Court of Justice advisory opinion on the Obligations of the States in respect of climate change, countries around the world are increasingly turning Just Transition pledges into laws and policies. A UNEP report on the subject concludes that just transition should be approached through an environmental rule-of-law lens, framing just transition as the fair, inclusive and rights-based transformation towards sustainable and resilient economies and societies that respect environmental rule of law.

UNRWA

UNRWA situation reports on the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip and the occupied West Bank

Restrictions on the entry of generators, engine oil, and spare parts continue to pose a critical threat to UNRWA's operations. Essential services such as solid waste management, water delivery, and health services are particularly affected, as facilities and equipment rely on generators that face frequent breakdowns. Furthermore, dozens of Agency vehicles have already been grounded due to major mechanical failures, and the Agency struggles to sustain the remaining operational fleet, which is operating far beyond its standard technical lifespan. Communities continue to report persistent fear and insecurity due to ongoing shelling affecting displacement sites, residential areas, streets, and public spaces. The continued unpredictability has reinforced psychological distress, disrupted daily

life, and contributed to a persistent sense of fear and uncertainty among affected populations. Israeli settlement expansion continued across the occupied West Bank, including the advancing re-establishment of Kadim and Ganim settlements in Jenin Governorate, both of which were formerly dismantled as part of the 2005 Disengagement Plan.

UNRWA situation report on the Lebanon emergency response

Amid renewed escalation between the United States and Iran on 25 June and a further intensification of tensions on 13 July following incidents affecting commercial shipping in the Strait of Hormuz, the situation continues to be closely monitored for potential spillover effects on the operating environment in Lebanon. Lebanon's security environment remained generally stable but fragile, with no major security incidents affecting humanitarian operations. Nevertheless, ongoing military activity coupled with the continued presence of armed actors in southern Lebanon maintained a volatile operating environment. UNRWA is strengthening contingency preparedness by reassessing existing Core Relief Item (CRI) stocks and planning additional procurement to ensure sufficient essential relief items for 4,000 individuals for four months. 20 out of 26 UNRWA primary health centres and clinics across Lebanon are operational, the mobile clinics supporting UNRWA emergency shelters have ceased operations following the departure of displaced persons. During the reporting period, UNRWA distributed multi-purpose cash assistance to 23,045 families (66,774 individuals) in conflict-affected areas to support their ability to meet basic needs.

UNRWA annual health report

The UNRWA Annual Health Report 2025 provides a comprehensive overview of the Agency's achievements, challenges and priorities in delivering healthcare services to Palestine Refugees across the region in 2025. Despite conflict, displacement, movement restrictions and severe operational challenges, UNRWA continued to provide primary healthcare services to approximately 3.25 million Palestine Refugees in the Gaza Strip, the occupied West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. In the Gaza Strip, UNRWA continued to serve as the largest provider of primary healthcare, delivering approximately 40 per cent of all health consultations. The Agency provided around 4.5 million medical consultations to an estimated 1.7 million internally displaced people during the year. Across the Agency's four other fields of operation— Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the occupied West Bank— UNRWA provided care to more than 200,000 patients with noncommunicable diseases, supported nearly 45,000 newly registered pregnant women, and delivered health services to more than 200,000 children under the age of five. Childhood immunisation coverage remained high, with 98 per cent of children receiving full booster vaccinations, while nearly all children entering school underwent preventive health check-ups.

UN WOMEN

Drone attacks and sexual violence leave no safe space for women to collect water in Sudan's El Obeid area

An emerging pattern of violence against women in the el Obeid region, in Sudan, puts at risk thousands of lives. With the rainy season set to peak next month, safe water is critical to reducing the risk of deadly waterborne diseases, but women and girls in El Obeid are forced to wait until after nightfall to collect water, due to drone strikes targeting water sources and distribution points during daylight. Under the perception that darkness offers protection from aerial attacks, these women and girls have been harassed, raped, and subjected to other forms of sexual violence. Sexual violence has been used as a weapon throughout Sudan's three-year war, becoming one of its most defining features. UN Women reiterates its call for an immediate ceasefire, paving the way for inclusive peace talks and an end to the war. We further call for safe and unimpeded humanitarian access, full respect for international humanitarian and human rights law, and the protection of women and girls. Perpetrators of violations must be held accountable, and survivors must have access to justice and comprehensive support services.

INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA (ITLOS)

Case 34 (Nauru Ocean Resources Inc. v. International Seabed Authority) and Case 35 (Tonga Offshore Mining Ltd. v. International Seabed Authority)

On 18 July 2026, the Seabed Disputes Chamber of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) has issued an order regarding the application for interim measures filed by Nauru Ocean Resources Inc. (NORI) against the International Seabed Authority (ISA). The dispute arose from an investigation initiated by the ISA against NORI, the holder of an exploration contract for polymetallic nodules, for alleged non-compliance with contractual obligations. Simultaneously, NORI requested an extension of its exploration contract. The company challenged the Authority's procedure, alleging a violation of due process and requesting the Chamber to suspend the investigation and prevent ISA from prejudging its application for a contract extension. The Tribunal confirmed its prima facie jurisdiction, holding that due process is a procedural element inherent to the contractor's rights in activities in the Area (the ocean floor beyond national jurisdictions). NORI's right to due process was deemed plausible, and the Chamber found a real and imminent risk of irreparable harm, despite the assurances provided by ISA. The Chamber ordered ISA to act in accordance with the relevant legal framework, ensuring due process both in the non-compliance investigation procedure and in the

handling of the contract extension application. The Court unanimously ordered that the Authority clarify or provide NORI with the necessary information on the ongoing procedures and the questions posed to the company, allowing NORI to respond meaningfully and within a reasonable time. It also ordered the parties to cooperate and refrain from actions that could escalate the dispute. Both parties must submit an initial report on compliance with these measures by August 31, 2026, each party bearing its own legal costs.

The Seabed Disputes Chamber of ITLOS on the case brought by Tonga Offshore Mining Ltd. (TOML) against the International Seabed Authority (ISA)

As in the NORI case, the dispute concerns an investigation initiated by the ISA against TOML, the holder of an exploration contract for polymetallic nodules, for alleged non-compliance with contractual obligations. TOML challenged the proceedings, alleging due process violations and requesting the Chamber to suspend the investigation and adopt interim measures to protect its rights pending a final decision. The Chamber confirmed its prima facie jurisdiction, reiterating that the right to due process is a fundamental procedural element in activities conducted in the Area (the international seabed). Furthermore, it recognized the plausibility of TOML's claim regarding the right to fair treatment and due process. Despite the Authority's assurances, the Court found a real and imminent risk of irreparable harm to the company's rights. The Chamber ordered the ISA to act in accordance with the applicable legal framework, ensuring due process in the investigation of the non-compliance. The Chamber unanimously ordered that: the Authority must clarify or provide TOML with the necessary information on the ongoing proceedings, allowing the company to respond meaningfully and within a reasonable time; the parties must cooperate and refrain from any action that could escalate the dispute; TOML and the Authority must submit an initial report on compliance by August 31, 2026; each party must bear its own legal costs for the proceedings.

IAEA

Update 356 – IAEA Director General Statement on Situation in Ukraine

On 2 July 2026, IAEA Director General Grossi condemned the June 30 drone attack on the Enerhodar fire station, which compromised the emergency response capacity of the Zaporizhia nuclear power plant. Despite the completion of urgent repairs to critical systems, the plant remains in a fragile state of safety, still dependent on a single external power line. In parallel, the IAEA reported drones in the vicinity of other Ukrainian nuclear sites and fires at Chornobyl (without radiological risks), while continuing the delivery of emergency aid and equipment funded by the international community.

Nuclear Liability: Ensuring Legal Certainty and Compensation for Nuclear Damage

According to IAEA, nuclear liability frameworks are essential pillars for countries developing or hosting nuclear energy, as they provide the legal certainty required to ensure victims receive prompt, fair, and efficient compensation in the unlikely event of an incident. By establishing clear rules—such as the operator's exclusive responsibility, defined compensation limits, and centralized judicial jurisdiction—these international instruments avoid lengthy litigation and provide necessary stability for investors, insurers, and the public. Importantly, this protection extends beyond national borders, ensuring that neighboring or transit countries are also covered against transboundary damage. While the IAEA does not handle individual claims or provide funding, it plays a vital role by supporting states in drafting robust national legislation and promoting adherence to international conventions, ultimately fostering a predictable and harmonized global system for nuclear safety and financial accountability.

ICAO

States unite as drones increasingly threaten civil aviation

ICAO is leading a coordinated international effort to address the growing threat of unauthorized drones to civil aviation. During a recent workshop in Poland, Secretary General Juan Carlos Salazar emphasized that managing these risks requires a multi-layered approach combining advanced technology, robust regulations, and improved information-sharing between civil and state systems. To support these efforts, ICAO is developing new Integrated Risk Management guidance to help Member States enhance security, improve drone identification, and better integrate data analytics, ensuring a unified global response to these evolving challenges.

IOM

"Trapped Behind the Scam": IOM Warns Trafficking Victims Are Being Forced into Scam Networks

The International Organization for Migration has warned that hundreds of thousands of people globally have fallen victim to a multibillion-dollar human trafficking industry, forced through violence and threats to run online scams from guarded compounds. Lured by fake job offers, these victims endure severe abuse and torture, generating staggering financial losses estimated in the hundreds of billions of dollars across the Asia-Pacific region. Emphasizing that those trapped are victims rather than criminals deserving of punishment, the IOM has launched a new regional strategy

for 2026–2030 to enhance victim protection, cross-border cooperation, and the disruption of these expanding criminal networks.

PREPARATORY COMMISSION FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR-TEST-BAN TREATY ORGANIZATION (CTBTO)

Tonga ratifies CTBT, completing Treaty universalisation in Pacific region

On 7 July 2026, Tonga has officially ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty during a ceremony at United Nations Headquarters in New York, becoming the 179th State to do so and achieving the complete universalisation of the treaty across the Pacific region. Building on its long-standing advocacy for non-proliferation and its role in the South-East Asia, the Pacific and the Far East grouping, this milestone reflects years of sustained engagement between Tongan leadership and the CTBTO. Officials hailed the move as a powerful statement from a region historically scarred by nuclear testing, reinforcing global efforts to permanently ban nuclear explosions and ensure peace and security.

UNITED NATIONS INTERREGIONAL CRIME AND JUSTICE RESEARCH INSTITUTE (UNICRI)

New UNICRI Report Calls for Integrated Approaches to Food Insecurity and Violent Extremism

On 28 July 2026, the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute has released a new publication examining how violent extremist groups exploit food insecurity in fragile settings to recruit supporters and undermine communities. Titled “Food Insecurity and Violent Extremism: UNICRI's Strategic Response”, the report highlights how extremist networks manipulate disrupted food systems through coercion, extortion, and attacks on agricultural infrastructure where conflict

and economic instability converge. To counter these dynamics, the publication introduces a comprehensive strategic framework built on six pillars, including research, risk analytics, and the protection of food systems, calling for integrated, evidence-based approaches that unite humanitarian, development, and security efforts for sustainable peace.

OSCE

OSCE Chairman-in-Office highlights dialogue, co-operation and peace efforts during visit to Azerbaijan

The OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Swiss Federal Councillor Ignazio Cassis, has concluded his official visit to Turkmenistan, where he met with the country's leadership to reaffirm the OSCE's strong partnership with Turkmenistan and discuss ways to further deepen co-operation in support of comprehensive security. During the visit, Cassis met with President Serdar Berdimuhamedov and Deputy Chairperson of the Cabinet of Ministers and Minister of Foreign Affairs Rashid Meredov. Discussions addressed the long-standing co-operation between the OSCE and Turkmenistan and explored ways to enhance joint efforts across the three dimensions of security. The Chairman also underlined the contribution of the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat to maintaining constructive, trust-based dialogue and co-operation with the Turkmen authorities. He highlighted the strategic importance of Central Asia to the OSCE, stressing the role of Turkmenistan as a partner in promoting dialogue, stability and regional co-operation amid growing geopolitical challenges. During the visit, Cassis also met with staff of the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat, expressing appreciation for their work in implementing the Organization's mandate in Turkmenistan and supporting co-operation with national authorities and civil society. The visit forms part of the Chairman-in-Office's broader regional engagement in the South Caucasus and Central Asia. Following visits to Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan, further visits to Armenia and Georgia are planned for later in autumn 2026.

OSCE Promotes Best Practices in Interdicting Smuggling at Airports in Turkmenistan

The OSCE Centre in Ashgabat, in cooperation with the Turkish International Academy against Smuggling and Organized Crime (TADOC), conducted a specialised training course on risk analysis in smuggling crimes and search techniques at airports. The five-day course brought together 20 representatives from the Transport Police of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the State Frontier Service, the State Customs Service and the Aviation Security Service of the State Service "Turkmenhowayyollary". The activity aimed to strengthen participants' knowledge and practical skills to more effectively detect and interdict smuggling at airports. Expert from TADOC introduced participants to methods and strategies in anti-smuggling, expanding on risk assessment and the profiling of flights, passengers, cargo, and luggage. Participants discussed methods for identifying suspicious passenger behaviors, conducting passenger profiling from the entrance to the exit gate, and learning how to effectively interview and interrogate suspicious passengers. Opening the training, William Leaf, Head of the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat, highlighted the relevance of the Tirana

Declaration on Strengthening Co-operation in Countering Transnational Organized Crime (MC.DOC/1/20), adopted on 4 December 2020. He stressed that the training demonstrated how the OSCE and its participating States are translating political commitments into practical measures to strengthen national coordination and international cooperation against transnational organized crime. The programme further covered travel document examination, the use of search tools and the identification of common drug concealment methods. A practical exercise at Ashgabat International Airport enabled participants to apply comprehensive and systematic search techniques in a real operational environment.

OSCE strengthens Ukraine's inter-agency capacity to counter illicit trafficking of weapons, ammunition and explosives

In 2026, the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre delivered a specialised inter-agency training programme to strengthen Ukraine's capacity to respond to the illicit movement of weapons, ammunition and explosives (WAE) across the state border. As a result of five consecutive training events, more than 100 representatives of the State Customs Service, State Border Guard Service, Security Service, and National Police of Ukraine strengthened their knowledge and practical skills to more effectively interdict illicit WAE. A key focus was the development of a coordinated inter-agency response system at border crossing points. Through practical exercises and realistic scenarios, participants tested the full operational response chain, from initial detection and risk assessment to the identification, documentation, seizure, safe storage and transfer of firearms to the competent authorities for further investigation. The programme combined Ukrainian operational experience with European expertise on trafficking trends, advanced concealment methods and border-control practices. Participants also carried out exercises on vehicle inspections, risk profiling and the use of specialised equipment, including specific training on the inspection of electric vehicles and potential concealment techniques. According to Viktor Halkin of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine, the joint exercises enabled the four participating services to gain a clearer understanding of their respective roles, improve coordination and information-sharing, and identify unnecessary procedures, thereby contributing to faster and more effective operational responses. Beyond strengthening individual skills, the programme enhanced operational cooperation among the participating services, produced practical recommendations for improving inter-agency procedures and laid the foundations for a nationwide network of WAE specialists and advisers. The initiative is contributing to the development of a practical and coordinated inter-agency system for the detection, safe handling and investigation of WAE-related incidents, thereby strengthening border security and European regional stability.

Dialogue and education are key to prevent violence based on religion or belief, OSCE human rights body says

The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) highlighted the role of education about religions and beliefs, as well as interfaith and interreligious dialogue, in preventing

prejudice, intolerance and hostility that can lead to violence. ODIHR Director Maria Telalian stressed that individuals and communities across the OSCE region continue to face violence on the basis of their religion or belief, underlining the responsibility of participating States to prevent and effectively respond to such incidents. She emphasised the importance of creating conditions for mutual respect and peaceful coexistence, including through education that promotes respect for human dignity, strengthens resilience to polarising narratives and enables individuals to identify and respond to misinformation and disinformation. ODIHR also highlighted the importance of dialogue across religious and belief boundaries as means of making diversity a more familiar part of everyday life and encouraging understanding rather than fear. According to the Office, limited opportunities for interaction between different communities can allow stereotypes and prejudice to develop, while hearsay, misinformation and disinformation may reinforce perceptions of difference and hostility. Online platforms can further amplify divisive or misleading narratives. The statement also recalled that respect for human rights and freedom of religion or belief requires recognition of the right of individuals to hold and express different religious or non-religious convictions, while respecting the rights and dignity of those with different beliefs. Through their OSCE commitments, participating States have committed to promote interfaith and intercultural dialogue as a way to foster respect and mutual understanding, and to counter intolerance. They have also undertaken to address the root causes of intolerance and discrimination through education. ODIHR assists in this work by providing guidance on fostering dialogue, as well as practical tools, resources and capacity-building support on freedom of religion or belief and hate crimes for state officials and civil society actors.

From Geneva to Helsinki: What the OSCE's founding legacy means for European security today and tomorrow

Vienna/Bern, 27 August 2026 – The Swiss OSCE Chairpersonship will host the conference “From Geneva to Helsinki: Founding Process and Core Purpose of the OSCE” in Bern on 3-4 September 2026. The event represents the third of four thematic conferences organized by the Swiss Chairpersonship in 2026. Held as part of the conference of the International Committee of Editors of Diplomatic Documents (ICEDD), the initiative will bring together historians, diplomatic document editors, diplomats and political representatives for a high-level discussion on the origins and development of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). The conference will examine the early stages of the CSCE process, from the preparatory consultations in Geneva to the adoption of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975. Particular attention will be given to the diplomatic processes and negotiations that enabled participating States to establish a framework for dialogue, confidence-building and cooperation across political divides during the Cold War. Against the backdrop of current geopolitical challenges affecting the principles and mechanisms of cooperative security, participants will also consider the continued relevance of the Helsinki legacy and its implications for the future role of the OSCE as a platform for dialogue and stability throughout the OSCE region. The high-level segment of the conference, to be held at the University of Bern, will feature addresses by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Federal Councillor Ignazio Cassis, and OSCE Secretary General Feridun H. Sinirlioglu, alongside distinguished historians, diplomats and experts. The event will be open to media representatives.

GLOBAL INITIATIVE AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (GI-TOC)

Cocaine and conflict in Mali, Niger, and Libya

A new report by the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC) examines the evolution of cocaine trafficking along the central Sahel-Libya corridor, a long-standing overland route connecting West and North Africa with European drug markets. While most cocaine transported from Latin America to Europe continues to move by sea, overland routes through the Sahel and Libya represent a significant part of the trade. According to the report, these corridors are supported by established trading networks, conflict economies and protection systems, which contribute to their resilience despite law-enforcement pressure, political instability and changes in the regional conflict landscape. Since 2019, cocaine trafficking through West Africa has expanded substantially. The report identifies several contributing factors, including increased cocaine production in Latin America, growing European demand, stronger law-enforcement pressure on direct maritime routes and improved transport connectivity across West Africa. These developments have encouraged traffickers to diversify their methods and exploit complex conflict environments in the Sahel and Libya. The report highlights the close relationship between trafficking routes and political authority, armed territorial control and insecurity. Periods of relative stability and predictable control have historically facilitated high-volume trafficking, while episodes of intensified violence, political disruption or changes in military alliances have forced traffickers to renegotiate protection arrangements, modify routes and adopt new operational methods. Despite these disruptions, the cocaine trade has continued rather than being abandoned. Focusing on Mali, Niger and Libya, the report analyses how changing conflict dynamics and political developments have reshaped trafficking patterns and examines their implications for governance, security and regional stability across the Sahel and North Africa.

Human rights abuses in the Taliban's drug control regime

A field research report by the GI-TOC, examines the conditions in drug treatment centres in Afghanistan, the situation of people who use drugs (PWUD), the conduct of staff and authorities, community dynamics and the evolving approach of the Taliban government toward rehabilitation programmes. The findings point to serious human rights concerns within treatment facilities, against a broader backdrop of restrictive social policies and the Taliban government's mixed record in addressing drug-related criminality. Researchers reported that the centres operated more like prisons than healthcare facilities, with limited evidence of structured treatment plans, therapy, rehabilitation programmes or adequate medical care. The research found that withdrawal treatment and psychological support were largely absent, leaving patients' medical and psychological needs insufficiently addressed. Researchers also documented widespread harassment, disrespect and humiliating treatment by staff. Although no physical beatings were directly witnessed, patients reported feeling ignored, humiliated and subjected to degrading treatment, with staff behaviour contributing to feelings of resentment and hopelessness rather than supporting recovery. Interviews conducted for the research describe people being held in large numbers under harsh

conditions while receiving minimal medical and psychological assistance, raising concerns over treatment conditions described as potentially amounting to prolonged torture.

UN SECURITY COUNCIL

Resolution 2826 (2026): Maintenance of international peace and security (Red Sea)

As the Security Council adopted a resolution extending the Secretary-General's monthly reporting mandate concerning Houthi attacks in the Red Sea for six additional months, the representatives of United States and China exchanged words about the causes and solutions for the current volatility in the Middle East. The 15-member Council adopted resolution 2826 (2026) by a vote of 13 in favour to none against, with 2 abstentions (China, Russian Federation). By its terms, the Council recalled its previous resolutions on the situation in Yemen and the Red Sea and extended the reporting request in paragraph 10 of resolution 2722 (2024) through 15 January 2027. The reporting was first mandated in January 2024 and most recently renewed in January 2026. The current adoption takes place in an atmosphere of heightened regional tensions after the 28 February attack by Israel and the United States on Iran, and retaliatory attacks by that country, as well as restrictions it placed on maritime freedom in the Strait of Hormuz. During an emergency meeting held on 13 July, Yemen's delegate detailed recent unauthorized flights in his country's airspace by Iran and the Houthis.

Resolution 2827 (2026): Peace and security in Africa (SCR 2745 sanctions)

On 29 July, the Security Council renewed the sanctions regime targeting non-State armed groups and individuals operating in the Central African Republic for another year. Unanimously adopting resolution 2827 (2026), the 15-member organ decided to extend the measures set out or extended in paragraphs 2 and 4 of resolution 2745 (2024) until 31 July 2027. Under those terms, Member States shall take the necessary measures to prevent the direct or indirect supply, sale or transfer of arms and related materiel of all types to armed groups and associated individuals operating in that country. The regime also includes a travel ban and asset freezes targeting individuals undermining peace. In addition, the Council extended until 31 August 2027 the mandate of the Panel of Experts supporting the 2745 Sanctions Committee as set forth in paragraph 6 of resolution 2745 (2024), reaffirming paragraphs 1, 3, 5 and 7 through 12 of said resolution, while noting that references to the Panel's midterm and final reports should be updated to 31 January 2027 and 15 June 2027, respectively. The Council first established the sanctions regime through resolution 2127 (2013), amid widespread

armed conflict, grave human rights abuses and severe political instability in the Central African Republic. These measures were intended to restrict the flow of weapons, deter individuals and entities undermining peace and the political transition, and hold accountable those responsible for violence, attacks against civilians and violations of international human rights and humanitarian law.

OHCHR

Intensified Israeli attacks in Gaza

The Israeli military has intensified its attacks in Gaza, killing and injuring dozens of Palestinians – children, women and men. Nine months after the announcement of a ceasefire, still, nowhere is safe for Palestinians in Gaza. The killing of civilians in these attacks raises concerns of continuing violations of international humanitarian law, war crimes and other possible atrocity crimes in Gaza. Under international law, deliberately attacking civilians is a war crime. Meanwhile, the Palestinian population in Gaza remains trapped in an ever-shrinking area, with the “yellow line” constantly being moved westwards by the Israeli occupying power, presenting a continuous threat to life as the Israeli military appears to routinely fire on Palestinians for mere presence in the vicinity of that line, in violation of international human rights law and international humanitarian law. The violations, the suffering and the misery that continue to be imposed on the Palestinians in Gaza cannot be ignored. Third States must take urgent action to insist on full respect for the ceasefire, to put an end to all violations, and to ensure accountability and justice.

Stranded Hormuz Seafarers abandoned for months at sea

UN Human Rights Chief Volker Türk calls for urgent action to remedy the plight of thousands of stranded seafarers who are facing a dire humanitarian and human rights crisis in the Strait of Hormuz.

The seafarers have been left on their ships to fend for themselves without food, water, fuel, medical care, electricity or means to communicate with their families. These seafarers remain exposed to hostilities as deadly attacks in the Strait continue - facing imminent risks of death or harm. Two Indian seafarers have been killed in recent weeks in the Strait. At least three other seafarers have been killed in an attack on an oil tanker near the Strait. In line with a Resolution adopted in 2024 by the Human Rights Council, States, the shipping industry and all relevant stakeholders must protect the human

rights of seafarers, including their right to life, to just and favourable conditions of work, including safe and healthy working conditions, and the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. Seafarers have the right to freely choose or accept work, including decisions on whether to sail or continue sailing in high-risk areas. Flag States and shipowners should also uphold their labour rights, including through the continued payment of wages. The dignity, safety and well-being of seafarers must remain at the core of policies, industry practices and international cooperation, in accordance with the Manila Declaration - a landmark global call to action issued last year.

Lebanon: Israeli strikes 'could amount to international crimes,' warns Türk

UN Human Rights Chief Volker Türk expressed concern about ongoing displacement and destruction caused by Israeli strikes against Lebanon. Lebanon faces crises including delayed elections, economic collapse and conflict. Despite a 17 April conditional ceasefire agreed by Israel and the Lebanese Government reached via US-led talks, Israel has continued to conduct airstrikes and use explosive weapons in densely populated areas while Hezbollah has likewise continued fighting, leading to mass displacement, according to the UN's human rights office (OHCHR).

UNHCR

UNHCR: Hate speech and misinformation are creating real-world harm for displaced people

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is concerned that the spread of misinformation, hate speech and deepfakes is exacerbating and inciting real-world harm to refugees and humanitarians. Artificial Intelligence is intensifying these risks to the integrity of our information ecosystem and undermining trust, but it can also be part of the solution if managed in the right way. AI is transforming our world and, built with purpose and inclusivity, will bring opportunities and tangible benefits, including for refugees. It can also help address complex information challenges in humanitarian contexts. It is critical that humanitarian and refugee perspectives are included in international AI governance efforts. When information is distorted, it can reduce access to jobs and education, make integration harder and threaten social cohesion. Online rumours, false accusations, scapegoating and dehumanizing speech have triggered protests and attacks. In extreme cases, they have been linked to physical violence, killings, and are even a factor in forced displacement. The spiral of mis- and disinformation poses risks to humanitarian operations and security. UNHCR has noted an increase in false, hostile narratives targeting operations and staff, which have the potential to significantly impact fundraising at a time of shrinking budgets and growing needs.

AFRICAN COURT ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS

Application 003/2026 - Saif Eddine Makhlouf v. Republic of Tunisia – 06/07/2026

In the case of *Saif Eddine Makhlouf v. Republic of Tunisia* (Application No. 003/2026), the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights issued a ruling on a request for provisional measures filed by Saif Eddine Makhlouf, a Tunisian lawyer and member of parliament who alleged multiple human rights violations stemming from domestic judicial proceedings and his subsequent surrender from Algeria to Tunisia. The Court established that it had *prima facie* jurisdiction to consider the request, noting that the application was filed before Tunisia's withdrawal of its Article 34(6) Declaration took full effect. However, the Court unanimously dismissed the request for provisional measures—which sought his return to UNHCR custody and permission to join his family in a country of asylum. The Court concluded that the applicant failed to substantiate the claimed irreparable harm. Furthermore, granting the requested measures would require evaluating the core lawfulness of his detention and transfer, an assessment so inextricably linked to the merits of the main application that it could not be granted without prejudging the outcome.

Application 003/2026 - Saif Eddine Makhlouf v. Republic of Tunisia – 06/07/2026

In the case of *Brahim Ben Mohamed Ben Brahim Belgeith v. Republic of Tunisia* (Application No. 004/2025), the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights issued a ruling regarding a request for provisional measures brought by a Tunisian lawyer against the Republic of Tunisia. The applicant challenged Tunisia's decision to withdraw its Article 34(6) Declaration—which allows individuals and NGOs direct access to the Court—alleging that the withdrawal violates fundamental rights, including the right to be heard and access to justice. The Court affirmed that it possessed *prima facie* jurisdiction, as the application was submitted prior to the date when Tunisia's withdrawal took full effect. However, the Court unanimously dismissed the request for provisional measures, which asked to suspend the withdrawal decision or postpone its effective date. The Court reasoned that examining and granting such provisional measures would directly address the core remedies sought in the main application, thereby prejudging the merits of the case before a full hearing could take place.

EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Authorities' inadequate response to allegations of domestic violence, leaving a mother and her children to live in a shelter for over three years, application no. 9993/24 – 02/07/2026

In the case *Ubeda and Others v. Italy*, the European Court of Human Rights unanimously ruled that Italy violated Articles 3 and 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights due to its inadequate

handling of domestic violence allegations lodged by a mother and her two children against her former partner. Although the family was placed in a shelter in May 2021 to ensure their safety, they were left living there in overly restrictive conditions for over three years, which severely impacted the children's psychological and physical well-being. The Court criticized the Italian authorities for failing to conduct a prompt and effective investigation, highlighting that the prosecutor made sexist and stereotypical remarks that secondary-victimized the mother. Furthermore, the Juvenile Court took more than three years to issue a final decision stripping the father of parental responsibility, completely ignoring the domestic violence claims in its rulings. As a result of these systemic shortcomings and inaction, the Court ordered Italy to pay €15,000 in non-pecuniary damages to each applicant, along with €15,000 jointly for costs and expenses.

Judgment A.P. and R.P. v. Poland and Decision A.D.-K. and Others v. Poland - Refusal to recognise legal parent-child relationship established abroad, application no. 1298/19 – 02/07/2026

In the cases concerning *A.P. and R.P. v. Poland* and *A.D.-K. and Others v. Poland*, the European Court of Human Rights examined the Polish authorities' refusal to transcribe foreign birth certificates indicating same-sex parents. While the Court declared the application in *A.D.-K. and Others* inadmissible due to a lack of direct practical impact on their daily family life in the UK, it reached a different conclusion regarding the child R.P., who held Polish citizenship by birth but was left in a state of legal uncertainty without identity documents. The Court found a violation of Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (right to respect for private and family life) specifically concerning the child's right to respect for his private life. The judges emphasized that the Polish authorities had failed to assess the best interests of the child, creating an unjustified legal obstacle to the recognition of his identity and civil status. Furthermore, the Court established a violation of Article 14 (prohibition of discrimination) taken in conjunction with Article 8 regarding the child's private life, ruling that the refusal was based solely or decisively on his parents' sexual orientation and the circumstances of his birth. Ultimately, the Court ordered Poland to pay €5,000 in non-pecuniary damage to the child R.P., while finding no violations regarding the mother's individual rights or the family life aspects of the claim.

Judgment de Carvalho Marques and Others v. Portugal - Porto Football Club's acceptable criticism of referees subject to unjust disciplinary proceedings and disproportionate fine, applications nos. 29703/19, 29978/19, 34185/19, 37235/19, 47902/20 and 3708/22 – 07/07/2026

In the case of *de Carvalho Marques and Others v. Portugal*, the European Court of Human Rights evaluated whether disciplinary sanctions imposed by Portuguese authorities on Porto Football Club and its officials breached their rights. The case revolved around Article 10 (freedom of expression) of the European Convention on Human Rights. The Court unanimously held that Article 10 was violated with respect to Porto Football Club in one specific application (no. 47902/20). In this instance, the statements merely criticised a referee's performance and perceived lack of impartiality

without alleging illegal acts, which the Court deemed to fall within the limits of acceptable criticism in football. Conversely, the Court found no violation of Article 10 regarding the other applications, concluding that unsubstantiated allegations of corruption and match manipulation constituted value judgments lacking a sufficient factual basis and thus exceeded permissible boundaries.

Judgment Al Nashiri v. Lithuania - case concerning Lithuania's involvement in CIA secret detention programme, application no. 31908/22 – 07/07/2026

In the case of *Al Nashiri v. Lithuania*, the European Court of Human Rights unanimously held Lithuania responsible for violating multiple provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights due to its active participation in a CIA secret detention and rendition scheme. The Court found a violation of Article 8, which guarantees the right to respect for private and family life, because Mr. Al Nashiri was subjected to secret, incommunicado detention and solitary confinement without any possibility of family contact. Lithuania was also found to have violated Article 6 § 1 (right to a fair trial) by assisting in his transfer out of its territory despite knowing he faced a real risk of a flagrant denial of justice before US military commissions. Furthermore, the Court established a violation of Articles 2 (right to life) and 3 (prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment) read in conjunction with Article 1 of Protocol No. 6 (abolition of the death penalty), as the authorities enabled his transfer to a jurisdiction where he now faces capital charges and the prospect of execution.

Judgment S.T. v. the Czech Republic - Death of Roma man following use of prone position during police intervention, application no. 28273/23 – 16/07/2026

In the case of *S.T. v. the Czech Republic*, the European Court of Human Rights unanimously held that the Czech Republic violated multiple provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights following the death of a Roma man subjected to a lethal police restraint. The Court found both substantive and procedural violations of Article 2 (right to life) and Article 3 (prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment). Substantively, police officers used disproportionate force by keeping a vulnerable, intoxicated man in a dangerous prone position—kneeling on him while handcuffed—without monitoring his vital signs, coupled with the state's failure to establish a proper legal framework or officer training for such techniques. Procedurally, the authorities failed to conduct an effective, independent investigation into his death. Furthermore, the Court established a violation of Article 14 (prohibition of discrimination) read in conjunction with Articles 2 and 3, finding that the domestic authorities failed to fulfill their duty to investigate potential racist or discriminatory motives behind the police intervention.

Judgment Bazhenov and Others v. Russia and Ukraine - No legal basis for Russian authorities to deprive applicants of their ownership of plots of land in Sevastopol, applications nos. 20092/18 and 11 others – 16/07/2026

In the case of *Bazhenov and Others v. Russia and Ukraine*, the European Court of Human Rights unanimously held that the Russian Federation committed multiple violations of the European Convention on Human Rights by unlawfully cancelling private land titles in Sevastopol, Crimea. The Court established a violation of Article 1 of Protocol No. 1 (protection of property), finding that the Russian judicial decisions depriving the applicants of their land titles and sales proceeds were unlawful. The Russian "courts" used alleged past breaches of Ukrainian privatisation laws merely as a pretext to apply Russian legal provisions and expropriate the properties, which also directly violated international humanitarian law rules against property confiscation. Additionally, the Court found a violation of Article 6 § 1 (right to a fair hearing), ruling that because the judicial bodies operating in occupied Crimea functioned in contravention of international law, the applicants were denied a hearing by a legitimate "tribunal established by law"

Judgment G.K. and A.S. v. Switzerland - authorities' overly formalistic approach to complaints about lack of access to vegan diet while in detention, application nos. 55299/20 and 31515/22 – 20/07/2026

In the case of *G.K. and A.S. v. Switzerland*, the European Court of Human Rights evaluated the Swiss authorities' failure to provide a vegan diet to two individuals while in state custody (pre-trial detention and a psychiatric hospital) and the subsequent dismissal of their legal appeals. The Court found that Switzerland committed violations of two key provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights. First, the Court established a violation of Article 9 (freedom of thought and conscience), recognizing for the first time that veganism constitutes a protected ethical belief under this article and ruling that the state had an obligation to properly address the applicants' requests for a vegan diet. Second, the Court found a violation of Article 13 (right to an effective remedy), criticizing the Swiss courts' overly formalistic approach, which dismissed the applicants' appeals on procedural technicalities—due to the lack of formal administrative "decisions"—and prevented their human rights claims from ever being examined on the merits at the national level.

NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

NATO Deputy Secretary General announces new initiatives in space, strike capabilities and air defence

The NATO Deputy Secretary General announced space and surveillance, strike capabilities and missile defence related efforts, including efforts to develop a generic NATO 155mm munition; scale up production of 155mm and loitering munitions; and advance long-range strike capabilities,

initiatives to strengthen capabilities against lower air threats, including drones and cruise missiles, as well as efforts to enhance passive air surveillance.

NATO Allies strengthen the transatlantic defence industrial base with new coproduction initiatives

At the NATO Summit and Defence Industry Forum in Ankara, several NATO Allies formed new multinational procurement coalitions. They will jointly acquire critical capabilities, particularly in air defence and strike systems. These coalitions aim to aggregate demand, align procurement, and accelerate the delivery of much-needed equipment for both Allied forces and Ukraine.

Defence Investment Update: Record Spending in Europe and Canada

Defence investments ensure that NATO Allies are able to meet their individual and collective obligations in accordance with Article 3. European Allies and Canada have significantly increased their core defence expenditure by nearly 20% in 2025 compared to 2024. In 2026, five Allies are already expected to meet the 3.5% guideline for core defence requirements, and 17 Allies are predicted to meet the 1.5% guideline for defence – and security-related investments – well ahead of the 2035 deadline agreed on in The Hague.

KOSOVO SPECIALIST CHAMBERS & SPECIAL PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

Thaçi et al. Trial Judgment Scheduled for 16 September 2026

The Trial Panel has scheduled the pronouncement of the trial judgment in the case of the Specialist Prosecutor v. Hashim Thaçi, Kadri Veseli, Rexhep Selimi and Jakup Krasniqi for 16 September 2026 at 10:00 CET.