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Sofian Philip Naceur

An “accessory to repression”?

Police training and equipment aid
by the EU in North Africa
and the Sahel

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SOFIAN PHILIP NACEUR is a political scientist, working in Cairo as a freelance journalist. He writes for the daily newspaper *junge Welt*, the online news portal n-tv and the Egyptian news portal Mada Masr, among others. His thematic focuses are Egypt, Algeria, flight and migration, as well as Germany's foreign and arms export policy in North Africa.

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AN 'ACCESSORY TO REPRESSION'?

POLICE TRAINING AND EQUIPMENT AID BY THE EU IN NORTH AFRICA AND THE SAHEL

1 INTRODUCTION

"It is time to face the truth. We cannot and will never be able to stop migration," Dimitris Avramopoulos, European commissioner for migration, states in his piece for the *Politico* magazine, published online in December 2017¹. Europe's refugee crisis may subside; however, on a global scale migration will not stop, he writes, emphasising that the European Union (EU) could become "better, smarter and more proactive" in dealing with this "phenomenon". While Avramopoulos definitely sees the most recent decline in "irregular migrant flows" as a success, he also advocates a political approach to migration policy that is based on integration and inclusion. In the light of Europe's ageing population, this is not only a "moral imperative", but also a "social and economical" one. For this reason, he calls for improving legal channels for economic migration into the EU via "ambitious" working regulations, as well as support for projects that recruit highly skilled workers in non-EU countries. This is where Avramopoulos' department plays a key role. Other responsibilities include the improvement of border controls, the implementation of the border control agency Frontex, the fight against human trafficking and smuggling, and ensuring the 'smoothest' possible repatriation of irregular migrants in cooperation with non-EU countries². While the EU commissioner criticises the debate on migration as being increasingly "influenced by rising nationalism, populism and xenophobia" and makes his case for a change in perspective – although in view of a neo-colonial levy on qualified manpower - the EU and its member states continue their isolation strategy, while pushing forward with the externalisation and militarisation of the EU border control regime in the Mediterranean region. The start of the Arab revolts in 2011 marked the collapse of the EU border regime, which was established in 2005 in cooperation with Libya and Tunisia. The treaties signed with the former governments in Tripolis and Tunis now serve as a blueprint for the current EU Mediterranean policy. However, the forward shift of the EU's external borders is being promoted on a massive scale not only in North Africa, but also extends into the Sahel and the Horn of Africa.

For this reason, the EU is supporting equipment and training aid for military and police forces across countries in North Africa and the Sahel, as well as the increased integration of security and development policy instruments. Germany primarily provides police training and equipment aid in Egypt, Tunisia and the Sahel, thus flanking Italy's efforts to increasingly involve Egyptian and Libyan security authorities in the closure of EU borders. France, on the other hand, currently constitutes one of Egypt's most important arms suppliers, with a government that readily subordinates itself to Brussels' migration control endeavours.

Algeria also plays an important role in decreasing border permeability in the region, yet also maintains a largely sovereign security and regional policy strategy. This strategy, which was tailored to the massive rearmament and control of the southern borders in the late 1990s, as well as to the fortification of the country's eastern and western borders in 2011, shows respective intersections with the EU's security policy goals. European and German companies in particular offer extensive support to Algeria for the modernisation of its army and the development of its own arms and equipment industry. These measures are of central importance to EU endeavours for restricting "illegal" migration flows in the Mediterranean region. However, the externalisation of the European border control regime is only one of the driving forces behind the militarisation of the EU's Africa policy. France, for example, pursues vested economic interests in the region and wants to safeguard its access to raw materials – mainly uranium, but also petroleum and gas. In the meantime, the progressing state collapse in Mali is reinforcing concerns that the Sahel could develop into a permanent stronghold for terrorist groups. While the region has been considered a refuge for violent extremists since the late 1990s, the anticipated return of IS members from Syria and Iraq to the region provides reason to expect an increased conflict potential in the Sahel. However, the EU's fixation on security policy measures will only create new conflicts, rather than contributing to pacification. Even the intensified development cooperation will not change this – after all, without any fundamental reorientation of the EU's trade policy, it remains a worthless scrap of paper.

1 Cp. Avramopoulos, Dimitris: Europe's migrants are here to stay, in: *Politico*, 21 December 2017, available at: www.politico.eu/article/europe-migration-migrants-are-here-to-stay-refugee-crisis/

2 Cp. task description on the homepage of the European Commission, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2014-2019/avramopoulos_en

2 “WITHOUT ALTERNATIVE” AND “POLITICALLY NECESSARY” – THE GERMAN-EGYPTIAN SECURITY AGREEMENT

In March 2017, the German parliament (*Bundestag*) ratified the bilateral security cooperation agreements with Tunisia and Egypt by a large majority. Back in 2015, the German government had already launched training and equipment aids for Egyptian police and secret service officials, who are being accused of massive human rights violations and systematic torture. The treaty, classified by the German government as being without alternative, is allegedly “politically necessary”, “meets German security interests” and “primarily serves the combating of crimes by heavy and organised criminals as well as terrorism”. Further, it forms the basis for the cooperation “in the technical assistance in the case of catastrophes and for the security of travel documents”³. The security cooperation with Cairo is, however, above all an instrument for promoting a policy of walling-off, to the benefit of Egyptian security authorities. Following the German government’s calculations, the provided training and equipment aid will enable an improved control of Egypt’s marine borders, thus increasing the restrictions on “irregular” migration. After the devastating boat accident near the small town of Rashid on Egypt’s Mediterranean coast in October 2016, during which over 200 people drowned, the Egyptian coastguard did in fact increase its maritime border controls. This led to a dramatic decrease in the number of boats setting sail from Egyptian shores, paralysing the Egyptian human smuggler business along the Mediterranean coast for the time being. The looming question of liability for the accident, however, has so far been left unanswered by the government. After all, it is the same Egyptian security officials maintaining the tightened border control regime in the Mediterranean that are being accused of failing to render assistance, and are therefore accused of complicity in the disaster⁴. The involvement of Egyptian officers in the human trafficking business is one of the country’s many open secrets⁵. Rather than leading to an end of the trafficking business within the country, the wide-scale closure of the Mediterranean route via Egypt has shifted trafficking activities to the Libyan-Egyptian border. Against the backdrop of these developments and in light of the corruption-riddled security and government apparatus, a permanent maintenance of the border control regime in Egypt remains highly questionable. Substantial doubts are therefore also pertinent to the German government’s arguments regarding the security cooperation with Cairo. Considering the lack of willingness to reform exhibited by Egyptian interior authorities, the claim that rendered police aid is “fundamentally contributing to democratisation” and is supporting Egypt in the “development of security structures based on the rule of law”⁶ is not only illusory and therefore untenable, but also dangerous: There is undoubtedly an existing risk that the Egyptian authorities will use their acquired knowledge to take action against their own population, thereby massively hindering the development of democracy and the rule of law.

2.1 Training and equipment aid for Egypt’s security apparatus

In November 2014, the German government first confirmed ongoing negotiations on the conclusion of a security agreement with the Egyptian government. Due to the political situation in Egypt these talks were suspended in 2012, but resumed shortly thereafter. While the German Federal Police was planning to “conduct training courses for combating document crime while simultaneously providing training relevant equipment aid,” the Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA) had already made an information survey trip⁷ to Egypt in June 2013. This survey took place only a few weeks before the Rabaa massacre in Cairo, during which Egyptian police units cleared a protest camp of the Muslim brotherhood, which is classified as a terror organisation by the Egyptian government. Around 1,000 people were killed in the process⁸. Since the army’s takeover of power under then-Defence Minister and current President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi in July 2013, the open use of violence by Egyptian security forces against demonstrators, the political opposition and civilians has become part of everyday life. The government and security apparatus have been implementing a restrictive protest law, as well as a rigorous approach by the executive and judiciary against protesters to ensure peace and quiet in the country. While subject to much praise since 2011, the population’s willingness to protest has since been in significant decline. In the beginning, the Egyptian state authorities’ politically motivated violence was highly condemned, especially in Europe. However, this criticism quickly gave way to pragmatic reality policy guided by economic, geopolitical and, above all, migration policy interests. Today, this policy line includes in particular

3 Bundestagsdrucksache Nr. 18/11812, Abschnitt IV, Begründung, 30 March 2017.

4 Cp. Magid, Pasha: Report from Rashid: Where was the state when hundreds drowned?, Mada Masr, 13 October 2016, available at: www.madamasr.com/en/2016/10/13/feature/politics/report-from-rashid-where-was-the-state-when-hundreds-drowned/

5 Cp. in particular Cuttitta, Paolo: Viewpoint. Egypt: Europe’s other north African border, Statewatch, April 2017, available at: www.statewatch.org/analyses/no-313-egypt-viewpoint.pdf

6 Bundestagsdrucksache Nr. 18/7181, Schriftliche Frage 9, 30 December 2015.

7 Bundestagsdrucksache Nr. 18/3054, Antwort auf Frage 16, 5 November 2014.

8 Cp. www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/16/rabaa-massacre-egypt-human-rights-watch

the enforced restoration of a security policy cooperation with Al-Sisi's regime, which is of central importance in the context of today's EU border control policy.

In this area, the German government is relying above all on the security agreement with Cairo, which initially provided for measures concerning anti-terrorism, airspace and airport security, combating illegal migration and the performance of police duties at large-scale events. The latter is particularly geared to the safeguarding of football matches, where violent clashes between the security forces and the Ultra Groups of the capital's football clubs Al-Ahly and Zamalek SC have repeatedly occurred in Egypt since 2012. Since the February 2012 riots in Port Said, which resulted in the death of 72 Al-Ahly fans, matches of the first Egyptian league have - after a brief interruption - been carried out in front of empty audience stands⁹. Owing to this precaution, so far the only relevant measure taken in the context of the security cooperation concerned the work shadowing of Egyptian officials during the German football cup (*DFB Pokal*) final in Berlin in May 2015. To date, the cooperation's focus has been on combating illegal migration and support in ensuring air and airport security, which also includes measures pertaining to migration policy. The executing authorities on the German side are the Federal Police and the Federal Criminal Police Office. On the Egyptian side, the Ministry the Interior, the General Intelligence Service (GIS) and the National Security Agency (NSA, also known as National Security Sector or NSS by the German government) are involved. In particular, the intensive cooperation between German police authorities and the NSA is seen as highly problematic: after all, the latter service - also known as homeland security - is viewed as the regime's political police force, which has emerged from the officially dissolved State Security Investigation Service and is notorious for its widespread network of informants.

The BKA organises training courses and reciprocal working visits with the NSA that are focused on various topics surrounding counter-terrorism, and has been training NSA officials since 2015 as part of the BKA's scholarship programme¹⁰. However, as football Ultras and demonstrators are repeatedly charged on the basis of Egyptian anti-terrorist laws and sentenced to imprisonment, the cooperation with Cairo in the fight against terrorism remains particularly controversial. Even the German government has rejected the "extensive definition of terrorism" propagated by the Egyptian government as "disproportionate", while confirming its application by security authorities and the judiciary "within the context of demonstrations"¹¹. Nonetheless, Berlin continues to praise the cooperation with the NSA as "very good and trustful on the whole" and as holding a "high strategic significance"¹². In order to legitimise its cooperation with the Egyptian authorities, the German government repeatedly resorts to the same tried-and-tested pattern of justification for cooperations of this kind: the alleged objective of initiating learning processes. Thus, the answer to a parliamentary inquiry (*Kleine Anfrage*) from 2014 went as follows: "Egypt does not have the necessary equipment at its disposal to successfully meet the specific challenges of the anti-terrorist struggle. Security forces are still in a learning and adaptation process. [...] Poor training and equipment as well as lack of knowledge regarding the rule of law and available options for action are often the cause of misconduct, which can be contained by improved cooperation."¹³ In light of repeated reports of arbitrary use of anti-terrorism laws and non-transparent anti-terrorism operations on the Sinai peninsula, this approach to the fight against terrorism remains highly questionable, especially as the Egyptian security apparatus shows no sign of any willingness to reform. So far, the measures implemented by the German Federal Police are primarily targeted at air space and airport security, and thus also at combating irregular migration. In 2016, the German government issued the following statement:

"In view of the current migration situation, the German Federal Police intends to intensify its cooperation with Egyptian (border) police authorities within the framework of the advance deployment strategy, by providing training and equipment aid measures in the field of border protection. These measures aim to strengthen the expertise of Egyptian (border) police authorities, as well as to convey the concept of a police force committed to democratic principles, the rule of law and human rights."¹⁴

In this context, training sessions on the topics of certificate and document security and border control tasks were conducted in 2015 and 2016 for the Egyptian border police at the airports in Sharm El Sheikh, Cairo,

9 The massacre of Port Said, during which security forces not only failed to stop the violence propagated by the rival group towards Al-Ahly fans, but even fuelled further aggressions, is seen as a politically motivated revenge act against the ultras through the state. During the 2011 revolution, the ultras had played a significant role in defending the Tahrir square from the storming by the police. Since 2013, the judiciary and executive powers have been taking massive action against the ultras, even attempting to classify them as terrorist organisations. The ban on spectators still in place today is seen as an attempt to neutralise the ultras in the long-term and to paralyse their informal networks.

10 Bundestagsdrucksache Nr. 18/9965, Antwort auf Frage 10a (2), 13 October 2016.

11 Bundestagsdrucksache Nr. 18/4915, Antwort auf Frage 6, 18 May 2015.

12 Bundestagsdrucksache Nr. 18/8598, Antwort auf Frage 24, 31 May 2016.

13 Bundestagsdrucksache Nr. 18/3054, Antwort auf Frage 22, 5 November 2014.

14 Bundestagsdrucksache Nr. 18/8598, Antwort auf Frage 20, 31 May 2016.

Alexandria, Hurghada and Frankfurt am Main¹⁵. A total of 300 people attended these training sessions. In 2017, two further training sessions were held on the subject of recognising document and identity abuse for several airport police departments. The Egyptian Border and Harbour Police also received 100 document verification devices to facilitate training measures in the field of certificate and document security¹⁶. A closer cooperation between the German Federal Police Academy and the Police Academy in Cairo is also planned. This will include the police service dog programme, as well as the deployment of instructors of the German Federal Police Academy to hold a series of lectures in Cairo¹⁷.

2.2 Desolate human rights situation and police brutality – an “accessory to repression”?

Despite countless reports of human rights violations by Egyptian authorities, the German government has to this day held on to its commitment to the security cooperation with Cairo. Criticism and demands to end its cooperation with these very Egyptian authorities that are at the heart of such reports are consistently met in an evasive manner. In the explanatory statement accompanying the agreement, which came into force on 30 July 2017, the parliamentary coalition fractions CDU/CSU and SPD made the “respect of basic and human rights” a prerequisite for cooperation, pointing out that the latter could be terminated in the event of human rights violations.¹⁸ Paradoxically, during the negotiations leading to the agreement’s adoption, the Federal Government had, however, already clarified that “the assessment of compliance with human rights, the rule of law and the prevention of corruption in the respective contracting state [...] is not the subject of these bilateral agreements.”¹⁹ The cooperation with Egypt rather allows the “exemplification of Germany’s own standards concerning the rule of law and human rights”.²⁰ So far, however, this has been without any visible success. Regarding the human rights situation in Egypt, the German government is well-informed:

“There have been numerous cases of arbitrary arrests, detention without charges and trials which do not meet the constitutional criteria. There are also credible reports of torture and abuse in police custody, as well as enforced disappearances. In addition to followers of the Muslim brotherhood, human rights activists, union representatives, journalists, scientists, student representatives, artists and peaceful demonstrators are increasingly being targeted by security services.”²¹

Irrespective of this fact, the German government categorically rejects any share of responsibility for human rights violations resulting from its cooperation with Egypt’s police and secret service apparatus. As stated in 2016 and repeated multiple times, among other instances in July 2017²², there has allegedly been “no evidence that any knowledge or technology provided in the context of training and equipment aid to Egypt’s armed forces in 2015 and 2016 was misused or used against constitutional law.”²³

It was not until October 2017 that the German government first shifted away from this course. According to the German government, a workshop on ‘*Internet crimes*, including monitoring of websites that could be misused by *terrorists* to spread extremist ideas and prepare *terror* attacks’ was initially planned for 2016 and to be organised by the BKA for employees of the Ministry of the Interior in Cairo. The workshop was cancelled on the grounds that “some of the knowledge and skills imparted during this course could be used not only to prosecute terrorists, but also possibly to persecute other groups of people.”²⁴ This cancellation was the BKA’s reaction to the intensified state-led persecution of homosexuals in Egypt: In September 2017, after members of the audience waved the rainbow flag during a concert of the Lebanese band *Mashrou’ Leila* in Cairo, authorities arrested dozens of people and took them to court for alleged “debauchery”. According to the human rights organisation Human Rights Watch (HRW), at least 85 people were arrested and more than 40 of them were sentenced to imprisonment.²⁵ It also became known that members of the security services regularly use dating apps to lure people into outright traps by means of fake dating requests. The German government’s justification for the cancellation of the training course is quite remarkable, since this marks the first incident where Berlin explicitly admits that the knowledge imparted in the context of such police cooperation can be misused for domestic political reprisals. In 2016, Andrej Hunko, a member of German parliament for the Left

15 Bundestagsdrucksache Nr. 18/7274, Antwort auf Frage 14, 15 January 2016 and Nr. 18/9965, Antwort auf 10a (2), 13 October 2016.

16 Bundestagsdrucksache Nr. 18/11391, Antwort auf Frage 13, 7 March 2017.

17 Bundestagsdrucksache Nr. 18/13091, Antwort auf Frage 5, 7 July 2017

18 Bundestagsdrucksache Nr. 18/11812, Abschnitt IV, Begründung, 30 March 2017.

19 Bundestagsdrucksache Nr. 18/8148, Antwort auf Frage 7, 18 April 2016.

20 Bundestagsdrucksache Nr. 18/11812, Abschnitt IV, Begründung, 30 March 2017.

21 Bundestagsdrucksache Nr. 18/10437, Antwort auf Frage 1, 23 November 2016.

22 Bundestagsdrucksache Nr. 18/7839, Antwort auf Frage 5, 10 March 2016.

23 „So far, the Federal Police’s liaison officer in Cairo has not disclosed any facts or indications suggesting that measures implemented by the Federal Police in Egypt could have abetted human rights violations. Nor has the BKA provided any indications to date according to which German police measures have encouraged human rights violations.” Bundestagsdrucksache Nr. 18/13091, Antwort auf Frage 23, 7 July 2017.

24 Bundestagsdrucksache Nr. 18/13688, Antwort auf Frage 20b, 18 October 2017.

25 Cp. www.hrw.org/news/2018/01/22/more-arrests-egypts-lgbt-crackdown-no-international-outcry

Party, already described Germany's police cooperation with Egypt as an "accessory to repression".²⁶ The HRW also criticised Berlin's adherence to the security cooperation with Cairo and referred to the wide-spread torture in Egypt, the enforced disappearance of civilians and extrajudicial executions in a position paper from March 2017. According to the HRW, the continuation of this cooperation could make German officers complicit in serious human rights violations.²⁷

2.3 European division of labour – outsourcing the EU border control regime to Egypt

In the meantime, Germany is not the only player involved in the migration policy-motivated security cooperation with Egypt. Italy, France, the UK, Cyprus and Greece have also been intensifying their police and military cooperation with the Al-Sisi regime since 2014. In light of the continuing political instability in Libya, the EU and its member states are pursuing a multidimensional strategy towards building a more effective border control regime in Egypt. After all, the country is considered an important transit station for refugees from Eritrea, Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan and South Sudan, who often travel to Libya on their way to Europe.

The political objectives of the EU's migration policy cooperation with Egypt are above all "the protection of the EU's external borders, combating causes of flight and the improved organisation and management of migration".²⁸ Therefore, the EU is stepping up its efforts to synchronise security and development policy instruments with one another. While the planned deployment of an EU immigration liaison officer to the EU delegation in Cairo is still under way, countries like Germany, Italy and France are increasingly steering their bilateral development projects towards the creation of jobs in Egypt, in an effort to somewhat counteract the temporary increase in irregular migration of Egyptians. The projects in Egypt, co-financed by the federally owned *Deutsche Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ) and its Italian and French counterparts, are now explicitly understood as part of the EU's migration policy in North Africa and are intended to help combat the so-called causes of flight. Referring to the EU-Africa summit in November 2017, Franziska Brantner, member of the German parliamentary group *Bündnis 90/Die Grünen*, emphasized the fact that this approach is not very promising, since the EU's trade and agricultural policies are directly responsible for destroying the livelihoods of many people in African countries.²⁹ Indeed, the development projects financed by the EU member states are far from capable of absorbing the structural deficits inherent in the Egyptian economy, which is needed in order to change the growing willingness to flee among the people affected by the economic crisis. Although the German government has taken steps to place its support for Egypt's education policy in the context of migration policy cooperation³⁰ by promoting existing German schools and scientific exchange and scholarship programmes in Egypt, the focus of German and European migration policy measures in Egypt lies on security policy instruments. The so-called 'migration dialogue' between the EU and Egypt is currently stalled in its practical implementation. While there are plans for the EU Border Protection Agency Frontex to expand its sphere of activity to Egypt – an initial exchange of information between Frontex officials and Egyptian authorities³¹ already took place in Cairo in October 2016 –, for the time being the EU does not expect to reach an agreement any time soon. The bilateral security cooperation with Egypt is of overriding importance for the implementation of a restrictive EU border control policy in North Africa mainly promoted by Germany, France and Italy. The Italian government already signed a police agreement with Egypt in 2004, and has conducted ten police training sessions per year in Italy for representatives of the Egyptian Ministry of Interior since 2011. These include measures for the traffic police, driver training for bodyguards and document security training courses.³² Italian companies such as Iveco, Fiocchi and Beretta also equip Egypt's riot police with vehicles, firearms and ammunition.³³ In September 2017, Italy and Egypt signed a joint training protocol, which, under the umbrella of the Egyptian Police Academy in Cairo, envisages the implementation of training courses on combating organised crime and illegal migration for 360 police officers from 22 African countries.³⁴ This and other measures aim to establish Egypt as a regional training centre for African border police forces. The National Coordinating Committee in Combating and Preventing Illegal Migration (NCCPIM), a coordinating authority within the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, also plays an important role. In cooperation with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the NCCPIM carries out information campaigns to raise awareness of the dangers of illegal migration, but also organizes training courses in the police academy for members of the judiciary and public prosecutor's office.

26 Cp. www.andrej-hunko.de/presse/3122-beihilfe-zur-repression-in-aegypten

27 Cp. www.hrw.org/news/2017/04/24/germany/egypt-agreement-risks-complicity-abuses

28 Bundestagsdrucksache Nr. 18/11098, Antwort auf Frage 2, 3 February 2017.

29 www.deutschlandfunk.de/eu-afrika-gipfel-unsere-handelspolitik-ist-wirklich-unfair.694.de.html?dram%3Aarticle_id=401856

30 Bundestagsdrucksache Nr. 18/13688, Antwort auf Frage 8, 18 October 2017.

31 Bundestagsdrucksache Nr. 18/11098, Antwort auf Frage 8, 3 February 2017.

32 Bundestagsdrucksache Nr. 18/11098, Antwort auf Frage 23c, 3 February 2017.

33 Cp. www.jadaliyya.com/Details/32986/Hollow-Words-Egypt,-Italy,-and-Justice-for-Giulio

34 Cp. <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/277062/Egypt/Politics-/Egypt-interior-ministry-signs-joint-training-prot.aspx>

In addition to the UNHCR, the United Nations are also directly involved in migration policy-relevant activities in Egypt within the framework of a programme by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) on “capacity-building for police and customs authorities at border crossing points in the field of evaluation and analysis, communication and improvement of technical equipment”.³⁵ This programme is funded by Japan, the Netherlands, the UK, Canada and the US. Furthermore, European governments are supplying Egypt with arms and weapons to an unprecedented extent. In 2014 alone, twelve EU member states authorised 290 arms shipments to Egypt worth a total of six billion Euros.³⁶ While Italy mainly supplies small arms and ammunition, France is the undisputed leader in arms exports to Cairo. In addition to a FREMM frigate, four corvettes and two MISTRAL class³⁷ helicopter carriers, the Egyptian government has ordered 24 Rafale fighter jets worth 5.2 billion Euros and is currently negotiating the delivery of another 12 fighter aircrafts.³⁸ Egypt has also signed a contract with Airbus Space Systems and Thales Alenia Space for the delivery of a military satellite.³⁹ Meanwhile, Germany is supplying four submarines built by ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems (TKMS), torpedoes manufactured by the TKMS subsidiary Atlas Elektronik and air-to-air missiles from Diehl Defence, and has equipped Egypt’s police forces with vehicles. In addition to material supplies, training measures and joint military manoeuvres are also being carried out as part of the military cooperation with Egypt. According to official figures, the UK trained 80 members of the Egyptian army in 2015 and 2016⁴⁰, while the Egyptian Navy conducted joint military manoeuvres with France, Greece and Cyprus in the Mediterranean in 2016 and 2017. Germany has also intensified its military policy cooperation with Egypt and has increased its offer of training courses, information visits and expert talks since 2015.⁴¹

3 EXTERNALISATION OF EU EXTERNAL BORDERS TO NORTH AFRICA AND THE SAHEL

While the EU and its member states are pushing ahead with the military and police closure of Europe’s borders, Tunisia, Algeria and the Sahel states are also being increasingly integrated into the EU’s border control regime. Rather than focusing only on North Africa, as was the case in 2005, Europe’s walling-off strategy now also includes police and military measures in Mali, Niger, Chad, Mauritania and Burkina Faso.

This is the EU’s response to the changing dynamics on established flight routes. As the IOM recently confirmed, the EU–Turkey deal is showing its effect: compared to the previous year, the number of “irregular” migrants entering the EU via the eastern Mediterranean route in 2017 has dropped from 173,344 to 29,557. According to IOM, the numbers on the central Mediterranean route, which includes departures from Libya and Egypt, are also in strong decline. The western Mediterranean route, on the other hand, which includes crossings from Algeria and Morocco to Spain, witnessed a significant increase from 6,046 people in 2016 to 20,693 last year.⁴² This renewed relocation of flight routes is not surprising. The investigative research project *Migration Control*⁴³ carried out by the Berlin-based newspaper *die tageszeitung* impressively documents that the expansion of the EU’s border control regime, which today extends not only to North Africa but also to the Horn of Africa and the Sahel, has been pursued by the EU and its member states for several years. As in the case of Egypt, security and development policies are being increasingly interlinked. By now, EU commissioner Avramopoulos is not the only one realising that the “phenomenon” of migration cannot be effectively confined by security policy measures alone. This awareness is the driving force behind existing efforts to supplement the military and police-enforced sealing-off of Europe with instruments of “migration management.” This includes the EU’s demand for biometric data to be incorporated into travel documents of African countries. To this end, the security agreements concluded by the German government with Egypt and Tunisia contain corresponding clauses.⁴⁴ A key instrument for the EU in terms of implementing security policies and civilian measures is the so-called ‘empowerment initiative’ (*Ertüchtigungsinitiative*).⁴⁵ According to the German government, its aim

35 Bundestagsdrucksache Nr. 18/13091, Antwort auf Frage 17, 7 July 2017.

36 Cp. www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/05/eu-halt-arms-transfers-to-egypt-to-stop-fuelling-killings-and-torture/

37 www.naval-group.com/en/news/naval-group-delivers-the-first-gowind2500-corvette-ens-elfateh-to-the-egyptian-navy/

38 www.france24.com/en/20150216-france-egypt-sign-deal-sale-rafale-fighter-jets

39 www.latribune.fr/entreprises-finance/industrie/aeronautique-defense/thales-et-airbus-vendent-un-satellite-de-telecoms-militaires-a-l-egypte-65293.html

40 www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-supports-training-of-egyptian-armed-forces

41 Bundestagsdrucksache Nr. 18/13091, Antwort auf Frage 15 und 16, 7 July 2017.

42 Cp. www.iom.int/news/mediterranean-migrant-arrivals-reach-168314-2017-deaths-reach-3115

43 Cp. <https://migration-control.taz.de/#en>

44 Bundestagsdrucksache Nr. 18/11508 (Art. 4 Abs. 2) and Nr. 18/11509 (Art. 6), both dating from 13 March 2017.

45 Cp. with Mickan, Thomas: *Die Politik der militärischen Ertüchtigung. Kritik und Schlussfolgerungen für linke Politik*, hrsg. von der Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung, Studien 4/2016, Berlin 2016.

is to “support partners in such a way that they can carry out their own crisis prevention, crisis management, post-crisis rehabilitation and peace-building measures, while simultaneously observing human rights and constitutional standards throughout the entire crisis cycle. A particular emphasis is placed in the strengthening of the security sector in selected partner countries.”⁴⁶ In the meantime, the militarisation of the Sahel has already reached alarming proportions. Mali’s progressing state failure could not be halted, even after the stationing of the UN mission MINUSMA 2013. In addition to the 11,000 soldiers and 1,600 police officers deployed in the EU Stabilisation Mission and 600 further uniformed forces of the EU Training Mission in Mali (EUTM Mali) – which also involved the German Armed Forces –, the 3,500 member strong French anti-terrorist operation *Barkhane* is also involved in the region.⁴⁷ In addition, the establishment of a “joint force” of the G5–Sahel states, funded by the EU, the USA and the Gulf States is currently under way. However, as an instrument for deterring migration and terrorism that is geared to the interests of its donor countries, this task force can hardly contribute to a long-term solution of the security issues in the region. Social, political and economic structural problems within the region remain and serve as a breeding ground for the reproduction and intensification of the current crisis.

3.1 EU border control policy and migration management in the Sahel

Complementary to the police training and equipment aid provided in Egypt, the German government is also implementing police training measures in Tunisia, where irregular crossings of migrants to Europe increased significantly in 2017. Although those migrants are mostly Tunisian citizens as Tunisia is not yet considered a transit stop for refugees and migrants from East and West Africa, the German–Tunisian security cooperation forms a key element for the implementation of a border control regime on African soil, and remains closely linked to the EU’s efforts towards regulating the cross-border movement of people in the Sahel.

Under the umbrella of the German–Tunisian Transformation Partnership, which was launched in 2011, the German Federal Ministry of Interior already promoted a security sector reform in Tunisia. Within this framework, the German Federal Police offered support to Tunisian border authorities in the areas of coastguard, maritime security and rescue operations at sea, as well as border controls and certificate and document security.⁴⁸ These measures were increased in the wake of the terrorist attacks in Tunis and Sousse in 2015 and contain training and counselling assistance by the BKA and the German Federal Police for Tunisian border authorities, the National Guard and the Ministry of Interior, seminars on topics of counter-terrorism and crime, as well as extensive equipment supplies such as vehicles, inflatable boats, night-vision equipment, basic equipment for border guards and police schools, and even torches and boots. Since the beginning of 2016, around 700 Tunisian officials have been trained.⁴⁹

Additionally, the government in Berlin has intensified its support to Tunisia in the fortification of its border with neighbouring Libya. In addition to the procurement of mobile border surveillance systems, which is also supported by the German government, Germany and the U.S. are also financing the development of a stationary electronic surveillance system along the border.⁵⁰ However, the EU and German government’s efforts towards securing and fortifying national borders in the region is not only limited to Tunisia, but also extends to the Sahel. As early as 2015, the European Council adopted a “comprehensive package of migration and refugee policy measures”, which provides support to Mali and Niger for the surveillance and control of their national borders. Against this background, the civil EU missions EUCAP Sahel Mali and EUCAP Sahel Niger (EUCAP: EU Capacity Building Mission) have already been extended to include border protection and the fight against illegal smuggling.

Meanwhile, the German Foreign Office is increasingly relying on the GIZ for the provision of equipment aid for border fortifications and border control capacities. The GIZ was involved in the implementation of a border control policy support programme of the African Union in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, which delivered “vehicles, office equipment, GPS devices for border surveys, building materials for installing boundary stones and a supply infrastructure”,⁵¹ as well as in the country program for Mauritania funded by the German Foreign Office. This program included the construction of three border posts, while another six were equipped with furniture, computers and solar panels. The EU and German government also financed the construction of nine border checkpoints along the border between Niger and Nigeria, and an additional one on the border between Cameroon and Chad. The German Federal Police and the BKA conducted additional training sessions for police authorities of several countries in the region, while Mali was accepted into the German Government’s Equipment Aid Programme for Foreign Armed Forces (*Ausstattungshilfeprogramm der Bundesregierung für*

46 Bundestagsdrucksache Nr. 18/11889, Antwort auf Frage 1, 7 April 2017.

47 Cp. www.german-foreign-policy.com/news/detail/7434/

48 Bundestagsdrucksache Nr. 18/3054, Antwort auf Frage 6, 5 November 2014.

49 Cp. the issue of *Die Welt* newspaper from 22 August 2017.

50 Bundestagsdrucksache Nr. 18/9262, Antwort auf Frage 24 und 25, 21 July 2016, and Nr. 19/272, Antwort auf Frage 3, 14 December 2017.

51 Bundestagsdrucksache Nr. 18/5895, Antwort auf Frage 7, 1 September 2015.

ausländische Streitkräfte) in 2013. While the Federal Government supports Nigerian authorities in “combating smugglers and creating alternative sources of income to the migration business” and has provided vehicles for this purpose, the EU plays a key role in the establishment of the aforementioned joint task force of the G5 Sahel countries (Mali, Niger, Mauritania, Chad, Burkina Faso). The funding for the first year of operation of the 5,000 member strong task force’s has been largely secured. While each of the G5 countries has invested ten million Euros, the EU has pledged 50 million Euros from the African Peace Facility. France is providing another eight million Euros, with 60 million US dollars contributed by the USA. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are supporting the project with 100 and 30 million Euros, respectively.

Officially, the task force’s main goal is the fight against terrorism; however, according to the German government, this struggle is inseparable from the fight against organised crime. A successful joint task force would also hinder the activities of smugglers and human traffickers, and could thus also “enable refugees and internally displaced persons of the region to return to their homes”.⁵² Meanwhile, the task force’s activities – which included a first patrol operation in October 2017 with the participation of the Barkhane mission⁵³ – will also be “advised” by the EU EUTM Mali, the EUCAP Sahel Mali and the EUCAP Sahel Niger missions already operating in the region. However, this makes it clear that Brussels’ support for the project is more closely linked to the EU’s walling-off policy than the donor countries publicly admit. Rather than address the actual need for a more closely coordinated regional security policy for the G5 countries, the task force runs the risk of degenerating into a neo-colonial instrument that caters primarily to Western interests. Even though the formal power of command lies with the G5 countries, it is not expected that donor countries will maintain their support if the G5 governments set their own priorities, which do not coincide with the donor countries’ security policy objectives.

3.2 Sovereignty claims and right-wing populism in Algeria

In contrast to Egypt, Tunisia and the Sahel states, Algeria is considered as a highly intractable EU partner. Due to historical and ideological reasons, the country generally acts with great restraint in matters of security, economic and migration policy cooperation. This does not mean that the government in Algiers generally refuses to cooperate with the EU. However, in terms of security policy issues Algeria attaches great importance to the protection of its own national sovereignty, and is therefore often opposed to joint military manoeuvres or the deployment of foreign soldiers on its own territory.

In terms of security and migration policy, the interests of the EU and Algeria have nonetheless been converging since the end of the Algerian civil war. The spread of extremist terrorist groups in the Sahel is closely linked to the conflict of that era, during which government-opposed terrorist cells took refuge in neighbouring countries and southern parts of the country, which are difficult to access. While the infamous, now rebranded Algerian military intelligence service DRS established its own terrorist cells or infiltrated existing groups during its counter-insurgency campaign in the 1990s,⁵⁴ the security apparatus is still dealing with the devastating effects of this strategy today. In order to secure its 6,000 km long national border and prevent the infiltration of terrorist groups, Algeria has been concentrating on an unprecedented upgrade of its army along with the fortification of its southern borders since 2005. In 2011, these efforts were extended to securing its eastern and western borders. This is one of the main reasons why Algeria is pushing ahead with the establishment of a local arms and equipment industry and is maintaining its multi-billion defensebudget, despite its tight state finances. After Russia, which in recent years has received orders for 42 combat helicopters, twelve Sukhoi fighter jets, two submarines and hundreds of battle tanks of which 200 are to be assembled in Algeria, Germany has now become Algeria’s most important supplier of arms and equipment.

Already in 2008, Algeria’s President Abdelaziz Bouteflika and German Chancellor Angela Merkel (CDU) agreed on an arms deal worth approximately ten billion Euros. In addition to four TKMS frigates and a crew training carried out by the German Armed Forces, this agreement includes the construction of a shipyard where two of the four warships are to be assembled. Further, the agreement includes the construction of local production facilities for Mercedes-Benz Sprinter vans, G-Class off-road military and police vehicles,⁵⁵ the military transporter Zetros,⁵⁶ and the armed wheeled tank Fox produced by Rheinmetall. The controlling shareholder of these joint ventures is the Algerian government, which intends to push for a transfer of technology and become less dependent on arms supplies from abroad in the future.

52 Bundestagsdrucksache Nr. 18/13487, Antwort auf Frage 1, 5 und 6b, 1 September 2017 .

53 Bundestagsdrucksache Nr. 19/433, Antwort auf Frage 8, 15 January 2018.

54 Cp. www.madamasr.com/en/2017/07/25/feature/politics/the-legacy-of-the-algerian-civil-war-forced-disappearances-and-the-cost-of-amnesty/

55 Cp. www.algerie360.com/economie/economie-algerie/livraison-de-325-vehicules-multifonctions-et-tout-terrains-au-profit-du-mdn/

56 Cp. www.defencweb.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=38381:algerian-factory-unveils-new-locally-assembled-truck-for-algerian-military&catid=50:Land&Itemid=105

Algeria's border closure policy is also in line with the EU's walling-off policy. Initiated in 2012, the construction of a 50-kilometre-long electronic fence along the Malian border and the additional deployment of special military task forces to several border provinces⁵⁷ was followed by the construction of sand barriers equipped with electronic surveillance systems at the Tunisian and Libyan borders, which are planned to cover a distance of 350 kilometres. The Algerian–Moroccan border has now been virtually sealed off by a 450-kilometre-long fence, a water-filled ditch and dozens of border posts.⁵⁸ In addition, Algeria has intensified its border control cooperation with Mauritania and Tunisia, and is currently planning to train elite troops in Mali and Niger.⁵⁹ Meanwhile, since the end of 2014, Algerian security and home affairs authorities are continuing their repression against refugees and migrants within the country on an unprecedented scale. Police and gendarmerie forces have been launching waves of arrests of African foreigners on a regular basis. In most cases, detained people are temporarily detained in collective accommodation centres such as Camp Zéralda in southern Algiers before they are transported in bus convoys to Tamanrasset, which is located about 2,000 kilometres south of Algiers. From here, mass deportations to Niger are executed, with whom Algeria signed a readmission agreement in 2014.⁶⁰ According to various sources, between 17.000 and 20.000 people have been deported since then. It was not until September 2017 that numerous human rights organisations such as EuroMed Rights, Amnesty International and HRW reacted to the Algerian authorities' persistent repressions against refugees and strongly condemned the government's actions.⁶¹ Algeria's society has long been regarded as relatively open towards African immigrants; however, government officials such as Foreign Minister Abdelkader Messahel or Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia, who has accused irregular migrants of bringing "crime, drugs and other plagues" into the country, are further inflaming a growing xenophobic sentiment among the population.⁶² This right-wing populist rhetoric also serves the purpose of placing the blame for the ongoing economic crisis and increasing social tensions within the country on refugees. In this light, Algeria's border control policy has become a political priority – a development that complements the EU's border lock-down strategies in North Africa, and will pave the way for further forms of cooperation between Brussels and Algiers in the future.

4 SHORT-SIGHTED PRIORITY SETTING

The EU's strategic reorientation in the field of immigration and border control policies in the Mediterranean follows a clear line. Contrary to rhetorically misleading terms such as "combating of causes of flight" or "migration management", short-term crisis management strategies are being adopted, which, rather than addressing and eliminating the causes of flight and so-called economic migration, will lead to their increase in the medium and long-term. Rather than using political instruments to dismantle social, economic and political inequalities on a national, European and pan-African level, or at least considering an modification of the EU's trade and economic policies in order to improve standards of living in North African countries, the consequences of these structural inequalities are being tackled with police and military force.

In the process, an entire region is being militarised in a highly ruthless manner regarding human rights standards. The attempt to pave the way for a neo-colonial-style exploitation of qualified African workers with the help of state-led development aid organisations is accompanied with unpredictable intrusions into the social structures of North African and Sahel societies. The devastating consequences of this European policy on a local and national scale in North Africa and the Sahel cannot yet be foreseen – however, they will certainly affect not only the region as a whole, but also Europe.

The large-scale upgrade of military and police forces in autocratically governed states in the region is equally worrying – here too, the long-term consequences of this expansive arms export policy are by no means predictable. The existing, clearly formulated and reasonable arms export restrictions (the German War Weapons Control Act, the Foreign Trade and Payments Act and the newly introduced Post Shipment Controls), which prohibit exports of arms to crisis regions and states at war, are hereby either ignored by the German government or undermined by outsourcing of production through arms manufacturing companies. The export policy of Rheinmetall subsidiaries RMV Italia and Rheinmetall Denel Munition, a joint venture between the Düsseldorf-based company and the South Africa arms manufacturer Denel, is only the tip of the iceberg. While

57 Cp. www.defencenweb.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=28619:algeria-seeks-new-border-security-systems-as-war-clouds-gather-over-mali&catid=87:border-security&Itemid=188

58 Cp. www.files.ethz.ch/isn/191018/PW109-Border-Security-Challenges-in-the-Grand-Maghreb.pdf

59 Cp. www.algerie360.com/messahel-lalgerie-forme-troupes-delite-nigeriennes-maliennes/

60 Cp. www.rfi.fr/hebdo/20151016-niger-algerie-reprise-expulsions-departs-volontaires-agadez-tamanrasset-mendicite

61 Cp. www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/10/algeria-mass-racial-profiling-used-to-deport-more-than-2000-sub-saharan-migrants/

62 Cp. www.jeuneafrique.com/455760/societe/algerie-migrants-amenent-crime-drogue-selon-chef-de-cabinet-de-bouteflika/

this type of outsourcing and export practice is nothing new in the lucrative armament business, the dimensions of Rheinmetall Denel Munition's recent export practices are still surprising: The corporation has sold at least 39 turnkey factories for the construction of bombs and ammunition to third countries, including one to Egypt.⁶³ The German government's claim to a "restrictive arms export policy", although admittedly rhetorically imaginative, is equally misleading. Meanwhile, the figures speak for themselves. In terms of arms exports that are subject to authorization, the proportion of such applications that are rejected by the Federal Government is ridiculously low. Led by SPD politicians Sigmar Gabriel and Brigitte Zypries during the last legislative term, the German Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy has, therefore, pursued a highly expansive arms export policy, which is aimed at opening up new markets, rather than imposing restrictions.

63 Cp. www.br.de/nachrichten/bomben-fuer-die-welt-wie-sich-deutsche-waffenhersteller-unabhaengig-von-exportregeln-100.html