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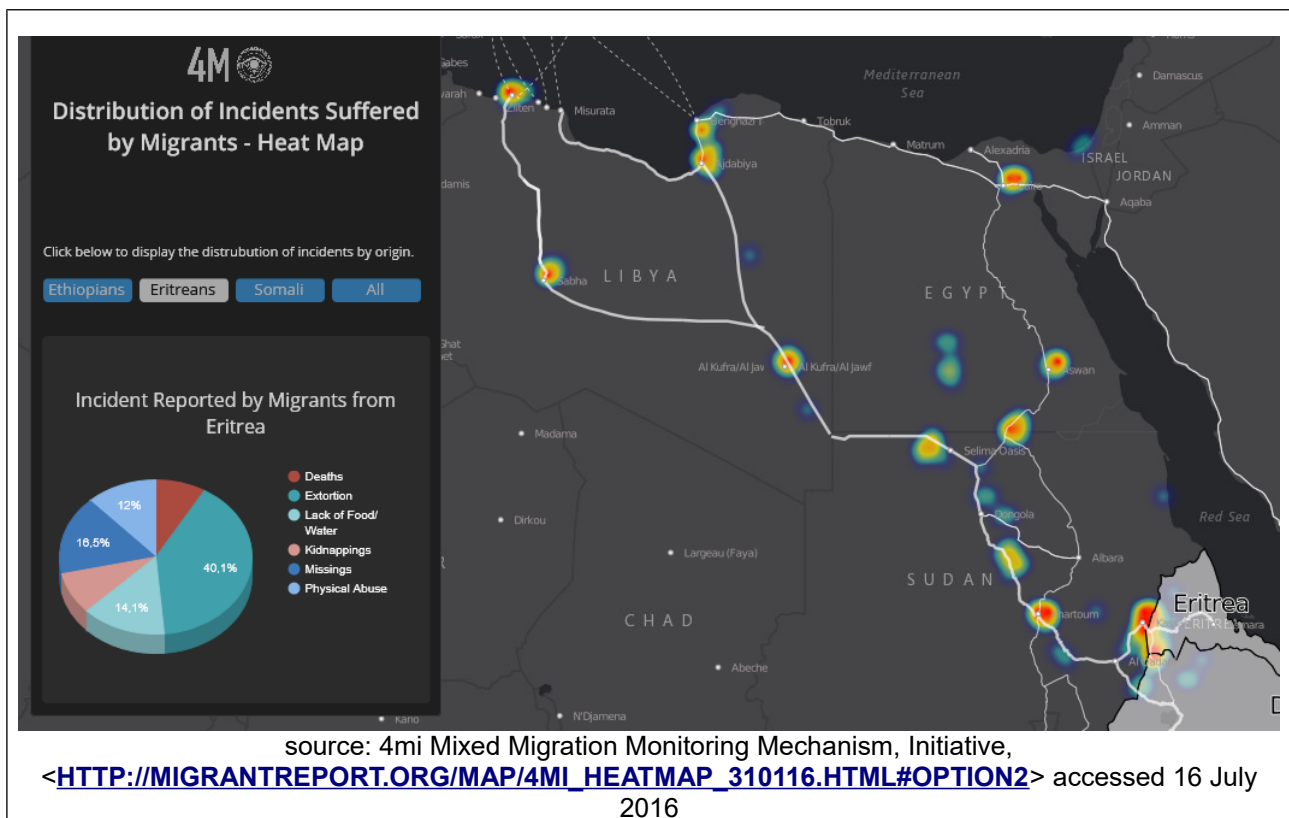
DEPARTMENT
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HUMAN
RIGHTS
CENTRE

EUROPEAN MASTER'S DEGREE
IN HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRATISATION

'When a Journey becomes a Nightmare': States' Obligations related to Trafficking in Forced Migrants

The Case of Eritrean Refugees falling Prey to Traffickers on their
Journey from Eritrea to and through Sudan and Egypt



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ABSTRACT

As a result of increasing political oppression and gross human rights violations in Eritrea, many Eritreans clandestinely leave their country with the help of smugglers and their middlemen. While some Eritrean refugees settle in refugee camps in Ethiopia or Sudan, others continue their journey through Northeast Africa and/or further on towards Europe. The irregularity of this large-scale migration movement puts them at high risk of being exploited. In recent years, human smuggling as well as human trafficking networks evolved all along the migration routes of Eritreans in Northeast Africa. At almost every step of the journey to and through Sudan, Egypt, Libya and other countries, Eritreans are at jeopardy of being kidnapped, held hostage and tortured with the purpose of extorting ransom from their relatives. In view of this elaborate trafficking network, this thesis asks whether Eritrea, Sudan and Egypt adhere to their obligations to fight trafficking in human beings, in particular Eritrean refugees.

The first chapter gives an overview of the applicable international framework. The questions whether the purpose of ransom extortion is a new form of trafficking and which states' obligations apply in light of the phenomenon of mixed-migration flows are being highlighted. The second chapter depicts the reasons for and effects of the vulnerability of Eritreans. A specific focus is laid on the question whether and how smuggling and trafficking networks intermingle in the context of Northeast Africa. Lastly, the third chapter outlines efforts undertaken by Eritrea, Sudan and Egypt to fight trafficking, in particular their efforts to provide for an adequate legal framework, prevent, prosecute and protect trafficking victims.

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