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The 2015 migration crisis was not fueled by the war in Syria, Theo Francken says

In a book published simultaneously in French and in Dutch in September 2018, *Continent Without Border*¹, State Secretary for Asylum and Migration Theo Francken criticizes the passivity and the politically correct culture of the Belgian and European leaders in the migration crisis since 2015

Willy Fautré, Human Rights Without Frontiers

HRWF (23.10.2018) - In summer 2015, 1,257,030 new applications for asylum were introduced in the European Union.

At the height of the crisis between August and December 2015, 5000 persons filed an application for asylum in Belgium but only 21.1% were introduced by Syrians: 7554 out of 35 776².

The other asylum-seekers were Afghans and Iraqis that traffickers in human beings had convinced that EU countries would provide them housing, cash and facilities for family reunification, according to Francken. The reason behind the massive wave of emigration of Baghdadis was not the (non-existent) war waged by ISIS troops in the capital city of

¹ *Continent sans frontière*, 310 pages, Editions Jourdan

² https://cgra.be/sites/default/files/statistiques_asile_decembre_2015.pdf

Iraq but prospects of a better economic future. The salaries of the public servants had just been dramatically reduced because of the fall of the oil price and because Turkey had liberalized the visa regime concerning the Iraqi citizens.

In September 2015, 2662 migrants from Baghdad filed an application for asylum in Brussels. An information campaign targeting Facebook profiles of young Iraqis finally erased the image of Belgium as a "Promised Land" and contributed to the reduction of this immigration wave from Iraq.

While the Western media were presenting the asylum-seekers as "Syrian war refugees", State Secretary Theo Francken stresses that the migration crisis only broke out four years after the war was raging in Syria, that less than 1/3 of the persons entering Europe without visa claimed to be Syrian (but not all were) and most of the (really Syrian) asylum seekers were not coming directly from Syria but from UNHCHR refugee camps or in big cities of Turkey, Lebanon or Jordan where they had been living for years.

It was therefore obvious that Europe was not facing a crisis of Syrian refugees but was confronted to the sudden rise of a broader international migration crisis that had already been proliferating for years, according to Francken. In 2015, people from no less than 117 countries requested asylum in Belgium, that is to say 70% of non-EU countries.

"Few asylum seekers come from war regions and they have also travelled across many safe countries before setting foot on the European territory," says Francken who stresses that the end of the war in Syria will not lead to the end of the migration pressure on Europe.

Last but not least, Francken accuses the media, Belgian politicians and EU top leaders to have spread views of the crisis that did not correspondent to the statistical realities.

Belgium suspends funds for two Palestinian schools over name change honoring terrorist

By Shlomo Papirblat

Haaretz (10.10.2017) - <http://bit.ly/2kKdS5g> - The Belgian government is suspending funding for two school construction projects in the Palestinian territories after it emerged that a school it backed was later renamed after a woman it considers a terrorist.

Belgium said it backed a school in the south of Hebron only to find out in 2013 that local authorities changed its name to "Dalal Mughrabi Elementary School." Belgian Foreign Minister Didier Reynders said that Mughrabi was "a Palestinian terrorist" who led a 1978 attack against Israel which killed 38, including 13 children.

"Belgium will not allow itself to be associated with the names of terrorists in any way," a statement from Reynders' office said. Two projects totaling \$3.9 million have been put on hold.

Belgian officials stressed today that the school's renaming in the name of the terrorist Dalal was carried out without their knowledge, and the reaction came as soon as the matter became known in Brussels.

The Mission of Palestine to the EU, Belgium and Luxembourg was asked to respond to the incident, the mission told reporters that they preferred to wait at this stage for the response.

Palestinian Education Minister Sabri Saydam said in a statement he regretted the Belgian action and invited the Belgian Consul General "to meet and discuss the matter."

Mughrabi is considered by many Palestinians to be a national hero. In March 1978, she entered Israel from Lebanon by boat, heading a squad of militants. They murdered the American photographer Gail Rubin on the beach and hijacked a bus on the coastal road. The militants blew up the bus and shot at the passengers who tried to escape. In an exchange of fire with the police, Mughrabi and other members of the squad were killed.

Sexual abuse and paedophilia in the Catholic Church in Belgium: Some statistics

In 2012, the House of Representatives put in place an investigation commission called "Sexual Abuse and paedophilia in the Catholic Church" and subsequently an Arbitration Center. The testimonies were collected either by the Arbitration Center, a neutral institution, or through 11 contact points in Catholic dioceses used by those who still had some confidence in the Church.

From 2012 until June 2016, the Arbitration Center identified and opened **628 cases and distributed 3 million EUR to the victims**: 449 in the Flemish-speaking community, 178 in the French-speaking community and 1 in the German-speaking community.

121 cases were rejected because the perpetrator was not a priest or because the victim had already been indemnified.

Most of the facts lasted during less than 3 years, and sometimes there was only 1 case of abuse.

4% of abuses of young boys and **10%** of abuses of young girls lasted between 8 and 11 years.

3 French-speaking abusers were involved in 3 cases and 1 in 4 cases.

43% of the French-speaking abusers had been in contact with their victims at school and 28% in the church.

67% of the victims who lodged a complaint were **between 50 and 69 years old**.

In 36% of the cases, the victims were **between 8 and 11 years old** when they were first abused.

In 44% of the cases, the victims were **between 12 and 15 years old** when they were first abused.

2/3 of the cases concern male victims.

Financial compensation

The cases of minor victims when the abuses were perpetrated were filed in 4 categories: sexual molestation with use of force or threats, sexual molestation with use of force or threats, rape and other abuses of exceptional gravity. The maximum compensation

amounts per category were: 2,500 EUR, 5,000 EUR, 10,000 EUR and 25,000 EUR. For suicides, the maximum possible amount was 7,000 EUR for relatives.

507 cases led to some financial compensation. In 482 cases, the amount was reached through a conciliation process.

1,499,750 EUR were granted to **184 victims** of rape.

1,026,251 EUR were attributed to victims of **sexual molestation with use of force**.

51,250 EUR were granted to victims of **sexual molestation without use of force**.

7000 EUR were paid to 5 relatives of victims who had committed suicide.

Sources:

La Libre Belgique, "[Abus sexuels au sein de l'Eglise: Trois millions d'euros pour les victimes](#)", 13 April 2017.

La Meuse, "[Abus sexuels dans l'Eglise : 3 millions pour les victimes](#)", 12 April 2017.

Great Mosque leaders accused of perjury during hearings

The chair of the federal parliament's commission investigating the March 2016 terrorist attacks in Brussels and Zaventem has said that one of the two witnesses from Brussels' main mosque is lying

By Alan Hope

Flanders Today (13.04.2017) - <http://bit.ly/2nI2h7z> - Patrick Dewael, the chair of the parliamentary investigative commission investigating the terrorist attacks of March 2016, has filed a complaint against the chair of the Great Mosque in Brussels and the mosque's imam, alleging one or the other committed perjury when they appeared in hearings before the commission last month.

Speaking under oath, the two men gave contradictory testimony regarding the mosque's involvement in the radicalisation of young people and recruitment of young men to fight in Syria.

Both imam Mohamed Galaye N'Diaye and Jamal Saleh Momenah of the Islamic Cultural Centre attached to the mosque – claimed that the institution practises a moderate form of Islam, countering critics who claim it is backed by Saudi Arabia and practices a radical form of the religion.

Dewael (*pictured*) will turn the contested testimony over to the prosecutor-general at the court of appeal, who will decide whether to prosecute. Perjury carries a sentence of two months to three years.

In related news, Dewael (Open VLD) told VRT that he plans to request an extension of his commission's deadline, which is 30 April, to allow it to complete its enquiries. The commission would now like to look into the official recognition of mosques and the conditions they are required to meet.

Belgium should speed up the social inclusion of persons with disabilities

Council of Europe (28.01.2016) - <http://bit.ly/1KeNKWz> - "Belgium is failing to uphold the rights of persons with disabilities to live independently and be included in the community. Planned measures to improve the situation should be implemented as a matter of priority" said today Nils Muižnieks, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, while releasing a report on his visit to the country, carried out from 14 to 18 September 2015. The report also focuses on the human rights of migrants, asylum seekers, and Roma and Travellers.

The widespread institutionalisation of persons with disabilities, combined with a lack of community-based services, limits these persons' possibilities to lead an autonomous life, a right enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This problem is compounded by the high number of children with disabilities who are educated in specialised schools, separately from other children, with little prospect of being reintegrated into mainstream education. Commissioner Muižnieks calls for a nationwide commitment towards the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream education.

Additionally, the detention of persons with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities in overcrowded psychiatric wards in Belgian prisons, without providing them with adequate treatment, remains an outstanding serious problem, in spite of several judgments of the European Court of Human Rights which found Belgium in violation of the European Convention on Human Rights in this area. "Belgium must take swift action to address these violations. Some positive steps have been taken in 2014, such as the building of a new specialised facility and the adoption of legislation easing transfers from the penitentiary system to health care institutions. The implementation process must now accelerate."

As regards migration and asylum, the Commissioner welcomes Belgium's bolstered reception capacity and increased resettlement quota. However, he urges the authorities to speed up the registration of newly arrived asylum seekers so that they are not left without accommodation while registration is pending. He also deplores the widespread practice of detaining asylum seekers at the border and the lack of systematic judicial review of detention. Moreover, the Commissioner welcomes that families of migrants with children are currently accommodated in open family units and calls on the authorities to refrain from resuming the practice of detaining these families in closed detention centres.

As regards Roma migrants, the marginalisation and acute destitution of a limited number of families is of serious concern. "Promising practices providing targeted social assistance and using mediators have been implemented in some cities, notably Ghent. These examples should serve to develop sustainable solutions to improve the situation of Roma families."

The Commissioner also strongly recommends increasing the number of encampment sites available to Belgian Roma and Travellers and addressing the reported over-representation of foreign Roma children and children of Roma and Traveller background in specialised schools. It is also important to tackle more forcefully all instances of hate speech and discriminatory practices against these communities.

- [Read the report of the Commissioner following his visit to Belgium from 14 to 18 September 2015](#)

- [Read the reply of the Belgian federal authorities and the federated entities to the report of the Commissioner](#) (in French)
 - [Read the report in a nutshell](#)
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A Russian converted to Islam in Belgium, trained as militant in Syria and detained in Kabardino-Balkaria

HRWF (17.12.2015) - According to a news from Interfax/ Russia, a native of Nalchik (capital city of Kabardino-Balkaria Republic of Russia) who lived for several years in Belgium and converted to Islam there was detained by Federal Security Service (FSB) officers of the Republic in early December.

"A 26-year-old Russian born in Nalchik who lived for several years in Belgium, converted to Islam there and was trained to be an explosives specialist in a militant camp in Syria," a representative of the FSB department in Kabardino-Balkaria told Interfax.

The former Nalchik resident began attending mosque only in Belgium. He moved to Egypt and attended a religious school there. Afterwards he reached Syria across Turkey and was trained in a militant camp along with other natives of the North Caucasus.

"The persons he intended to meet in Kabardino-Balkaria had been either detained or killed," the FSB officer said.

Source: <http://www.interfax-religion.com/?act=news&div=12599>

Appel d'un journaliste kurde d'origine syrienne « Je veux voir ma maman chez moi ici en Belgique »

Lettre ouverte aux autorités belges

(08.09.2015) Je suis journaliste d'origine kurde de Syrie. Mon épouse, mes quatre enfants et moi avons la nationalité belge depuis les années 90.

Le consulat Belge a Istanbul a refusé notre demande de visa pour ma maman, Me Alifa Mustafa (Visa application reference number ISTA/090615/0022/01) pour des raisons qui ne sont pas convaincantes.

En bref:

Ma maman (née en 1939) est coincée en Turquie depuis 2 ans. Mon père est décédé en 2006. Je suis le seul fils de mes parents.

Nous avons perdu l'espoir et les moyens afin que ma mère puisse venir chez nous.

Maintenant, ma mère croit absolument qu'il ne reste plus qu'une seule solution pour venir rejoindre sa famille ici chez nous ... au risque de tomber dans les mains de trafiquants en Turquie. C'est un risque très sérieux pour sa vie et sa santé mais c'est la conséquence du refus persistant de visa de la part de notre Belgique. Je m'inquiète beaucoup pour le risque que ma maman va peut-être prendre.

Dites-moi, mesdames et messieurs, qui est alors responsable si quelque chose arrive à ma mère alors que je suis un citoyen de ce pays?

Permettez-moi que de vous demander d'urgence une aide immédiate qui puisse nous redonner un vrai espoir de pouvoir accueillir ma mère chez nous.

Merci à l'Allemagne!

Mais tout d'abord je veux remercier la Belgique!

En vous remerciant de l'intérêt que vous réserverez à ma demande, je vous prie de recevoir, Madame et Monsieur, mes salutations respectueuses.

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Repeated and sophisticated attacks from Russia and China against the website of Human Rights Without Frontiers

HRWF (14.10.2014) - On Saturday, the Brussels-based NGO *Human Rights Without Frontiers* received a message from Intermedia, its Web hosting provider and the world's largest independent provider of hosted Exchange, notifying us of another attempt to compromise our Web server. Our Internet and Security consultant explains: "Another series of repeated hacking events over the last 48 hours seeking to hijack or disable our server were detected on hrwf.org and hrwf.net. Our server logs also indicate numerous brute force style attempts to gain access to our CMS (Content Management System) primarily from allocated unspecified IP addresses and from allocated IP addresses that we were able to trace back to Ukraine using data from The RIPE NCC which is one of five Regional Internet Registries (RIRs) providing Internet resource allocations, registration services and coordination activities that support the operation of the Internet globally. Whoever they are, they are obviously persistent and well equipped and we have to assume that they are the ones who for some time now have been trying to compromise our servers. "

Our Internet and Security consultant continues: "As our System Administrator was monitoring the server, he noticed that the hacker(s) successfully placed a script in a file on our Website. That file was requested on 10/10 at 22:23 GMT from this allocated unspecified IP address 64.78.39.13 (supposed to be EU Country but can be from any other country in the world) and the same IP address sent several other POST requests to our server on 10/10 and 10/11 and started sending SPAM from our servers on 10/11 at about 2 PM PT. It should be noted that not longer after that script was modified, a number of other files on our server were accessed and modified from 37.139.47.122 IP address. According to The RIPE NCC, that IP address is allocated to a person in St. Petersburg, Russia. So we had to briefly stop our Website and remove the offending script and check all server data and clean our files. Since this procedure can be time-consuming, we decided to perform a restore from a known clean backup."

This latest incident follows a series of damaging server attacks that were carried out between June and August. These seriously disrupted the normal functioning of our website for three months. Each time, thousands of files on our Web Server had to be checked one by one. Unfortunately and regrettably, the first successful attack (believed to have originated from China) on our old CMS caused several emails with inappropriate contents to be sent in our name. Due to constraints in our previous server environment

and in the vendor's release of needed upgrades scheduled only for December 2014 (these constraints beyond our control and the often limited resources situation we usually face left our old server vulnerable), HRWF had not only to invest in a different new server system environment but also hire web developers who could perform the difficult unofficial migration of all existing data to a vendor-independent upgrade and migration solution.

Despite constant upgrades of our protection against hackers, the website *Human Rights Without Frontiers* has for years been targeted by sophisticated IT attacks but this time has decided to make it public and to call upon all human rights organizations to denounce such practices. *Human Rights Without Frontiers* will publicize any similar case that will be brought to its attention.

The director of *Human Rights Without Frontiers*, Willy Fautré, commented: "No doubt our almost daily coverage of the events at Maidan, in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine explains the latest attacks. For years we have as well reported worldwide and at the European Parliament about violations of human rights in China. We are aware that we disturb the state disinformation policies of Russia and China but such threats will not deter us from pursuing our mission."

Last minute info:

Our Internet and Security Consultant managed today to find the name and address of the person in Russia who tampered with our files on the server. Our consultant can be reached at netsecurity@cowetatech.com

Belgium museum attack prompts manhunt

European Jewish body calls for greater security and tougher anti-Semitism legislation following Brussels shooting

Human Rights Without Frontiers adds its voice to the chorus of condemnations of the killing of four people at the Jewish Museum in Brussels. All accounts point to this crime being a terrorist action directed toward Jews. We urge the Belgian authorities to make every effort to bring the perpetrator to justice, strengthen protections against anti-Semitic attacks and take measures that promote peaceful co-existence and the respect of everyone's "right to life, freedom and security of person," as expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Adapted from Al Jazeera and sources (25.05.2014) - Belgian authorities are searching for an armed man who killed three people and injured a fourth at the Jewish Museum in Brussels. [The fourth has died in hospital since this reporting, HRWF]

Two of the three victims of Saturday's attack were Israeli tourists from Tel Aviv, a spokesman for the Israeli Foreign Ministry told the AFP news agency on Sunday.

Belgian officials released a thirty-second video clip from the museum's security cameras showing a man wearing a dark cap and a blue jacket enter the building, take a Kalashnikov rifle out of a bag and shoot into a room before walking out.

Deputy prosecutor Ine Van Wymersch said on Sunday that the suspect "probably acted alone, was armed and well prepared." He said he could not confirm whether the shooting was a "terrorist or anti-Semitic act" and added that all leads remained open.

Israel's foreign minister and prime minister condemned the shooting, saying it was the result of "anti-Israeli and anti-Semitic incitement."

The European Jewish Congress called for greater security at Jewish institutions and tougher legislation in dealing with anti-Semitic crime.

'Increasing hate'

In a statement issued on Sunday, Moshe Kantor said: "Such acts will continue if no additional resources are put into place to guarantee the security of our communities, to share intelligence and law enforcement cooperation and tougher punishments.

"How many more deadly attacks at Jewish institutions does our community need to endure until European governments get serious with a climate of increasing hate towards Jews?"

Belgian officials, including the foreign minister, have expressed their shock at the crime.

On Sunday, the French interior minister Bernard Cazeneuve said two Jewish men were attacked as they left a synagogue in Creteil, southeast of Paris, on Saturday night. He ordered more security around Jewish and Israeli establishments.

Proposed Belgian legislation could limit freedom of expression, says OSCE media freedom representative

OSCE (25.03.2014) – OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Dunja Mijatović today expressed concern about a proposed law in Belgium criminalizing certain forms of expression, most notably incitement to gender discrimination.

"Free speech should not be criminalized. The right to express opinions is a universal and basic human right; it must be upheld and protected, and only restricted to instances of intentional and dangerous incitement to violence," Mijatović said. "Even speech that we find offensive and not in line with most basic democratic principles and values, painful or provocative must be allowed to be heard."

According to the proposal put forward to the legislator in Belgium available on the Senate's website, penalties for sexist and other discriminatory expressions based on gender include fines and prison sentences of up to one year. Mijatović said these sanctions were too harsh for a bill that was vaguely worded and subject to interpretation.

"I ask the members of the Belgian parliament to reconsider and to reject this amendment as it could limit freedom of expression," Mijatović said.

The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media observes media developments in all 57 OSCE participating States. She provides early warning on violations of freedom of expression and media freedom and promotes full compliance with OSCE media freedom commitments. Learn more at www.osce.org/fom, Twitter: @OSCE_RFoM and on [facebook.com/osce.rfom](https://www.facebook.com/osce.rfom).

For PDF attachments or links to sources of further information, please visit: <http://www.osce.org/>

Yemen to deport two Belgian terror suspects

Reuters (07.05.2012) - Two Belgian nationals could be deported from Yemen after being detained last month on suspicion of involvement in terrorism, a Yemeni security official and Belgium's Foreign Ministry said yesterday.

The Yemeni official identified the men as Ebrahim Bali and Ezzeddine Tuhairi, Belgians of Arab descent, and said they were detained on April 13 at Sanaa's airport as they tried to enter the country.

"They were arrested on suspicion of planned terrorist activities in Yemen. We are in a process of negotiation with the Belgian government. We expect them to be deported...within days," the official said. A Belgian Foreign Ministry spokesman confirmed the two men were being held over suspected involvement in "terrorist" activity, and said Brussels was seeking consular access to them.

Yemen's branch of Al-Qaeda, is of great concern to Washington, which is waging an assassination campaign against alleged members of the group using drone and missile strikes.
