

EXPORTING SURVEILLANCE TECHNOLOGY TO MENA:

IMPLICATIONS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND REGIONAL STABILITY.

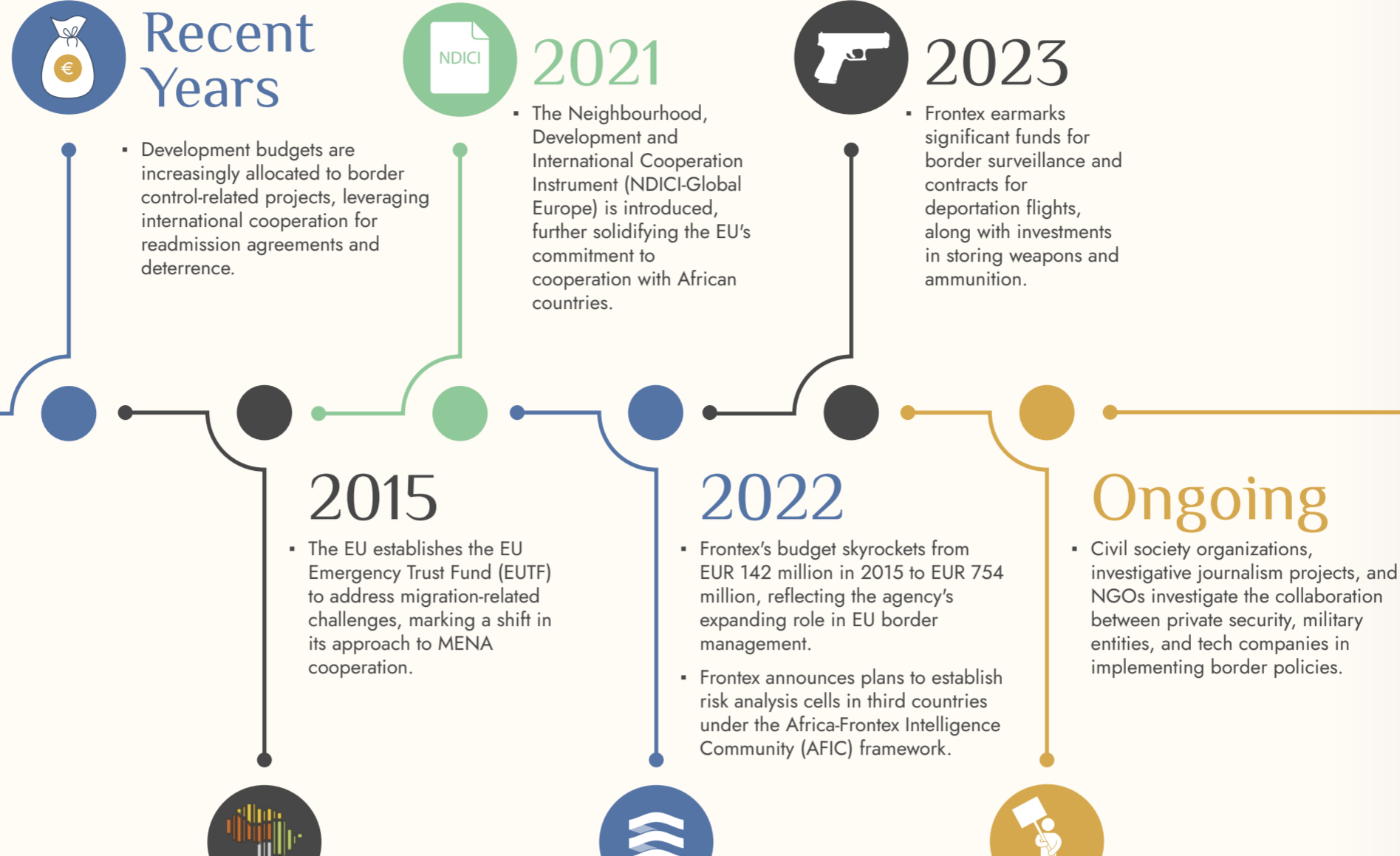
In recent years, the European Union (EU) has reshaped its approach to cooperation with the MENA region. Development funds have been redirected towards border control projects, reflecting the growing emphasis on security and migration management.

This info sheet explores the implications of this shift for human rights and regional stability.



INTRODUCTION

Over the past years, the use of development budget for border control-related projects and the use of international cooperation support as leverage for readmission agreements or to prevent departures have marked the approach of the European Union to cooperation with African countries, especially in the MENA region.



This logic of conditionality is shaped through budgets structured around the external dimension of migration: the EU Emergency Trust Fund (EUTF) in 2015 and the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe) from 2021.

FUNDING INSTRUMENTS AND CAPACITY BUILDING

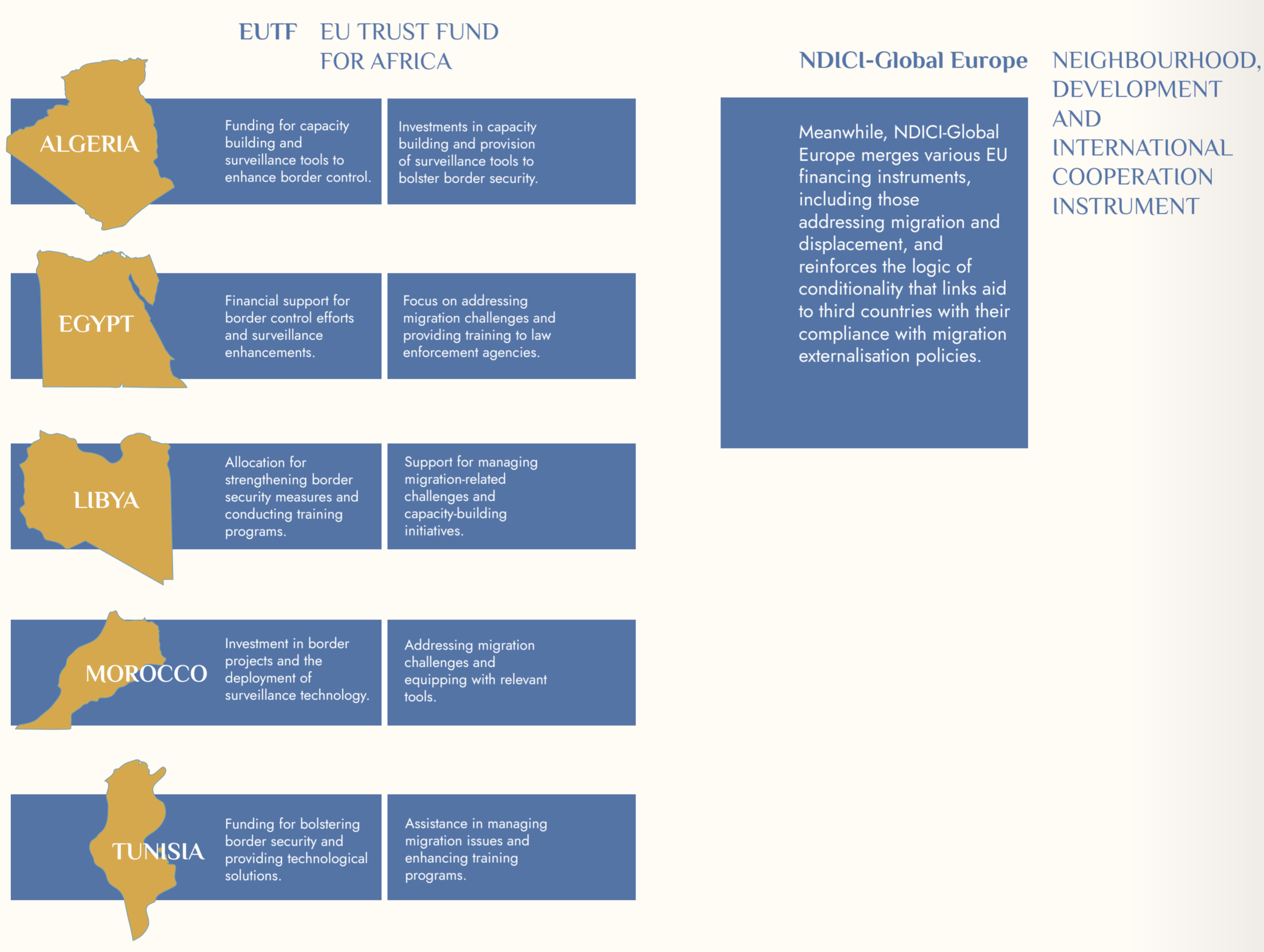
EU funds have been channelled into capacity building for law enforcement agencies in non-EU countries. This investment predominantly focuses on outsourcing surveillance tools and training to support the EU's strategy of externalizing border control.

Within this, the development and deployment of surveillance technologies, often shrouded in secrecy, plays a central role.



IMPACT OF EUTF PROJECTS IN MENA AND NDICI-GLOBAL EUROPE

The EU Emergency Trust Fund (EUTF) for Africa, initiated in 2015, addresses migration-related challenges. Its priorities include migration restriction, rights and services promotion, and border management. It was able to make financial commitments until 2021 but its programmes will be implemented until the end of 2025.

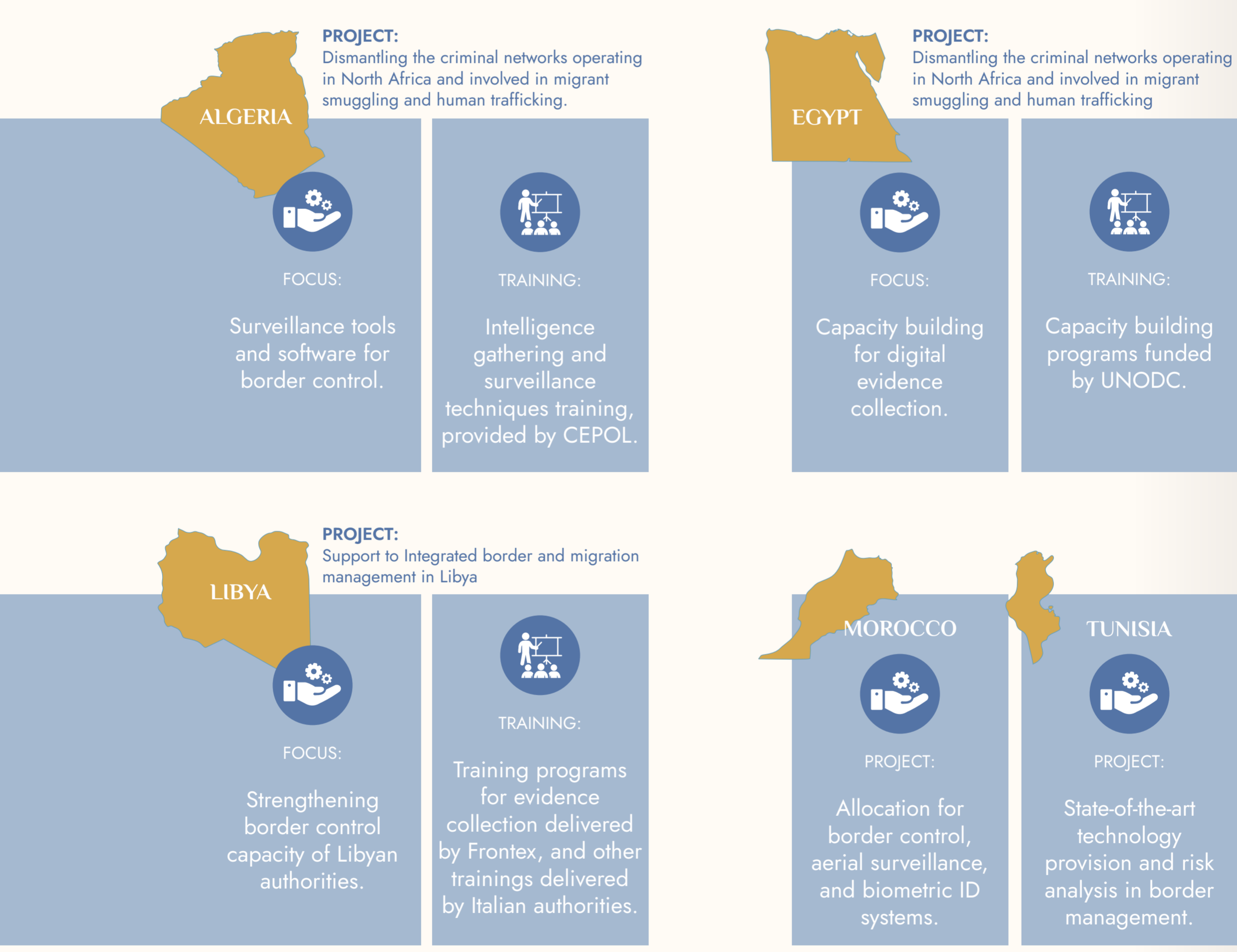


The EU Emergency Trust Fund (EUTF) for Africa, has faced criticism due to its broad objectives, implementation weaknesses, and insufficient transparency.

EU PROJECTS IN MENA

Several MENA countries have been recipients of EU-funded projects, impacting border control and surveillance technology.

These projects encompass Frontex's expanded role, intelligence training in Algeria, digital evidence capacity building in Egypt, border control initiatives in Libya, technology allocation in Morocco, and advanced border management in Tunisia.



Frontex serves as a key partner in these projects, contributing technical knowledge, resources, and coordination to ensure the implementation of EU-funded initiatives in these MENA countries, despite their human rights impacts.



CONSEQUENCES AND HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

The increasing reliance on surveillance technology raises concerns about its consequences.

It may push migrants toward perilous routes, violating their rights to life and freedom of movement.

Privacy breaches, freedom of expression limitations, and potential misuse of spyware further complicate the situation.

Risks of Increasing Surveillance Technology:



Potential Consequences:



REPORTS OF MISUSE:

Concerns have arisen regarding the potential misuse of EU-supplied spyware for surveillance, raising questions about accountability and oversight.

CONCLUSION

The outsourcing of surveillance technology to MENA countries presents significant challenges. It not only jeopardizes fundamental rights but also contributes to regional instability, by reinforcing the security apparatus of fragile democracies and authoritarian states. Responsible technology transfer and a commitment to safeguarding human rights are essential for addressing these concerns.

TO READ THE FULL REPORT OF "ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: THE NEW FRONTIER OF THE EU'S BORDER EXTERNALISATION STRATEGY"

Visit: https://euromedrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Euromed_AI-Migration-Report_EN-1.pdf

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