

JOINT STATEMENT

Rabat, 7 October 2015

*Ten years of violence at the southern border  
of the European Union.*

*Impunity for the externalisation of migration  
“management” policies must end.*

Ten years since the deadly events at the borders of Ceuta and Melilla in October 2005, civil society organisations highlight that impunity continues for the violent acts committed against people who seek to migrate to Europe at the northern border of Morocco which is also the southern border of Europe.

The decade between 2005 and 2015, although it has featured promising political changes in recent years, has been marked by constant and sometimes deadly violence, especially in crossborder areas.

The analysis of the violence at the Nador-Melilla border has moved our organisations to publish this statement.

Civil society organisations from the Afro-Mediterranean region and Europe, meeting in Rabat from 1 to 3 October 2015 within the framework of the workshop “Block migrants as far as possible from the borders of Europe?” call on all the governments involved:

- **To respect the provisions of international law**, particularly the Geneva Convention on Refugees, of which both Morocco and Spain are signatories. To respect the principle of non-*refoulement* of people and to cease all acts of physical and moral violence against persons crossing the borders of Ceuta and Melilla.
- **To respect legal provisions in cases involving expulsion at the borders**, in particular to end the practice of refusing people seeking international protection, the detention of people who have right of residence or stay and documents that demonstrate refugee status, including pregnant women and minors. We recall that the decision which decides the country to which somebody will be expelled must be under judicial control, with all the procedural guarantees that derive from it.
- **To stop using the “fight against trafficking in human beings” instrumentally, as a justification for repressive operations**. While, the Moroccan authorities have used this argument several times – for example in the massive raid on 10 February 2015 in Gurugu and that on 15 August 2015 in Oujda – they have never implemented procedures for the identification and protection of potential “victims of trafficking”.
- **To effectively provide access to asylum offices at the borders of Ceuta and Melilla to any persons seeking international protection, without discrimination**. We also call for the Moroccan authorities to stop blocking the passage of people from sub-Saharan Africa who may legitimately aspire to protection based on the right of asylum, and of refugees from Syria, or from any region of the world.

For some months, people coming from Syria and Palestinians from Syria have been blocked

at the Beni Ansar border and prevented from reaching Melilla, sometimes using force.

Some of them have been detained and persecuted. In September in Nador, a Syrian refugee was convicted to serve a two-month prison sentence. These blockades have opened the door to a veritable human trafficking operation in which Syrian and sub-Saharan African people are compelled to pay considerable sums to cross borders.

We deplore the use of enormous technical and financial resources for the construction of new barriers and an increase in the number of violent acts against people moving across national borders and/or potential asylum seekers.

We urgently demand the end of impunity enjoyed by those responsible for this violence and the migration policies that cause suffering at the southern border of Europe, particularly around the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla.

We call for all current or future laws dealing with immigration and asylum to be respected and for them to comply with Morocco's international commitments and the provisions of the Moroccan Constitution of 2011. Insecurity, mainly legal, as well as in terms of the protection of rights, continues for certain categories of foreigners in Morocco, in spite of its new migration policy.

#### First signatories of the statement

- Abdelkrim Belguendouz, universitaire à Rabat, chercheur en migration Alianza por la Solidaridad
- Alliance contre le Racisme et la Xénophobie nord du Maroc Association AL KHAIMA
- Asociación Elín
- Association lumière sur l'émigration clandestine au Maghreb (ALECMA) Association Marocaine des Droits Humains (AMDH)
- Asociación Pro Derechos de la Infancia (PRODEIN)
- Association Thissaghna pour la Culture et le Développement (ASTICUDE) Collectif des Communautés Subsahariennes au Maroc (CCSM)
- Collectif Loujna Tounkaranké
- Conseil des Migrants Subsahariens au Maroc (CMSM)
- EuroMed Droits – Réseau euro-méditerranéen des droits humains
- Groupe antiraciste de défense et d'accompagnement des étrangers et migrants (GADEM) Organisation Marocaine des Droits Humains (OMDH)
- Pateras de la vida Réseau Migreurop

(This declaration is open for signatures from other entities, please write to [elsa.tyszler@gmail.com](mailto:elsa.tyszler@gmail.com))