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THE EU DISCARDS THE IRREGULAR MIGRATION ISSUE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN - 2

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During the last month, the Mediterranean Sea has once again become the grave of countless migrants. AVİM has drawn attention to these tragedies on several occasions.[1] The death toll since 2014 has exceeded 17,000. The restrictions and agreements regarding migration continue to be on the agenda, turning the Mediterranean into a cemetery day by day.

An agreement was recently signed between the European Commission and Tunisia concerning the irregular migrants. Amnesty International condemned the agreement between the European Commission and Tunisia. Amnesty International views the agreement as an initiative which will further worsen the failure of the migration policies. As per the agreement, the European Union (EU) will provide monetary assistance to Tunisia to prevent migration to Europe.[2] According to the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, the agreement is "investment in shared prosperity" to tackle rising the migration and dismantle the trafficking network in the region. If approved by the International Monetary Fund, the EU will provide 105 million Euros (approximately 120 million Dollars) to Tunisia to deal with irregular migration.

In an article written by Noah Robinson, it was stated that Eve Geddie, Amnesty International's Head of Office and Advocacy Director at European Institutions Office, believes that the agreement was signed in "bad faith".

Geddie stated This ill-judged agreement, signed despite mounting evidence of serious human rights abuses by authorities, will result in a dangerous expansion of already failed migration policies and signals EU acceptance of increasingly repressive behavior by Tunisias president and government. Coming against a backdrop of escalating violence and abuses against sub-Saharan African migrants by Tunisian authorities, the decision shows no lessons have been learned from previous similar agreements. This makes the European Union complicit in the suffering that will inevitably result..[3]

One may recall that black Africans were deported from Tunisia only a few days prior to the agreement being signed between the EU and Tunisia.[4] On February 2023, the President of Tunisia warned his country of a plan to alter the demographic make-up of Tunisia, turning it to just another African country that doesnt belong to the Arab and Islamic nations any more. As part of this threat, hordes of irregular migrants from sub-Saharan Africa had travelled to Tunisia, bringing all the violence, crime, and unacceptable practices that entails. This warning, which has been widely condemned and characterized as racist by human rights groups as well as regional and international organizations, gave official endorsement to a mentality that has been spreading in this North African country in recent years.

This President of Tunisias warning led to the rounding up sub-Saharan black Africans, their forced eviction from rented property and African countries stepping in to repatriate their citizens.[5]

In our previous article[6], we expressed our concern regarding Europe tarnishing its reputation. Now, with the agreement signed between the EU and Tunisia on irregular migration, it would not be inaccurate to state that the EU is washing its hands from the responsibility and shifting it to Tunisia. The agreement officially declares that the EU has firmly closed its doors to the migrants.

**Image: https://www.amnesty.org.tr/icerik/abtunus-goc-anlasmasi-abyi-siginmacilara-gocmenlere-ve-multecilere-karsi-islenen-ihlallerde-suc-ortagi-yapiyor*

[1] Hazel Çağan Elbir, AB, Düzensiz Göçmen Sorununu Akdenize Gömüyor, *avim.org.tr*, 20 June 2023, https://avim.org.tr/tr/Yorum/AB-DUZENSIZ-GOCMEN-SORUNUNU-AKDENIZ-E-GOMUYOR.

[2] Noah Robinson, EU-Tunisia Migration Agreement Makes EU Complicit in Human Rights Abuses: Amnesty International, *Jurist.org*, 18 July 2023, https://www.jurist.org/news/2023/07/eu-tunisia-migration-agreement-makes-eu-complicit-in-human-rights-abuses-amnesty-international/.

[3] EU/Tunisia: Agreement on migration makes EU complicit in abuses against asylum seekers, migrant and refugees, *amnesty.org.tr*, 18 July 2023, https://www.amnesty.eu/news/eu-tunisia-agreement-on-migration-makes-eu-complicit-in-abuses-against-asylum-seekers-migrant-and-refugees.

[4] Black Tunisians lie low as violence against Black people worsens, *Al Jazeera*, 14 July 2023, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/7/14/black-tunisians-lie-low-violence-against-black-people-worsens.

[5] Black Tunisians lie low as violence against Black people worsens.

[6] AB, Düzensiz Göçmen Sorununu Akdenize Gömüyor.

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