

Press Release

Confronting Irregular Migration in Tunisia and Firm Measures in Exchange for European Assistance!

(Translated)

In the year 2023, as reported on the website fdes.net on July 31, 2023, the following statistics were recorded:

- The number of casualties of irregular migration on Tunisian coasts reached 903 victims and missing individuals.
- The number of attempted migrants prevented from crossing from Tunisian coasts (both Tunisian and non-Tunisian nationals): 35,143 migrants.
- The number of Tunisian minors who arrived on Italian coasts: 1,526 minors.
- The number of Tunisian women who arrived on Italian coasts: 379 migrants.

The Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights provided data in a report, indicating that these figures are not final and accurate. There are "invisible" numbers representing migrants who reach Europe through various routes without passing through local authorities or international structures, and these numbers do not appear in any statistics. These invisible numbers are significant and vary according to the tactics of migrant smuggling networks. They also include instances of departures from Tunisian coasts that either manage to evade security surveillance or are prevented from crossing without being reported or announced.

Just a few days ago, tragedy renewed as 41 migrants lost their lives in a drowning incident off the coast of the Italian island of Lampedusa, according to the Italian news agency (ANSA), citing survivor accounts. The agency noted that four individuals who survived the incident informed rescuers that they were aboard a boat that departed from the city of Sfax in Tunisia and sank on its way to the Italian shores. The migrants come from various nationalities. The city of Sfax has become a major transit point for irregular migrants attempting to reach Italy, given its proximity to Lampedusa where the recent drowning incident occurred. Hundreds of migrants are risking an unknown fate, with the possibility of either surviving and reaching the Italian shores for a potentially better life than what they left behind in their home countries, or facing death, disappearance, and falling victim to criminals.

Tunisia has become a destination for many migrants fleeing conflicts and crises in their own countries, either seeking refuge or as a launching point for their migration towards Italy (including Syrians and Africans). However, Tunisia itself is not in a better condition than their home countries, as its citizens endure poverty, unemployment, high prices, and decreased purchasing power—especially after the revolution. The crises it has faced have made it a target for further exploitation under the rule of corrupt leaders who have drowned it in debt and servitude. This has resulted in deteriorating living conditions, rising prices, increasing unemployment, and widespread poverty due to financial inflation and the depreciation of the currency. In fact, inflation rates have reached unprecedented levels (nearly 8.2%).

These corrupt individuals have laid out a red carpet for the West, strutting proudly and arrogantly as they control the country, dictate their terms, and impose their restrictions. Their organizations and entities are scattered here and there, draining the country's wealth and resources, imposing constraints, and shackling it with debts that the state struggles to provide liquidity for and import essential commodities. Meanwhile, its people remain hungry, standing in queues for a handful of sugar, flour, or a small amount of oil.

What a state the country has fallen into, and what humiliation its people have endured!

A significant number of the youth in Tunisia see no future for themselves except migration to Europe. They have lost all incentives in their own country, as wage levels are insufficient even to meet their basic needs.

Our youth are desperate, with all doors seemingly closed to them. There is no work, no decent life, and they can't even afford their basic necessities. There is no employment, no decent living, and they cannot even afford their basic needs. How can they think of building a home and supporting a family?

"The desperation" is no longer just a concept that affects the youth, but it has become, as some have labeled it, a culture that has gripped the entire population. How many families have boarded death boats? How many children and women have been counted among the dead and missing? Everyone is fleeing for their lives because they are as good as dead in their own homeland. The essentials of a dignified life are absent, and human dignity is disregarded.

When a person carries their young children and throws them into the open sea, not knowing if they will reach safety or become food for sharks, and when a mother sends her underage daughter in hopes that she will reach the shores of Italy and obtain asylum, without considering the risks she might face... When these stories recur and diversify, it signifies that matters have reached an extreme point, and people have become numb to everything in the face of blocked horizons and the loss of hope for a decent life.

O People of Tunisia:

The situation is grave and the matter is dire! The tragedies and drownings resulting from irregular migration, commonly referred to as "al-Harga," must be stopped. We must rescue our sons and daughters from becoming lifeless bodies tossed by the waves onto foreign shores, only to be buried in the graves of strangers. This issue goes deeper than being mere drowning incidents reported by Italian authorities.

- When Italy hosts an international conference on July 23, 2023, to address irregular migration, resulting in what is called the "Rome Process" aimed at tackling the root causes of irregular migration,

- When this process involves several measures, including cracking down on human trafficking and improving cooperation between European and African countries in various areas,

- When the overarching concern of the conference is to replicate Tunisia's model, where European leaders have signed agreements promising the country aid exceeding one billion euros in exchange for taking stringent steps to address irregular migration through its territory, we find an explanation for reports indicating the involvement of the coast guard and authorities in these disasters and the drowning of innocent migrants.

We, in the Women's Section of the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir, deeply mourn the tragedy that hundreds of families have faced, losing their sons and daughters. We condemn the exploitation of this phenomenon by criminal networks that seek to amass large sums of money. They are aided by individuals with weak moral character who are willing to take innocent lives in exchange for a handful of money, a position, or status.

We urge our people in Tunisia to delve into the true underlying causes of the suffering, pain, limited opportunities, and lost hopes. By doing so, we can uncover the fundamental solutions to all of life's problems and work together to find them.

And we call upon them to work with us to resume the Islamic way of life by establishing the Khilafah Rashidah (rightly guided Caliphate) on the method of the Prophethood.

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَحُولُ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَأَنَّهُ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ﴾

“O you who have believed, respond to Allah and to the Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life. And know that Allah intervenes between a man and his heart and that to Him you will be gathered.” [Al-Anfal:24]

**The Women's Section
in the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir**

