

Migrimage presents: Massive Open Online Courses.

Capsule number 3: **CIRCULARITY**, EXTERNALISATION OF THE BORDER
LIBYA, STATUS OF MIGRANTS, DEPORTATION ARRANGEMENTS

Podcast created by Luca Brindisino for the University of Salento

Italy and Libya participate in the United Nations Protocol against organized crime, signed in 2000 to fight the smuggling of migrants by land, sea and air.

Both the Italian government and the European Union pursued an articulated strategy of externalization of borders, overshadowing respect for fundamental rights.

One of the many steps is the Memorandum of Understanding of 2017.

The key points of this agreement are:

- cooperate supporting Libyan security and military institutions in order to stem the flows of illegal migrants. Specifically, Italy provides technical and technological support to the Libyan Coast Guard;
- close the southern border of Libya, that's the main transit point for migrants from sub-Saharan Africa;
- financing the reception centers in Libya (ignoring that these are real detention centers where torture and deprivation are the rule);
- promoting a broader vision of Euro-African cooperation to eliminate the causes of illegal immigration.

In summary, Libya undertakes to block the passage of Central African migrants by closing the southern border and to intercept and block the boats departing from its coasts.

Italy offers organizational support by training and equipping the Libyan Coast Guard and the staff of the reception centers, financing unspecified development programs.

But what happens to migrants who are already in Libya?

Libya does not adhere to the Refugee Convention. So all illegal migrants are identified as criminals and imprisoned without letting them the right to international protection.

Furthermore, Libya is not bound by rules that require respect for human rights - such as those of the European Convention on Human Rights – so there is no guarantee that migrants enjoy these rights. This is why writing in an Italy-Libya treaty that "the parties involved undertake" to act "in compliance with international obligations and human rights agreements" is a real joke.

It means that the Memorandum between Italy and Libya talks about "reception centers", but in Libya the "management of migration flows is based on the automatic detention of refugees and migrants in inhumane conditions", as denounced by UNHCR and IOM.

The testimonies collected by Amnesty International and Médecins Sans Frontières draw a reality made up of physical and psychological violence, rape, forced labor imposed by both traffickers and official authorities. The same UNHCR Community Day Centers, born in recent years especially in Tripoli, are unable to guarantee assistance and support to thousands of migrants.

Migrants who are repatriated to Libya are subjected to arbitrary detention, extortion, disappearance and torture. Thousands of people are being held at the Department for Combating Irregular Migration in indefinite detention pending deportation.

But one of the most worrying aspects is the obvious corruption of the institutions financed by Italy and the European Union to ensure compliance with the Treaty.

The tabloid L'Espresso has collected testimonies of how the Libyan Coast Guard, the authority most involved in the blocking of departures, is in agreement with the traffickers, to whom it delivers the migrants stopped as bargaining chips.

That's why Libya is not a safe haven.

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