

Executive Summary of the Indictment¹
56th Session of the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal

Human rights violations against migrants by the states of the Maghreb, the European Union, and several of its member states

Palermo — 23–25 October 2025

From 2014 to 2025, the world has witnessed a dramatic surge in deaths, disappearances, and violence suffered by migrants at Europe's doorstep. This chilling reality is neither accidental nor inevitable: it stems from deliberate, acknowledged, and coordinated policy choices that have organized the suffering, humiliation, and disappearance of tens of thousands of people.

It is these documented and indisputable facts that compel civil society organizations to bring this indictment before the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal at its session of 23–25 October 2025 in Palermo, seeking to establish the responsibility of the Maghreb states, the European Union, and several of its member states for constructing a system of structural, large-scale violations of international law.

For more than a decade, according to the IOM's Missing Migrants Project, 75,912 migrant deaths and disappearances have been recorded worldwide, including 32,230 in the Mediterranean—over 42% of the global total. In 2024 alone, at least 3,488 deaths or disappearances were recorded in the MENA region, despite undercounting due to the lack of documentation on many routes.

These tragedies are not fate. They are the product of political choices: systematic breaches of the principle of non-refoulement; failure to render assistance at sea and deliberate creation of shipwreck situations; arbitrary detention, torture, and inhuman treatment; racial and systemic discrimination paired with the racist criminalization of migration; the criminalization of solidarity with migrants; and the unlawful externalization of border control through the delegation of sovereign functions.

These practices are extensively documented by expert and NGO reports, UN sources, and numerous first-hand testimonies. People seeking safety and dignity are exposed to institutional violence, trapped in transit zones, or deliberately abandoned in the desert or at sea.

Since 2014, migration policies coordinated between the European Union and the Maghreb countries—Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Mauritania—have established a transnational regime of institutionalized violence under the pretext of combating “irregular migration.” This regime has meant the militarization of borders, the spread of informal detention sites, the criminalization of migrants and those who support them, and the diffusion of racist and xenophobic rhetoric. The EU's externalization of migration control has led to massive violations of the prohibitions on refoulement and torture, and of the rights to life, liberty, and non-discrimination.

This indictment demonstrates—through concrete cases—the systematic and repeated nature of these violations: collective expulsions, desert abandonments, preventable shipwrecks, police violence, arbitrary detention, racial discrimination, and the criminalization of solidarity. These

¹ The full text of the Indictment will be presented on 23 October, at the Opening event of this PPT Session.

are not isolated excesses; they are the building blocks of a system designed to deter, punish, and render migrants invisible.

France, Italy, Spain, Greece, Germany, Malta, and the European Union bear direct responsibility for designing, coordinating, and funding this system. European and international agencies, such as Frontex and the IOM, are actively involved in surveillance, interception, the management of detention centers, and the organization of so-called “voluntary returns” that are frequently coerced and violent.

In light of these facts, this indictment asks the Permanent Peoples’ Tribunal to recognize the gravity, systemic nature, and persistence of these violations; to establish the direct, indirect, or complicit responsibility of the states and institutions implicated; and to open the way to justice, reparation, and the acknowledgment of the rights and dignity of migrants who have fallen victim to a policy of exclusion and institutionalized violence.

History will judge our generation’s ability to reject the barbarity of indifference. No policy—nor any political, economic, or security interest—can justify denying human dignity or violating the foundational principles of international law.

The Requesting organisations of the 56° PPT Session on migration