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56th SESSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AGAINST MIGRANTS BY MAGHREB STATES, THE EUROPEAN UNION, AND SEVERAL OF ITS MEMBER STATES

Palermo, [Sabir Festival](#), Cantieri Culturali alla Zisa, October 23–25, 2025

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

Panel of Judges:

President: Sophie BESSIS

Members: Chadia ARAB, Braulio MORO, Amzat BOUKARI-YABARA, Wahid FERCHICHI and
Luca MASERA

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[The Permanent Peoples' Tribunal \(PPT\)](#), established following the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Peoples, Algiers 1976, held in [Palermo from October 23 to 25, 2025](#), in continuation of its mission of universal conscience,

Having received and examined [the indictment](#) submitted by 54 organisations, represented by Le Forum Social Maghreb, le Forum Tunisien des Droits Économiques et Sociaux (FTDES) et le Forum des Alternatives Maroc (FMAS), concerning violations of the human rights of migrants by the Maghreb States, the European Union and several of its member States, as well as international organisations,

After hearing numerous witnesses, lawyers, and experts who have respectively suffered, documented, or witnessed human rights violations against migrants by the Maghreb States, the European Union, and several of its member States,

And after deliberation, declares the following:

Based on:

- The Slavery Convention (1926),
- the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948),
- the Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) and its 1967 Protocol,
- the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (1951),
- the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966),
- the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966),
- the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979),
- the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (1982),
- the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984),
- the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989),
- the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (1990),
- the Statute of the International Criminal Court (1998),
- the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (2010),
- the European Convention on Human Rights (1950),
- the OAU Convention on Refugees (1969),

- the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981),
- the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU (2000),

Convinced of the seriousness of the facts set out in the indictment and confirmed by various testimonies, the Tribunal condemns the violations of the human rights of migrants, in particular:

- serious violations of the right to life, liberty, security, and non-discrimination (Articles 6, 7, 9, and 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights);
- the violation of the absolute prohibition of torture (Article 3 of the Convention against Torture),
- the practice of human trafficking, in violation of the provisions of the 1951 Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others - violation of the principle of non-refoulement (Article 33 of the Geneva Convention),
- violation of the provisions of the agreement of the United Nations on the Law of the Sea, 1982, and in particular the obligation to rescue,
- sexual abuse,
- the increasing militarization of borders and the systematic use of force,
- the proliferation of transit centers and detention facilities, often outside any legal framework, which have been transformed into places of torture, murder, rape, and disappearances;
- the criminalization of migrants, prosecuted for so-called irregular entry or stay, and deprived of procedural guarantees,
- the violation of the provisions of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance,
- the criminalization of solidarity, through legal proceedings or administrative pressure targeting associations, NGOs, lawyers, journalists, or citizens who have provided assistance to migrants, particularly in cases of sea rescues, emergency accommodation, or legal advice;
- the widespread dissemination of racist and xenophobic rhetoric, including by certain institutions and public figures, fueling the stigmatization and repression of migrants, particularly women, children, and LGBTQI+ individuals,
- the externalization of the European Union's borders to third countries,

Convinced also that some of these violations may be considered crimes against humanity,

The Tribunal finds:

- that these violations were deliberate and systematic. Indeed, these are policies and practices that are neither isolated incidents nor simple negligence, but rather the result of a structured political will

whose effects are tragically predictable: deaths and disappearances at sea and in the desert, detention and inhuman treatment, violence, extortion, and institutionalized racism.

- the importance of the historical legacy of slavery in the Maghreb countries, where racism legitimizes violations of the rights of black migrants;

The Tribunal holds the following parties responsible for these violations:

All Maghreb States (Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya), the European Union and some of its member States.

While recognizing the existence of individual responsibilities, the Tribunal is unable to establish them. It therefore holds states and organisations responsible, with common but differentiated responsibilities.

The Tribunal, following the poignant testimonies, recognises that the five Maghreb States are guilty of systematic practices of arbitrary arrests, collective expulsions, forced displacement, and deportations to desert areas or militarised borders, knowingly exposing thousands of people to trafficking, hunger, thirst, torture, death, or disappearance. They have maintained or tolerated the existence of illegal, unsanitary, and inhumane detention centers where abuse, sexual violence, and deprivation of liberty without legal basis and in the absence of any judicial oversight prevail.

The Tribunal draws attention, in establishing the various responsibilities, to the particular situation in Libya. Since 2011, this country has experienced political and security instability and the proliferation of armed groups and militias that have made trafficking and exploitation of migrants a source of income.

The Tribunal holds the EU responsible, along with some of its Member States and agencies, in particular Frontex and its service providers. The Tribunal notes the worsening of violations, despite the recommendations and reports made by its previous sessions, concerning violations of the rights of migrants. This situation is reflected in the implementation of policies to externalise its borders and security and financial agreements.

Faced with this serious situation, which annually sacrifices the lives and human dignity of thousands of people, particularly black people from sub-Saharan Africa, - the Tribunal calls on the organizations and parties concerned to continue documenting the journeys of migrants, to attempt to

identify missing persons, and to clarify the repressive mechanisms implemented within the framework of Maghreb-Europe, inter-Maghreb, and transnational cooperation.

- It also calls for contributions to presenting a clear, transparent, and realistic picture of the violations, to remedying their invisibility, and to going beyond the purely numerical dimension of the data.
- The Tribunal finds the States and organizations concerned directly or indirectly responsible for the violations committed, including those that may be considered crimes against humanity.
- The Tribunal urges the parties concerned to take both legal and political action with the aim of ending illegal and inhumane practices, recognizing the harm suffered by victims, providing full reparation for the damage caused, and bringing to justice the perpetrators, instigators, and beneficiaries of this system of violence.

The Tribunal expresses its gratitude to the witnesses and honours their courage in bringing to light the reality that is often hidden behind legal formulas and figures.

Palermo, October 25, 2025