

ROUTINE OF PERSECUTION

THE UNBEARABLE CONDITIONS OF SUB-SAHARAN MIGRANTS IN THE NORTH OF MOROCCO

Due to the dramatic situation at the eastern external borders of the EU, the Moroccan-Spanish setting tends to be eclipsed. But West and Central African migrants in the north of Morocco still suffer oppression and racist violence on their way to Europe.

The city of Tangiers in the north of Morocco can be seen as an example for the developments of the EU and Moroccan migration policies. Here, the current political agenda is most visible: Integration programs for sub-Saharan migrants financed by the EU to decrease illegalized border crossings in exchange for an easier access to Schengen-Visas for Moroccan citizens. Meanwhile, since 2015, it has become next to impossible to get a legal residency for people from Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire, etc.

Indeed, the Kingdom of Morocco launched a legalization campaign (also called Regularization) which made it possible to obtain a residence permit under certain circumstances. A legalized residency still does not mean any protection from everyday racism and deportations. The arbitrariness of arrests and deportations are underlined by cases of detentions of legalized sub-Saharan residents. But the campaign of legalization lasted only one year, until 2015, even though extensions and objections on rejected demands for legalizations in 2014 are legally still possible. New applications are almost impossible. A renewal of the program in 2016 is still a matter of speculation.

→ <http://bit.ly/1QR43JR>

→ <http://rfi.my/1W6WxT>

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Tanger

The transit city of Tangiers has always been a dangerous terrain for sub-Saharan migrants, but the situation has escalated increasingly since 2015. Especially during Ramadan, the repression by the authorities and violent assaults by the local population have reached an alarming dimension.

In June 2015, the migrant population of the neighborhood of Boukhalef was subjected to large-scale deportations aiming at the expulsion of migrants from the entire area. In Boukhalef, at that time, many empty apartments were inhabited by sub-Saharan migrants. From the point of view of the local authorities and the population, this amounted to illegal occupations, which in turn caused the violent cleansing of the area.

In pogrom-like vigilante justice actions, parts of the Moroccan population of Boukhalef started to evict migrant residents from their apartments. These actions were accompanied by violent assaults, looting and the arbitrary destruction of migrants' belongings. The police forces tolerated these punitive actions, even though a young sub-Saharan died when he fell from a roof top fleeing from police attackers.

→ <http://bit.ly/1k6d4l4>

Those migrants who were victims of the deportations were transported to the southern border in direction of Mauritania, or imprisoned in improvised detention centers in the interior of the country, to Fès, Marrakech and Casablanca, Rabat and Taroudant. The prisoners detained in those centres were

set free after a while. To minimize the upkeep cost of those camps some people were released after a short time with some money, others, however, didn't get anything.

Currently, those detention facilities are not run at full capacity. At present, the practice is limited either to deportations to Tiznit in the far south, or to the big cities.

The massive deportations to Tiznit aim at two things: to buy time and to obscure the visibility of migration within the city of Tangiers. The deportees struggle to make their way back to Tangiers, but are facing the difficulties of transportation costs and the fact that often sub-Saharan are not even permitted entry in the busses that travel north. This setting encourages more and more migrants to head for war-ridden Libya, to try their chances to get to Italy.

Collective Arrests and Deportations – from Tangiers to Tiznit

In the aftermath of the Riots pitched police actions ceased for a while, but still deportations and everyday discrimination continued. As soon as October the authorities proceeded with large scale arrests.

After emptying Boukhalef of its migrants the police forces expanded their radius of action on the entire city of Tangiers and the surrounding forests. Former inhabitants of Boukhalef took refuge, depending on their financial capabilities, in hotels in the inner city, where the police undertook raids in those hotels and even private apartments. Arrested migrants were again deported to Tiznit.

→ <http://bit.ly/1PcXnpv>

Likewise, an apartment of sub-Saharan and international activists was raided. A member of the activist collective was arrested and deported in the course of the action, among 35 other migrants who lived in the same building. Having been transferred to the central police station, the detainees underwent long identification processes (photos, fingerprints). That day alone, 150 people were deported. The Cameroonian activist, too, spent 14 hours in handcuffs in a police van. Following the current practice, he was set free close to Tiznit and was left to his own devices.

Cases have also been reported that migrants arrested within the premises of the city of Tangiers were subsequently transferred to the harbor Tanger Med, situated 50 kilometers away. The general assump-



Bidonville à Fès, Novembre 2015

tion is that this kind of actions are carried out for the purpose of enhancing the number of people intercepted at sea, and thus display the alleged efficiency of the Moroccan border controls. Since the EU-Moroccan agreements (Action Plan) dating from 2013, the Kingdom of Morocco receives 150 million Euro to intensify political and economic relations, but also to intensify border control.

Violence in the Woods

Raids against migrants camps in the forests demonstrate another level of escalation. In the woods, the provisional dwellings, tents and personal belongings of people taking refuge there are burned down on a regular basis. Those not capable of fleeing in time are arrested and deported. During those operations, it is common that people are seriously injured and even killed. Those affected perceive these police operations as veritable manhunts.

Two people killed during police raid near Ceuta, November 2015

The case of the tragic death of two Cameroonians living in the forest, who died on the morning of the 30/11 in Castilleios/Fnideq, due to a raid by the Forces Auxiliaires serves as an example for the conse-

quences of these reckless actions. A group of migrants had been in hiding, using natural caves as sleeping places. During the raid the two victims lingered in the caves and couldn't prevent the police forces piling up mattresses and other belongings at the entrance of the cave. This barricade was then lit up. The young men, aged 25 and 26 suffocated. Other sources also report that the Forces Auxiliaires threw tear gas grenades in the cave. The corpses of the deceased were brought to a hospital near Fnideq and soon after buried in Tetouan.

Those who were not deported in the course of the raid fled traumatized, to the neighboring cities. Many of them heavily injured. There are now waiting for further developments, in anger and pain and constant fear of being discovered, nevertheless organizing further actions.

An investigation of the case is led by the regional section of the state run organization CNDH (Conseil National des droits de l'Homme). The migrant community, however, does not expect too much of that. The CNDH is an agency close to the Moroccan state, and racism and persecution have already become part of the migrants' everyday life.

- <http://bit.ly/1Zfyso0>
- <http://bit.ly/1OFznci>
- <http://bit.ly/1UIrBRh>

TEAM OF AUTHORS

NOBORDERMOROCCO & WESTERN MED ALARM PHONE

It's about freedom of movement, not about justification of refugeehood!

This article is based on collected insights, collective experiences and investigations of people confronted with the situation in Morocco. It is important to us to highlight, that despite the indicated repression, the movement of migration will keep on fighting for their rights. The Movement will organize resistance independently and autonomously cross borders. We will keep on supporting all those who constantly challenge the European-Moroccan border regime.
