

SITUATION OF MIGRANTS IN SOUTH MOROCCO

▪ Joint observation mission – September 2014

This mission was born from the will of the associations involved – the Antiracist Group of Accompaniment and Defense of Foreigners and Migrants (GADEM), the Light Association on Irregular Emigration in the Maghreb (ALECMA), the Collective of Sub-Saharan Communities in Morocco (CCSM) and the Catholic Mission of Nouadhibou – to document the situation and violations of the rights of migrants in the southern region of Morocco.

In fact, very little information is relayed, except sporadically, concerning migrants stranded at the Mauritanian border during refoulments or voluntary departures to Mauritania.

In January 2014, the launch throughout the Moroccan territory of the exceptional operation of regularization of foreigners in an irregular administrative situation justified the second objective of the mission which consists of evaluating and monitoring this action.

also one year after the Head of State announced the implementation of a new migration policy following the recommendations presented by the National Human Rights Council (CNDH).

This change of course of the government has had a number of repercussions on the situation of migrants, for example stopping raids and refoulings at the Algerian and Mauritanian borders. However, the crackdown on migrants in the northern region, particularly in the border areas near the presidencies of Sebta and Melilla, and in the city of Tangier, especially the Boukhalef district, continued throughout this period. This repression was accompanied by discrimination and racist attacks with, among other things, the murder of a young Senegalese student slaughtered at his home on August 30, 2014.

It is in this context that the joint observation mission of the situation of migrants in southern Morocco was carried out from 07 to 13 September 2014 in the cities of Dakhla (7-10 September), Boujdour (10 September) and Laayoune (11-13 September). This mission is part of the regional project "Loujna Tounkaranké – protection and access to the rights of migrants [1]" which GADEM and the Catholic Mission of Nouadhibou are partners.

This report was prepared following this mission and the information collected that fed it comes from interviews conducted with local civil society actors, regional human rights commissions (CRDH) and foreigners' offices in Dakhla and Laayoune, as well as migrants resident in the country.

Interviews were conducted mainly with Mauritanian and Senegalese nationals, which seems to be representative of the foreign population of Laayoune, Dakhla and Boujdour according to the Dakhla HRDC. Most of them work (fish canneries, hotels and street vending) and have been living regularly in Morocco since the 2000s, or even longer. The very profile of the migrants encountered highlights the difference in daily reality that they experience, compared to that experienced by

migrants near the border in the North for example or in other cities in Morocco.

This report tends to make an assessment of the respect of the legal framework relating to the status of foreigners; access to fundamental rights; discriminations and racist acts suffered by migrants; as well as the exceptional operation of regularization. Finally, the authors made recommendations based on their observations on the ground and addressed to the Moroccan authorities in charge of migration issues and the regularization operation.

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