

Declaration of Tetouan on Carrier women at Ceuta and Melilla Borders

Conclusions and recommendations for carrier women's dignity who transport merchandises through the border between the cities of Ceuta and Melilla and Morocco, held in Tetouan the 21st, 22nd of April in 2012

Unified in Tetouan, the organizations mentioned below, on the one hand, we want to let know to the public opinion about the situation of women who carry merchandises between the Ceuta and Melilla borders, as well as push the capable authorities at all levels to take the necessary measures to respect their rights and dignity.

Thousands of women go across the Moroccan border on a daily basis to the cities of Ceuta and Melilla to get supplied with merchandises of the industrial parks located at the border of both Spain and Morocco, then they transport these merchandises the other way around to deliver them in Morocco, they take the merchandise in overweighed bags that could reach a hundred kilograms.

The conditions of this tolerated transportation of merchandises, atypical or illegal, are inhuman. The overweigh that they are carrying in order to obtain more earnings (around 5€ Euros for travel) is not the only threat that they have to go through but the physical inhumanity of going across the border with such weight, the frequently police violence since they have to pay a suborn to the authorities to get through, also they suffer of sexual harassment and sometimes even the confiscation of the merchandise with arbitrary procedures.

Most of the women are single, widows, hated or divorced, nevertheless married women also could be performing this activity. All of these women are obliged to obtain economic earnings.

The daily objective is to go across the border as many times as possible, but commonly they only can make it once or twice a day; there is no more time for border crossing since the authorities close the border around 1 pm. For each package transported a carrier woman charges around 4 to 6 Euros depending on the weight, the packages usually are 50 kilograms but they could go up to a 100 kilograms.

The conditions of the border crossing frequently generates an avalanche of people where women had been killed, like Zafia Azizi (November of 2008) in Melilla or Bushra and Zhora (May 2009) at the Ceuta's border.

According to the American Chamber of Commerce in Casablanca this illegal movement of merchandises reports around 1.4 billion€ Euros which is almost a third part of the Spanish autonomic cities economy. 45,000 people live directly

from this activity in Morocco and other 400,000 live of it indirectly. Also an important quantity of money is earned by suborns (around 90 million of Euros each year according to the Independent Moroccan Al-Ayam seminary)

Women Carriers have to go through police violence, try to escape uninjured from avalanches of people, tolerate to be punched or to be sexually harassed, pay suborns, bear cold, rain and extremely hot weather, take the merchandises and follow the orders of those who control the traffic of such products and enriched themselves with them. More than that, they have to try to survive to a border on which the merchandise is the owner of the human being. The carrier women are the engine of the economy on both sides of the border between Ceuta, Melilla and Morocco but nobody does nothing in order to avoid the human tragedy of their activity nor their rights and dignity.

SO WE STABLISH THAT,

A huge violation of dignity and human rights is occurring to people at the Ceuta and Melilla borders and infringes international treaties and conventions related to the protection of such rights in which both the Kingdom of Spain and the Kingdom of Morocco participates.

WITH THESE ARGUMENTS WE PRESENT TO THE PUBLIC OPINION AND THE CAPABLE AUTHORITIES THE FOLLOWING REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

1 Neither the reasons of the State nor the economic or political interests can be above the respect of the human rights; this reaches also the borders, which are sensitive scenes that cannot elude the enforcement of the international treaties and the humanitarian legislation.

2 Other than normative reasons that never could be above the human rights, it is important to implement mechanisms of transportation that could accomplish the transit of products without seriously harming these women's health conditions.

3 In order to avoid tragic situations or simply the harassment and danger that suppose the transit by places not designed properly to go through comfortably for people and merchandise, it is vital to modify the physical structure of the border tunnels.

4 Also, It is necessary to consider the possibility of allow the use of mechanical instruments in order to bring the merchandises across the border.

5 It is essential that the authorities would implement actions to stop the police mistreatments which are incompatible with the state of law such as: Violence, beatings, abuses, suborns, arbitrary measures, merchandise request by authorities without any reason etc. punishing, if necessary, those who are guilty

of such violence but, above all, safeguard scrupulously the respect of people's dignity by the police authorities.

6 it is crucial to achieve a sustainable development that encourages employment for the people in the area. By doing this, it would avoid thousands of women working in such of inhuman and cruel activity that is taking merchandise across the borders.

Tetoun, April the 22th 2012

Signer Organizations

Asociación Pro Derechos Humanos Andalucía – APDHA	Asociación Pateras de la Vida
Asociación Pro Derechos Humanos de Melilla – APDHMI	Red Asociaciones del Norte de Marruecos - Chabacka
Comisión Española de Ayuda al Refugiado – CEAR	Association Almunadila - Femme Millitante
Asociación Elin	Association Almouatina
Asociación Dignidad Mujeres y Niños Ceuta – DIGMUN	Association Marocaine des Droits Humains - AMDH
Asociación AL AMBAR de Ceuta	Organisation Marocain des Droits Humains - OMDH
Entrepueblos	Ligue Nationale des Droits de l'Homme - LNDH
Manos Unidas de Ceuta	Institut Féminine à Martil
Foro Social Espiritualidades y Éticas del Mediterráneo	Union d'Action Féminine - UAF
Iniciativa Cambio Personal justicia Global	Alliance des Femmes du Maroc pour le Développement
Coordinadora de Barrios de Madrid	Association Tawaza
Institut drets Humans de Catalunya – IDHC	Reseau Euromediterranéen Droits l'Homme - REMDH
Asociación Uyamaa	Centro Cultural Lerchundi de Martil
Centro Malaika	
Confederación General del Trabajo – CGT	

If you are interested in joining us with your organization you can contact us at porteadorasceutamelilla@gmail.com