

Joint press statement

Death of a young Guinean in the Port of Marseilles: Anafé, Migreurop and Boats 4 People demand an inquiry

Anafé, Migreurop and Boats 4 People demand the interior minister to begin procedures for an inquiry into the tragic drowning of a young Guinean, a stowaway on an Italian merchant navy ship.

After an exhausting twenty-five-day crossing on board of a cargo ship that set off from Dakar, two young Guinean migrants finally arrived, on this Friday 10 January, in the port of Marseilles, and were taken ashore by the authorities.

The border police [*police aux frontières*, PAF] refused to record their asylum application and notified them of a refusal to allow them entry into French territory. They were then put back on board a few hours later to be returned to where they departed from, without being placed in the waiting zone [*zone d'attente*] [\[1\]](#). Moreover, as they were not informed of the possibility of not being returned for 24 hours, these two Guinean migrants were unable to enjoy their right to a day of respite.

When the ship left the port of Marseilles in the early evening, these two men – despaired due to this forced return – decided to jump into the water to return to the mainland and to request the protection that they had come to seek from France. While one of them managed to reach the shore, his compatriot drowned in French waters.

- How was it possible for this young man to drown so close to the port of Marseilles without the intervention of any rescue team, at the same time as he remained under the responsibility of the French authorities?
- Why was their request to be admitted for the purpose of lodging an asylum claim not recorded and why were these two young men not placed in a waiting zone in order for the interior ministry to examine their application, after receiving an opinion from the OFPRA [*Office Français de protection des réfugiés et apatrides*, French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless people]?

Moreover, the French authorities could not force the maritime carrier to take the two young Guineans back on board. The carrier was only responsible for taking charge of their return, which could have been undertaken by aeroplane or on a different ship.

As the survivor of this tragedy was allowed into French territory today by the interior minister, **Anafé, Migreurop and Boats 4 People demand that the French authorities draw all the relevant consequences from this tragic event, in particular insofar as the practice of returning “stowaways” onto the ships that brought them here, and to initiate proceedings to lift the veil from the opacity that surrounds this kind of expeditious practices that contravene respect for human rights at the sea borders.**

13 January 2014

[1] Once they are not authorised to enter French territory, foreigners who turn up at the borders may be held in a waiting zone for a maximum of twenty days, the time that is necessary for the border police to organise their return. See the article [Qu'est-ce qu'une zone d'attente ?](#) [What is a waiting zone?] in the Anafé website (in French).