

Italy/Ventimiglia

Statement by PHM Italy in solidarity with migrants in transit and the No Borders network

Posted on 2016/06/01

As the People's Health Movement Italy, a network of activists working to promote health, we express full solidarity and political support to the migrants in transit who are blocked at the Italian-French border and to the activists of the international No Borders network, particularly with regards to the serious events which are taking place in these hours in the territory of Ventimiglia.

The visit by interior minister Alfano which took place just over three weeks ago contributed to making a situation which was already intolerable harsher, leading to the closing of the centre set up by the Red Cross near to the station, to an increase in police control activities and to the creation of a tent city below the bridge of a highway which runs along the river Roia. Migrants in transit were forced to abandon this "tentopolis" two days ago, following an eviction order issued by the mayor, Ioculano, which justified it on the basis of health-hygienic reasons without providing any alternative solutions beyond forced removal from the border area.

Since then, the combing and deportation operations targeting undocumented migrants in transit which we are witnessing in these hours began, a veritable manhunt in the streets of a militarised city which takes us back to landscapes from a troubling past. Apart from this, numerous "*fogli di via*" [orders to leave a geographic locality and temporarily banning people from returning there] have been handed to some Italian activists to limit freedom of movement not just on the basis of citizenship, but now also for political leanings, criminalising solidarity and presenting the struggle by the people in transit as subordinated to the action of some militants, denying it its intrinsic strength whose roots lie in the natural and spontaneous will of migrants to see their rights recognised.

As doctors and activists of PHM, we believe that freedom of movement is an indispensable condition for self-determination and the full achievement of the right to health. Hence, we forcefully condemn the systematic violation of this right and the instrumental use of health-hygienic issues used by institutions and the media to portray an image of "dangerousness" for public health, from a viewpoint which we consider falsely humanitarian which, in reality, conceals the way in which the institutions themselves create such conditions through inadequate policies.

It is hard to deny that health-hygienic conditions in a self-managed "tentopolis" located below the bridge of a highway on the shores of a river among the pebbles and reed thickets are precarious, exactly like the repressive and violent actions which are being perpetrated in these hours do not appear coherent, in any way, to resolving the possible sanitary problems that have been highlighted. Rather, they are the inevitable consequence of political choices made by the Italian and European institutions. Hence, the health-hygienic rhetoric which is used appears, more than anything else, to be a "good" pretext to

legitimate racist and repressive policies. We openly take sides to support freedom of movement and the right to health for everyone, against these political choices and against every border.

We invite all the people acting in solidarity, as individuals and groups, to sign this and, most of all, to circulate it.

For updates on the situation in Ventimiglia, see:

<https://noborders20miglia.noblogs.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/Presidio-Permanente-No-Borders-Ventimiglia-782827925168723/?%20ref=ts>

[Unofficial translation by Statewatch]

The original version (in Italian) of this statement “Comunicato PHM Italia in solidarietà ai migranti in transito e alla rete No Borders” was published by the People’s Health Movement Italia on 1.6.2016 and is available at:

<https://gruppaphm.noblogs.org/post/2016/06/01/comunicato-phm-italia-in-solidarieta-ai-migranti-in-transito-e-alla-rete-no-borders/>