

EU/Africa: Fortress Europe records “at least” 104 victims in August 2009

August 2009 bulletin

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“ROME - There have been at least 104 victims of emigration along the European borders documented in the month of August by the Fortress Europe observatory. The figure is based on news reported from the international press. In the table of the bloodiest borders, the Channel of Sicily continues to boast a sorry leadership. Apart from the 73 Eritreans who went missing during the 23 days when they were adrift, of whom only five were saved, in the last week of August three more dead bodies were found between Malta and Linosa [Pelagian island belonging to Italy], while a Tunisian citizen has been declared missing in the high sea off Pantelleria [another Italian island]. In the first eight months of 2009, the recorded deaths in the strip of sea between Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Malta and Lampedusa have been 418, for 373 of which the victim’s corpse has not been retrieved. It is a worrying figure, if compared with the one from last year. In fact, while the victims documented by the Fortress Europe observatory on the route towards Malta and Italy was of 1,274 in the twelve months of 2008, the number of arrivals has decreased by 60%. In fact, from 1 January to 19 August, according to data from the Viminale [the Italian interior ministry], there were 7,567 arrivals, compared with 17,585 in the same period in 2008. Ten thousand less. There have also been victims along the other Mediterranean borders. In Greece, a shipwreck off the island of Kos resulted in five victims, two whose bodies were recovered, and three declared missing. In Spain, the reports of landings in the month of August record two victims, one in the Canary islands and the other in Cartagena, in the Murcia region. Elsewhere, six Somali refugees were killed by the Libyan police in the detention centre for undocumented migrants in Ganfuda, near Bengasi, in clashes that followed a mass escape attempt on the past 9 August.

The Libyan authorities denied the news, but photographs of those injured and direct testimonies by people who saw everything with their own eyes are circulating on the web. Finally, on the Adriatic [Sea] border as well. Two deaths. One on each side of the sea. In Brindisi, a man was run over and killed by the lorry under which he had hid in Patras to embark upon a ferry heading for Italy. Another migrant in Igoumenitsa suffered the same fate, lethally run over by the lorry under which he was travelling without the driver knowing about this. Lastly, in Algeria, a collision between an Algerian patrol boat in the high sea off Annaba and a boat laden with around thirty migrants heading for Sardinia caused the death of 12 people. Only one dead body was recovered. The others are missing at sea. 18 other passengers were injured in the crash.”

The Fortress Europe bulletin for August (in Italian) and other reports are available at:

<http://fortresseurope.blogspot.com/2006/01/newsletter.html>