

PRESS RELEASE – RETE 26 FEBBRAIO

The network born in the days after the shipwreck of February 26, 2023 launches a mobilization together with migrant families to demand legal channels of entry, against European policies of pushbacks.

2571 (two thousand five hundred and seventy-one) is the number of the people died at sea only in 2023, according to data from IOM, the International Organization for Migration, and Médecins Sans Frontières. Among these there are the 94 confirmed victims, men, women, children died and dozens of missing people in the shipwreck of Steccato di Cutro on February 26 2023

We still shudder when remember those days of great anger and pain, while the bodies of men, women and children gradually re-emerged from the Crotonese sea and the Palamilone was the funeral chamber of a totally silent Europe. But, fortunately, the response of the citizens was immediate. Different realities, activists and individuals immediately rallied around the families of the castaways, to try to support them in the indescribable suffering they had experienced.

From there, the 26 February Network was born, with a dual function: first of all, to offer any type of support, precisely, to those families and survivors, especially in the identification and repatriation of bodies; secondly, to denounce the serious institutional and political shortcomings and violations of human rights that are the cause of all the shipwrecks that unfortunately continue in the Euro-Mediterranean and the Aegean Sea.

The “number” that we mentioned at the beginning remind us that the Cutro Tragedy is the product of a security system that attempts to hinder human movements at European external and internal borders, and that causes thousands and thousands of deaths. The Balkan Route, the coasts of Greece, Tunisia, the Canary Islands, the sea in front of Libya, are the places where Europe, with its unjust laws and meaningless international agreements, lets people fleeing wars and misery die.

In front of these "migrant-cides" we feel the duty to renew our commitment to remember and denounce, both against the fatal European necropolitics and against the emergency decrees of the Italian government, such as the so-called "Cutro Decree" (law 50/23), alongside those who challenge borders, their communities and their families.

For this reason, on February 26th, exactly one year after the Cutro Massacre, we will organize ourselves again, and not for a simple symbolic or façade commemoration. We will welcome back the families of the castaways and the survivors of Summer Love, ready to return to the places of pain, after that the government did not fulfilled some of the commitments to families and survivors in March 2023, during the meeting at Palazzo Chigi. It must be said that, in their eyes and in ours, any "official" celebratory parades appear as insincere and self-absolving.

Together with them, as Rete 26 febbraio we will organize a mobilization to reiterate the demands and protest of families and survivors against the Europe of pushbacks. We therefore demand truth and justice on the massacre of February 26, 2023; reunification and humanitarian corridors for the families of the victims of the Cutro shipwreck who are in their countries of origin, as promised by the Italian government; identification, recognition and dignified burial of all the bodies of the people involved in the Cutro shipwreck; immediate revocation of the agreements concluded by the European Union with third countries such as Turkey, Libya and Tunisia, relating to the externalised

control of borders and the refoulement of persons in transit; safe and legal entry channels for all people fleeing poverty and humanitarian crises.

Therefore, as we did in the painful days of a year ago, together with family members and survivors, we will once again populate the places of suffering, pain and attempted impositions and abuses. Places where the consequences of criminal migration policies have tragically materialized, symbols of the humanitarian and solidarity response of anti-racist communities but, above all, places in which we all will reaffirm a collective memory and clear ways of resistance against the border regime.

To join the mobilization, propose initiatives and organizational support, please write to **reteventiseifebbraio@gmail.com**