



## **Lemkin Institute Statement on the Melilla Massacre of 24 June 2022**

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The Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention wishes to call attention to the Melilla massacre of June 24, 2022 and to protest the externalization of Western borders and the securitization of migration and refugee crises that has become an increasingly lethal tendency among Western nations in the 21st century.

According to the Moroccan Association for Human Rights (AMDH), on Friday, June 24, hundreds of Moroccan and Spanish police brutally beat a large group of migrants who were seeking to cross the border between Morocco and Spain. This brutality allegedly resulted in between 23 and 37 deaths, some of which are believed to have been caused by the crushing weight of the crowd and other accidents associated with the push to enter Spain.

As pointed out by Amnesty International on June 29, none of the bodies of the dead have been identified, autopsied, or repatriated to their family members, demonstrating the carelessness of Moroccan and Spanish authorities when it comes to black life. In addition, in the cemetery of Sidi Salem on the outskirts of Nador (Morocco), a dozen graves were dug to swiftly bury the deceased migrants despite repeated calls from the international community for a thorough investigation by the Spanish and Moroccan governments. The Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention urges both the Spanish and Moroccan authorities to work together in order to identify the dead and inform their families as well as arrange for the return of the departed to their families for burial in accordance with their requests.

Melilla is but one of countless massacres that demonstrate the horrific disregard for the value and the dignity of black life, a global scourge that has been forged through international networks of slave trading, plantation slavery, Western imperialism, genocide, neocolonialism, and globalization.

A world that normalizes the destruction of the life of one group, such as black people, is a world characterized by ever ongoing and incipient genocidal atrocity, such as what we have seen at the border with Melilla.

The Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention reiterates the points we made in our statement of 28 February, “Statement on White Supremacy and Anti-Black Racism in Europe,” in which we called attention to the historical problem of the white ethnonationalist framework in which Europe has traditionally understood migration, security, and freedom.

We further support the efforts of Moroccan and Spanish human rights organizations to call for an independent investigation of the events in Melilla.

At the recent NATO summit, refugees — particularly from Africa and the Middle East — were described by Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation Jose Manuel Albares as “hybrid threats” to peace and security in Europe. The Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention reminds NATO members that migrants and refugees are not security threats. We endorse the words of the episcopal sub-commission for migration and human movement of the Spanish Catholic Church: “They are not 'invaders',” it wrote on June 25, “they are just human beings who are seeking to reach Europe, fleeing wars... and drought aggravated by the consequences of the war in Ukraine, lack of water and infestations caused by climate change.”

Though the world is lacking in the visionary political leadership demanded by today’s crises, the Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention encourages all people with leverage and power to reorient migration and refugee policy towards the human rights norms that were established after the last World War and the Holocaust, lest we hurtle blindly towards a repeat of those dark times.