

**Press release**

**ZARZIS**

**JUSTICE AND TRUTH FOR THE VICTIMS OF MIGRATION POLICIES**

On the night of 20-21 September 2022, a boat carrying 18 young people including two girls and a newborn, all residents of the town of Zarzis, sank off the coast of Djerba without leaving any survivors. This tragedy led to a general strike in the town, due to the lack of confidence of the population in the local and national authorities, who apparently did not provide the necessary means for the search and investigation. A demonstration on 18 November tried to draw the attention of the government representatives present at the Summit of Francophonie in Djerba, but met with indifference and no reaction. The aim of these demonstrations was to demand and obtain truth and justice for this tragedy.

The local branch of the Tunisian Trade Union (UGTT) supported the people's anger and denounced the obstacles encountered by the local authorities in the search for the bodies of the shipwrecked. This tragedy is one of many caused by the policy of militarizing of border controls, which multiplies the risks faced by migrants, instead of providing rescue services. This is compounded by the fact that these rescue operations are now criminalized.

The Mediterranean has become a theatre of war whose first victims are the candidates for migration.

While the lack of opportunities for economic and social development prevents many young people from living in their country of origin, forcing them to migrate, Europe wants to maintain its economic privileges, forcing the countries of the South to adopt policies that reject candidates for migration without having the means to offer them an alternative.

On 19 January 2023, the delegation of the RSMMS network met with the families of the 18 victims and representatives of the fishermen's association at the headquarters of the Union of Trade Unions in Zarzis, to express their solidarity and support for the demand for truth and justice for what happened.

The representatives of the RSMMS network say that only a global policy of safe and free legal migration and sustainable economic development in countries of origin and transit will put an end to these human tragedies.

**The Steering Committee**

**of the Trade Union Network for the Rights of Migrants in the  
Mediterranean and Sub-Saharan Africa Region.**

**Zarzis (Tunisia), 24 January 2023**