



OPEN LETTER CONCERNING THE MEDITERRANEAN REFUGEE CRISIS

The tragic events of the past weeks where hundreds of people lost their lives in the Mediterranean Sea have filled us with tremendous shock. These desperate attempts to migrate from Africa to Europe in order to escape the deteriorating circumstances at home or simply to find a better life under different economic circumstances have their roots in the unequal distribution of resources at a global level and the political instability in several regions of the world.

Behind this humanitarian disaster lies a deep human rights crisis, where migrants try to flee from war and poverty to what they believe is a better social and peaceful situation. The nature and extent of these recent events once again show that the crisis cannot be solved by the countries directly concerned or some specific organisations alone. The International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) – as the only global organisation for the cooperation of more than 170 Ombudsman institutions worldwide – therefore calls on its member institutions, especially from the African and European Region, to encourage their respective governments and administrations to join forces to find solutions for this refugee crisis.

The IOI wishes to take this opportunity to call upon the European Union to curb the expansion of this humanitarian crisis by allocating further resources to proactively counter such humanitarian tragedies, provide prompt help in cases of emergency and support state governments with rapid and daily action. The IOI is aware that this is not merely a European problem and therefore also calls upon the African Union to take responsibility and help prevent such tragedies.

We have to emphasize the necessity to conjointly advocate the observance of human rights for the full realisation of human dignity, not just within Europe but also beyond its borders, where political instability and economic hardship push many people into despair and thus into exploitation and ultimately the risk of death.

The IOI – on behalf and together with its members – is therefore ready and willing to assist wherever necessary and within its powers, to find a solution to this imminent threat to human beings and gross human rights violations.

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