

Migrants' rights undermined by the renewal of the agreement between Italy and Libya

Rome, Paris, 6 November 2019 - The International Federation of ACATs and ACAT Italy deplore the renewal of the migration agreement between Italy and Libya and call for a radical revision of this agreement by the Italian authorities.

Despite numerous calls from civil society to denounce it, the agreement on migration, signed in 2017 by Italy and Libya to limit the influx of migrants on the Italian coast, was automatically renewed on 2 November 2019.

Many civil society initiatives, including the #Ioaccolgo campaign, have multiplied in recent years to denounce this agreement, which violates migrants' rights. Under this agreement, financial, material and technical assistance is provided by Italy to the Libyan coastguards to limit the influx of illegal migrants. As a result, many migrants are being held or returned to Libya where serious human rights violations continue to be documented. Indeed, international and non-governmental organizations and the media have consistently denounced, inter alia, acts of torture, sexual abuse, arbitrary detention and conditions of detention constituting cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

In response to these criticisms, the Italian government has announced its intention to convene a joint Italian-Libyan interministerial committee to redefine certain parts of this agreement. However, this solution is not satisfactory in view of the treatment of migrants in Libya.

Echoing ACAT Italy's petition to Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte to stop considering Libya as a safe place, FIACAT and ACAT Italy urge the Italian authorities to radically revise this agreement. They also call on all European Union countries to provide a common response to migration that, in particular by ensuring an equitable distribution of migrants, establishing more inclusive policies and taking urgent rescue action at sea.

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