

## MELILLA

The lack of safe and legal migration channels has led thousands of migrants and asylum seekers, many of them fleeing conflict and extreme poverty in sub-Saharan countries and others increasingly arriving from Syria or Palestine, to attempt to scale the fences in the two Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in Northern Africa.

On June 24, 2022, between 1,300 and 2,000 men, mostly Sudanese and South Sudanese, attempted to climb the 6- to 10-metre chain-link fences surrounding Melilla and separating the Moroccan and Spanish territories. The sudden influx caused a fatal stampede in which at least 23 people reportedly died and dozens were injured, while 133 managed to enter Spain and were received in the extremely overcrowded temporary migrant holding centre (CETI).

This latest collective passage of the wall and the push back has once again made evident the challenges faced by migrants and those seeking international protection. Episcopal Conferences, UN agencies, NGOs, and faith based organisations joined their voices in asking Spanish and Moroccan governments to conduct an independent investigation of the incident.

In a statement released just after the tragic incident, the Spanish Bishops' Conference also expressed the need to address the crisis from the perspective of the Social Doctrine of the Church, taking into account the need for protection of every human being, while asking for *"legal and safe channels, as well as development cooperation with countries suffering from war, conflict and famine"*.

In another statement, COMECE condemned the use of violence by people trying to cross borders and also called for *"a proportionate use of force by law enforcement agents and the absolute respect of the human dignity and the fundamental rights of migrants and refugees, as well as the facilitation of an appropriate screening of persons that are legitimate asylum seekers."* While on June 28, the Holy Father expressed his sorrow for the tragedy, invoking the Lord to *"open our hearts so these misfortunes never happen again."*

## **For further information:**

### *Institutional Websites and NGOs*

COMECE - Statement of the General Secretary of COMECE on the Morocco-Spain border cross tragic incident

<https://www.comece.eu/statement-of-the-general-secretary-of-comece-on-the-morocco-spain-border-cross-tragic-incident/>

Conferencia Episcopal Española - No más muertes en las fronteras

<https://www.conferenciaepiscopal.es/no-mas-muertes-en-las-fronteras/>

Council of Europe - Commissioner calls on Spanish authorities to investigate the circumstances of the deaths and violence at Melilla border

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/-/commissioner-calls-on-spanish-authorities-to-investigate-the-circumstances-of-the-deaths-and-violence-at-melilla-border>

European Commission - Joint press release: European Commission and Morocco launch renewed partnership on migration and tackling human smuggling networks

[https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP\\_22\\_4388](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_22_4388)

IOM - IOM and UNHCR Deplore Loss of Life at Nador-Melilla Crossing

<https://www.iom.int/news/iom-and-unhcr-deplore-loss-life-nador-melilla-crossing>

InfoMigrants - Morocco: 13 migrants sentenced for Melilla border crossing attempt

<https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/42698/morocco-13-migrants-sentenced-for-melilla-border-crossing-attempt>

OHCHR - UN experts call for accountability in Melilla tragedy

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/07/un-experts-call-accountability-melilla-tragedy>

Reuters - Dozens of migrants piled together at Melilla border fence

<https://www.reuters.com/world/dozens-migrants-piled-ground-melilla-disaster-rights-group-says-2022-06-25/>

### *Online Newspapers and Periodicals*

Agenzia Fides - I vescovi dopo le stragi a Melilla e San Antonio: inefficace l'inasprimento delle politiche migratorie, allargare le possibilità di migrazione regolare

[http://www.fides.org/it/news/72443-AMERICA I Vescovi dopo le stragi a Melilla e San Antonio inefficace l inasprimento delle politiche migratorie allargare le possibilita di migrazione regolare](http://www.fides.org/it/news/72443-AMERICA_I_Vescovi_dopo_le_stragi_a_Melilla_e_San_Antonio_inefficace_l_inasprimento_delle_politiche_migratorie_allargare_le_possibilita_di_migrazione_regolare)

Avvenire - Oltre 200 persone migranti saltano la barriera a Melilla ed entrano in Spagna

<https://www.avvenire.it/mondo/pagine/migranti-oltre-200-saltano-barriera-melilla-ed-entrano-in-spagna>

Avvenire - Drama alla barriera di Melilla: saliti a 37 i migranti morti nella calca

<https://www.avvenire.it/mondo/pagine/melilla-18>

EuroNews - Melilla massacre prompts international condemnation and calls for investigation

<https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2022/06/30/melilla-massacre-prompts-international-condemnation-and-calls-for-investigation>

Melting Pot Europa - Almeno 27 migranti muoiono in Marocco nel tentativo di superare le barriere verso Melilla

<https://www.meltingpot.org/2022/06/almeno-27-migranti-muoiono-in-marocco-nel-tentativo-di-saltare-le-barriere-verso-melilla/#:~:text=La%20polizia%20marocchina%20ha%20utilizzato,sono%20stati%20ricoverati%20in%20ospedale.>

Migrantes Online - Mons Perego: il muro di morte di Melilla

<https://www.migrantesonline.it/2022/06/27/mons-perego-il-muro-di-morte-di-melilla/>

SIR Agenzia di Informazione - Migranti morti a Melilla: p. Barrios Prieto (Comece), "vengano identificate le vittime e sia avviata un'indagine indipendente e affidabile"

<https://www.agensir.it/quotidiano/2022/6/28/migranti-morti-a-melilla-p-barrios-prieto-com-ece-vengano-identificate-le-vittime-e-sia-avviata-unindagine-indipendente-e-affidabile/>

Vatican News - Spanish Bishops appeal for better migration policies

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1a0q7UgYejO-BzKbkq3MDV-ftP-1YfftjDvhG2kqDYM/edit>

Vatican News - Il Papa: dolore per le stragi dei migranti a Melilla e in Texas

<http://www.vaticannews.cn/it/papa/news/2022-06/papa-francesco-tweet-migranti-melilla-marocco-spagna-texas.html>

Vatican News - Migranti, Melilla: la Comece condanna l'uso della forza e chiede un'indagine credibile

<https://www.vaticannews.va/it/mondo/news/2022-06/migranti-strage-confine-tra-spagna-e-marocco-onu-avvia-indagine.html>

Vatican News - Pope laments deaths of migrants in Texas and on Spain's border

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2022-06/pope-francis-prayer-migrants-melilla-texas.html>