INTRODUCTION

No Name Kitchen (NNK) is an independent organisation documenting and monitoring border violence by police and state officials. Founded in 2017, NNK works closely with communities affected to document and report human rights violations. NNK has been working in Ceuta, Spain, since February 2021.

We write this short report to highlight lived experiences of externalisation deals with Morocco: the exclusion, violence, enforced precarity, and even deaths which the Spanish government has paid millions for through tactical partnerships. The testimonies enclosed within this report come from the Bloody Borders project[1], an open and collaborative database of violence monitoring. NNK has extensively documented the reality of human rights abuses and systemic neglect, traceable to Spain and the EU's extensive externalisation of the external border with Morocco.

CONTEXT: SPAIN'S AND THE EU'S EXTERNALISATION DEALS WITH MOROCCO

The Council of the European Union has stated that the EU considers Morocco a key partner in migration[2], providing a budget support programme of €152 million[3] in February 2024. Between 2014 and 2022, €1.5 billion were funded[4], including under the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa. A full breakdown of the EU's border enforcement funding was conducted by Statewatch in 2019[5], and the European Commission regularly produces overviews[6].

Spain and Morocco have also implemented various bilateral agreements, most notably a commitment of €2.5 million in 2024 (a 12.5% increase from the previous year) distributed through the International and Ibero-American Foundation for Administration and Public

[1] www.bloodyborders.org
[2] https://www.statewatch.org/media/4403/mocadem-morocco-wk-2411-2024.pdf
[3] https://www.statewatch.org/media/4403/mocadem-morocco-wk-2411-2024.pdf
[4] https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-03/EU_support_migration_morocco.pdf
[5] https://www.statewatch.org/analyses/2019/aid-border-security-and-eu-morocco-cooperation-on-migration-control/
[6] https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-03/EU_support_migration_morocco.pdf

Policies (FIIAPP)[7]. Besides the direct funding, the package included 183 motorcycles worth €660,000 and 33 vehicles totaling €1.9 million[8]. This allocation is part of a €120 million package implemented during Pedro Sánchez's government[9].

These deals have been criticised extensively by civil society: Firstly, the involvement of multiple actors complicates transparency, **worsened by frequent conflation of border enforcement (which benefits an EU deterrence agenda) with other development goals** - including €624 million pledged in 2023 for both green transition and combating irregular migration[10]. Blurring the funding allocations in this way obscures the aims and obstructs monitoring efforts by civil society actors. Furthermore, although large proportions of the funding occurs under the guise of 'development', it has been criticised for prioritising EU interests of short-term security measures over genuine socio-economic needs of partner countries[11]. The funding thus also risks **bolstering non-democratic regimes and paramilitaries,** and increases dependency on non-state actors, paving the way for instrumentalisation of human movement[12].

THE IMPACT: INCENTIVISING HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSE

Testimonies collected by NNK field reports reveal that Spain's externalisation of migration control is actively creating conditions in which abuse is both routine, and an expected function of deterrence. The consistent accounts of beatings, arbitrary detention, torture, racial abuse, and expulsions to the Sahara desert represent a structural pattern of abuse by Moroccan authorities, which the Spanish government continues to endorse through

---

7 https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2025/01/166141/spain-allocates-euro-2-5-million-to-morocco-for-migration-control/

8 https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2025/01/166141/spain-allocates-euro-2-5-million-to-morocco-for-migration-control/

9 https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2025/01/166141/spain-allocates-euro-2-5-million-to-morocco-for-migration-control/

10 https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/eu-launches-new-cooperation-programmes-morocco-worth-eu624-million-green-transition-migration-and-2023-03-02_en

11 https://externalizingasylum.info/european-externalization-and-security-outsourcing-in-north-africa/

12 https://externalizingasylum.info/european-externalization-and-security-outsourcing-in-north-africa/

externalisation measures. Various film and photo footage has emerged documenting this[13], and children are no exception[14]. People on the move at Ceuta's borders are handed into the jaws of abuse over and over, with scant regard for their wellbeing, asylum rights, or possibility of other human rights.



Image 1: Post-refoulement detention in Morocco. Source: El Faro de Ceuta[15]

For example, in February 2025[16], a 30-year old man from Morocco reported to NNK that they were apprehended by the Moroccan police, detained for two days, without food or water. He described: "We entered a dark room and were not given any food or drink for two days. The bed had no covers or mattresses. We slept on the floor like dogs. This is disgusting." Then, the group was transported to Meknes.

This form of arbitrary detention demonstrates the consequences of Spain's practice of systematic pushbacks. People are not handed into a legal structure which weighs their rights and needs, but instead **directly into institutional neglect** that presumes criminality and routinely implements de facto detentions in inhumane conditions.

[13] https://elfarodeceuta.es/fiscalia-investiga-fotografias-detenidos-marruecos/
[14] https://elfarodeceuta.es/marruecos-detiene-60-personas-instar-pase-nado-ceuta/
[15] https://elfarodeceuta.es/derechos-humanos-marruecos-debate-tras-fotos-detenciones/
[16] https://bloodyborders.org/testimonials/despite-everything-we-will-reach-our-dream/

These handovers also take place with disregard for the health of the person on the move. In January 2025[17], NNK activists in Ceuta witnessed a person arriving by swimming to the coast of Ceuta, where police waited on the beach. He tried to run away, but collapsed and stopped moving. The police then hit him with a baton, dragged him away by his arms, handcuffed him, and forced him to sit in the cold for 20 minutes - refusing to call an ambulance.

In the cases documented of returns from Melilla in June 2024, one witness reported that people were handed over to the Moroccan authorities "even when they were bleeding or had open wounds, and the Moroccans failed to provide them with any assistance."[18]. Moroccan authorities did not dispatch ambulances to the scene until two hours later[19].

In addition to detention in abhorrent conditions, survivors frequently report excessive use of force, sometimesamounting to violations of the prohibition of torture. In a testimony given to NNK in September 2024[20], a respondent described being shot at by the Moroccan police, and showed us the wounds (see image 2). In addition, Moroccan police also attacked people with stones and tear gas.



Image 2: the bullet wounds of a 27-year old man from the Ivory Coast, who was shot at by the Moroccan police[21].

17 https://bloodyborders.org/testimonials/he-was-shivering-from-the-cold-and-without-medical-assistance/

18 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCCPR%2FCSS%2FESP%2F63366&Lang=en

19 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCCPR%2FCSS%2FESP%2F63366&Lang=en

20 https://bloodyborders.org/testimonials/my-first-attempt-was-the-day-of-the-ramadan-feast/

21 https://bloodyborders.org/testimonials/my-first-attempt-was-the-day-of-the-ramadan-feast/

The 27-year old from the Ivory Coast reported that[22]:

"Usually, the Guardia Civil does not assault nor beat migrant people caught along the border area. They simply tie migrant people's hands, open one of the doors along the fences and hand these people over to Moroccan police. The Guardia Civil does all this knowing that the Moroccan police does instead exercise various types of violence on migrant people. [...] However, the moment the Guardia Civil is no longer looking or is not immediately nearby, the torture and humiliation carried out by the Moroccan police does not stop."

The extensive documentation of violence by Moroccan authorities suggests that there is full knowledge from the Spanish authorities of likely violations. **There is no plausible deniability, and dependency on the violence of Moroccan border forces is structured into Spain's externalisation deals[23].** In this context, the externalisation of returns to Morocco is not merely negligent but is knowingly exploitative. **The human rights abuses which are likely to take place in Morocco serve as the backbone of Spain's deterrence efforts, not as an exception to them.**

THE IMPACT: 'DESERT DUMPS'

A particularly concerning practice is the expulsions to the Sahara desert, frequently reported. For example, in October 2024, NNK field reporters recorded the testimony of a 19-year old man from Guinea Conakry, who reported what happened when the Moroccan police catch people, based on his multiple attempts to cross the border[24]:

"They first tell them to stop running, and if they don't, they chase them with dogs and beat them. Then, they sometimes remove their shoes so they can no longer run and confiscate their belongings such as food, phone and money. [The respondent] also recounts being forced to work before being imprisoned for around 7 hours and suffering torture during detention. They are not allowed to go to the toilets, the food is neither good nor sufficient as they're only given one bread and two cheeses and the officers give them their phones back only once they arrive in the moroccan city they're deported to, but not the money."

[22] https://bloodyborders.org/testimonials/my-first-attempt-was-the-day-of-the-ramadan-feast/

[23] https://www.nonamekitchen.org/a-un-lado-y-al-otro-de-la-valla-responsabilidad-espanola-y-europea-en-las-devoluciones-en-ceuta-y-melilla/

[24] https://bloodyborders.org/testimonials/at-the-border-its-hell-between-life-and-death/

He described one incident: he was slapped by the police officer, plastic was placed over him to prevent him running, and left tied up in a car overnight and until 16:00 the following day. During a separate incident of a pushback, he described being insulted with racial slurs during the journey in a police bus from Tangier to Errachidia, told he was not a muslim because 'there are no Black muslims', and that some people on the bus were repeatedly hit with batons.

A similar testimony was provided by a 20-year old man from Sierra Leone in October 2024[25], who told his stories of violence by the Moroccan police. He stated:

"The police are very brutal. If they catch you attempting to cross the border, they beat you up and take all your belongings. They even torture you with hot plastic, burning your skin with melted plastic materials. [...] When the Spanish police hand you over to the Moroccan police, they detain you outside the small white houses near the fences. They take your belongings—such as jackets, shoes, cell phones, and so on—and set them on fire. Sometimes the guards beat you up to make you stay on the floor. They leave you to sleep outside, without blankets or warm clothes, and provide no medical assistance. At times, I have been held there for up to three nights. For food, they give you the bare minimum: some water and a small piece of bread, sometimes with cheese. Once enough people are gathered, they put them in a van and take them to a remote location, typically in the south of the country, in the middle of the Sahara Desert. Usually, people have no shoes, and their clothes are torn and dirty from the many days spent on the road and from their attempts to cross the border. [...] Typically, they spend three to four months trying to raise money and recover physically before they can begin the journey back and try again."

Children are also victims of this[26], suffering the same arbitrary detention, torture, and inhumane treatment[27]. Onward refoulements are also common, despite risk of torture or ill-treatment[28], and this has been the subject of various investigations by the Committee Against Torture and the Ombudsperson[29].

---

[25] https://bloodyborders.org/testimonials/i-have-tried-this-25-times/
[26] https://bloodyborders.org/testimonials/we-are-minors-but-they-didnt-listen-to-us/
[27] https://www.nonamekitchen.org/a-un-lado-y-al-otro-de-la-valla-responsabilidad-espanola-y-europea-en-las-devoluciones-en-ceuta-y-melilla/
[28] https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCCPR%2FCSS%2FESP%2F63366&Lang=en
[29] https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCCPR%2FCSS%2FESP%2F63366&Lang=en

These desert returns are a particularly cruel and calculated means of shifting the visible border enforcement out of sight. In a year-long investigation by Lighthouse reporting, interviewing over 50 survivors of these 'desert dumps' between July 2023 and May 2024, it was established that "**the EU is well aware of the dump operations and sometimes directly involved**"[30]. Public documents were found showing that EU officials have had internal discussions on these practises since at least 2019, and that the EU is directly funding paramilitary auxiliary forces who were filmed rounding people up on racial bases in Moroccan cities[31]. One consultant on the EU Trust Fund for Africa was explicit about the fund's aims: "You have to make migrants' lives difficult. Complicate their lives. If you leave a migrant from Guinea in the Sahara [in Morocco] twice, the third time he will ask you to voluntarily bring him back home"[32].The EU has denied complicity[33], and the EU Commissioner for Home Affairs, Ylva Johansson, has stated "We have not seen any shortcomings in this implementation"[34]. As with the comments from the consultant of the EU trust fund, Johanasson's comments reveal that these **desert dumps are no exception to EU externalisation policy, and in fact the funding is functioning exactly as intended.**

THE IMPACT: INSTRUMENTALISATION AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF DISPOSABLE LIVES

In addition to the direct transference of people into conditions where their rights are violated, we have serious concerns regarding the impact that externalising diplomatic relationships has on people on the move, namely with regards to the risk of instrumentalisation. CIDOB argued that the increasing presence of externalisation deals between Spain and Morocco has led to instances of instrumentalization: strategically permitting thousands of people to cross the border to 'remind' the Spanish government of consequences if they fail to engage with the Moroccan government's terms[35]. A poignant example of this is the mass entrances from 16-18 May 2021, when approximately 9000 people entered Ceuta in two days[36]. As CIDOB identifies, this ongoing dynamic between the

[30] https://www.lighthousereports.com/investigation/desert-dumps/
[31] https://www.lighthousereports.com/investigation/desert-dumps/
[32] https://www.lighthousereports.com/investigation/desert-dumps/
[33] https://euobserver.com/undefined/ar5d84590b
[34] https://ecre.org/eu-external-partners-eu-denies-complicity-in-dumping-black-migrants-in-north-african-desert-%E2%80%95-human-rights-organisations-call-for-human-rights-benchmarks-for-egypt-amid-reports-of-forced-retu/
[35] https://www.cidob.org/en/publications/ceuta-weaponisation-migration
[36] https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/RC-9-2021-0349_EN.html

two states is felt sorely by those on Ceuta's borders, because **the strategic use of human movement requires lives on the margins, ready to 'jump' at any point**.

This dynamic has been frequently observed by NNK field workers in the mental and physical states of those arriving in Ceuta. For example, in October 2024 NNK field reporters recorded a testimony of a 19-year old man from Guinea Conakry, who had attempted to cross Ceuta's border more than 14 times, but stopped counting at 14[37]. He described: "At the border it's hell, between life and death". The context of externalisation has led to various Ceutan containment policies, extending enforced precarity to include even those who do manage to cross, by mediating and restricting their access to healthcare, education, and other essential services[38]. Spain's tactic partnership with the Moroccan state, deriving from a securitised panic of mobility, have cultured the construction of 'disposable lives'.

CONCLUSION

The report's testimonies and evidence reveal the severe human cost of Spain and the EU's externalisation of border control to Morocco. Through formal agreements, covert funding, and material support, they have enabled a violent regime at Europe's Moroccan border while avoiding accountability. Rather than fostering a humane or sustainable approach to movement, these deals have entrenched abuse and become the foundation of Europe's deterrence strategy. The UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants is urged to strengthen accountability, amplify affected voices, and ensure the enforcement of human rights remains central to all agreements.

[37] https://bloodyborders.org/testimonials/at-the-border-its-hell-between-life-and-death/
[38] https://hal.science/hal-04264900/document