

Friday, April 15, 11:12

*Migrants abandoned at sea. The testimony of a survivor (full version)*

Emily Bos

*A desperate call for help. An SOS to arrive but that is useless. It is the latest tragedy of migrants in the Strait of Sicily. But this time something different happens. A military helicopter rescued 72 refugees on a boat adrift. Throw water and biscuits, then leaves in a cross section of the Mediterranean where warships and military assets involved in the conflict in Libya.*

*But no one will come to save these Africans who seek a new life in Europe, relying on a wooden shell and the engine is off. The fuel is over. They wander for days adrift at sea. Gone are also food and water. And on board, these human beings too easily branded as "illegal" start to die.*

*The report of the interview with Emily Bos Minister Frattini*

*This is the dramatic testimony collected exclusively by CSR.*

*The voice in English is Abu Kurki, a 24 year old Ethiopian who fled from the region of Oromia, where the community asks for years greater autonomy to the government in Addis Ababa. Escaping from political persecution.*

*The interview with Abu Kurki (English version)*

*Everyone has their own reasons for fleeing. Abu said by telephone from Tripoli on the boat that there were 72 people, including children with 2: 7 from Nigeria, 6 from Ghana, 5 from Sudan. 7 Eritreans, the rest of Ethiopia.*

Their incredible and absurd journey begins March 25. At 3 am sail from Medina, an area on the outskirts of Tripoli. At the helm of the boat there is a boy from Ghana. Should lead them to Lampedusa. This is the promise. After 18 hours the gas is almost over. And the Italian island does not appear on the horizon. From the boat, Abu and others are sounding the alarm. Call Don Zerai Mussi, a priest Eritrean years in Rome working in assisting refugees and asylum seekers. Many migrants from the Horn of Africa have his mobile number at the crossing of the "Mare Nostrum", which has become a "Sea Monstrum" that swallows migrants ..

Don Zerai warns the Italian Coast Guard. The boat is located about sixty miles from the Libyan coast, which is still far from Lampedusa. For a day and a half the priest is able to "follow at a distance" the survivors, now adrift. They are probably in international waters, perhaps Malta. No one helps them.

After 3 days they are approached by a helicopter with military insignia. So says Abu, in this testimony. They get a bit 'of water bottles and a few packets of biscuits. They think they are safe. But the helicopter did not return. Two days later, crossing a "large ship carrying war planes," says Abu. Probably an aircraft carrier. That probably can not see the refugees. But it does not help them.

On the boat begins to die. The survivor said that the first to go are the two boys and two girls. The throw into the sea. Then 4 others dead. Days pass. One after another, the refugees will go off, exhausted. Resisting 11. The current pushes them back to Libya. Land near Misurata, the Libyan city under siege for almost two months.

"We thought it was Italy," sighs Abu in this phone call. Instead they are in Libya. Again. I understand now, because the Libyan police officers have the usual welcome given to immigrants. That is, beatings, and no assistance, even food or water. A girl died an hour after landing. Another young survivor of the sinking die a few days later in prison Zilten, where the survivors, who were now in 9, 8 of which Ethiopians and an Eritrean, will be shut for three days. Then transfer to Tripoli. Of course in prison. Finally salvation, when a friend of Ethiopia can get them out of jail, two days ago.