



Monitoring

Right to life
on the western Euro-African border

January - May 2024

#RightToLife2024

**CA MINANDO
FRONTERAS**

Counting to repair rights

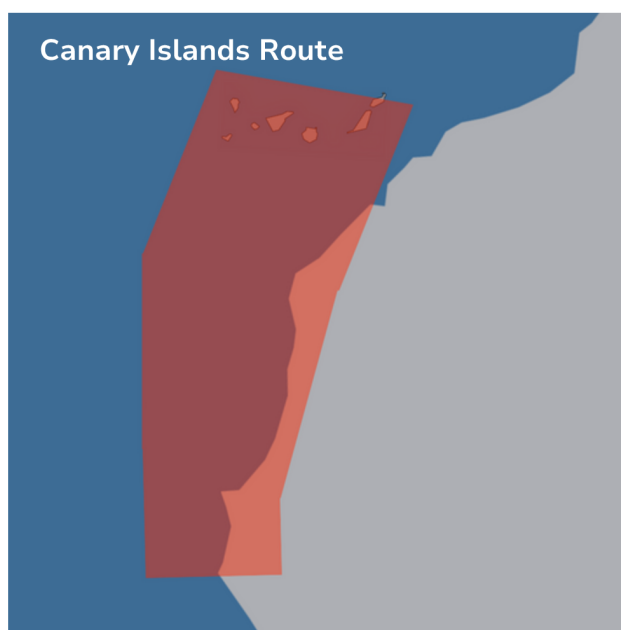
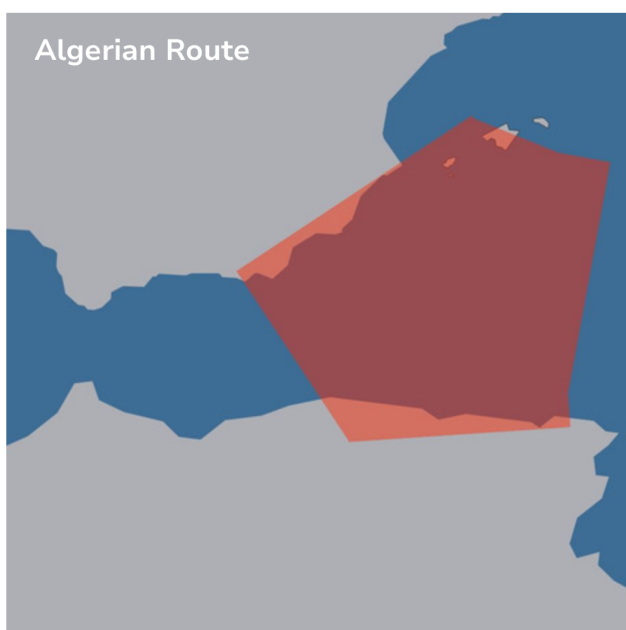
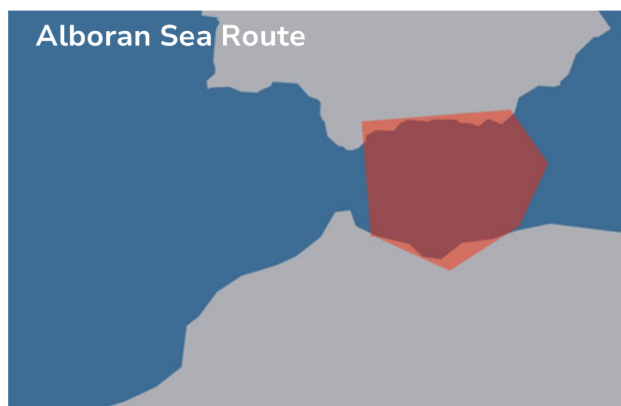
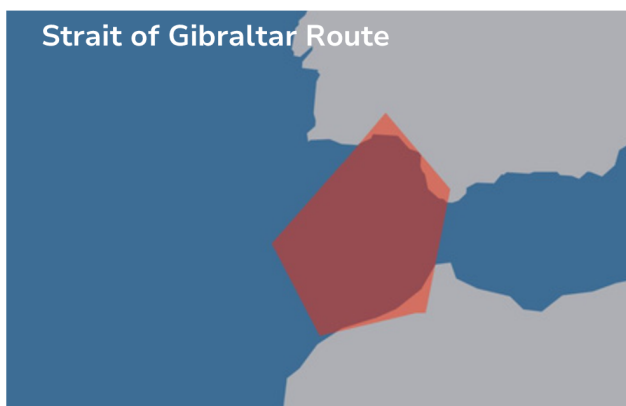
This report provides data on the number of victims on the Euro-African Western Border during the first five months of 2024. These figures have been obtained within the framework of the work carried out by Caminando Fronteras' Human Rights Observatory, which has monitored the impact of migration control policies on individuals for more than twenty years.

Through this research, our organisation brings light to the high cost in human lives of the Strait of Gibraltar, Alboran, Algerian and Western Mediterranean sea routes, the Atlantic route to the Canary Islands, and the sea and land route to Ceuta and Melilla.

The information presented has been obtained from primary sources by applying a participatory action methodology with a feminist approach and transnational implementation.

The figures shared in this report are essential for upholding the rights of the victims and those of their families. In the face of the denial and invisibilization that states perpetrate regarding the impact of their border policies on human rights, the data presented in these pages constitutes yet another year of reparation and memory.

Western Euro-African Border Routes



5.054
victims

on the access routes to Spain during the first five months of 2024

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33
people

died per day

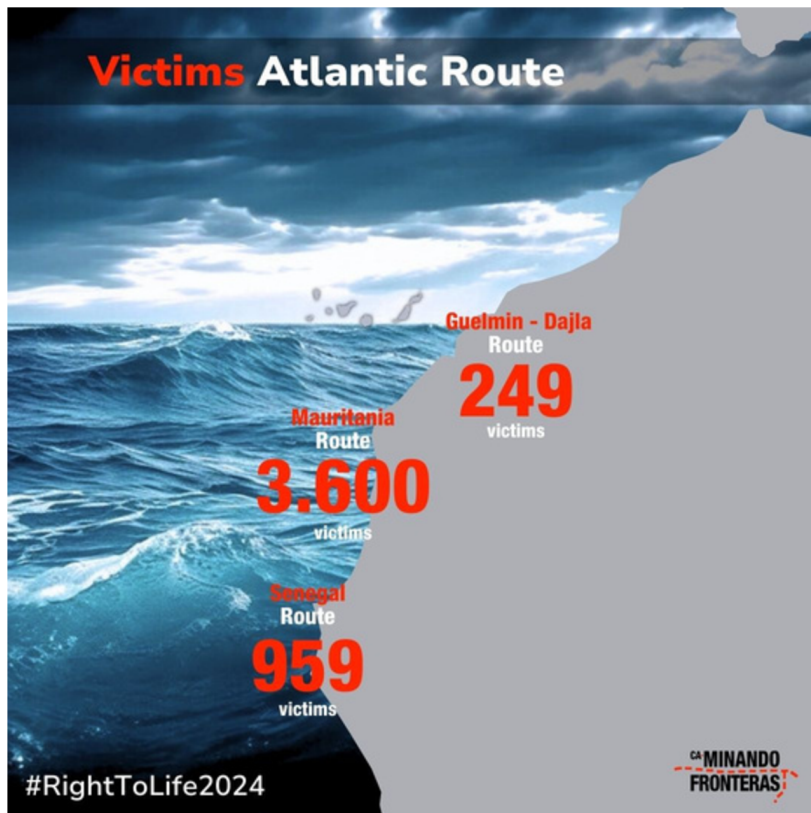
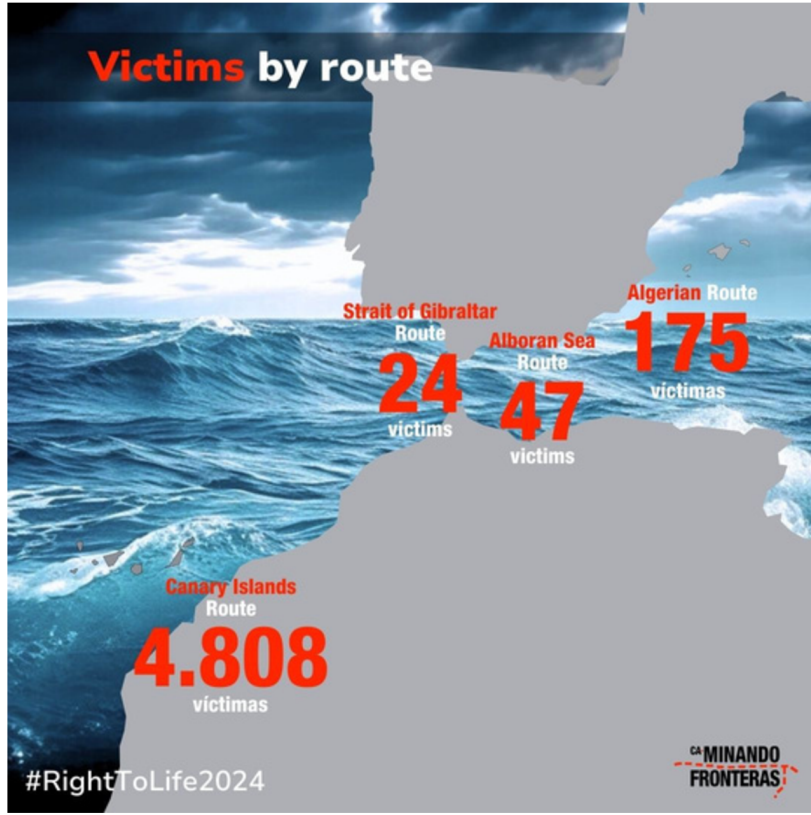
on the western Euro-African border in the first five months of 2024

#DerechoAlaVida2024

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Monitoring Right To Life January - May 2024





47
boats
have disappeared
with everyone on board

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This infographic features a background of a turbulent blue sea under a cloudy sky. The text is centered and uses a mix of red and white colors for emphasis.

People from **17** countries
have died attempting to reach
Spanish coasts

Algeria
Burundi
Burkina
Cameroon
Cote d'Ivoire
Gambia
Guinea Bissau
Guinea Conakry
Comoros Islands
Mali
Morocco
Mauritania
Pakistan
Dem. Rep. of the Congo
Senegal
Sierra Leone
Sudan

#RightToLife2024

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This infographic shows a map of Africa and the Middle East with 17 red location pins. The background is a blue sea with white waves. The text is white and red.

What has happened on the Euro–African Western Border from January to May 2024?

From the beginning of January until the end of May, 33 people have died every day on the migratory routes towards Spain. This is the highest daily death rate in our organisation's records for this period. The closest was in 2023, when 18 people lost their lives every day trying to reach the Spanish coast.

In total, in the first five months of 2024 we have counted 5,054 victims, 154 of which were women and 50 were children.

The Atlantic route remains the deadliest of all. It includes departures from Mauritania, Senegambia—Senegal and the Gambia—and the coasts between Dakhla and Tan Tan to the Canary Islands. 4,808 people have died in this overseas route, amounting to 95% of all victims recorded during these first five months of the year.

In this period, there has been a notable increase in the number of cayucos departing from Mauritania, most of them carrying people from the Sahel as well as Mauritanian nationals.

This has been the most active area during these five months and where most victims have been counted.

Numerous boats that left Mauritania have disappeared at sea with all the people on board. An example of the risks this route poses is the arrival on 15 April of a cayuco with no survivors off the coast of Brazil, that had left Mauritania in February.

The significant drop in departures from Senegal and the Gambia—which had been the most numerous in 2023—must also be noted.

In recent months, the city of Dakhla has started receiving boats from Mauritania, Senegal and the Gambia after being rescued by the Moroccan navy, most of which were in serious risk situations.

Inflatable boats are still present in the departures from the coastal areas between the towns of Guelmin and Dakhla, and they continue to be the most dangerous for navigation.

246 people have died on the Mediterranean routes, the Algerian Western Mediterranean being the second most deadly after the Atlantic route. The number of victims departing from Algeria has doubled compared to the same period last year. This has also happened in the Alboran route, where the number of deaths has increased by more than fifty percent.

In the Strait of Gibraltar, all the deaths have been documented in swim crossings to the city of Ceuta, a highly risky method which, on several occasions, has been carried out in terrible weather conditions.

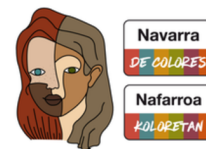
Why has the number of victims increased?

- The bilateral agreement signed between Mauritania and Spain in February 2024 focuses solely on migration control to prevent boats from leaving the Mauritanian coast but has not established any collaboration protocols to protect the lives of people at risk. The lack of search and rescue resources when there are missing boat alerts has been a key factor for the increase in the number of victims during this period.
- The Mauritanian route has remained very active in the worst winter months. In previous years, boat departures decreased during these months but this year they have kept departing even in the worst weather conditions.
- In general, there is a delay in the activation of search and rescue resources due to the fact that negotiations between countries focus on migration and not on defending the right to life.
- There is also poor coordination between the countries responsible for activating rescue services when it comes to migrant people.
- The decision-making process about the means used for rescue and their activation is very often arbitrary.
- Necessary search and rescue means are not activated, despite having exact positions where a shipwreck is happening.
- There is an increase in less effective, passive search methods —alerting ships in the area to report if they see a vessel in distress—to the detriment of active searches —putting all available air and sea mechanisms in place to rescue people at sea.
- Rescue services interpret the obligations and recommendations of international conventions in a unilateral and discriminatory manner when it comes to migrant boats.
- In some cases, the maritime search resources are insufficient and there is little involvement of aerial resources.
- There has been report of accidents happening on departure due to the overloading of boats.
- Boats are used despite poor nautical safety conditions.
- Boats must cover long distances with insufficient means.

A report by:



With the support of:



This publication has been made possible with the financial support of the Ministry of Social Rights, Consumer Affairs, and Agenda 2030. Its contents are the grantee's sole responsibility and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Ministry of Social Rights, Consumer Affairs, and Agenda 2030.