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Greece

The Pylos disaster on trial

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“The court finds the prosecution inadmissible and declares the defendants innocent”. The sentence handed down by the Kalamata court, acquitting the 9 Egyptian refugees who had been in prison for almost a year, infuriated Mitsotakis, who is engaged in a European campaign seeking far-right votes.

On 13 June 2023, a boat overloaded with refugees was reported in distress off the coast of Pylos (south-west Greece). For 15 hours, the coastguards refused to rescue them, and finally hung up a rope, which we still don't know was intended to pull the boat in distress towards Italy! This manoeuvre caused the boat to sink, resulting in the deaths of more than 600 refugees, a veritable mass crime. The government immediately acted as it had in other cases (the Tèmbi rail disaster), shifting the blame onto individuals or even victims.

Although they were facing life imprisonment as criminal ‘smugglers’, the court thus justified the ongoing campaign of solidarity with the accused: demonstrations, concerts and rallies kept up the pressure for their acquittal and for the real culprits to be charged. On 21 May, the Left was present in Kalamata, alongside associations such as Keerfa and Diktyo and trade unions. Let's hope that this victory strengthens the anti-racist battle!

Anti-refugee repression

Beyond the tragedy in Pylos, the anti-refugee practices of a right-wing that is very open to the extreme right are a daily occurrence: more than 2,000 refugees are in prison, accused without proof of being smugglers. But the Kalamata judgement will certainly not help them: the court did not rule on the merits of the case, as the tragedy took place in international waters. We are also familiar with the practice of refoulement, which is prohibited but covered by Frontex, the organisation that monitors Europe's borders, whose former head has just, appropriately enough, joined the RN list. From February 2022 to February 2023: more than 1,000 refoulements in the Aegean Sea, or 28,000 refugees. And it is estimated that at least 20,000 refugees have drowned in the Mediterranean since 2015. But the recent European agreement on immigration is not enough for Mitsotakis: he has just written to the Commission to demand tougher measures...

The fight goes on!

Petty revenge from the authorities: on 24 May, the 9 Egyptians were still imprisoned, on illegal pretexts. This shows the horror of such a racist policy, especially as at the same time the leader of the Chryssi Avgi (Golden Dawn) Nazis, imprisoned as the head of a criminal organisation, was granted an early release, which is legally possible, and other imprisoned Nazis are now asking for the same favour! This would have provoked the anger of a Franco-Greek journalist who has just died: a tribute to Angélique Kourounis, whose documentaries on Greek fascists helped the mobilisations, and who was obviously a firmly anti-racist activist.

Athens, 24 May 2024

Translated by *International Viewpoint* from [l'Anticapitaliste](#).

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