

Dear Commissioner,

We are writing on behalf of the Agency Habeshia which, as you may know, deals with the tragedy of the refugees and migrants and that, therefore, would like to see You, Sir, as an ally in the difficult path intended to ensure freedom, dignity and security to millions of people forced to abandon their land.

Let's start with one of the last, dramatic pleas for help. Certainly You know the UN report that, just a few weeks ago, reported over 400,000 children as victims of famine in Nigeria, because of the situation caused by Boko Haram militia fundamentalists. Indeed, according to UNICEF, 75,000 are likely to die of starvation in the coming months, at a rate of 200 a day. Not to mention the killings, kidnappings, looting investing entire villages, bombings, massacres and the northern part the country fallen for years under the direct control of ISIS faithful fundamentalists. So figures don't end up if we think back to Your statement, disseminated by all European media, affirming that there is no need to change the criteria of the nationalities of refugees to be accepted and "relocated" in any of the EU states.

"If we compare Italy and Greece, we see that up to 80 percent of migrants crossing the Aegean Sea are refugees, while the majority of those arriving in Italy from the central Mediterranean, in this case 80 percent, are irregular. We do not intend to change the criteria ... ": this is the declaration which Press attributed to You, in response to those who asked if You were thinking of few changes for Nationalities to redistribute, because in Italy there are no *"Syrians and Eritreans enough"*. Yet this idea of nationality as "a priori requirement" seems nothing short of absurd. At least because - you know it well - according to International law and the Geneva Convention, asylum applications should be examined case by case, listening to the stories of each individual and not, however, carried out according to criteria of "national belonging", as unfortunately we are now doing, accommodating only those fleeing from the war-torn Syria or from Eritrea enslaved by the dictatorship of an authoritarian regime.

If you really want, however, we might speak well of nations and countries. We spoke of Nigeria, where thousands of people whose alternative is to die under the blows of Boko Haram or hunger. Let's go further: for example, let us think of South Sudan. Again, You, Sir, are too well informed, for the role you play, not to know that a civil war has been ravaging the country for three years, causing at least 10,000 dead and 3 million refugees, threatening to turn into a real genocide, with the warring factions ready to kill and to massacre by ethnicity, following the perverse logic of ethnic cleansing. A UN report published in early December denounces it, in addition to the now "usual" corollary of killings, abductions, villages looted and set on fire, raids even in places like refugee camps under UNHCR's insignia. Not to mention the "famine": apart from climate change and drought, at least two years have passed with no sowings because of war and, therefore, there are no crops to satisfy at least part of the nutritional requirements of the population.

So, what is about? Those fleeing from this hell should not be accepted in Europe as refugees?

But the list of situations like this is very long. Somalia has imploded, and in the throes of a civil war, with the militants of Al Shabaab, affiliated to Al Qaeda, who make an average score of more than 900 attacks a year, with hundreds, thousands of deaths and, again, a drought and a famine investing millions of men and women. Or Mali where, contrary to what they keep saying in Europe, the war, exploded with the revolt of 2012 in the northern regions, the so-called Azawad, never ended, as evidenced by the long chain of daily attacks, bombings, ambushes, killings. The ordeal of Darfur, the war-torn region of

Sudan that has been knowing no peace for years and feeding, in fact, a steady stream of refugees who see in flight the only way of salvation from all kinds of violence perpetrated by the police in the Al Bashir regime, the famous "devils on horseback". Yemen, overwhelmed by the war between Shiites and Sunnis: here thousands of deaths and millions of refugees or displaced and desperate people are driven from their homes and their cities even by bombs and weapons that Europe (and Italy in particular) is selling, together with Member States, to one of the warring factions. Or, again, Gambia, subjugated for years by a brutal dictatorship, which we hope has been truly banished from the elections a few days ago. Or the Central African Republic. Or the same Niger, chosen from Europe to make it a big "sorting hub" for refugees, but that seems far from certain, due to the increasing escalation of terrorist attacks by Boko Haram from Nigeria and AQIM jihadis and Isis from Mali, so that in June, the UN coordinator, Fode Ndiaye, has appealed to the international community speaking bluntly of "humanitarian crisis" ... One could go on - You know, Sir - for who knows how long. Let's take Afghanistan, for example, where the European Union wants to "repatriate" 80,000 refugees, as if the country had become suddenly "peaceful and safe". Unfortunately, media don't speak a lot of these tragedies and the general public knows just a little. But the real tragedy is denounced by the refugees who continue to knock on the doors of Europe, fleeing from Nigeria, South Sudan, Sudan, Somalia, Gambia and so on: just scroll down the list of nationality of many young people landed in Italy. However, according to Your statements, Sir, it seems that these situations would not be "sufficient" to open the doors of solidarity in Europe. Not enough to guarantee - as well as rules of International law - help and hospitality.

Why this choice? Habeshia can not explain it. Unless the reason is that these states from which people are forced to flee are largely the very same ones with which European Union has signed a number of treaties to stop the refugees before their arrival on the shores of the Mediterranean. We refer to the processes of Rabat and Khartoum, the agreements signed in Malta in November 2015, the pact with Turkey You exalted and that, in fact, works great as a "barrier" placed across the Aegean: it is a shame that it lets refugees put their neck on the line. Yeah, because agreements and pacts of this kind serve to Europe to outsource its borders even beyond the Sahara or in any case far from the southern Mediterranean, delegating to others the dirty work to supervise these frontiers, and make them uncrossable. And Your statement, Sir, is likely to give now a voice to those who want to raise more barriers of selfishness and indifference and always appeals to a closed-door policy and refusal.

We do hope, as Habeshia, to be proven wrong. But - less than denials, in fact - that is just what emerges from Your words quoted by the media. Words that seem to forget that you *leave the house only when the house does not let you any more stay*¹ ...

Sincerely,

Fr. Mussie Zerai, president of Habeshia
Emilio Drudi, Agency spokesman.
Barbara Spinelli, Group GUE/NGL
Patrick Le Hyaric , Group GUE/NGL
Ana Maria Gomes, Group S&D
Dimitrios Papadimoulis, Group GUE/NGL
Josu Juaristi Abaunz, Group GUE/NGL
Marie-Christine Vergiat, Group GUE/NGL
Rina Rojna Kari, Group GUE/NGL

NOTE

1 - Giuseppe Cederna, *Home*. The subsequent verses say: *No one leaves the house unless the house does not cast thee fire under your feet, warm blood in the stomach, something that you never thought of doing, as long as the scythe has marked you the threats neck ...*