

An Analysis of the Mass Migration Tragedy of Moroccan Youth to Ceuta and Melilla

(Translated)

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The grim scene unfolding near the Tarajal crossing in Ceuta on the morning of Thursday, July 30, 2026, was not merely another migration attempt—as had frequently occurred in the past regarding that occupied city. Instead, it was the manifestation of a tragedy involving a people fleeing a hellish reality created for them by the Moroccan regime. This human flood overwhelmed security forces, rendering them unable to contain or repel the surging influx. Furthermore, the event's striking coincidence with Morocco's Throne Day celebrations transformed it from a mere border and migration incident into a source of burning political, security, societal, and international questions.

An Analysis of the Events:

The crisis began with sporadic attempts to swim from the coast adjacent to Ceuta, subsequently escalating in the days leading up to the mass surge. Juan Jesús Vivas, the head of the occupied city's government, announced that over 1,500 people had arrived within a ten-day period. Notably, the crossing was not limited to the usual practice of scaling the border fence; instead, the primary route taken was by sea. What distinguished this wave of migration was that it did not begin with the storming of a single border crossing—which could have been cordoned off and managed at a specific point—but instead saw the open sea itself transform into a transit route. Images of those crossing to the other side began to circulate and spread; the impact compounded and the phenomenon snowballed. We witnessed a chaotic rush on bus and train stations in cities across the country as people sought to reach the point closest to Ceuta. The situation escalated beyond containment, peaking hours after the "Throne Speech." By Thursday evening, a human tide—comprising some 50,000 migrants who had crossed by swimming and on foot—had reached Ceuta. It was a shocking paradox: a ruler boasting of the regime's achievements, contrasted with a people fleeing a tragedy of the regime's own making.

This surging human tide inevitably raised security and political issues, sparking a clash of opinions and views, alongside a host of theories, hypotheses, and speculations. Comparisons were drawn to the 2021 migration wave—despite significant differences and contrasting realities—as speculation based on hypotheses prevailed over analysis grounded in facts, largely due to a scarcity of information. Facts regarding the security and political aspects of the migration:

This mass migration was unique in terms of its scale, timing, and surrounding circumstances. Its primary route was maritime—a mode of migration that is inherently more difficult and complex from a security standpoint than containing a land-based movement at a specific point. Furthermore, the migration was not preceded by intensive calls that would have necessitated a security alert; indeed, the rise in numbers during the ten days prior to the mass exodus can be understood within the context of so-called "summer migration waves." Data from the Spanish Ministry of the Interior and the International Organization for Migration for 2022–2025 show that summer months remain peak periods for migration activity. However, the surging tide of people occurred specifically on Thursday evening, following the spread of rumors about successful arrivals in Ceuta.

This human surge raised security dilemmas and sparked diverse interpretations, as realities on the ground imposed exceptional circumstances. The surveillance and containment systems suffered a sudden breakdown, forcing the Spanish Civil Guard—as shown in images—to open a gate near the border area after being overwhelmed by numbers beyond their control, and after the border had effectively lost its function of deterrence and prevention.

On the Moroccan side, security priorities and focus were centered on the Throne Day celebrations—where the King and senior state officials were present—creating a shortfall in other areas. This opened gaps that facilitated migration on such a massive scale.

The political context surrounding this migration differs significantly from the 2021 crisis. At that time, tensions between Rabat and Madrid were high, fueled by the Polisario leader's visit to Spain, the Moroccan ambassador's public threats of consequences, and Foreign Minister Bourita's statement that Moroccan authorities were not responsible for Spanish borders—all of which pointed to a manufactured migration wave.

Today, however, those factors are absent; relations between Rabat and Madrid are normal and improving. Indeed, following the recent events, the Spanish Foreign Ministry affirmed that ties with Morocco are excellent. Consequently, attributing this new wave of mass migration toward Ceuta and Melilla to Moroccan-Spanish tension is untenable—drawing a parallel to the 2021 events is misplaced. While the 2021 migration was orchestrated to manage a crisis, the 2026 migration represents the creation of a crisis that has shaken both systems. Moreover, this sweeping wave of migration occurred just hours after the Speech from the Throne—a speech filled with inflated claims regarding the regime's major achievements and successes. The migration wave stood in stark contrast to that narrative, undermining those claims and directing sharp criticism at the regime's leadership; this makes the theory that the migration was artificially orchestrated highly unlikely.

There remains a factor that effectively acted as a catalyst—one highlighted by both the Spanish and Moroccan regimes: smuggling and migration networks. While the “hidden hand” controlling these networks remains undisclosed, Spanish authorities attribute the exceptional influx directly to smugglers exploiting a recent Spanish Supreme Court ruling. That ruling barred the immediate deportation of migrants who arrive by swimming—a fact underscored by the young people who actually swam across to reach the other shore.

This situation compelled both regimes to address the security crisis arising from this extraordinary migration. In a statement, the Spanish Interior Ministry praised its exemplary cooperation with Morocco across all sectors, including migration; Minister Fernando Grande-Marlaska thanked Moroccan authorities for the efforts of their security forces in recent days, which thwarted thousands of irregular migration attempts.

Ultimately, however, the true and certain cause of this mass exodus—and the tragedy befalling its victims—lies in the misery endured by the Moroccan people and the devastation wrought upon the country by the “regime of ruin.” This includes high poverty rates, the soaring cost of living, widespread youth unemployment, and divorce rates unprecedented in the people's history. Then there is the international dimension and the “hidden hand” profiting from this situation—specifically, the American actor and its “dirty tricks” directed at Spain's defiant Prime Minister, who rejected Washington's request to use joint bases against Iran and closed Spanish airspace to US military aircraft by exploiting the politically sensitive issue of migration in Europe. This must be viewed in light of the geostrategic importance of Ceuta—the southern gateway to the Strait of Gibraltar—and Trump's ambitions to wrest it from Spain. Indeed, the US Congressional Appropriations Committee raised the issue of Ceuta and Melilla on May 3, 2026, describing them as “Moroccan territories under Spanish administration.” Prior to that, in April 2026, Republican Congressman Mario Díaz-Balart had emphasized that “Ceuta and Melilla are geographically part of Morocco, and their status is always subject to negotiation and discussion among friends and allies.”

These are our tragedies, wrought by colonialist regimes; these are our causes, torn apart by the vile agents of colonialism.