

Although the issue of refugees is more present today than in 2015, it still goes unnoticed, and only hits the headlines when many people die, or to stir up a controversy.

Quite possibly since mid-2015, an especially during 2016 we witnessed -and could even say made possible- an important shift in the media coverage, which all of a sudden linked it to seeking refuge. Yet, as is often the case, this was not because there was a sudden interest in the inefficacy of asylum policies or because of the situation of migrants and refugees, all of which we had been denouncing for some time from organizations, groups and individually. Rather, this happened because of the sheer drama that could no longer be ignored: thousands of people were dying in the Mediterranean and there were pictures (some morally objectionable) to prove it. We could say that dramatic moment went viral.

But let's not be tricked; we know that even if something going viral may have positive elements (like reaching out to many people, or the strong mobilization in many towns and cities), it is quickly gone and forgotten. Also, it doesn't allow exploring the deep root causes of the problem.

With regards to temporality and speed. The violation of rights and risk situations on many borders (not just in the Mediterranean) unfortunately have happened since well before 2015 and are still a reality today, that is worsening rather than getting better. Examples are found with the flagrant violation of rights along the southern border (of the Spanish state) or the racist statements made by the new Italian home affairs minister. However, although the matter is much more present than before 2015, it often goes unnoticed, and only makes the headlines when many people die or to stir up a controversy, as we have seen in recent days with the case of the vessel Aquarius.

Things going viral, many a times and especially when there is no real will to do so, does not allow for an in-depth analysis of the issues and therefore many questions are left unsolved. With this background, I would like to touch on two concepts, that are not new in anti-racist movements, but that have been discussed very little: institutional racism and social racism, which feed back into each other.

Very often, from different perspectives, those of the citizens but also the institutions, the desire to receive refugees has been discussed, but without looking at what this means exactly, in what conditions...The existence of a racist regulatory framework has been kept hidden; a framework that finds its greatest exponent in the Spanish migrations laws, which limit the lives of people and their rights based on their place of origin. Also the regulatory framework on asylum, which grants or denies international protection, leaving many people out. Both of these theoretical classifications limit the rights that are inherent to the condition of being a person.

On the other hand, if we look at the collective imagery that citizens have about reception and how it is done, we have: it's a question of mutual solidarity and support, or it is about having equal rights effectively; access to health, to housing, to a public school that does not practice segregation, to the labour market...among other aspects. This requires the public administrations to intervene to guarantee and protect these rights instead of violating them.

No new proposals, and many old demands to be rescued: ensuring the right to migrate, which is systematically violated despite being an internationally recognized right; open the borders and bring down the Spanish migration laws.