

Maritime Cemetery

Marijana Hameršak

Activists (e.g. [No Border Spain](#)) and researchers (e.g. Koshravi 2007) have been referring to the Mediterranean Sea as a graveyard or cemetery for refugees and other migrants from the turn of the century. The surface of the Mediterranean Sea includes floating boats with people who are fleeing, boats left to die, as the title of a famous reconstruction of an abandoned ship reads ([Forensic Oceanography Left to Die Boat](#)), while countless dead rest in its depths. Although the [media](#) often present summary numbers of **deaths** in the Mediterranean, accurate data on border deaths, including deaths in the Mediterranean, do not exist. The many unknown deaths, but also the many **disappeared**, call into question "the image of the Mediterranean as a 'transparent' sea, bringing to the fore the patchy visibility that is at play and the presence of shadow zones" (Tazzioli 2015: 5).

For those who, due to the currently active border control regime (visa system, penalties for carriers, etc.) cannot use regular air, sea or land routes, the Mediterranean Sea is the gateway to Europe, but also a maritime cemetery on the way to Europe. As they buy life jackets in Turkish coastal cities, they are "preparing for escape and death at the same time", as formulated by Harith Salman (2019: 8), who himself was forced to cross the Aegean Sea after he was denied entry into the EU first at the airport in Zagreb, and then in Bucharest. Due to the denial and criminalization of providing assistance at sea, the impossibility of docking in ports, **pushbacks**, **detentions** and other techniques to deter and control migration, as well as inadequate vessels and the conditions on vessels used for irregularized crossings, the Mediterranean Sea has been the site of unprecedented "crimes of peace" for decades (Albahari 2015), a **weaponized landscape** in which crossing a distance of several kilometers at sea, under favorable weather conditions, even in the vicinity of other vessels, can be deadly.

Deaths at the Mediterranean and the Mediterranean as a maritime cemetery are the subject of contemporary artistic production, from theater, for example, Lina Prosa's play [Lampedusa Beach](#) (translated into Croatian by Iva Grgić Maroević, directed by Senka Bulić, acted by Nina Violić, Hotel Bulić Theater) to children's literature and the graphic novel [Zenobia](#) by writer Morten Dürr and illustrator Lars Horneman, which was also promptly translated into Croatian.

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Literature

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