



30 YEARS OF MIGRATION IN SPAIN

Policy failure across the board



Mayor of Telde Carmen Hernández received the filmmaker in the town hall, saying: "We congratulate Castellano on his brilliant work, but above all for his personal commitment to human rights and to making the tragedy visible. We are proud he is from our ranks". The film deeply questions Spanish and European refugee policy, which puts migration control higher in importance than human lives. "People get on boats because they have no choice," emphasised Castellano, pointing out that 500 people die every day at borders around the world. Gran Canaria's island president Antonio Morales also made an appeal: "The situation has turned into a macabre death ritual. Using the sea as a wall is cruel. In order to know how many peo-

← *The last stop in a holiday paradise*

↓ *Human tragedies take place almost daily somewhere at borders*

In mid-January, a journalist from Telde in Gran Canaria, Nicolás Castellano, presented his documentary called *El naufragio, 30 años de memoria sumergida* (Shipwreck - 30 years of sunken memory) in the patio of the island's government building.

Together with photographer Juan Medina, Castellano has collected shocking images of the last three decades, right from the first known shipwreck of migrants off Spanish shores, which took place on November 1, 1988 at Playa de Los Lances in Tarifa in the Peninsula, to the first on the Canary Islands, which took place in July 1999 at Playa de Las Señoras in Fuerteventura.

The film criticises poor immigration policy that drives refugees on increasingly dangerous routes. In the last 30 years, an estimated 25,000 people have lost their lives off Spanish coasts. Whilst some travellers are economic migrants seeking work, many are fleeing warlike conflicts or the exploitation of their homeland, such as refugees from Guinea Conakry, who make up 22 per cent of all immigrants seeking shelter in Spain. Castellano's film condemns current politics, stating that the strengthening of the rightwing movement is only possible because refugees are portrayed as enemies instead of highlighting and questioning the human tragedy behind the current situation.



INTERNATIONAL WARRANT EXECUTED

'Dangerous' British criminal arrested

A 35-year-old British man had an unwanted start to the year when he was arrested on an international warrant in the immediate vicinity of the Reina Sofía Airport in Tenerife.

The Edinburgh Public Prosecutor's Office had issued the initial warrant for him, charging him with an incredible 29 crimes, which carry a total of 100 possible years in prison if convicted for each crime indi-

vidually. The man is considered as being one of the heads of a violent gang which undertook criminal activities between 2011 and 2018 in Great Britain, Iceland, the Netherlands, United Arab Emirates, Portugal, Spain, China and Mexico. The group is said to have trafficked, among other items, cocaine and hashish on a large scale into Great Britain and other European countries.

The arrested Brit is accused of illegal trafficking in narcotics and psychotropic substances, arms, munitions and explosives, as well as money laundering, cybercrime, murder, grievous bodily harm, kidnapping, hostage-taking and armed robbery. The man had apparently been running his criminal activities from his base in south Tenerife. However, his location was initially

difficult to pinpoint due to the immense resources he had to hand and the abundance of security measures the wanted man took to camouflage himself. The trial for his extradition to the United Kingdom is under way.

Throughout the course of December, a total of ten foreign criminals wanted on international arrest warrants were detained in Spain. The arrests



↑ *National Police on Tenerife were successful in searching for and arresting a wanted British criminal*

took place in El Ejido (Almería), Jaén, Madrid, Móstoles, Lérida, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria and Gandía, near Valencia. The ten were guilty of a wide vari-

ety of crimes, including drug trafficking, armed robbery, sexual offences, abuse of minors, money laundering and illegal financial transactions. ■