

Call with Abu Huthaifa

Abu Huthaifa: Where are you now?

Reporter: In Latakia

Abu Huthaifa: Will you travel from Syria or Lebanon?

Reporter: From Syria

Abu Huthaifa: No problem. There is a trip next Monday. Do you want to reserve a seat? The ticket from Damascus to Benghazi will cost you 1200 USD.

Reporter: Airline ticket?

Abu Huthaifa: Yes, via The Cham Wings Airlines. Then you pay another 350 USD. Do you understand?

Reporter: Yes, I understand.

Abu Huthaifa: Then there is the amount of 4000 USD for the rest of your trip which you will “hold” under your name at an office in Syria, either by your brother or any trusted family member.

Reporter: Ok. What about the security clearance?

Abu Huthaifa: The security clearance is included with your airline ticket, the 1200 USD.

Reporter: Would it be possible to see a copy of the clearance form just to put my mind at ease?

Abu Huthaifa: Don't worry. The security clearance will be issued before you depart from Syria.

Reporter: Ok. But is there any way I could see the security clearance form?

Abu Huthaifa: The security clearance to enter Benghazi differs from that you would receive before departing from Lebanon or Jordan for example. Security clearances for Syrian departures are a special case, as they are issued for the whole flight. This is the responsibility of Cham Wings Airlines. So the initial payment is 1200 USD.

Reporter: Ok. Should I pay you in USD, Euros...?

Abu Huthaifa (jokingly): It doesn't matter. You can choose any strong currency like the Kuwaiti Dinar, anything you want.

Reporter (laughing): No really I need to know to be prepared.

Abu Huthaifa: Well our charge is 1200 USD. Others may charge you 1300 or 1400. Your trip to Europe will be via the sea?

Reporter: Yes, that's correct

Abu Huthaifa: Ok. I will advise you as my brother. Do not take the route through Tripoli. Take the route through Tubrok. I know someone trustworthy and guaranteed. You can “hold” your money in Syria, in a trustworthy office, understand?

Reporter: Yes, I understand. But what about the amount you are asking for? What if I am unable to pay?

Abu Huthaifa: That money isn't for me. It is for a trusted Syrian smuggler whom I have dealt with many times. He will not keep you in a warehouse as is the case with many other migrants. You will stay in a regular home and will be able to live normally and contact your family regularly and you will be treated very well.

Reporter: Ok. Where is this person in Libya?

Abu Huthaifa: He is in Tubrok. You will depart from Tubrok on board a giant fishing boat, not one of the smaller models.

Reporter: And how much will he charge?

Abu Huthaifa: 4350 USD to Italy.

Reporter: 4350 USD?

Abu Huthaifa: Yes. 4000 USD for the trip, and 350 USD to cover transportation from Bengazi to Tubrok and that price includes subsistence.