Central Med Info

June 28 – July 12 2019

About our Central Med Info: borderline-europe started in March 2019 to put together information about the situation in the Central Mediterranean Sea for internal research reasons. In 2020 we decided to publish these info-letters. You will also find sources of right-wing newspapers and twitter quotations of “friends” of the so-called Libyan Coast Guard. This does not reflect our opinion, but some information is only available here.

LIBYA- INFO

11.07.2019

Info about Libya: The Tajoura center was bombed last week by Haftar

About sixty people have been transferred to the reception center managed by UNHCR, presented by the Minister of the Interior, Matteo Salvini, in June 2018 and activated only a few months ago. The center welcomes mainly vulnerable migrants and foreigners of some nationalities who possess the refugee status, such as all those arriving from the Horn of Africa. These are destined to remain in the center, which is located in the heart of Tripoli, right in front of the reception center of Trik al-Sikka, where the conditions are very different. It is likely that UNHCR will be able to organize an airlift with some countries, including Italy, to transfer the 60 people and remove them permanently from Libya. For the others it is different. The UN refugee agency talks about ‘our facilities in and around Tripoli’ to support the evacuees of Tajoura. In particular, all the Africans of the sub-Saharan countries have been transferred there [...] https://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2019/07/10/libia-nessuna-liberazione-dal-centro-di-detenzione-distrutto-a-tripoli-migranti-sopravvissuti-spostati-in-altri-strutture/5314561/

10.07.2019

The migrants of the bombed Tajoura center in Libya are free but they do not know where to go

UNHCR Twitter: We thank the Libyan Ministry of Interior for releasing refugees and migrants from Tajoura detention centre today. 350 persons were still at risk in Tajoura and now free. UNHCR will provide assistance through its urban response programme @Refugees https://twitter.com/UNHCRLibya/status/114861336575881216?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E114861336575881216&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.repubblica.it%2Ffester%2F2019%2F07%2F09%2Fnews%2Flibia_il_govern o_libera_350_migranti_del centro_profughi_bombardato-230818892%2F

UNHCR Twitter: Over the past days, UNHCR visited Tajoura & provided food, water and medical assistance. As evacuations out of Libya are limited, we attempted to relocate the most vulnerable to the GDF and advocate for the release of all persons remaining in Tajoura @IOM_Libya @IMC_Worldwide https://twitter.com/UNHCRLibya/status/114861336575881216?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E114861336575881216&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.repubblica.it%2Ffester%2F2019%2F07%2F09%2Fnews%2Flibia_il_govern o_libera_350_migranti_del centro_profughi_bombardato-230818892%2F

09.07.2019

Tajura migrants leave in groups. Free. But without knowing where to go

In the end, the Tripoli’s authorities linked to the government of Fajez Sarraj seem to be putting into practice what they had threatened: they start to free the migrants. On the Libyan social media, there are videos of several hundred of them walking in groups along the street in the direction of Tripoli. The Tajura camp had been bombed by air force under the orders of Khalifa Haftar in the night between Tuesday and Wednesday, causing more than fifty deaths. In the video that we broadcast the voice of the young man who is heard in the background says: "We were driven out of the camp of Tajura by both the Libyan authorities and officials of the United Nations. Please call the media, film us and listen to our appeal: we have no food and we do not know where to go. According to Libyan sources, after the bombing, there were about 365 people left in the camp who, in the last hours, were on hunger strike because they demanded better living conditions and security and refused to transfer to other detention centres. It seems that with the expulsion they are afraid of losing their right to leave the country and the assistance of international humanitarian organizations. At the moment it is not clear whether the expulsion from the camp..."
of Tajura is an isolated case or could involve the other 7,000 migrants closed in the twenty "official" camps controlled by the authorities of Tripolis.


05.07.2019
Migrants say militias in Tripoli conscripted them to clean arms
Migrants who survived the deadly airstrike on a detention center in western Libya say they had been conscripted by a local militia to work in an adjacent weapons workshop. The detention centers are under armed groups affiliated with the Fayez al-Sarraj government in Tripoli. Two migrants told The Associated Press on Thursday that for months they were sent day and night to a workshop inside the Tajoura detention center, which housed hundreds of African migrants. A young migrant who has been held for nearly two years at Tajoura says “we clean the anti-aircraft guns. I saw a large amount of rockets and missiles too.” The migrants spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisal.


03.07.2019
Haftar bombed the Tajoura detention center, more than 40 people died
Dozens killed and scores more wounded in attack on detention centre in Tripoli suburb blamed on Haftar’s forces. Dozens of people have been killed in an air raid at a detention centre for refugees and migrants in the Libyan capital, Tripoli, according to health and emergency officials. According to the UN Support Mission in Libya, the air raid that happened overnight on Wednesday killed at least 44 people and wounded more than 130. The centre, which is located next to a military camp in the eastern suburb of Tajoura, houses more than 600 people, but the part that was hit held some 150 male refugees and migrants from African countries such as Sudan, Eritrea and Somalia [...]


03.07.2019
Libya attack: airstrike on Tripoli migrant detention centre leaves at least 40 dead
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jul/03/air-strike-kill-libya-tripoli-migrant-detention-centre
https://thedefensepost.com/2019/07/03/libya-migrant-detention-center/

08.07.2019
Italy prepares triple blockade in the central Mediterranean
In view of the expected bombing of Tripoli and the surrounding area by Haftar troops and the United Arab Emirates, in view of the bombing of the internment camp Tajoura on 02.07.2019 with 60 to 100 dead and countless injured, in view of the assumption that more internees could break out and flee, in view of the increase of refugee boats which reach Italy independently from Libya and Tunisia, the Italian government has decided a threefold blockade of the central Mediterranean. The first parts of the blockade plan are to be implemented immediately, as refugee boats are on their way [...]
The Order and Security Committee decides on new measures to regulate migratory flows. Ten more patrol boats in Tripoli and new agreements with Tunis. And Conte convenes a summit on migratory flows. In the night 47 migrants landed in Pozzallo. Humanitarian ships must be physically stopped and barges and boats intercepted before they leave the territorial waters of the countries from which they depart. The resumption of migration flows and the return of NGO ships to the Sar Libyan area is a cause for concern for Interior Minister Matteo Salvini, who convened the Committee on Law and Order and Public Security, which has taken new measures in agreement with the top management of the Law Enforcement, including the Navy and Coast Guard [...] 


10.07.2019
Find Info in German also in the Italian newsletter of borderline-europe 

Italy-Malta – shipwreck 11.10.2013

09.07.2019
Shipwreck of Lampedusa, Syrian families’ civil action against Italian Navy officers
The examining magistrate of Rome has accepted the request of about thirty people who lost their children in the shipwreck on October 11, 2013. The Syrian families who in the shipwreck of October 11, 2013, off Lampedusa, lost their relatives, among them many children, while Italy and Malta were taking responsibility for the rescue of the boat on which they were traveling, will be a civil party in the trial against the two officers of the Navy and the Italian Coast Guard in the dock. In that tragedy at sea, which followed the first frightening shipwreck off the coast of Lampedusa only eight days later, 268 people died, 60 children. After the inquiry in the pages of Fabrizio Gatti’s L’Espresso, the Public Prosecutor’s Office of Rome asked for the trial of the then head of the Rome Coast Guard operations room, Leopoldo Manna, and the commander of the naval team’s operations room, Luca Liciardi. Both must answer for denial of office and manslaughter. The prosecutors, in truth, had asked for the dismissal but the gip imposed the forced indictment. From the testimonies and especially from the dramatic interceptions of the phone calls in which the Syrians on board begged for urgent assistance because the boat was sinking, it became clear the delays in the rescue that would have caused the death of so many people. The reconstruction of the facts contained in the inquiry of the weekly magazine L’Espresso revealed that an Italian Navy patrol boat was only 10 miles from the boat that had begun to take water in after being hit by gunfire from the Libyan coast guard. The first call for help from a Syrian doctor travelling with his family was at 12.39pm. According to the reconstruction, the boat was without help for over five hours. 
Central Med Rescue Ships and airplanes, situation July

For the moment only OPEN ARMS is in the rescue zone
Mediterranea: Alex seized, Mare Jonio seized in Licata
Sea Watch 3: seized in Licata
Sea Eye: Alan Kurdi went back to Palma de Mallorca

INTERCEPTIONS to LIBYA

05.07.2019
The journey of 97 migrants on board a raft, the testimony: "They shot and drugged us"

While the Sea Watch, on the night between June 26 and 27 2019, was entering Italian waters, 97 people were on board of an inflatable boat that was intercepted by an unidentified patrol boat south of Lampedusa. "I left that it was dark at 10 a.m., all these people were on a rubber boat. After 27 hours the engine didn't work anymore, food and water were gone, the waves of the sea were high and from far away you could see a light, but the waves didn't allow to see clearly what was on the horizon". The testimony of one of those 97 migrants on board of the boat was reported by La Stampa through a video interview with the translation of the interpreter Amr Adem. "I called the guy who was driving the boat who had an emergency number here in Italy. Within 20 minutes a ship arrived, there was a very bright light. There was one who spoke and said in Arabic "we are an Italian ship, get on board". And again: "An Italian who speaks Arabic? That's impossible. They started firing with machine guns at the boat, then they used the harpoons to deflate the tubes and forced us to go up, then they gaslighted us. They wore masks to protect themselves." Within two minutes, the passengers lost consciousness and only hours later they woke up, back in Libya.

https://www.tpi.it/2019/07/03/migranti-viaggio-spari-gas/

Rescue Operations CM

Rescue of the Alan Kurdi (1st rescue operation) 05.07.2019
German rescue ship Alan Kurdi takes 65 migrants aboard off Libya

NGOs rescue ships rescuing migrants in the Mediterranean continue to make the headlines: After the Sea-Watch drama and Mediterranea’s ongoing stand-off with Italy, Sea-Eye’s “Alan Kurdi” vessel is looking for a safe port after saving 65 migrants from a rubber dinghy off Libya. A ship operated by German aid organization Sea-Eye said on Friday it had rescued 65 people from an overloaded rubber dinghy 34 nautical miles off the Libyan coast. According to Sea-Eye, the dinghy didn’t have a navigation device and carried only ten liters of drinking water. The migrants were "inconceivably lucky," said Gordon Isler, Sea-Eye director of operations. [...] Italian Interior Minister Matteo Salvini has insisted that the Sea-Watch and Mediterranea's Alex vessels won't be allowed to enter an Italian port [...] https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/17989/german-rescue-ship-alan-kurdi-takes-65-migrants-aboard-off-libya

Rescue of the Alan Kurdi (2nd rescue operation) 09.07.2019
Alan Kurdi rescue ship saves 44 stranded people in Mediterranean

Charity says Malta has agreed to take in rescued people who hail from Syria, Libya, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Guinea. Last week, the Alan Kurdi rescued 65 shipwrecked migrants attempting the perilous journey from North Africa. At least 44 people, including infants, have been picked up from their stricken vessel off Libya’s coast in the Mediterranean Sea, according to a German charity operating the ship that rescued them. Malta agreed to take in those rescued by the Alan Kurdi ship and was sending a vessel to pick them up, the Sea-Eye charity said late on Monday. There was no immediate confirmation by Maltese authorities. [...] https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/07/alan-kurdi-rescue-ship-saves-44-stranded-people-mediterranean-190709100458532.html

09.07.2019
Sea-eye Twitter: The 44 rescued persons were brought to land in the afternoon by the Maltese Navy. For the #AlanKurdi this rescue mission ends and we head back to port to refuel.
Without us, no ship of the civil rescue fleet will patrol off the Libyan coast.
https://twitter.com/seayeorg/status/1148627206354214912

Rescue by Malta
07.07.2019
AP-CASE: Armed forces rescue 58 migrants from within Maltese territorial waters
The migrants were disembarked in Malta on Sunday afternoon. A group of migrants rescued by the Armed Forces of Malta have landed in Malta after being rescued by the Armed Forces of Malta. The migrants were rescued from a boat in distress just north of the Maltese search and rescue zone by the AFM’s P21 patrol boat on Sunday, an army spokesperson said. The composition of the group of migrants and their condition is as yet unknown. A second migrant boat is reportedly being monitored by the AFM ...

ALEX MEDITERRANEA
04.07.2019
AP Twitter: At 15,57 CEST we were called by a boat in distress coming from Libya, with 55 people, incl. 11 women and 4 children. We informed the authorities and Mediterranea who have now spotted the boat. They cannot be returned to Libya but must be rescued and disembarked at a safe port!
https://twitter.com/alarm_phone/status/1146811643642429441

04.07.2019
AP Twitter: The 54 people in distress were rescued by the #ALEX rescue vessel by Mediterranea. A Libyan patrol boat arrived later, first intimated ALEX to stop, then left the scene. Congratulations on this successful #SAR operation - now they need disembarkment in a safe port! #safepassage
https://twitter.com/alarm_phone/status/1146829372587986944

07.07.2019
Rescued refugees land in Sicily as another ship defies Salvini
Charity vessel carrying 41 docks in Lampedusa after two days stranded at sea. Forty-one refugees and migrants disembarked overnight at the port of Lampedusa after a charity vessel that rescued them off Libya defied an attempt by Italy’s far-right interior minister, Matteo Salvini, to close ports to NGO boats. The Italian-flagged Alex, run by the NGO Mediterranea, was escorted by the Italian coastguard and on Saturday the ship was seized by police, the captain was put under investigation for allegedly aiding illegal immigration, and the rescues eventually disembarked. Mediterranea was fined €16,000 (£14,300). […] “We cannot be responsible for boats with people rescued from shipwrecks on board spending weeks on the Mediterranean because they can’t find a port,” Seehofer wrote.

06.07.2019
Mediterranea on Alex case: “in these conditions sailing to Malta would seriously endanger health and safety of people on board. Lampedusa is the only possible place of safety” After spending the night trying to coordinate with the Rescue Coordination Centres (RCCs) of Malta and Italy, it has become evident that sailing to La Valletta in current conditions would mean to put health and safety of people on board of ALEX in serious risk. Beyond already difficult conditions, we have also found out that the Italian MRCC would expect the ALEX to take back on board all 41 rescued people in International waters, before entering the Maltese territorial waters and continuing to the port of La Valletta. This would be in complete disregard of any regulation about navigation safety. […]

SEA WATCH: CAROLA RAKETE ARRESTED
05.07.2019
Captain who rescued 42 migrants: I’d do it again despite jail threat
Carola Rackete faces prospect of long trial for defying Italy’s ban on rescue ships
Carola Rackete: ‘People’s lives matter more than any political game.’
The ship’s captain facing jail after defying Italian law to bring 42 migrants into port has said she would do it all over again and hit out at Italy’s
far-right deputy prime minister, Matteo Salvini [...] 

Rescue call 60 migrants from Libya, on July 3rd 03.07.2019
AP Twitter: At 23.41h we informed MRCC #Rome about the situation. The #Italian authorities replied that they would ensure to inform the Libyan authorities. We have no idea what happened to the boat & the 60 people. We hope they survived, even if this means being back in an ongoing warzone. 
https://twitter.com/alarm_phone/status/1146344332879941632

AP Twitter: We informed the so-called #Libyan coastguards via email. We also tried to reach them directly via the phone, which was, however, not possible, which shows once more how dysfunctional the Libyan authorities are. For 11 hours now, the Libyan authorities could not be reached. 
https://twitter.com/alarm_phone/status/114634351064813570

AP Twitter: According to the man they could see the lights of the Libyan coast & they could not move on. He stated that they wanted to be rescued even if this meant being returned to #Libya –they had no other option. After the 1st call, contact to the man broke & could not be re-established. 
https://twitter.com/alarm_phone/status/1146343160697761794

AP Twitter: Last night, 23.20h CEST, a man called Alarm Phone who said he was among a group of 60 people on a boat in distress off the coast of #Zawiya, #Libya. According to him there were 20 women & small children on board, one of the tubes was deflating & water was entering from that side. 
https://twitter.com/alarm_phone/status/1146340839783882752

03.07.2019
Migrants, a dinghy with 60 people on board in distress off the coast of Libya
An inflatable boat with about sixty people on board, including women and children, should be in trouble off the coast of Libya. The report comes from Alarm Phone, the platform that helps migrants in the Mediterranean, created in 2014 after the Lampedusa shipwreck and which aims to "allow civil society to monitor what happens at sea". 
Alarm phone reports: rubber boat in distress off the coast of Libya 
Alarm Phone claims to have received around 11.20 p.m. yesterday a phone call from a migrant who was on board the boat. The man reported that one of the two tubes of the raft was deflating and that they were off Zawiya. According to the report, there were 60 people aboard the boat, 20 of whom were children [...] 
https://www.tpi.it/2019/07/03/migranti-in-distress-off-libya/ 

Malta reaches agreement to distribute new migrants within the EU 
08.07.2019
The 65 migrants on board of the Alan Kurdi, a ship belonging to a German NGO, arrived in Malta on Sunday evening, and are now waiting to be relocated to different European countries, an AFP correspondent reported. The migrants, visibly tired, arrived on land aboard a Maltese military patrol boat. Maltese Prime Minister Joseph Muscat, who held talks on Sunday with the European Commission and the German government, said on Tweeter that none of the 65 migrants would stay in his country "as this case was not the responsibility of the Maltese authorities". 
[...] While media attention has focused on the arm wrestling between NGOs and Matteo Salvini, involving about 150 migrants, more than 500 others have landed in two weeks on the Italian coast thanks to sufficiently solid boats, official statistics reveal. 
https://www.euractiv.fr/section/migrations/news/malte-trouve-un-accord-pour-repartir-de-nouveaux-migrants-au-sein-de-lue/ 

Shipwreck off coast of Zarzis - 81 people missing 
04.07.2019
AP Twitter: The 5 survivors were brought to Zarzis by the #Tunisian Marine. Chamseddine Marzoug just informed us that one of them just died in the hospital. We are shocked by this continuous mass drowning at sea. We wish the relatives and friends who have lost loved ones all the strength. 
https://twitter.com/alarm_phone/status/1146739186243985410

AP Twitter: According to Tunisian Red Crescent volunteer and activist Chamseddine Marzoug, a shipwreck occurred not far from #Zarzis in #Tunisia yesterday. He told Alarm Phone that only 5 people survived while over 80 people went missing. #Europe and its #borders kill! 
https://twitter.com/alarm_phone/status/1146729719620079617
Glossary
AP: Alarm Phone
IOM: International Organisation of Migration
Migrant Rescue Watch: Account of R. Gowans, a person that seems to know a lot about the so-called Libyan Coast Guard. We do not share his opinion about the so-called LCG and the SAR NGOs.
So-called LCG: so-called Libyan Coast Guard. These coastguard units since long time are the subject of criticism because of the human rights violations they have committed, their frequent unavailability and the impossibility of attributing them to a government or to militias, for this we call them "so-called" coastguards.

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