Central Med Info
November 13 – December 13 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 // Malta

13.11.2019
What is Italy's role in so-called Libyan Coast Guard operations?
Abdallah Toumia is the best known face of the Libyan coast guard. Admiral, a life in the navy - he started at the time of Gaddafi -, those who know him say there is nothing to dispute about his professionalism. He is the one who signed the Memorandum of Understanding of August 23, 2016 with the European force Eunavfor Med, where it was established that the mission called Operation Sophia would train the Libyan military and so-called Coast Guards. [...] https://www.internazionale.it/notizie/lorenzo-bagnoli/2019/11/13/italia-libia-guardia-costiera?fbclid=IwAR02YW5SureAqIF5g69QAAnDnWiqosFDiI6z xVSMU34wZ1-unBBjac

15.11.2019
We give millions to the so-called Libyan Coast Guard. Who's monitoring it? Practically no one if the European Union decides to finance the controversial so-called Libyan Coast Guard with more than 90 million euros over the last two years, you will expect there to be a stringent monitoring mechanism to determine whether or not this money is well invested. Perhaps you will not be surprised to find that it is not. In Libya, neither Italy nor Europe can control how even those same people trained by us to patrol the west coast of the country on patrol boats - sometimes armed - behave. Not only that: there is no permanent EU representation in the country. And even the European military maritime security operation in the central Mediterranean does not set foot in the country as a precaution. [...] https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/malta-repeatedly-delayed-migrant-rescues-claims-ngo-alarm-phone-three-million-euros?fbclid=IwAR00Apvm9co7-ygfMgPRnh3sCZPShPME-qhA-XW1uwW39yP-SllWXXVrJQ

15.11.2019
Commissioner publishes observations on alleged human rights violations of migrants returned from Italy to Libya
Today, the Commissioner published her written observations submitted to the European Court of Human Rights in connection with the case of S.S. and others v. Italy. This case concerns the interception and rescue operation of a boat in distress in the Mediterranean Sea, carrying around 150 persons who had left Libya, and the alleged human rights violations resulting from this operation. [...] https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/-/commissioner-publishes-observations-on-alleged-human-rights-violations-of-migrants-returned-from-italy-to-libia

15.11.2019
Malta 'repeatedly delayed' migrant rescues, claims NGO Alarm Phone
Malta has repeatedly delayed the rescue of migrants at sea, “needlessly endangering hundreds of lives”, according to the operators of an emergency rescue hotline. In a bi-monthly report on migrant crossings covering the months of September and October, NGO Alarm Phone said delays to rescue missions, particularly by Maltese authorities, were continuing despite warnings of the risk to human life. Alarm Phone, a volunteer group that helps those in trouble at sea find the nearest coast guard, also highlighted “forced interceptions” of migrants at sea which resulted in their return to their initial ports of departure. [...] https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/-/commissioner-publishes-observations-on-alleged-human-rights-violations-of-migrants-returned-from-italy-to-libia
cannot monitor the Libyan coastguard and that the detention of migrants is a “profitable business model” for Libya’s government, with whom it has recently renewed a controversial deal to stem migration to Europe. [...] https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/nov/20/migrants-detained-in-libya-for-profit-leaked-eu-report-reveals

29.11.2019
Migrant Rescue Watch Twitter
1/2 #Libya 27.11.19 – 152 stranded Bangladeshi migrants returned safely home via Misrata Int. Airport at Janzour ImmDC #MigrantCrisis #TogetherForRescue #Frontex #Seenotrettung #UNHCR #Backstsea

2/2 #Libya 27.11.19 – Many of the apprehended Bangladeshi migrants have entered Libya illegally via Tunisian-route using human smuggling networks #MigrantCrisis #TogetherForRescue #Frontex #Seenotrettung #UNHCR #Backstsea https://twitter.com/rgowans/status/120047378025148418

29.11.2019
Sara Creta Twitter
#Libya @UNHCRLibya "advise" to asylum seekers hosted at gathering &departure facility (GDF) in #Tripoli "We cannot process your case here. You will not be consider for evacuation/resettlement if you stay at the GDF." Basically, you cannot exist in this place [...] https://twitter.com/article/1200469690709090309

30.11.19
When refugees in Libya are being starved, Europe’s plan is working
A hospital that finds its patients so burdensome that it denies them medical care. A homeless hostel that turfs its residents out on the streets. A refugee agency that refuses to provide food for those under its care. All might seem implausible. Except that there are credible reports that the third scenario is playing out in the Libyan capital, Tripoli. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is a body that, as its name suggests, is entrusted with the care and protection of refugees. Yet it is apparently trying to shut down a centre that it opened just last year, and to “starve out” the people still inside to force them to leave. [...] https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/nov/30/when-refugees-in-libya-are-being-starved-europes-plan-is-working

02.12.2019
MSF Twitter
Disturbing news in the #Mediterranean with 33 people rescued by a commercial vessel forcibly returned to #Libya - contrary to int’l law. #Libya is not a place of safety for #refugees, #AsylumSeekers and #migrants. https://twitter.com/MSF_Sea/status/1201465485411454977?s=20

152 stranded Bangladeshi migrants are credible reports that the third scenario is playing out in the Libyan capital, Tripoli. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is a body that, as its name suggests, is trusted with the care and protection of refugees. Yet it is apparently trying to shut down a centre that it opened just last year, and to “starve out” the people still inside to force them to leave. [...] https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/nov/30/when-refugees-in-libya-are-being-starved-europes-plan-is-working

02.12.2019
France cancels offer of boats to Libya under pressure from NGOs
Rights groups hailed on Monday a French decision to drop plans to offer six boats to Libya’s coast guard. French officials confirmed they had cancelled the delivery after eight NGOs filed a lawsuit against the move, criticising Libya’s treatment of migrants. [...] https://www.france24.com/en/20191202

02.12.2019
LCG, OV and Merchant vessel "Panther": Rescued migrants escape in panic Return to Libya
The Libyan coast guard has reportedly taken 30 migrants off the supply ship "OOC Panther" that rescued them on Saturday in the Central Mediterranean. According to charity search and rescue groups, armed Libyan guards had previously boarded the ship in an attempt to force the migrants to return to Libya. [...] https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/21241/rescued-migrants-taken-from-supply-ship-by-libyan-coast-guard

01.12.2019
Rescued migrants escape in panic Return to Libya
The merchant ship "Panther" rescued about 30 people from two boats out of distress in the Mediterranean Sea. When the Libyan coast guard wants to bring the migrants back to Libya, the people on the ship panic. On the merchant ship of a German shipping company off the coast of Libya, people rescued from distress at sea by rescue organizations resisted the attempt to be brought back to Libya. The "OOC Panther" of the Hamburg company Opeliek rescued about 30 people from two boats in distress on Saturday, the organizations SOS Méditerranée and Ärzte ohne Grenzen informed the Protestant Press Service (epd) on Sunday. They referred to radio messages and information from the captain of
the "Panther", on which they themselves briefly boarded. SOS Méditerranée and Médecins Sans Frontières are in the region on their ship "Ocean Viking" to rescue people in distress at sea. They have 60 people on board whom they rescued on Thursday evening from a floating wooden boat. Like many other migrants and refugees, they had made their way from Libya to Europe. The country, devastated by civil war, is notorious for its camps where migrants are abused. On Saturday the "Ocean Viking" was asked for help by the merchant ship "Panther", as the heads of operations Nicholas Romaniuk and Aloys Vimard said. A team from "Ocean Viking" then visited the "Panther", which was located about 70 nautical miles north of the Libyan coast near the Bouri oil rig site. According to Opielok's website, the "Panther" is a supply ship, built in 2011 and a good 70 metres long, which sails under the flag of Antigua and Barbuda. "It's almost impossible to stop migration." [...] [https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article203966038/Aus-Angst-vor-Rueckkehr-nach-Libyen-springen-Migranten-ins-Mittelmeer.html]

06.12.2019
UN Libya migrant center plagued with crowding, TB, food cuts

TRIPOLI, Libya (AP) — The United Nations center in Libya was opened as a "alternative to detention," a last, safe stop for migrants before they were resettled in other countries. Now, just a year later, it looks increasingly like the notorious Libyan lockups it was supposed to replace. The facility is jam-packed with nearly 1,200 migrants — about twice the number it was built for — including hundreds who fled from abuse at other detention centers in hopes of sanctuary. Dozens of patients with tuberculosis languish in a room crammed with mattresses. Sewage is overflowing, and armed guards from a local militia have effectively turned the center into a prison.

Unable to cope, the U.N. last week offered migrants the equivalent of $112 each to leave, and warned that food, already down to emergency rations, would be cut off on Jan. 1 for unapproved arrivals. [...] [https://apnews.com/7e72689f44e45dd17aa0a3ee53ed3c03]

28.11.2019
Refugees being 'starved out' of UN facility in Tripoli

Aid worker claims refugees are being denied food to motivate them to leave

The UN has been accused of trying to starve out refugees and asylum seekers who are sheltering for safety inside a centre run by the UN refugee agency in the Libyan capital of Tripoli. One group of about 400 people, who came to the Tripoli gathering and departure facility in October from Abu Salim detention centre in the south of the country, have apparently been without food for weeks. [...] [https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2019/nov/28/refugees-being-starved-out-of-un-facility-in-tripoli]

06.12.2019
REPORT: Accountability for Serious Crimes under International Law in Libya: An Assessment of the Criminal Justice System

Composed of 60 eminent judges and lawyers from all regions of the world, the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) promotes and protects human rights through the Rule of Law, by using its unique legal expertise to develop and strengthen national and international justice systems. Established in 1952 and active on the five continents, the ICJ aims to ensure the progressive development and effective implementation of international human rights and international humanitarian law; secure the realization of civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights; safeguard the separation of powers; and guarantee the independence of the judiciary and legal profession. [https://www.icj.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Libya-Accountability-serious-crimes-Publications-Reports-Thematic-reports-2019-ENG.pdf]

09.12.2019
Libya: The infernal trap

FRANCE 24 brings you an exclusive documentary filmed in war-torn Libya by Catherine Norris Trent, Julie Dungelhoeff and Abdullah Malkawi. This special report takes you to the front lines of the conflict and to the heart of the huge migration crisis unfolding there. [...] [https://www.france24.com/africa/20191209-reporters-plus-libya-the-infernal-trap-conflict-frontlines-militias-tripoli-plight-migrants]

10.12.2019
UN tells migrants to leave Libya transit centre as $6m project flounders

‘You will not be considered for evacuation or resettlement if you stay.’ The UN says it is unable to help most residents of an overcrowded refugee centre in the Libyan capital it once touted as
a safe haven. To encourage people to go, it is offering money and aid, even telling them they won’t be able to register as refugees to leave the war-torn country if they remain. [...] https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/investigation/2019/12/10/UN-migrants-Libya-transit-centre-project

11.12.2019

‘Between life and death’: Rescued migrants recall Libya ‘hell’
Libya is major gateway for African migrants hoping to reach Europe but they face ‘unimaginable horrors’ in the country.
Onboard the Ocean Viking in the Mediterranean - Forty-two-year old Florent* took off his life jacket, knelt to the floor of the Ocean Viking, a migrant rescue vessel, and let out a roar. He looked up, index fingers pointing to the sky as tears rolled down his cheeks, trickling between grease stains and cracked, dry skin on his face. His eyes were red, not least from the trauma of being out on the sea for more than 36 hours after spending five years in Libya. [...] https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/life-death-rescued-migrants-recall-libya-hell-191209173850299.html

Left to Die trial in Rome

11.10.2013

Left-to-Die Trial in Rome
Press Release from WatchTheMed Alarm Phone +++ Deliberate delay of rescue in 2013 goes to trial in Rome on 2 December 2019 +++ Over 250 people drowned +++ Responsible Italian officers and politicians stand accused +++ Today the situation in the Mediterranean is even worse! +++ Stop the Death at Sea!
The shipwreck on the 3rd of October 2013 near Lampedusa with over 360 fatalities has remained in our collective memory but much less so the shipwreck that occurred only eight days later. On the 11th of October 2013, over 250 died at sea. Many women, men and children drowned, even though the Italian and Maltese coastguard had been alerted several times to the impending disaster. From the boat in severe distress, a Syrian doctor pleaded desperately via satellite phone for rescue, but the authorities did not react adequately to his SOS calls. Instead, and over hours, the Italian and Maltese authorities argued over whose responsibility it would be to rescue. When rescue vessels arrived five hours later, the boat had already capsized and many people had already drowned.
Six years later, this case of a deliberately delayed rescue operation will be examined before a criminal court in Rome. Several officers of the Italian coastguard, the navy, and also politicians stand accused. Besides the delay in coordinating rescue, an Italian navy vessel had been in the vicinity of the drama but failed to intervene. Several of the survivors, who lost family members, have joined the legal action. They hope that this injustice and deadly act of non-assistance will not remain unpunished. [...] https://alarmphone.org/en/2019/12/02/left-to-die-trial-in-rome/ (English) https://alarmphone.org/it/2019/12/02/lasciati-morire-in-mare-processo-su-omissione-di-soccorso-a-roma/?post_type_release_type=post (Italian) https://alarmphone.org/de/2019/12/02/sterbenlassen-auf-see-prozess-wegen-unterlassener-hilfeleistung-in-rom/ (German)

Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights - Application No. 21660/18 S.S. and others v. Italy

15.11.2019

Third party intervention by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights
To conclude, the Commissioner stresses that:
• - In recent years, changes in member states’ migration management practices in the Central Mediterranean have led to the increased return of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees to Libya. Such returns have routinely resulted in migrants, asylum seekers and refugees being exposed to torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, as well as other serious human rights violations. The Commissioner notes that member states knew, or should have known, about the risk of such serious human rights violations occurring in Libya, on the basis of the extensive information available on the human rights situation in the country.
• - She considers that certain types of assistance, such as the delivery of vessels, the provision of communications infrastructure, and support in declaring an SRR, including through the establishment of the JRCC, have particularly increased the Libyan Coast Guard’s capacity to intercept persons at sea and therefore increased the risks of returns to Libya.
• - Member states’ relevant authorities, when receiving distress calls originating
from any search and rescue region, should not transfer, either formally or de facto, responsibility for rescue operations to other authorities when they know or should have known that this action would lead to the exposure of people in distress at sea to serious violations of their rights protected under the Convention.

- Instructions issued by member states’ relevant authorities in the course of rescue operations must be human rights compliant and must be made in such a way that they neither obstruct safety at sea and effective rescue in a distress incident, nor lead to the disembarkation of persons rescued at sea in a place that is not safe under international maritime, human rights or refugee law. [...] https://rm.coe.int/third-party-intervention-before-the-european-court-of-human-rights-app/168098dd4d

**El Hiblu case**

**21.11.2019**

Bail request for “El Hiblu Three” approved by court. Trial proceedings still delayed for teenage refugees

The lawyers of three teenagers (the “El Hiblu Three”) have requested their release on bail, precisely seven months after the first unsuccessful request, with Judge Aaron Bugeja finally granting the request on November 15. On March 26, the three young men had been rescued from a rubber boat in distress in the central Mediterranean by the commercial tanker El Hiblu 1 in international waters off Malta. After the 108 passengers of the rubber boat, spotted by an EUNAVFOR MED aircraft, had been recovered safely and embarked onto the tanker, panic arose among the 5 rescues when they realized the vessel was steering towards Libya. Some even threatened to jump overboard in desperate attempts to avoid being taken back to the war torn country they had escaped from. The crew of the El Hiblu 1, complying with international law, eventually changed course towards Malta as the nearest place of safety.

Upon reaching Maltese territorial waters on March 27, 2019 the El Hiblu 1 was stormed by a Special Operations Unit of the Armed Forces of Malta. Subsequently, the three minors, aged 15, 16 and 19 at the time, were arrested and charged with several major crimes, including piracy and terrorism.

The ‘crime’ these young men are accused of comes down to this: saving their own lives and those of 105 other passengers from illegal pushbacks to the same Libyan torture camps they had escaped from. Their trial comes at a time when government sources have eventually confirmed what we have been witnessing for weeks: a dirty deal between Malta and Libya in place to block refugees from ever reaching European shores. [...] https://sea-watch.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Statement_BailDecision_EH3.pdf

https://ffm-online.org/common-statement/

**Lampedusa shipwreck**

**24.11.2019**

Italian coast guard: migrant bodies washed ashore or in sea

ROME (AP) — The bodies of five migrant women, two of them washed ashore, were recovered Sunday, the Italian coast guard said, as search efforts continued in rough seas near the tiny island of Lampedusa for around another dozen people feared missing in the capsizing of a fishing boat. Three of the bodies were retrieved from the sea, where waves as high as three meters (10 feet) complicated the coast guard search by boat and helicopter. The Italian news agency ANSA, reporting from the Italian Mediterranean island, had said that a total of seven bodies had been brought ashore by midday. Later, ANSA said the number of recovered corpses had been confirmed at five. On Saturday, the coast guard said it had rescued 149 migrants after their foundering boat overturned. Once ashore, survivors told authorities that 169 had been originally crowded aboard the 10-meter (33-foot) long boat utilized by Libya-based migrant smugglers.

Survivors included a 1-year-old baby, two other children whose parents couldn’t immediately be located among the survivors, and 13 women, RAI said. [...] https://apnews.com/5699a5780c9b4b7cb20cdd991f283eef
NGOs help 367 migrants and ask for a port of landing

At least six hundred people have fled Libya by sea in the last 48 hours, according to reports from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). In the last three days the humanitarian ship Ocean Viking has received several distress calls from the NGO of Alarm Phone volunteers. The same organization on November 20 had given the news of a shipwreck off Tripoli: the source of the news would be a Libyan fisherman who rescued about thirty people and said that the dead would be more than sixty. [...] https://www.internazionale.it/bloc-notes/annalisa-camilli/2019/11/21/mediterraneo-soccorsi-porto

Ocean Viking rescues 94 people off Libya's coast

Onboard the Ocean Viking - Ninety-four refugees and migrants, including four pregnant women, have been rescued by a charity ship off the coast of Libya. The Ocean Viking, operated jointly by SOS Mediterranee and Doctors Without Borders (Medecins Sans Frontieres, or MSF), carried out Tuesday's rescue mission after being notified of a boat in distress at 4am local time (03:00 GMT)

"We were copied on an email sent to the Libyan coastguard by AlarmPhone this morning. As a result, we altered our course towards the potential boat in distress and arrived in the area 90 minutes later," Nicholas Romaniuk, search and rescue coordinator for SOS Méditerranée, told Al Jazeera onboard the Ocean Viking. The people rescued 42 nautical miles (78km) off Libya's coast include 56 adults - 45 male and 11 female - and 38 children, of which at least 29 were unaccompanied. Four of the children are aged below five, with the youngest less than one-year-old. "The weather conditions were not terrible for us but if it's a rubber boat you're on, one that is not certified to carry any weight, it can be deadly with the waves," Romaniuk said. People were in danger of dying on that boat so we didn't hesitate to send our rescue boats out, hand out life jackets to stabilise the situation before making sure everyone was transferred onboard the Ocean Viking."

More than 1,000 people have been feared drowned in the Mediterranean this year, according to the International Organization of Migration (IOM). Almost 700 of those have been recorded in the central Mediterranean, with refugees and migrants embarking on the dangerous journey to Europe from Libya. [...] https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/11/ocean-viking-rescues-94-people-libya-coast-191119115225387.html

Ocean Viking Rescue Ship Saves 30 Migrants Off Libyan Coast – MSF

The Ocean Viking, a migrant rescue ship operated by humanitarian groups Doctors Without Borders (MSF) and SOS Mediterranee in the Mediterranean Sea, has saved 30 people near the coast of Libya, the MSF Sea Twitter account said on Wednesday. [...] https://www.urdupoint.com/en/world/ocean-viking-rescue-ship-saves-30-migrants-of-767210.html

Migrants: Open Arms rescues a boat with 73 people

Volunteers tell of serious cases among migrants. Ranging from hypothermia to 2 and 3 degree burns and gunshot wounds. Open Arms helped a drifting boat with 73 people on board at dawn. The boat was off the coast of Libya. The NGO intervened after being contacted yesterday by Alarm Phone to which the migrants "escaped from Zawiya" had turned. The same NGO announced it on Twitter explaining that there are "69 men, 4 women, 2 children aged 4 and 3 and 24 minors traveling alone". The volunteers also report "cases of traumatic shock, second and third degree burns, gunshot wounds, severe hypothermia, dehydration". [...] https://www.tellerreport.com/news/2019-11-21---migrants--open-arms-rescues-a-boat-with-73-people--HyWtZjEhH.html

213 survivors disembark in Messina amidst deadly week in the Mediterranean

AMSTERDAM, MARSEILLE – As the 213 people rescued by the Ocean Viking this week disembark in Messina on Sunday, SOS
MEDITERRANEE and Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) repeat their calls to EU governments to cease hindering lifesaving Search and Rescue (SAR) operations, and to ensure a sustained and coordinated response to the ongoing humanitarian disaster in the Central Mediterranean. More than 700 people are reported to have attempted to flee from Libya on flimsy boats this week alone amid renewed deadly violence around Tripoli. Of the 215 rescued by the Ocean Viking in three rescue operations, almost one-third were children under the age of 18, the vast majority of whom were travelling alone. 


21.11.2019
SPANISH OPEN ARMS RESCUES 73 MIGRANTS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Two children and 24 unaccompanied minors were among 73 migrants rescued by Spanish humanitarian organisation Open Arms in the Mediterranean earlier today. Some of the migrants were suffering from traumatic shock, second and third degree burns, gunshot wounds, severe hypothermia and dehydration, the organisation said on social media. The migrants were traveling in a drifting barge that was at risk of shipwrecking and were found about 50 miles (about 80 kilometers) north of the Libyan city of Az Zawiya, west of Tripoli, near the Tunisian border, they told Efe NGO sources. Volunteers at Open Arms are preparing medical reports and have requested safe passage from the two closest European countries, Italy and Malta. A migrant distribution system was agreed between Germany, France, Italy and Malta in September to manage migratory flows only from the central Mediterranean. The four countries want to extend the agreement to other EU partners.


AP Twitter: +++ About 90 people fleeing #Libya in grave danger! +++
This afternoon, we were alerted by a boat in distress, including 13 women and several children. Authorities and #OpenArms are informed. The people need to be rescued immediately, they say a tube is deflating! #safepassage

https://twitter.com/alarm_phone/status/1197570385383960583

SHIPWRECK LIBYA
20.11.2019
ALARM PHONE

In the early evening, the Alarm Phone was called by a fisherman who reported a shipwreck off the coast of #Libya. According to him, about 30 people survived while 67 people died. To make clear: we cannot further verify this information but we fear another tragedy has occurred. According to the testimony, the fishermen found a deflating rubber boat off Tripoli at around 17h. Many people were already overboard. They managed to save 30 people but many others drowned. They said they tried to contact the so-called Libyan coastguards but could not reach them.

https://twitter.com/alarm_phone/status/1197242143812784128

21.11.2019
Migrants, a fisherman reports a shipwreck with 67 victims off Libya. 30 others saved by Ocean Viking

A possible wreck with 67 victims, hundreds of migrants intercepted and returned to Libya. On the first day of good weather, the traffickers go back to starting boats loaded with people and there is a fear of a new possible massacre. To inform it, but without being able to confirm its veracity, is the Alarm phone switchboard called by a fisherman who said he witnessed a shipwreck off the Libyan coast. According to this initial information, the victims would be 67 while the survivors were about thirty. Several inflatable boats would have been intercepted by
the Libyan coast guard and brought back. So also in Tunisia where forty people, mostly native to sub-Saharan Africa, were blocked off Sfax while trying to head towards Italy and were brought back to Sfax. The Tunisian Ministry of Defense reported this, specifying that there are four Tunisian citizens and 36 from other African nationalities. Migrants told the authorities that they left in the night between Tuesday and Wednesday. Another boat with 30 migrants was instead assisted by the Ocean Viking of Sos Mediterranee and Msf, on its second rescue in two days. Now there are 125 people aboard the humanitarian ship.


SHIPWRECK LAMPEDUSA
24.11.2019
Italian coast guard: migrant bodies washed ashore or in sea

Often, those aboard traffickers’ boats in distress call for help, but this time no such request from those aboard was made, the coast guard said, adding that they were alerted by a private citizen. Two fishermen who said bad weather kept their fleet from going out to sea on Saturday spotted the migrant’s struggling fishing boat. Stefano Martello said he and his fellow fisherman were walking along a stretch of coast when “we understood immediately that the very high waves were about to knock over the boat,” ANSA reported. “We called the coast guard port office, and (their) motorboats arrived within a few minutes,” Martello was quoted as saying. “It was this speediness that saved the migrants who in the meantime had fallen into the water. Without the immediate intervention of the motorboats, they all would have died.” Risking their lives in hopes of a better future in Europe, hundreds of thousands of migrants have set out in recent years on decrepit fishing boats and flimsy rubber dinghies launched by the Libya-based traffickers. The coast guard described Saturday’s rescue as particularly dramatic. In addition to two specialized rescue divers, also jumping into the sea from the coast guard vessel was the crew member in charge of the engine room, since so many people had tumbled into the sea at the same time. “In the meantime, the coast guard crew who remained aboard took to throwing everything possible into the sea -- life preservers, floating buoys, sideboard bumpers and every other thing that could allow the shipwrecked to grab onto and save themselves from certain drowning,” the coast guard said in a statement. Among the first to be pulled aboard, it said, was a visually impaired man who attracted the rescuers’ attention. […]

https://apnews.com/5699a5780c9b4b7cb20cdd991f283eef

02.12.2019
Death toll from Lampedusa shipwreck rises to 18

The bodies of five migrants who died when a boat capsized in rough waters off the southern Lampedusa coast a week ago have been found, Italy’s coast guard said on Sunday. This brings the overall death toll to 18. Italy’s coast guard says its divers have retrieved five more bodies following the capsizing of a migrants' boat, which sank a week ago near the Italian island of Lampedusa. In a statement, the Italian coast guard said the recovery brings the confirmed death toll from the November 23 incident to at least 18.

The boat, which survivors said had departed from Libya, taking advantage of improved weather conditions, is believed to have been carrying some 170 people. The Lampedusa coast guard managed to safely bring onshore 147 migrants after the accident on November 23. Survivors have said at least 20 migrants were missing. A new period of bad weather blocked search operations for several days. On Sunday six coast guard divers, helped by a remotely-operated submarine, found four bodies underwater and a fifth one floating. The boat had been launched by Libya-based human traffickers. Over the last several years, hundreds of thousands of people fleeing poverty or violence in their homelands have risked their lives aboard migrant smugglers' unseaworthy boats to reach European shores after setting out from Libya. […]


OCEAN VIKING & ALAN KURDI
29.11.2019
Alan Kurdi, Ocean Viking rescue nearly 140 migrants

Some 137 migrants picked up overnight in rescue operations off the Libyan coast are waiting for a safe port to come ashore. Seven
migrants, including two new-born babies, have already been evacuated to Lampedusa for medical reasons. The Ocean Viking ship, jointly run by charities SOS Mediterranee and Doctors Without Borders (MSF), has 60 migrants aboard who were rescued some 60 nautical miles (111 kilometres) north of Libya on Thursday evening. On Twitter, SOS Mediterranee said the migrants were picked up from a “severely overcrowded and unstable wooden boat.” A three-month-old baby boy and his three-year-old brother are among the rescued. Meanwhile, the Alan Kurdi vessel run by German NGO Sea-Eye took aboard 84 people in two separate operations on Thursday after receiving an emergency alert from the distress hotline Alarmphone. During its first rescue, Sea-Eye picked up 44 migrants from a rubber dinghy, including 21 women, one small child and two new-borns of just a few weeks old. Some of the women told Sea-Eye they had been stuck in Libya for three years, reports the Catholic news agency in Germany, KNA. In the second rescue operation which happened just a few hours later, Sea-Eye picked up another 40 migrants, again including minors -- three small children. Sea-Eye writes on its homepage that they were again alerted by Alarmphone and that the surveillance aircraft Colibri run by the Pilotes Volontaires charity had located the dinghy shortly after. One woman was unconscious at the time of the rescue, Sea-Eye said, but she became stable after receiving medical care onboard the Alan Kurdi. Thursday, the NGO tweeted that one of the new-borns was in a critical condition and that it appeared the baby had not had fluids in two days. [...] 

https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/21213/alan-kurdi-ocean-viking-rescue-nearly-140-migrants

04.12.2019
Migrant rescue ships Ocean Viking, Alan Kurdi permitted to dock in Italy

The Alan Kurdi and Ocean Viking rescue ships were given permission to dock in Italian ports on Wednesday morning and safely offload their 121 passengers. Both ships rescued migrants from the Mediterranean on November 28 and had been waiting for approval to enter a safe port. On Wednesday morning, 121 migrants rescued by the NGOs Sea-Eye, SOS Mediterranee and Doctors without Borders (MSF) were disembarked at the Sicilian ports of Messina and Pozzallo. The permission came around five days after the NGOs had rescued the migrants from the Mediterranean sea off the coast of Libya. “Finally, the news in the night: Safe Port Messina. It’s over,” tweeted the organization Sea-Eye on December 3 after the news broke. Those on board clapped, chanted “Alan Kurdi, Alan Kurdi” and danced up and down, visibly relieved. The 61 migrants on board the Alan Kurdi were able to disembark the following morning at around 09:30 am. The second ship, the Ocean Viking with 60 migrants on board, docked at Pozzallo on Wednesday morning. Onboard the ship there was “relief” when the news finally came that those on board would be disembarked in the port in southern Sicily. Hands were raised in the air and smiles spread across the faces of those waiting. [...] 


TRAFFICKING - CRIMINALISATION

SMUGGLER ON BOARD OF THE OCEAN VIKING

06.12.2019
Police arrested 27 year-old Sudanese smuggler who charged #migrants 1000 Euro each for the boat trip. The individual disembarked from #OceanViking @ Pozzallo on 04.12.19

https://twitter.com/rgowans/status/1202948534141632524

05.12.2019
 Arrested a Sudanese smuggler: he pocketed a thousand euros per migrant

Passengers’ testimonies framed a Sudanese smuggler who had crossed 60 migrants in an inflatable boat and then arrived in Pozzallo. Each passenger had paid a thousand euros. The police detained a 27-year-old Sudanese citizen, allegedly a smuggler accused of having facilitated the illegal entry into Italian territory of 60 migrants on board an overcrowded dinghy in poor condition, rescued from the ship “Ocean Viking”. According to the story of the witnesses, who had paid up to a thousand euros each for the trip, the boat had departed from the Libyan coast, facing the crossing despite the adverse weather conditions. Yesterday morning, immediately after the arrival of the ship, the migrants were transferred to the Pozzallo hotspot and the investigators ascertained within a few hours the responsibilities of the 27-year-old, who was locked up in Ragusa prison.

Police arrested 3 smugglers who disembarked @Messina from #AlanKurdi on 04.12.19. All individuals were in contact via #AlarmPhone with NGOs!

https://twitter.com/rgowans/status/1202948537559977984

Arrested three boatmen disembarked from the ship Alan Kurdi

There are three very young smugglers on the boat of the Alan Kurdi, the ship of the German NGO, that landed in Messina on 4 December 2019. As a consolidated practice, immediately after the landing of a ship with the migrants on board, the Police starts the investigation in search of possible hulls.

Almost always those who organize or materially pocket the money of the voyage of hope, are on board the boats then recovered either from the military ships or from the ships of the NGOs. Therefore, the smugglers try to camouflage themselves among the landed migrants so as not to leave traces and avoid being discovered. However, the police, especially in recent months, have been able to intercept the smugglers from the various ships that landed, also thanks to the cooperation provided by the migrants. And also, on the occasion of the last landing in Messina, which involved the ship Alan Kurdi of the German NGO Sea Eye, the police was able to find the smugglers. In particular, three were found among those who were on board the German-flagged ship. They were all very young, between the ages of 21 and 25. All three have sub-Saharan nationalities, in particular one of Senegalese nationality, one of Sudanese nationality and one of Somali nationality.


Tunisian migrant smuggler arrested

'Piloted craft that sank Nov 23 killing at least 20' Palermo, December 9 - A 22-year-old Tunisian alleged migrant trafficker was stopped by police in Agrigento Monday on suspicion of piloting the boat that sank off Lampedusa killing at least 20 migrants on November 23. The man, Helmi El Loumi, is under investigation for causing a shipwreck, favouring clandestine immigration and multiple manslaughter, police said. A probe is continuing to try to identify other possible migrant smugglers among those who survived the wreck. There have been several deadly shipwrecks in the Mediterranean this year. Many migrants attempt the perilous central Mediterranean crossing from Libya to Italy. Lampedusa is the main target for most migrants. But some try to get to Sicily, Puglia, Calabria or even Sardinia.


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 Coast Guard 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" Coast Guards.