

## COVID19 - Update Italy

### borderline-europe, Sicily – PART 16



Latest Update: 27.11.2020

#### Politically/Socially

- The [UN World Food Programme](#), based in Rome, has published a report in cooperation with IOM that shows the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on migration flows. The socio-economic consequences of the pandemic are [fatal and devastating](#) for those who have been already living at subsistence level before. 164 million migrant workers worldwide, especially those working in informal sectors and seasonal jobs, are among the worst affected by the pandemic. This means that it is no longer possible to meet basic existential needs such as food. For the future after the coronavirus, a massive increase in worldwide migration flows is therefore expected.
- Outside Palermo, a [military exercise](#) for handling the coronavirus took place. Together with the Italian Red Cross, a campus was built to provide remedy for the treatment of migrants infected with Covid-19. Wards with defibrillators and ventilators were set up on the campus, and military personnel was trained in how to deal with the patients. So far the center is not yet officially in operation, so it remains to be seen whether this measure can be an additional remedy for the poorly equipped quarantine ships or if it will be just another discriminatory instrument to exclude migrants from equal access to the health system.
- On November 20, 2020, the University of Oxford published the report ["No one is looking at us anymore - Migrant Detention and Covid-19 in Italy"](#), which focuses mainly on the conditions in deportation prisons that were made more difficult under Covid-19. This report is part of the larger project "Immigration Detention in Italy and Greece: Safeguarding Human Rights at Europe's Southern Frontier", which aims to ensure that public awareness will not be deprived of what happens at border checkpoints, that the voices of refugees are heard, and that activists and human rights defenders receive information and support to make their evidence available to a wider audience. To achieve this goal, an interactive map - the ["Landscapes of Border Control"](#) - was introduced in early 2020. This map shows Italy and Greece as they are experienced by the migrants living there, shaped by their experiences and struggles. In their report, the authors work with the concepts of "dangerousness" and "vulnerability" of refugees and the connection to their right to protection.

#### Situation in the Central Mediterranean

- In the first mission of the Open Arms after its release, the NGO crew managed to save 263 lives in three different operations. Five people could only be recovered already dead, one child died shortly after the rescue on board. The death of the [6-month-old newborn Youssef](#) caused a strong media resonance when the video of his desperate mother went viral on social media. Since then, the demand is rising to finally put an end to the constant dying in the Mediterranean Sea. The body of the boy was buried on Lampedusa. A legal procedure has now been initiated to examine whether the incident could have been avoided if the authorities, which had been informed hours before, had intervened on time. The remaining adults are currently - despite the traumatic experience of the shipwreck and the needed psychological support - on a quarantine ship near Trapani, while the unaccompanied minors were brought to Pozzallo by the coastguard.

- Last week there was an unusual landing in Italy. A group of 16 people of Iraqi and Iranian origin [arrived near Naples in a small boat](#). This destination is off the usual route, there has never been a similar arrival before. So far it is unclear how and why this landing occurred. The people are currently in quarantine and according to media reports they are asking to be taken to England where their relatives live.

### Situation of Migrants

- The situation on the quarantine ships remains precarious. The emergency measures aim to provide public health control by placing migrants in quarantine stations - both on GNV ships and in CAS, CARA, hotspot or other reception or detention centers in Sicily and Italy. Those people still do not have enough access to sanitation, medical care, psychological support or information about their situation. The isolation of people who were tested positive cannot be guaranteed. Even the quarantine period, which has been reduced to 10 days, is often far exceeded. [An article by Algamah](#) reports about the bad conditions on the quarantine ship Allegra, backed up by statements of refugees. [According to Borderline Sicilia](#), these procedures represent “an act of exclusion of the migrant's body, placed in an outside space - mostly in the middle of the sea - in order to ensure the "safeguarding of public health”.
- This situation leads to people repeatedly trying to escape from the quarantine ships. On November 20, [a man from Tunisia jumped from the quarantine ship Rhapsody](#), he was taken to hospital afterwards. In the following days, about 20 people of Tunisian nationality escaped on a rope ladder from the same ship. Shortly afterwards, a similar situation occurred, with another 20 people of Tunisian nationality [fleeing from the Rhapsody](#). Some were picked up by the police. The Rhapsody is currently located in Porto Empedocle, Agrigento.
- Bad health care and lack of information lead to protests in many places. Also in [Monastir, Sardinia](#), there were outbreaks of violence because people had not been tested for Covid-19 anymore for several weeks.
- Last week, a Tunisian citizen jumped out of the window of the Villa Sant'Andrea reception center in Valderice, Sicily, to escape deportation. A video on Facebook shows the man lying motionless on the ground. The young man has passed away. People have repeatedly tried to flee from the center in recent days. 27 people of Tunisian nationality who [arrived on the island of Pantelleria](#) were brought to Valderice for quarantine. Recently, a number of refugees has also arrived in Pantelleria, where a reception center is located in the former "Barone" barracks.

Further information regarding the situation in Italy can be found under ‘Streiflicht Italien’ and on previous Covid-19 Updates on our homepage <https://www.borderline-europe.de/projekte/newsletter-italien>.