



**Scirocco**  
**borderline-europe, Sicilia – Part 8**  
**Palermo, 16/07/2021**



## Scirocco - Part 8

Scirocco [ʃiˈrɒkko-Schirokko] is a south-easterly, hot strong wind that carries dust and sand across the Mediterranean to Sicily and Italy's north for often only a few hours. This short info in the age of the pandemic will be published from March 2021 in an approx. bi-weekly rhythm. The Scirocco replaces the Corona Update Italy.

### Political and Social Situation

Prior to a parliamentary vote on the financing of the foreign deployment of the Italian military in Libya with the aim of training the so-called Libyan coast guard, there were **demonstrations all over Italy** on July, 14. Together with [Amnesty International](#), [Human Rights Watch](#) and [Médecins Sans Frontières \(MSF\)](#), the NGO [ActionAid](#) called on the Italian government to block the Memorandum of Understanding with Libya, to end Italy's policy of deterrence and to guarantee the rights of refugees and migrants in the central Mediterranean. In the last five years, **financial support to Libya has tripled** while systematic human rights violations such as torture, sexual violence and arbitrary detention by Libyan authorities have continuously increased (for more information, see the call [non sono d'accordo](#)). The Forum Antirazzista Palermo participated in the demonstrations as well. Meanwhile, some [deputies of the Partito Democratico \(PD\)](#) have also asked for the interruption of the cooperation between the Italian government and the so-called Libyan Coast Guard. Despite nationwide demonstrations, the military mission in Libya and the financial cooperation with Libyan authorities were approved by more than **350 votes in parliament** on Thursday.

In the meantime, the European Union has financed the repair of three boats for the so-called Libyan Coast Guard, as confirmed by the [Spokesman for the High Representative for European Security and Foreign Policy, Peter Stano](#). Over the next months, another six inflatable boats will be handed over to the

so-called Coast Guard and the General Directorate for Coastal Security. Thus, the **EU is once again guilty of human rights crimes committed by Libyan authorities**.



Demonstration on 14/07/2021 in Palermo. Banner on the left „Stop the deaths of hunger, thirst and torture in Libya!"; Banner on the right: „Close the camps in Libya!"

### About Rescue at Sea

During the first half of the year, more than 1300 people have already arrived on the coast of Calabria. The **increasing number of arrivals in the regions of Calabria and Apulia** points to an "alternative route" from the east of Libya or a departure in Turkey and/or Greece (we already reported on this in the [Central Med Info June 2021](#)).

Currently, the **number of arrivals from Tunisia is very high** as well. In the North African country, the social and economic situation is deteriorating daily due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Fewer and fewer people can imagine to stay in the country in the future perspective. [Tunisian MP Majdi Karbai](#) has appealed to Italy for urgent help for Tunisia and its healthcare system, which is in danger of collapsing due to the high number of infections.

After three days at sea, the [Ocean Viking](#) (SOS Méditerranée) was allowed to enter the port of Augusta/Sicily on July 9. This means that **there is no civilian rescue ship left on the central Mediterranean Sea**. As there is [no progress](#) in favor of a common European

compact for migration and asylum, the distribution of rescued people has still to be coordinated on an ad hoc basis, i.e. before rescue ships enter a safe port. The EU Commission is now preparing for a request from Italy to [voluntarily accept the 572 migrants and refugees rescued by the Ocean Viking](#).



Stranded life vests

The Italian Coast Guard is still searching for [missing persons from the shipwreck off Lampedusa](#) on June 30 (as reported [here](#)). In the meantime, the shipwrecked boat has been [sighted at the bottom of the sea](#) and further dead bodies have been recovered. Hopefully, these bodies can be identified soon and relatives can be informed. In the meantime, [at least three other shipwrecks](#) have occurred off the Tunisian coast in which [49 people have drowned and another 43 are missing](#).

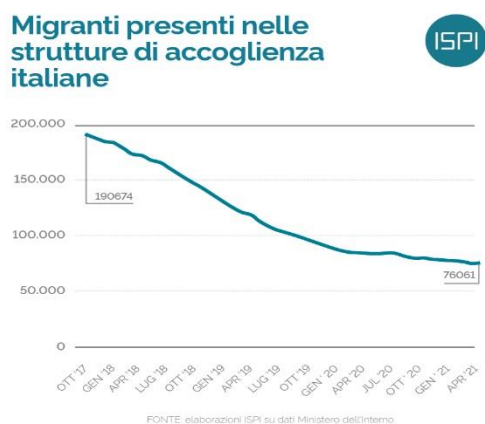
### Situation of the refugees

The situation of migrants and refugees in Italy as well as the [structures of state institutions are continuously deteriorating](#): the conditions in the Second Reception Centers (SAI) – which should actually provide additional services such as language and integration courses – are increasingly reminiscent of those in the 8 Initial Reception Centers (CAS) in the Sicilian provinces. The situation is no less dramatic in Covid centers, quarantine ships or in the largest European reception center for asylum seekers in Mineo.

The Civil Court of Ferrara (Northern Italy) determined that the **regulation on the allocation of social housing adopted in March last year is discriminatory** and must be amended. The acting mayor, [Alan Fabbri](#), has defended the racist allocation mechanism of social housing according to historical residence and nationality.

On July 2, while the European championship was being played, the young Libyan soccer players [Joma, Ali, Abdelrahman and Mohannadam](#) were sentenced to **30 years in prison** at the Court of Justice in Rome. The four young men's lawyer has already announced that she will appeal the sentence to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR).

According to the report [Fact-checking: migrazioni 2021](#) by the Italian research institute ISPI, the number of arrivals in Italy has increased fivefold during the last two years. Similarly, shipwrecks off Italian coasts and human rights violations on the Mediterranean Sea have increased. Nevertheless, Matteo Villa, a researcher at ISPI, points out that the number of annual arrivals has levelled off at around 50,000 and that **the Italian reception system is far from being overloaded**; even the rapid increase in arrivals due to the Covid 19 pandemic has not changed this fact.



Number of migrants in Italian reception centers from October 2017 to April 2021, ISPI

In addition, there is growing evidence that **the presence of civilian rescue ships off the Libyan coasts has no significant impact on the number of departures**. Still, about 9 out of 10 migrants reach Italian shores without the support of civilian rescue ships. However, Italy is left alone with the care and coordination of migrants by other member states of the European Union. The EU has not yet been able to agree on either mandatory resettlement or voluntary reception mechanisms. Despite the existing capacity to receive migrants and refugees, the number of receptions permits for reasons of humanitarian protection issued in Italy has **stagnated at a low level**. Even the enactment of the [new migration law](#) "on urgent provisions in the field of immigration, international protection and complementary matters" by the Conte II government in December 2020 could not influence this situation for the better. Overall, it is clear that regular entry routes into the EU have narrowed rather than widened over the past decade, Villa explained.

The **new migration law DL 130 is still blocked**. Accordingly, the traditional regulations of the security decrees of the former Italian Interior Minister Matteo Salvini still apply. The [Forum per cambiare l'ordine delle cose](#) has denounced this fact and urges to finally execute the new migration law. The fact-checking also points to the increase of migrants detained in official detention centers in Libya and the presumably very high number of unofficially detained people who are exposed to the violence and arbitrariness of Libyan authorities without protection.

**For more information on the situation in Italy, see our Streiflicht Italy and our previous Corona Updates on our [homepage](#).**

Contact

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