



**Scirocco**  
**borderline-europe, Sicilia – Part 10**  
**Palermo, 26.08.2021**



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Scirocco [ʃiˈrɔkko-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

The [case against former Italian Interior Minister Matteo Salvini](#) regarding the **coast guard vessel Gregoretti has finally been dropped**. Salvini had been charged with deprivation of liberty and abuse of office. The judge in charge, Nunzio Sarpietro in Catania, based his decision on saying that the closure of ports to ships – just as it happened in the case of the Gregoretti in July 2019 – was not a decision taken by Salvini alone but was made in agreement with other cabinet members. If found guilty, Salvini would have faced up to 15 years in prison as well as a ban from holding elective political office. A similar charge against Salvini in regard to the rescue ship Open Arms will be decided in September. Despite the complete acquittal, [the Ministerial Court in Catania](#) found that the Minister's decision was a clear violation of international conventions on the reception of mi-



The ResQ People at the port of Augusta. Photo by Silvia di Meo

grants who have been rescued from distress at sea. Moreover, there were no overriding interests of public order that could have justified the prolonged stay of the migrants on board the Gregoretti.

The [journalist of the Catholic newspaper 'Avvenire' Nello Scavo](#) has received **several threats and intimidation attempts from anonymous Twitter profiles**. These are apparently linked to paramilitary groups operating in Libya as well as to known individuals already involved in the investigation into the murder of journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia in Malta. Scavo advocates for humanitarian concerns of migrants. The Observatory of the Ministry of Interior was asked to take measures to protect the work of Nello Scavo.

As leader of the Lega Nord party, Salvini is currently drawing attention to himself with [verbal attacks](#) against Interior Minister Luciana Lamorgese. In false statements, he mistakenly mixes migration with security issues regarding unregistered events during the Covid 19 pandemic. He also accuses the Minister of the Interior of lacking competence in the field of migration policy. Moreover, **Salvini agitates against the ius soli** (the so-called "birthright," according to which every person born in Italy is granted Italian citizenship) **in order to spread his right-wing propaganda**. [Lamorgese jumps on this political course](#) by countering with high figures of deported people and also calls for a tougher approach against refugees. A joint meeting of the two politicians is probably imminent. The [Sicilian regional president Nello Musumeci](#) is also trying to build up political pressure by talking about an "invasion" and wanting to declare a state of emergency in Sicily. In this case, Lamorgese replied that there are no signs of a state of emergency as arriving people are distributed to other regions after quarantine.

## About Rescue at Sea

The [Sea-Watch 3](#) arrived in the western Sicilian Trapani. The landing of 257 people was successfully completed on August 8. The [Ocean Viking](#) was also able to enter the port of Pozzallo in southern Sicily after six days of waiting. The 549 rescued people were transferred to a quarantine ship upon their arrival. However, the European Commission's attempt to [distribute the rescued migrants among EU member states](#) has been unsuccessful so far. Italy is now trying again to push through a redistribution system at a [special meeting of EU interior ministers](#). However, the **establishment of an intra-European redistribution system is considered unlikely**. Whereas it is possible that the capacities of the EU border protection agency Frontex will be increased to provide military support to Italy.

After five rescue operations and more than four days of waiting, the [Geo Barents](#) was assigned Augusta (Sicily) as a place of safety to disembark 322 rescued people. After its first mission with four rescue operations in the central Mediterranean, the [ResQ People](#) was also able to enter Augusta and bring 166 people safely ashore. The ResQ People is Sea-Eye's former rescue vessel Alan Kurdi which was taken over this summer by the Italian NGO [ResQ – People Saving People](#).

While **RESQSHIP's observation boat Nadir** cannot take people on board, it provides essential first aid support to people in distress until larger NGO vessels or national authorities can begin to rescue. In this way, on August 22, [two dozen people](#) were accompanied by the Nadir for hours before Italian authorities finally came to bring ashore the people.

Last weekend, there was a [shipwreck near the island of Levanzo off Sicily](#), in which at least one person died. It is not yet clear why the accident happened. In addition, the crew of ResQ People [observed](#) how the so-called

Libyan Coast Guard intercepted around 40 people in the Maltese SAR zone and pulled them back to Libya. The organization attempted to intervene by radio, but was unable to prevent the **pull-backs** and hence, only contributed to the [documentation](#) of the violation of international maritime law.



Levanzo

## Situation of the refugees

Germany may have issued a [landmark ruling on the current Dublin Regulation](#): **Persons entitled to protection or asylum seekers who have traveled from Italy to Germany and have no prospects of finding accommodation or work in Italy may not be returned** – despite the Dublin Regulation which stipulates that EU member states must send people back to the EU country in which they were first registered. This was decided by the Münster Higher Administrative Court in [two cases at the end of July](#). This ruling is based on a **position paper** by [borderline-europe and Swiss Refugee Aid](#) on the situation of asylum seekers and persons with protection status, in particular Dublin returnees to Italy. In the cases of a Malian, who did not have protection status at the time of the proceedings, and a Somali, who had already been granted refugee status in Italy, the Münster Higher Administrative Court ruled that they could not be returned to Italy with a Dublin procedure, as they would be threatened with degrading and inhuman treatment there. Moreover, there would possibly be a [lack of access to a reception facility and its associated care](#) in the event of a return to It-

aly. Thanks to this ruling, the asylum applications will now be heard in Germany, after they were initially rejected by the BAMF with a reference to Italy's responsibility.



Refugee Camp on Sicily. Photo by Alberto Biondo

A Gambian man was severely injured with a glass bottle at a [café in Caltanissetta](#). The perpetrator was accompanied by his 5-year-old son. None of the witnesses present wanted to recognize the perpetrator, let alone testify against him, although he is known as a regular customer of the café. No one came to the aid of the injured man; only the police was called. A **deadly racist attack** also occurred in Bergamo, where [Tayari Marouan](#) was stabbed and killed in front of his family. Borderline Sicilia reports [here](#) on the (fatal) attacks on people seen as foreign, as well as the hope that the wind is about to change.

**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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