

Scirocco - Kurzinfo aus Italien

26.03.2026: Financing Violence: Unmasking Opacity in Libya's Migration Funds

In March, the NGO [SOS MEDITERRANEE](#) and the journalistic network [IRPI Media](#) published the report *Finanzare la violenza* ("Financing Violence"). The report examines how European and Italian taxpayer money is channelled to Libya under the framework of so-called "migration cooperation." At its centre is the [SIBMMIL](#) programme (Support to Integrated Border and Migration Management in Libya), which, since 2017, has been considered the largest migration control project between Italy and Libya.

Above all, the report highlights a major transparency problem. Of the total €61.2 million allocated to SIBMMIL, [€27.1 million — around 44 percent](#) — cannot be publicly traced. Although IRPI Media reviewed numerous procurement portals, ministry websites, and EU databases, it was only able to reconstruct part of the spending. For the rest, it remains unclear how the funds were actually used. According to the report, several requests for access to documents submitted to Italian authorities were fully rejected, even after appeals. The authorities justified these refusals by citing public security, public order, and Italy's international relations with Libya. The report presents this as a clear deterioration, noting that similar requests had been more successful just a few years earlier.

Zugleich legt der Bericht nahe, dass italienisch und europäisch finanzierte Unterstützung im Rahmen von SIBMMIL nicht nur die sogenannte libysche Küstenwache ausstattete, sondern auch Strukturen stärkte, die später dokumentierte Gewalt gegen zivile Rettungsschiffe ausübten. Ein zentrales Beispiel ist die [Motovedette Horn 664](#), die Italien 2023 im Rahmen des EU-finanzierten Programms übergab und die im August 2025 die Ocean Viking angriff. Der Bericht dokumentiert darüber hinaus mindestens [24 Vorfälle](#) zwischen 2021 und Ende September 2025, an denen libysche Akteure, darunter die sogenannte libysche Küstenwache, und humanitäre Schiffe beteiligt waren. Parallel dazu stieg die Zahl der von libyschen Behörden auf See abgefangenen und nach Libyen zurückgebrachten Personen von rund 9.200 im Jahr 2019 auf über 27.000 im Jahr 2025.

The report not only sheds light on the concrete use of these funds, but also raises the question of who profits from this policy. Among the recipients of contracts and funding was the shipyard *Cantiere Navale Vittoria*, which has already come under investigation for alleged international arms trafficking and corruption. The company received five contracts worth more than €7.7 million, including over €6 million for three vessels intended for the Libyan Coast Guard. Based in *Adria* (Rovigo), the shipyard specializes in military, para-military, and commercial vessels and had maintained business relations with Libya long before SIBMMIL.

SOS MEDITERRANEE describes this funding as a deliberate political choice to tolerate violence and human rights violations in order to keep migrants away from Europe. In particular, it criticises — rightly — the fact that Europe continues to support Libyan actors even though it has long been known that the equipment provided is used for unlawful and vio-



lent practices.

On 16 March, the report was presented in the [Italian Chamber of Deputies](#) in Rome. During the presentation, SOS MEDITERRANEE and the other actors involved formulated several [political demands](#).

- First, they call for an independent and transparent investigation into the attack on the Ocean Viking on 24 August 2025. This investigation should not only clarify the incident itself, but also identify the responsibility of the direct perpetrators as well as the chain of command behind them, since the attack has remained unpunished to this day.
- Second, they demand effective and significantly stronger monitoring and oversight mechanisms for migration cooperation agreements with third countries, especially in relation to cooperation with Libya. This demand is rooted in the criticism that EU-funded programmes such as SIBMMIL are linked to violent interceptions, intimidation, and attacks on civilian rescue ships.
- Third, they call for full access to documents on how these funds are being used, as well as regular reviews of the impact such agreements have on fundamental rights.

Matteo Orfini, a member of the Italian Chamber of Deputies for the Partito Democratico (PD), also criticised the systematic human rights violations linked to cooperation with Libya and spoke of a [“monstrous veil of opacity”](#) that prevents democratic oversight.

We explicitly support the demands outlined above. We also share the political call for [Italian and European authorities](#) to finally act decisively: they must rescue people in distress at sea, end the obstruction of civilian search and rescue operations, and stop accepting — or even further enabling through cooperation with states such as Libya and Tunisia — the deaths of people on the move in the Mediterranean as the outcome of political decisions. As long as safe pathways are denied and freedom of movement is systematically restricted, search and rescue remains only a response to violence that is politically produced.

The more financial resources are invested in supporting violence in the Mediterranean, the more this violence becomes normalized and institutionally entrenched. Our goal cannot simply be that people are rescued; it must be to ensure that they are not forced to flee under deadly conditions in the first place. The report once again makes unmistakably clear that every additional round of funding moves us further away from upholding human dignity and from protecting the lives and rights of those seeking a way to Europe. At the same time, it reinforces an unjust system in which migration and solidarity are criminalized, and humanitarian workers are attacked by actors funded, among others, by the EU — such as the so-called Libyan Coast Guard. Instead of providing protection and saving lives at sea, every further act of support for the so-called Libyan Coast Guard helps legitimize violence and systematically deprive people of safety and a future.

