



June 2026

CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN INFO

ARRIVALS

According to data collected by [borderline-europe](#), **2,762** people on the move/asylum seekers reached Italy by sea in June 2026 representing a slight increase of **8,02 %**¹ compared to May's figures. However, compared to data from the previous year, a sharp decrease in arrivals is evident, continuing the trend already observed in previous months. With more than **7,000** people arriving at Italy's shores in June 2025, arrivals in June 2026 were **61,3 %** lower.

The majority of people (**2,039** individuals, or **73,82 %**) arrived in Sicily – primarily Lampedusa, representing a slight increase compared to May 2026. Even though overall a wider distribution of arrivals across the country can be observed, with rising numbers in Sardinia (**113**), Calabria (**267**), Tuscany (**116**), Lazio (**94**) and Liguria (**43**), Sicily remains by far the primary point of disembarkation.

According to our figures, in June **1,539** people (**55,72 %**) were rescued by Italian authorities, while a total of **805** people (**29,15%**) were rescued by civilian sea rescue services. Compared to previous months, this marks an increase in rescues conducted by civilian sea rescue services, with the average between March and May lying at **25.5%**.

Frontex was involved in the rescue of **38** people (**1.38%**). **104** people (**3,8%**) reached Italian territorial waters (12 nautical miles off the coast) independently, without having been intercepted or rescued beforehand. For a total of **128** people (**4,63%**), no information was available regarding the manner of arrival or rescue.

According to official figures from the [Italian Ministry of the Interior](#), **2,758** people arrived in Italy in June. We were able to verify somewhat lower arrival figures for this month, but we would like to note that we do not have access to the background information or sources underlying the figures published by the Ministry of the Interior.

The general decrease of arrivals which could already be observed during previous months is not a dynamic preserved to the region of Italy but is rather part of bigger global trend. As the [Global Trend Report 2026](#) border from UNHCR has shown, for the first time in a decade the number of People on the Move (PoM) decreased (**4%** in regard to **2024**). However, this is not due to an improvement in living conditions or the resolution of crises that force people to leave their homes, but rather to a politically driven deterioration in the conditions faced by PoM, making it increasingly difficult for them to seek a better life in a safe and dignified manner. While the number of people leaving their homes has declined, the number of people being, most of the time *forcibly*, returned to their country of origin increased by **50%** compared to **2024**.

¹ Unless otherwise stated, all percentages quoted refer to the total number of people who arrived in Italy by sea that month

While this is a clear sign of the ongoing dehumanization of migration policy that prevails in most asylum-granting countries, this figure becomes particularly alarming when one considers that **39%** of people seeking international protection are children and adolescents (aged **0** to **17**) and **50%** are women and girls

Overview of the data collected by <i>borderline europe</i>	
Arrivals of people on the move in Italy by sea	2,762
Arrivals of people on the move in Sicily	2,039
Rescues by Italian authorities and Frontex	38
Rescues by NGOs	805
Independent arrivals of people in the move	104
Arrivals with no information on arrival/rescue	128

The data is provided without guarantee, as the number of unreported cases could be significantly higher.

Routes to Europe

The transit countries Libya, Tunisia, and Algeria serve as the primary departure points for the crossing to Italy. In May, at least **1,610 (67%)** of the people who arrived in Italy departed from Libya, **81 (3%)** from Tunisia², and **49 (2%)** from Algeria. For **598 people (25%)**, the point of departure is unknown. In contrast to recent months, the point of departure remains unknown for significantly more people in May (in May, the figure was 16%).

The human rights situation for People on the Move and migrants in North African transit states, particularly those from sub-Saharan Africa, remains dire. In this CMI, we want to focus on the situation in Tunisia, where a particular event has marked the month of June: for the first time in history, Tunisia is standing before the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights over [human rights violations against foreign nationals](#).

The allegations, brought before the court by four People on the Move, concern [arbitrary detention, torture, violations of the right to life, mass expulsions, human trafficking, gender discrimination and racism](#).

This lawsuit amounts to far more than isolated individual cases; rather, it stands for systematic and violent practices by Tunisian authorities, which thousands of People on the Move have been reporting from the North African transit state for years. You can read more about these systematic patterns of human rights violations in our [April CMI](#).

² The number is definitely higher, but there has been little information lately, including about interceptions to Tunisia.

It is now up to the African Court to [assess the incidents according to the Court's Charter](#) and determine Tunisia's responsibility. What concrete consequences a possible finding of guilt against the country would have remains uncertain. Nevertheless, the lawsuit already makes an important contribution to legal memory and once again increases pressure on the EU and Italy to end its existing migration cooperation with Tunisia.

The Tunisian government introduced the concept of "voluntary returns" a year ago in order to facilitate mass deportations, as alleged in the lawsuit. Since then, around [4,500 migrants](#) from countries south of the Sahara have been "voluntarily" returned to their countries of origin, these numbers have since become a benchmark for the Tunisian government's performance. However, these returns take place against a backdrop of [extreme racism against migrants, their high vulnerability, and overt political pressure](#); for many, returning to their country of origin represents [the only option](#). There is little to suggest voluntariness here.

The ongoing human rights violations against sub-Saharan migrants in Tunisia are once again clearly evident this month. A verdict handed down on [26 June 2026](#) against six human rights activists makes this plain: Tunisian authorities are using the justice system to silence any attempt at solidarity from civil society.

Six members of the anti-racist organization "Mnemty" (Arabic for "my dream") were sentenced to prison terms [ranging from 1 to 8 years](#). The charge: baseless [allegations of economic crimes](#). The most popular face among those convicted is the organization's founder, [Saadia Mosbah](#). For decades, she has fought in the country against racism and for the rights of People on the Move from sub-Saharan Africa. Now, after two years of pre-trial detention, [the legal limit in Tunisia is 14 months](#), marked by [various racist incidents](#), she must spend a further eight years in prison.

This trial amounts to far more than a personal injustice: it represents an attack on human solidarity and fits into Tunisia's systematic strategy of criminalizing commitment to human dignity and silencing people who stand up against structurally entrenched racism.

Despite consistent reports of this kind, Tunisia has become one of the linchpin of the EU's strategy to externalize its borders. In July 2023, the [Memorandum of Understanding between the EU and Tunisia](#) was signed, which was also strongly supported by Italy. Since then, the agreement has provided financial support to the North African state in exchange for tightened coastal controls and the prevention of departures.

Death & Missing

In June the number of deaths and missing people in the Central Mediterranean rose significantly compared to May. According to our figures **65** people died whilst fleeing across the Central Mediterranean in June and **82** people are recorded missing. Compared to May, the number of documented deaths has risen by **150%** with the estimated number of unrecorded cases assumed to be significantly higher.

Most of the deaths have been documented along the Libyan coast, where the bodies of people who died during their attempt of crossing the Mediterranean to search for a better life in Europe are washed ashore. After a boat carrying **61** people capsized on [June 10](#) off the eastern coast of Libya while en route to Crete, **11** bodies were recovered, while **40** others remain missing. The **10** migrants who survived the tragedy were reportedly [taken to Tobruk prison](#), in Libya, where they are expected to be exposed to severe human rights abuses, forced labour as well as practices of torture.

On June 7th another [deadly tragedy](#) took place in the Mediterranean that could have been prevented if the European political authorities would have lived up to their moral, political and legal responsibility. A boat that had set sail from the Libyan coast, carrying around **61** migrants, capsized in the waters east of Malta. After the shipwreck **48** people had been rescued by the fishing vessel Tuncany Sagun-2 which had been in the area. When the Italian Coastguard arrived, they recovered **11** dead bodies. At least **2** people were declared missing.

According to [reports of Sea Watch](#) this massacre could have been prevented had Maltese and Italian authorities acted timely. The NGO accuses the authorities to have actively decided to intervene when it was already really late, even though they had been well aware of the dangerous situation hours before the actual start of the rescue operation. *"From the tracking data we were able to verify in the area of operations, it appears that a Maltese aircraft was already on the scene at 10.33. Subsequently, other Maltese, Italian, Frontex and Eunavfor Med aircraft were also tracked in the same area. When Sea-Watch's surveillance aircraft, Seabird 1, reached the area at 16:42, an Italian patrol boat, two Maltese vessels and the fishing boat that had carried out the rescue were already on the scene. 'We spotted several bodies on the Italian patrol boat, inside body bags. We also witnessed the transfer of survivors from the fishing vessel to the Maltese vessels and the medical evacuation of at least one person, carried out by a Maltese helicopter', so the NGO.*

The deliberately delayed response by Italian and European authorities to boats in distress has become a structural practice that has been documented for years and is unprecedented in its inhumanity. The massacre known as the "[Cutro shipwreck](#)" - in which **94** people, including **35** children, lost their lives only a few hundred meters off the Italian coast in February **2023** after Frontex and the Italian authorities failed to provide timely assistance despite having sufficient information - is perhaps one of the most prominent and clearest examples illustrating the extent of this deadly practice.

The ongoing [Cutro trial](#), initiated in the aftermath of the shipwreck, in which Italian authorities stand accused of failing to render assistance, has in turn come to symbolize the authorities' inability and unwillingness to accept responsibility for what happened. More than three years after the disaster, justice remains elusive, depriving the victims' families of even the possibility of closure.

[The appeal](#) initiated by Member of the European Parliament Mimmo Lucano (The Left), held in Brussels on June **24**, during which relatives of the Cutro victims once again publicly demanded that the authorities acknowledge their responsibility, should be a symbol of shame for both the European Union and the Italian government. The fact that survivors and the families of those who died or remain missing are still forced to [demand basic measures](#) - including the identification of victims, psychological support for relatives, meaningful involvement in legal proceedings, dignified burials, and the repatriation of bodies - is both shameful and utterly unworthy of democratic institutions committed to upholding human rights. Rather than fulfilling the promises they made, political authorities appear completely unwilling to take meaningful responsibility. Furthermore, as this month's latest shipwreck has once again demonstrated, little has changed in the way authorities respond to people in distress at sea. People on the Move continue to be deliberately left to die in the Mediterranean, while those responsible seemingly have little reason to fear legal or political accountability.

As documented in our previous reports, death rates this year are significantly higher than last year. [According to](#) the latest data from the *United Nations International Organization for Migration (IOM)*, **824** people lost their lives in the first five months of **2026** in the central Mediterranean alone - the route connecting North Africa with Italy and Malta. When looking at the entire Mediterranean, the numbers are again significantly higher.

The arrival of a [“ghost boat”](#) near Nardò in mid-June served as yet another stark reminder that the documented figures reflect only a fraction of what is actually happening in the Mediterranean. When analyzing and interpreting the data, it is crucial to always keep in mind that *what we do not know* is most likely greater than *what we currently know*. [Mediterranea](#) estimates that when including the so-called “ghost shipwrecks,” this year’s total death toll is likely to rise to as many as **1,500**: Almost **700** lives lost at sea, leaving no trace, no stories to be told, no outcry.

Push- & Pullbacks

This month, we recorded **1,090** interceptions³ in the Central Mediterranean, where boats carrying refugees were often forcibly pushed back to the North African coast.

This month’s number of interceptions represents a sharp decrease compared to May 2026, when we recorded **2,301** interceptions. However, this trend cannot be attributed to a decrease in the actual number of interceptions taking place, but rather to a decline in key information sources that have ceased publishing the necessary data. Most of the intercepted individuals we documented were towed back to Libya, and some to Tunisia. However, especially given the lack of data this month, it can be assumed that the actual number of cases is significantly higher, as many interceptions go undocumented and the fate of those affected remains unknown.

Civil resistance

In total, **7** ships of the civil fleet were involved in rescues in the central Mediterranean in June and were able to rescue **489** people from distress at sea (18% of arrivals).

While the New EU-pact on asylum and migration that came into force on June 12 focuses on deterrence and border controls, civil society continues to work to save human lives. This month too, the organization [Alarm Phone](#) reported various incidents of shipwrecks and people in distress at sea.

³ Interceptions are violent forced returns at sea to a third country. For example, the so-called Libyan Coast Guard, which is largely funded and equipped by Italy and other EU member states, carries out interceptions by intercepting boats on their way to Europe and forcibly returning them to Libya.

New Sea-Watch Ship:

The [Aurora 2](#) joined the civil fleet this month. According to the NGO, Sea-Watch's new ship is meant to be a response to Italy's restrictive policy of systematically detaining civilian rescue ships. Since 2023, there have been more than [40 detentions](#) in total. With the addition of the Aurora 2, the NGO ensures that rescue missions can continue even if one of its ships is detained.

On the night of June 16, the ship set out on its first rescue mission; a total of [40 people in distress](#) off the coast of Lampedusa were rescued and were able to dock shortly thereafter at their designated port in Lampedusa.

Malta Shirks Its Responsibility:

This month saw two flagrant incidents in Malta's SAR zone: as already reported in the section "Deaths and Missing Persons", at least [11 people had to die on June 7](#) because Maltese authorities evaded their responsibility. The fact that the other 48 people on board survived was solely [thanks to the help of a fishing boat](#), which arrived at the scene much earlier than Italian or Maltese vessels and rescued the survivors.

On June 23, another incident occurred in the Maltese SAR zone. Here, [Alarm Phone reported](#) 42 people in distress at sea, without drinking water and with a broken engine. While people were spotted overboard, the [Aurora 2](#) made its way to the scene with support from Seabird. The situation escalated when Libyan military vessels [passed through the Maltese SAR zone unhindered](#) and reached the boat in distress. Before the civil rescue boats could provide assistance, the people were forcibly returned to Libya, the country they had fled. To this day it [remains unknown](#) whether everyone survived this incident.

Although the Maltese authorities were clearly informed about these cases, they once again evaded their international responsibility to save human lives and left the fate of people in distress in the violent hands of Libyan authorities.

Intimidation Attempts by the so-called Libyan Coast Guard

The Louise Michel received a distress call from a Frontex aircraft and set out late in the evening of June 4 toward an overcrowded dinghy. During a [difficult rescue of 47 people](#), including two pregnant women and small children, the so-called Libyan coast guard also reached the rescue site. It began disrupting the process and [threatening the civilian rescue ship by continuously circling the boats](#). Despite this alarming intimidation attempt, all people on board were fortunately able to be brought aboard. Shortly afterward, the ship responded to another distress call involving two boats nearby, but upon arrival only empty rubber dinghies were found, as [Libyan authorities had intercepted the rescue first](#) and taken the people back to Libya. Shortly after, the Louise Michel did not head to the port of Taranto assigned by Italian authorities, but instead brought the rescued people to Crotone in Calabria. The NGO justified this with a lack of fuel and insufficient drinking water on board.

Yet alongside the increasing criminalization and political deterrence strategies, this month we can also record a positive event for civilian sea rescue. After the ship of the NGO SOS Méditerranée was [detained by Italian authorities at the end of 2023](#), and the penalty was supplemented a year later with a fine, the court in Bari ruled at the end of June that [the fine was unlawful](#). Further rulings from the court in this matter are expected [in September](#). June thus ends with two contrasting realities: the ongoing failures of state actors that continue to hinder humanitarian aid, and a legal victory for sea rescue, a reminder, once again, that civil resistance at sea remains indispensable.

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