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MEDITERRANEA SETS SAIL AGAIN

FREED FROM THE PIANTEDOSI DECREE



On October the 29th, the ship **MEDITERRANEA** set sail from the port of Trapani for its second mission of observation and monitoring in defense of fundamental human rights, and for search and rescue operations at sea to safeguard human life.

The ship MEDITERRANEA sets sail again for its second mission

“We are returning to the sea,” said Laura Marmorale, president of Mediterranea Saving Humans, “thanks to the decision of the Trapani Court, which suspended the administrative detention of the ship under the Piantedosi decree, instead recognizing the full legitimacy of our actions when we refused the distant port of Genoa and set course for Trapani. We acted in this way to ensure proper medical care for the rescued people, who had been thrown into the sea like ‘bags of garbage’ by Libyan traffickers.”

“We are setting out again,” added Sheila Melosu, mission leader on board, “because we feel the need to intervene in a dramatic situation in the central Mediterranean: in just the past two weeks, there have been reports of four shipwrecks with tragic consequences—two near Lampedusa, one off the Tunisian coast of Mahdia, and one on the Libyan shores of Sabratha—with dozens of lives lost at sea. Data published yesterday by United Nations agencies confirm more than 1,400 victims since the beginning of the year, not counting those who are captured at sea and taken back to prison camps or abandoned to die in the desert.”

“It is an unacceptable situation,” Marmorale concluded. “Women, men, and children fleeing from Libya and Tunisia should be able to reach Europe through humanitarian corridors, safe and legal access routes. Instead, our governments—the Italian government and European institutions—continue to strengthen their collaboration with militias and criminal regimes responsible for every kind of unspeakable violence. As Pope Francis reminded us last Thursday, we cannot accept that migrants are treated as ‘garbage.’ We cannot accept that our Mediterranean Sea is turned into a war zone against humanity. That is why we return to rescue—and we will continue to intervene there until things change.”



A BORDO! THE MEDITERRANEA FESTIVAL

A REPORT ON THE
FOURTH EDITION



Between October 2nd and 5th, 2025, at the Rivolta Social Center in Marghera (Venice), the fourth edition of A BORDO! The MEDITERRANEA Festival took place. As every year, the event represented an important moment of encounter, dialogue, and reflection for those who, in various ways, participate in or support the missions and struggles of Mediterranea.

More than a festival, A BORDO! is a political, cultural, and human space, capable of uniting reflection and action, words and practice, thought and solidarity.

This year, the fourth edition of A BORDO! The MEDITERRANEA Festival was realized thanks to close collaboration with two organizations from the Veneto region that have long shared Mediterranea's political and human commitment: in addition to the constant and valuable contribution of the activists from the Rivolta Social Center, an essential role was played by Officina 31021 from Mogliano Veneto, which contributed to the organization and collective construction of the content.

A BORDO! has always been an occasion for dialogue within the Mediterranea community: a space to analyze the present, take stock of the challenges imposed by the political and social context and, at the same time, strengthen bonds of solidarity and alliance among the many organizations working daily for the defense of human rights. Over the four days of the festival, hundreds of people passed through the Rivolta spaces, participating in debates, assemblies, social gatherings, and concerts. Their presence represented a tangible sign of support for Mediterranea's cause and a powerful reminder: despite the continuous attempts by authorities to obstruct solidarity action at sea and on land, the community that has developed around Mediterranea continues to grow, resist, and build concrete alternatives to the borders of institutional violence.

The central themes addressed in workshops and debates ranged from violations of migrants' rights in Libya to sea rescue, from nonviolent resistance in the West Bank to the role of civil society in the face of war scenarios and humanitarian crises that mark our time. The richness of A BORDO! derived precisely from the plurality of voices and perspectives present: legal experts, members of the academic world, activists, people engaged in advocacy or sea rescue. They contributed to composing a collective mosaic that showed how freedom of



movement, social justice, and the defense of fundamental rights are different aspects of the same struggle, fought both at sea and on land.

Beyond the moments of debate, the festival was characterized—as every year—by convivial and cultural moments. A BORDO! aims to be also a place of gathering and awareness-raising, bringing as many people as possible closer to Mediterranea's reality, creating a free space to share ideas, experiences, and moments of lightheartedness. The evenings were animated by theatrical performances and concerts that brought to the stage artists sensitive to the themes addressed throughout the festival and through Mediterranea's daily action. These moments once again demonstrated that the struggle for human rights can take multiple forms and that the contribution of the artistic world is fundamental to spreading messages of solidarity and justice.

This fourth edition was made even more significant by its coincidence with national mobilizations and strikes against the genocide in the Gaza Strip and in support of the Global Sumud Flotilla. The Mediterranea community actively participated in initiatives promoted by the network of local organizations, including the Venice land crew. On October 3rd, in particular, the demonstration collectively organized by lagoon and mainland organizations led to the total blockade of the Ponte della Libertà (Freedom Bridge), which connects Mestre to Venice: a powerful gesture intended to forcefully assert a clear message, namely that when civil society unites, it can block everything, sending a strong signal to the authorities.

A BORDO! 2025 thus confirmed its nature as a political, cultural, and human space, capable of uniting reflection and action, words and practice, thought and solidarity. Once again, the festival reminded everyone that “first we save, then we discuss” is not just a slogan, but a principle of collective resistance.



THE MAERSK ETIENNE CASE

THE TRIAL
HAS BEGUN



The trial began in Ragusa (IT) on October 21st with six of our activists in the dock accused of “aggravated aiding and abetting illegal immigration”.



The public hearing is finally, five years after the events, opening to re-establish the full truth and legitimacy of what happened.

The trial opened on Tuesday, October 21st before the Court of Ragusa with six of our comrades from Mediterranean Saving Humans in the dock accused of “aggravated aiding and abetting illegal immigration” (according to Article 12 of the Consolidated Law on Immigration).

Their crime? Having participated, in various capacities, in the mission of the Mare Jonio ship, which, in September of 2020, rescued 27 shipwrecked people who had been abandoned for 38 days by all European Authorities (mainly Malta and Denmark) aboard the Danish oil tanker Maersk Etienne, right off the coast of the Maltese Islands.

On August 5, Etienne had rescued these people on the run from Libya - where they had suffered unspeakable violence and abuse of all kinds - as they were sinking in international waters. The Maltese authorities, who had even coordinated the rescue, refused to assign a safe port for them to disembark. And the Danish government did nothing to resolve the situation.

On September 11, 2020, after over a month of unanswered appeals from the crew, United Nations agencies, and humanitarian organizations across Europe, Mare Jonio, which was on a SAR mission, responded to Etienne’s call for assistance and intervened boarding the oil tanker with its medical-healthcare team.

On that occasion, we assessed the situation, which was unbearable and incompatible with the further permanence of the people on board the Etienne due to the progressively deteriorating physical and psychological conditions of the shipwrecked people.

The 27 people were transferred to the Mare Jonio where they received first aid on the evening of September 13, the Italian Authorities (Ministry of the Interior and the Maritime Rescue Coordination Center in Rome) designated the Port of Pozzallo as a safe place to disembark.

Three months after the incident, the ship’s shipowning company, Maersk Tankers, made a transparent donation to support civilian rescue at sea. The Ragusa Public Prosecutor’s Office used this donation to accuse Mediterranean activists of “aiding and abetting illegal immigration” aggravated by the defamatory “profit-making” charge, unleashing an actual shitstorm against us.

The public hearing finally opens five years after the events; this will provide us an opportunity to re-establish the truth and legitimacy of what happened and transform an absurd accusation against sea rescue and solidarity into a trial against those who, instead, cause the deaths of women, men, and children at sea through massacres like the one at Cutro or through failure to provide assistance, which causes further suffering and death.

BORDER STORIES

TRUE SOLIDARITY CROSSES BORDERS

**SUPERFICIAL
SOLIDARITY,
INSTEAD, DOESN'T
GET VERY FAR.**



At the beginning of October, two humanitarian corridors connected the Gaza Strip and Italy. A total of 152 Palestinian people were evacuated from the territory devastated by the Israeli army, in a mission coordinated by the Italian Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Defense. However, the Italian government hides behind these theatrical actions to mask its complicity in genocide.

Italian government legitimizes and supports the genocide in Gaza. The Italian people do not.

After two years of devastation and extermination in the Gaza Strip, Italy has activated humanitarian corridors to evacuate several dozens of Palestinians fleeing the Israeli army invasion. Thanks to two missions, one between September 28 and 29 and the other on October 1, 2025, 152 Palestinians arrived in the country after leaving the Gaza Strip. In the first case, the group crossed the Kerem Shalom border into Israel and, once they arrived at Ramon airport in Israel, traveled to Rome, Verona, Pisa, and Lecce. In the second case, the evacuees were transferred to Jordan, where the local Italian embassy assisted them. Among those evacuated were Palestinians with serious health problems, including accompanied minors, university students who had been awarded scholarships, and people with family members in Italy. In one case, the missions were

supported by the World Health Organization (WHO), which organized the evacuation of about 80 Palestinians with serious health problems.

According to Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, the evacuation operations “confirm the Italian government’s ongoing commitment to providing humanitarian assistance and protecting human lives in such dramatic crisis situations as that in Gaza.” However, this statement is contradicted and disproven by the Italian government’s actions and decisions over the last two years of invasion. *Giuristi e avvocati per la Palestina*, a group of jurists and lawyers that formed spontaneously to “ensure the application of international law and the recognition of the rights of the Palestinian people,” has filed a complaint with the International Criminal Court against the Italian government, specifically Giorgia Meloni, Antonio Tajani (Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, as well as Vice President of the Council) and Guido Crosetto (Minister of Defense), but also Roberto Cingolani, CEO of Leonardo SpA, holding them responsible for penally relevant conduct in relation to the ongoing genocide in the Gaza Strip. Italy is a member of the Convention against Genocide and, as such, has a legal obligation to prevent it. According to lawyers, there has been “active involvement” by the government through the choices made in recent months. One example is Italy’s support for the Israeli army: despite always denying that it exports arms to Israel, it is estimated that in 2024 only, over €5.2 million worth of weapons, ammunition, and accessories were sent. In 2023, the value was €12.3 million, and exports are believed to be continuing in 2025. In addition, it is also mentioned that political support has been given to Benjamin Netanyahu’s government and its policies, legitimizing the naval blockade imposed on Gaza and, among other aspects, obstructing Italian citizens involved in the Global Sumud Flotilla. Implicit support for the Israeli government is also evident in aspects that may seem secondary but which underlie the true intentions and opinions of the Meloni government.

An example of this is Netanyahu's recent trip to the United States, during which the Israeli president avoided flying over countries such as Spain, which has long been explicitly opposed to the genocide taking place in Gaza. Between February and July of this year, however, Italy had already granted the Israeli government three authorizations to cross Italian airspace. Although wanted by the International Criminal Court, Netanyahu entered Italian airspace three times (Giorgia Meloni stated, however, that her administration does not have the relevant documentation). Then, we can recall how Meloni's government allowed the Mossad, the Israel's intelligence agency, to escort the Israel's national soccer male team to Udine for the match against the Italian national team, despite thousands of signatures being collected asking the FIGC - Federazione Italiana Giuoco Calcio - to cancel the 2026 World Cup qualifying match on the basis that it would violate Articles 72 and 74 of the FIFA Statutes, which safeguard the national teams of countries under military attack. Last but not least, it should be remembered that the Italian government has voted against every proposal to question the actions of the Israeli government, both within European institutions and the United Nations.

In recent months, Italy has refused, and continues to refuse, to recognize the state of Palestine, unlike countries such as Canada, Belgium, the United Kingdom, and Spain.

However, there is another side to the coin. Another Italy made up of thousands of people who continue to mobilize to demand an end to the genocide in Gaza, through general strikes and demonstrations in dozens and dozens of cities. The national demonstration in Rome on Saturday, October 4, alone saw over a million people in the streets. Even the Gaza Skate Team, which had recently published a video showing two Palestinian boys waving the Italian flag, explicitly emphasized that Gaza's gratitude goes to the Italian people and not to its government, which in fact legitimizes the ongoing genocide. Eman Abu Zayed, a Palestinian writer and translator, thanked all the people in Italy who are demonstrating for the Palestinian people in her latest article on Al Jazeera.

In the last few months, solidarity has metaphorically crossed borders, starting from Italian squares and reaching the people of Gaza. Real solidarity, though, and not the facade put up by the Italian government, useful for hiding the legitimization and support offered to the Israeli government during these two years of genocide.



LET'S TAKE STOCK

MONTHLY REPORT ON MIGRATIONS

What happened on the migratory routes of Europe, of the Mediterranean, of the world?

What measures have governments taken?

Who provided assistance?

Who, instead, sanctioned, detained or rejected?

Let's take stock.

TUNISIA, October 1

40 people, including 15 minors and more than 7 pregnant women, were intercepted at sea and returned to Tunisia.

UNITED KINGDOM, October 5

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer declared that refugees will have to “earn” the right to long-term residence in the UK.

LIBYA, October 10

After years spent in precarious conditions in Libya, 152 Syrian nationals and 309 Bangladeshi nationals were repatriated by air under voluntary repatriation programs managed by the IOM.

ALARM PHONE, October 11

ALARM PHONE RUNS 11 YEARS. Since the hotline began operating in October 2014, Alarm Phone has assisted more than 10,000 boats in distress.

TUNISIA, October 12

After spending more than three days at sea, 35 people were intercepted by the Tunisian Coast Guard. Some people were taken back to Sfax, others deported to Libyan concentration camps.

SENEGAL, 13 October

Senegalese authorities intercepted a boat carrying more than 120 people in the Atlantic Ocean. The passengers were taken to Dakar and handed over to the authorities for identification and the necessary procedures.

UNITED KINGDOM, 21 October

Under the “one in, one out” agreement with France, the UK deported 16 people who had entered the country irregularly on a single flight. This brings the total number of deportations under the agreement to 42.

IRELAND, 23 October

Riots outside a Dublin hotel hosting asylum seekers led to over 20 arrests, highlighting growing tensions over immigration in Ireland. The protests were sparked by unconfirmed reports linking an asylum seeker to an assault.

UNITED KINGDOM, 24 October

An Iranian asylum seeker, previously deported to France under the UK’s “one in, one out” agreement, has crossed the Channel again and is now in detention in the UK.

AFGHANISTAN, 28 October

Research presented to Parliament reveals that at least 49 relatives and colleagues of Afghans have been killed after the British Ministry of Defence exposed the details of nearly 19,000 applicants for transfer to the UK following the Taliban takeover.

LIBYA, 30 October

Libyan authorities ordered Médecins Sans Frontières to leave the country by 9 November, putting access to healthcare for refugees, migrants and other vulnerable people at risk.

AFGHANISTAN, 30 October

A third group of Afghans authorised for resettlement left Pakistan for Germany, despite the suspension of the German programme for vulnerable Afghans.

UK, 31 October

According to the British Home Office, the authorities have carried out the highest number of operations ever to arrest unauthorised workers.

PORTUGAL, October 1

Portugal has approved a bill aimed at tightening immigration rules, particularly family reunification, with the support of the far right. The bill is awaiting presidential approval.

EUROPE, October 1

A leaked document confirms that the EU continues to support deterrence policies, despite knowing that these funds go to those responsible for human rights abuses.

FRANCE, October 1

French authorities have cleared a migrant camp in Calais, where hundreds of people had been sheltering for a year. In the same region, riot police temporarily prevented a group of migrants from attempting to leave for the United Kingdom.

EUROPE, October 8

Using fingerprints, facial recognition, and databases, the EU is preparing to launch its EES

(entry/exit system) border control system.

EUROPEAN UNION, 17 October

The European Commission has presented its new “One Sea, One Pact, One Future” agreement, which aims to curb irregular migration through enhanced cooperation with neighbouring third countries, affecting various aspects of their social, economic and political life.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, 23 October

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Association of Italian Businesses in Bosnia and Herzegovina (AiiBh) have signed an agreement to promote legal migration channels supporting labor mobility in the Balkan country.

SWITZERLAND, 24 October

A new law in Switzerland stipulates that asylum seekers and refugees may travel to their country of origin or other countries only in exceptional cases. This restriction does not apply to Ukrainian asylum seekers and refugees.

GERMANY, 25 October

Spontaneous protests broke out outside the CDU (Christian Democratic Union) headquarters in Berlin following statements by Chancellor Friedrich Merz, who linked immigration to public safety and the city's image.

EUROPEAN UNION, 31 October

The EU has allocated €150 million to support the return to Syria of refugees returning from Turkey after the fall of the Assad regime in December 2024.



ALGERIA, October 2

A boat with 26 people aboard capsized off the coast of Algeria. Only seven people survived.

LAMPEDUSA, October 3

A boat carrying 26 people was rescued while in distress in the central Mediterranean; all aboard reached Lampedusa.

CIVIL FLEET, October 4

Following a shipwreck off the coast of Sicily, 34 people were rescued by the NGO SOS Humanity, seven are missing at sea and two died on board.

CIVIL FLEET, October 5

Humanity One of the NGO SOS Humanity rescued 29 people, including 13 unaccompanied minors.

GREECE, October 7

Following the shipwreck of a boat off the coast of Greece, four people lost their lives.

CIVIL FLEET, October 10

Sea Watch 5 rescued 79 people, SOS Humanity rescued 40 people.

CIVIL FLEET, October 10

60 people aboard a vessel in distress in the Central Mediterranean were rescued by the Italian Coast Guard.

THE ENGLISH CHANNEL, October 12

Two Syrians suspected of carbon monoxide poisoning aboard the CM COAST vessel, in British territorial waters, were taken against their will to Calais.

POZZALLO, 13 October

140 people arrived in Pozzallo, including one in critical condition and two seriously injured following an armed attack by Libyan militias in the Maltese SAR zone; despite alerts from Mediterranean Saving Humans and Alarm Phone, the Italian authorities only launched rescue operations 24 hours later.

CIVIL FLEET, 14 October

The Louise Michel rescued 32 people, while the Nadir (ResQship) rescued 73.

RHODES, 15 October

Two people died and 16 others were rescued after a boat capsized off the coast of Rhodes, caused by the Greek Coast Guard chasing the boat.

GAVDOS, 15 October

67 people were rescued in Greek waters near Gavdos, close to Crete, thanks in part to the intervention of Frontex.

MALTA, 16 October

At least 20 of the 35 people on board are missing after a boat sank in Maltese SAR waters despite an Alarm Phone alert that went unheeded.

LAMPEDUSA, 19 October

The Italian authorities transferred two dead and fourteen people in critical condition to Lampedusa after exposure to gas during the journey.

LIBYA, 20 October

A boat with 42 people on board was intercepted by the so-called Libyan coastguard.

CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN, 20 October

A boat with 42 people on board was intercepted by the so-called Libyan Coast Guard.

TUNISIA, 22 October

A boat with around 70 people on board, including women and infants, capsized off the coast of Salakta, Tunisia. Thirty people were rescued by the Tunisian Coast Guard, while at least 40 are missing or presumed dead.

GREECE, 22 October

A luxury cruise ship operated by Norwegian Cruise Lines rescued 63 people off the coast of Zakynthos.

GREECE, 27 October

Near the island of Lesbos, four people drowned after their boat overturned due to strong winds.

LIBYA, 28 October

In western Libya, off the coast of Sabratha, 18 people died in a shipwreck while trying to flee from the country.

GREECE, 30 October

Near the island of Gavdos, 79 people were rescued by the Greek Coast Guard and transferred to the island of Crete.

CIVIL FLEET, October 8

The Court of Trapani accepted the precautionary appeal and ordered the suspension of the detention of the ship *Mediterranea*, following its decision on August 23 to reject the distant port of Genoa and instead head for Trapani for the disembarkation of vulnerable people.

PARLIAMENT, October 10

Parliament denied authorization to proceed against those who facilitated the escape of internationally wanted man Al Masri for crimes against humanity, granting impunity to Ministers Nordio, Piantedosi, and Mantovano.

ROME, 14 October

An appeal has been submitted to the European Court of Human Rights against Italy for its failure to cooperate with the ICC in the investigation and prosecution of senior Libyan official Almasri, who is wanted for international crimes.

ROME, 15 October

The Italian Parliament has approved the renewal of the memorandum of understanding between Italy and Libya on the management of migration flows.

RAGUSA, 21 October

The trial has begun against six activists of *Mediterranea*. They are accused of aggravated facilitation of illegal immigration, based on their 2020 rescue of 27 people who were stranded for 38 days on the *Maersk Etienne* tanker.

AGRIGENTO, 22 October

The civil court of Agrigento has ruled the administrative detention imposed in July on the *Aurora* of the Sea-Watch civil fleet as unlawful.

MINISTRY OF INTERIOR, 24 October

The Ministry of the Interior and the Province of Trento signed an agreement to open a repatriation centre (CPR) in the city.

GOVERNMENT, 28 October

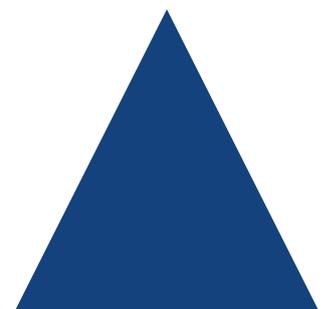
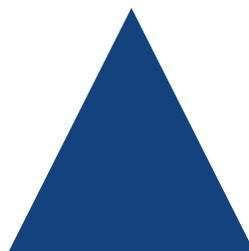
Prime Minister Meloni met informally with 13 EU states to ask them to speed up repatriations, as announced by the government after the meeting.

CIVIL FLEET, 29 October

After the revocation of the detention order by the Court of Trapani, *Mediterranea* conducted its 23rd mission, rescuing 64 people, including pregnant women and unaccompanied minors, in the Libyan SAR zone.

LIVORNO, 30 October

Two young migrants jumped from a cargo ship in the port of Livorno during police checks: one died and the other is missing.





REPORT

BORDERLINE EUROPE

**NEWS FROM THE CENTRAL
MEDITERRANEAN**

Arrivals

According to data collected by [borderline-europe](#), 8,253 people arrived in Italy by sea in October 2025. Most of the migrants (7,767) disembarked in Sicily, primarily in Lampedusa. In two cases, for a total of 58 people, the crossing to Italy took place via the Ionian route. Overall, [borderline.europe](#) can show that approximately 4,894 arrivals departed from Libya; however, the actual number is likely to be even higher. The percentage of departures from Tunisia this month is 249, a slight increase from the previous month (206). According to our calculations, the Italian authorities rescued approximately 2,220 migrants. Another 628 people were saved by civilian sea rescue organizations. According to [borderline-europe](#) data, Frontex participated in the rescue of 200 people in October. 145 refugees reached Italian coastal waters on their own without being intercepted or rescued. Again, the actual number may be higher. According to official data from the Italian Ministry of the Interior, 7,933 people arrived in Italy in October. This month, we recorded a slightly higher number of arrivals, but we want to emphasize that no information is available on the context or sources of the data published by the Ministry of the Interior.

The trend observed in September, with new arrivals increasingly including unaccompanied minors (UAS), families with young children, and pregnant women, continued in October. On October 17, 2025, the *Solidair* ship arrived in the port of Reggio Calabria with 99 people on board, including 12 women, 3 minors, and 27 unaccompanied minors from countries such as Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sudan, and South Sudan. Authorities in other parts of southern Italy have also recorded a high number of young people disembarking: between October 15 and 16, approximately 47 people disembarked in Roccella Jonica, including 10 unaccompanied minors, and 32 people in Reggio Calabria, including 12 unaccompanied minors. In Lampedusa, in a single night, 368 people arrived on the island aboard five boats, many of whom were children and adolescents. In recent months, more and more unaccompanied minors have been among those rescued, particularly on routes from Libya.

Dead and missing

The number of dead and missing people in the central Mediterranean decreased in October. According to data from [borderline-europe](#), 105 people lost their lives crossing the central Mediterranean in October, while 36 are still missing—a sharp decline from September. The number of unreported cases remains significantly higher.

On October 17, 2025, a tragic shipwreck occurred in the Maltese search and rescue (SAR) zone, approximately 50 nautical miles southeast of Lampedusa. A boat carrying approximately 35 people, including several children, had departed from Al Khums (Libya). After two days at sea, the small fiberglass vessel capsized in the early hours of the morning. The Italian Coast Guard managed to rescue 11 survivors, including four unaccompanied minors. A pregnant woman lost her life, while several children are missing.

On October 19, 2025, intervention forces from the Guardia di Finanza and the Coast Guard rescued 85 people in distress off the coast of the Italian island of Lampedusa. The vessel had been spotted by a helicopter approximately 16 nautical miles south of the island. During the rescue operation, intervention forces found two people dead on board; 14 others were in critical condition. According to Italian authorities, the deceased and sick had inhaled toxic hydrocarbon vapors below deck. The incident highlights the extreme risks to which people seeking protection on unseaworthy vessels are exposed, even when rescue occurs promptly.

On October 22, 2025, off the Tunisian coast near Salakta, near Mahdia, at least 40 people from sub-Saharan countries, including several infants, lost their lives when their boat capsized. Approximately 30 people were returned to Tunisia. This shipwreck follows a series of fatal incidents off the Tunisian coast, in which overloaded and unstable iron boats continue to capsize. This highlights the precarious situation faced by migrants, especially those from sub-Saharan countries, who face difficult living conditions in makeshift camps in Tunisia and attempt the dangerous crossing to Europe.

On October 28, 2025, another deadly shipwreck occurred off the coast of Sabratha, western Libya. According to data provided by [Refugees in Libya](#), 18 people lost their lives, 12 are missing, and 60 have been returned to Libya. The survivors are from Tunisia, Libya, and several sub-Saharan African states. The accident once again highlights the dangerous situation along the Libyan coast and the consistently high number of fatal accidents that occur shortly after departure.

Pushbacks

This month, we recorded 3,831 interceptions (referring to the interception of boats at sea, often violent and usually followed by repatriation) in the Central Mediterranean, during which boats carrying refugees were pushed back or towed to the North African coast. 3,766 people were returned to Libya and 65 to Tunisia. These figures are not considered certain, as the actual number could be much higher. Compared to September 2025, when 4,992 interceptions were recorded, the number of documented pullbacks has decreased slightly. These developments continue to highlight the systematic practice of keeping asylum seekers away from safe ports on the Central Mediterranean route, as well as the persistently high level of danger for refugees at sea. A boat with 42 people aboard ended up in distress near the Libyan coast. Initially, the IVAR BEAUTY cargo vessel approached, but then left the people on board, following the orders of the so-called Libyan coast guard, which then intercepted the vessel and returned them to Libya. This incident once again highlights the danger asylum seekers face on the routes between North Africa and Europe, as well as the problematic role that external actors play in interceptions at sea. More information on the situation in Libya will be provided later.

Routes to Europe

Libya

The Italian government continues to be closely involved in supporting Libyan militias. On October 15, 2025, the Italian Chamber of Deputies confirmed, with 153 votes in favor, 112 against, and 9 abstentions, the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Italy and Libya on the control of irregular migration, which has been in force since 2017. This agreement was initiated by Marco Minniti, then Interior Minister in the Gentiloni government, and signed together with Libyan Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj of the Government of National Reconciliation. The collapse of law and order in Libya at that time was making it impossible to manage migration through normal state structures. The MoU stipulates that the Libyan Coast Guard will actively block and ward off migration in the Mediterranean, while Italy will provide financial and logistical support, as well as training and education. On October 18, 2025, protests against the MoU, called by Refugees in Libya and other organizations, took place in Rome. Despite parliamentary approval, organizers emphasized that a political withdrawal is possible at any time and that Italy and the EU must end their complicity. The MoU between Italy and Libya was extended on November 2 for another three years. This demonstrates that Italy's border policy continues to focus on isolation and collaboration on human rights violations, rather than protection and solidarity.

In addition to the renewal of the MoU, Italy's complicity in human rights violations in Libya is also evident in the Almasri case: on October 9, 2025, the Italian Chamber of Deputies upheld the competent committee's decision to maintain the parliamentary immunity of ministers Carlo Nordio, Matteo Piantedosi, and Alfredo Mantovano. This prevented the initiation of criminal proceedings for abuse of office, aiding and abetting, and embezzlement.

The case concerns the Rada militia and its alleged leader Osama Almasri Njeem, who managed to flee Italy despite an arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC). Almasri is accused of serious human rights violations, including unlawful detention in inhumane conditions, torture, sexual violence, and murder. An Italian court had previously requested the criminal prosecution of the named ministers, alleging that the government knowingly allowed Almasri's repatriation to Libya. The relevant parliamentary committee had already ruled against lifting his immunity on September 30, 2025.

On October 14, a survivor of Almasri's violence filed a complaint with the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). The applicant, a refugee from sub-Saharan Africa, had been intercepted in the Mediterranean by the so-called Libyan coast guard, tortured and forced into hard labor in several detention centers, including the Mitiga military base. The complaint, supported by the European Centre for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR), Refugees in Libya, and a team led by Andrea Saccucci and Chantal Meloni, challenges Italy's refusal to cooperate with the International Criminal Court and extradite Almasri.

There's a specific case that illustrates how lethal the cooperation with the Libyan coast guard, supported by Italy and the EU, can be: in early October 2025, a vessel carrying approximately 140 people was involved in a violent incident approximately 100 nautical miles southeast of Malta. According to witnesses and the NGO Alarm Phone, the vessel was hit and rammed by patrols of the so-called Libyan coast guard. Three people suffered gunshot wounds: one man was put into a coma due to a blow to the head, another was wounded in the face, and a third in the leg. Many aspects of this case remain unclear, namely the exact sequence of events and the conditions of the injured.

Malta and the Politics of Indifference

This incident, which occurred southeast of Malta earlier this month, exemplifies the structural failure of European states' maritime rescue operations and Malta's growing responsibility in this dynamic. The fact that Libyan units were able to operate so far north is not a coincidence, but the result of a coordinated transfer of responsibilities and expertise between Malta, Italy, and Libya. Alarm Phone reported the emergency to the Maritime Rescue Coordination Center in Valletta. According to its own statements, Malta responded by dispatching air patrols and a vessel. However, the authorities stated that they had not observed any visible distress on board and allowed the vessel to continue sailing toward Italy.

Since the establishment of a "secret coordination on migration" with Libya in 2020, the number of rescues carried out by the Maltese Armed Forces has dramatically decreased, from 21 in 2020 to just two in 2024 within the Maltese SAR zone. At the same time, the Libyan coast guard increased its interception operations in this area from seven to 23 cases, an increase of over 230%. Consequently, in 2024, people fleeing in the Maltese search and rescue zone were almost ten times more likely to be handed over to the Libyan coast guard than to be saved by Maltese rescuers.

Actively ignoring the situation is a long-term pattern: in 2022 already, as data from the Asylum Information Database (AIDA) shows, Malta ignored more than 7,000 people in distress in its search and rescue zone. Plus, the country is accused of participating in at least 14 pushbacks involving a total of 789 people.

Pushbacks and the deliberate failure to rescue are considered the main causes of the drastic drop in asylum applications in Malta, which fell from 2,254 in 2021 to just 973 in 2022.

The tragic event in early October demonstrates how Malta is increasingly distancing itself from its international legal obligation to rescue at sea and is becoming part of the European tendency to externalize responsibilities, which particularly affects people on the run.

Tunisia – restrictions on civil society

On October 27, 2025, the Tunisian government ordered a one-month suspension of the Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights (FTDES), a major organization dealing with migrants and human rights. This measure was officially intended to verify the source of foreign funding, but critics view it as an attempt to stifle independent voices from civil society. Since President Kais Saied took power in 2021, many organizations and activists have been restricted, persecuted, or imprisoned, particularly those who speak out against racism and human rights violations against migrants.

Civil resistance

On the anniversary of the shipwreck off Lampedusa in October 2013, which claimed the lives of more than 360 people, commemorative events and protests were held in numerous Italian cities. Since the day of the shipwreck the city park in Milan's Giambellino neighborhood has been named after Alan Kurdi, the deceased Syrian boy whose photo has become a symbol of deaths in the Mediterranean since 2015. This was made possible thanks to the collaboration between the City of Milan, District 6, and the civilian sea rescue organization ResQ.

Sea rescue

In October, 7.6% of all rescues were carried out by NGOs. According to data collected by *borderline-europe*, the civilian fleet, consisting of five ships operating in the Mediterranean during that month, managed to save a total of 628 people. In October, RESQSHIP's rescue vessel Nadir carried out a multiple rescue. On October 8, with the support of the merchant vessel IVY 1, the vessel took a total of 175 people on board. In the first operation, 75 people were saved, including six women and a girl. A second rescue of 100 people followed. All survivors were brought to safety in Lampedusa.

When it comes to the criminalization of sea rescue, a positive ruling was issued on October 8: the Trapani court ruled in favor of *Mediterranea Saving Humans* and revoked the maximum administrative fine of €10,000 and the 60-day seizure of the vessel. On August 23, 2025, contrary to instructions from the Italian Ministry of the Interior, the rescue ship *Mediterranea* did not set sail for the distant port of Genoa, but for Trapani, Sicily. There, the crew saved ten shipwrecked people rescued on August 21 by the so-called Libyan Coast Guard. Judge Federica Emanuela Lipari clarified that the crew's decision was justified by the "vulnerable and fragile situation" of those rescued and motivated "solely by a spirit of solidarity."

On the other hand, the Ministry's instructions were unlawful and violated international maritime law and the principle of protecting life and health at sea. This ruling could set an important precedent and it once again calls into question the so-called Piantedosi Decree, which uses the assignment of distant ports as a political tool to systematically hinder civilian rescue operations in the Mediterranean. Following this success, *Mediterranea* was able to set sail from the port of Trapani on October 29 for a new mission.

Another trial against *Mediterranea Saving Humans* began on October 21, 2025, in the Ragusa court. Six crew members of the *Mare Jonio* are accused of "aiding and abetting illegal immigration." In September 2020, they saved 27 people who were forced to remain for 38 days on the Danish oil tanker *Maersk Etienne* in the Mediterranean, after Malta and Denmark denied any responsibility. Three months later, a donation from the shipping company was used as a pretext to criminally prosecute the crew for alleged profit-making. Five years later, the trial has finally begun. CGIL union was present in the courtroom along with other associations "to express their closeness and solidarity with the crew." The next hearing is scheduled for early 2026.

In addition to the ongoing court battle against the criminalization of rescue at sea, a new rescue vessel will soon be available: once the renovations are completed, the 28-meter *LIFELINE SAR* vessel will be ready for use. Despite this strengthening of civilian rescue at sea, the situation remains alarming: as long as rescue organizations are criminalized, people continue to die, and European policy focuses on isolation, there can be no real solution. Only through safe and legal entry routes will it be possible to sustainably end deaths in the Mediterranean – until then, civilian rescue at sea will remain essential.

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