



MIGRARE
È UN DIRITTO

MEDREPORT
SEPTEMBER 2022

NESSUN ESS
UOMO È
GALE

ABORDO!
GUEST

ABORDO!
Please if they see a boat!

ABORDO!
Please if they see a boat!

INDEX

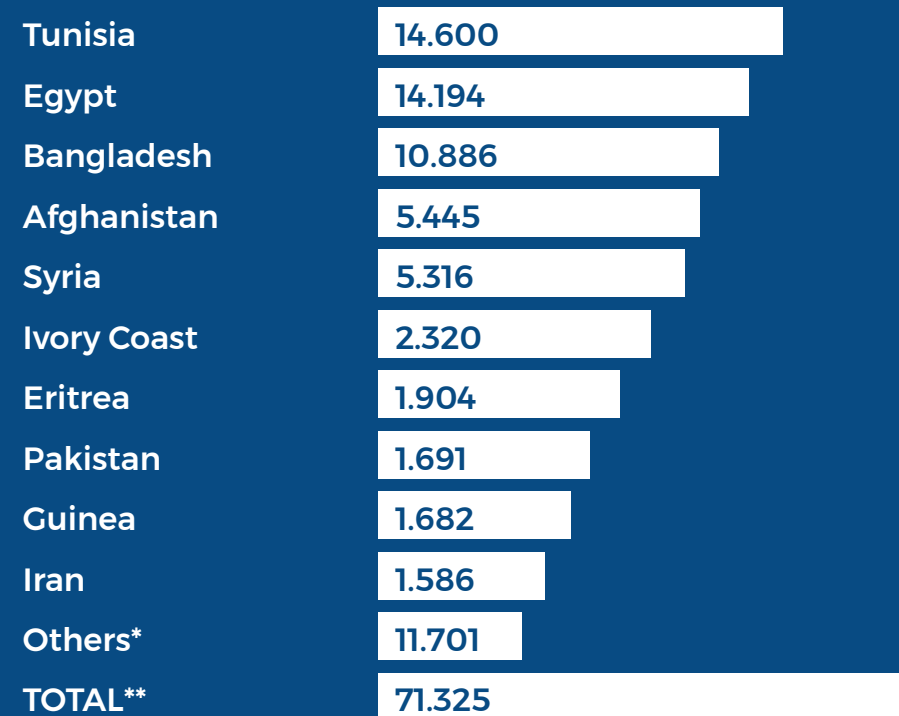
What the numbers tell us	3
Data for the months of September	
Chronicle of the facts of the Mediterranean	5
The most important events of the month of September	
A bordo!	8
Story of the first MSH festival	
Italy Libya Memorandum	18
What happened in 5 years	
No Memorandum	23
Interview with Matteo Orfini and Giuditta Pini	
Borderline Europe Report	30
News from Central Mediterranean	

WHAT DO THE NUMBERS TELL US

In September, the number of people who found themselves forced to flee, cross the Mediterranean Sea and managed to arrive in Italy was 14,157. Among them, there are 1,719 unaccompanied minors.

Numbers extremely close to those of the previous month. Yet, not at all close to the rhetoric of the immigration emergency that has characterized the previous months. In the politicians' cries we find a description of a country not at all close to reality. An ordinary phenomenon, conversely, used and exploited for personal interests, with a precise emotional and propagandistic communication.

NATIONALITIES DECLARED AT THE TIME OF LANDING (UPDATED TO SEPTEMBER 30, 2022)



* The figure could include immigrants for whom they still are identification activities are in progress.

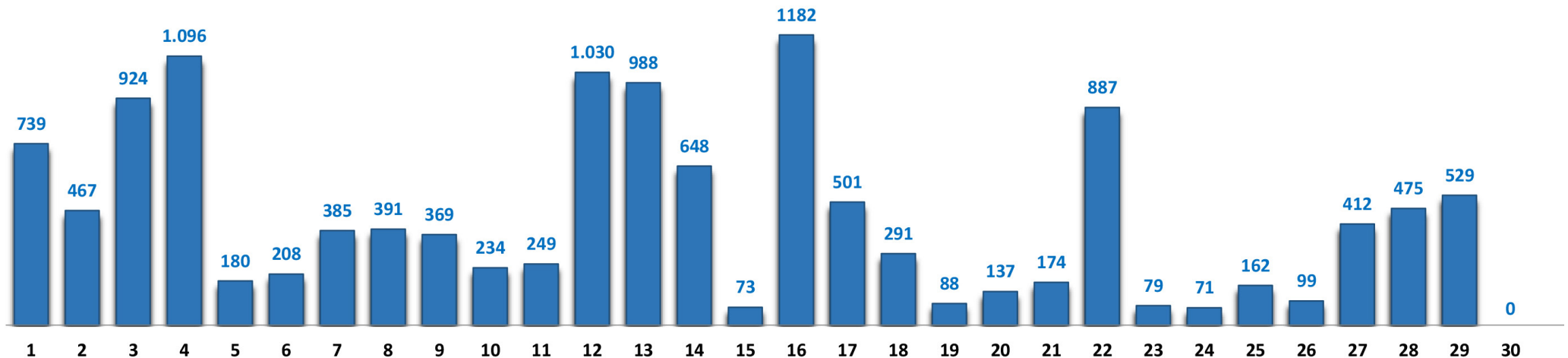
** The data refer to the landing events detected before 8:00 am of the reference day.

Source: Department of Public Security of the Ministry of the Interior of the Italian Republic.

The data are subject to subsequent consolidation

Sunday, September 25 marked the celebration of World Migrant and Refugee Day. As Pope Francis reminded us in a passage from the encyclical *Brothers All*, “Migration will constitute a foundational element of the world’s future.”

The building of our future must take place together with migrants, with refugees: a truth, this one, so much forgotten in a climate of aversion to what is different. Yet, Francis reminded us that “it is not enough to welcome migrants: they must also be accompanied, promoted and integrated.”



These data are processed on the basis of information provided by the Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration of the Ministry of the Interior of the Italian Republic. The data refer to the landing events detected by 8.00 on the reference day.

A white patrol boat is shown from an aerial perspective, moving through dark blue water. The boat is leaving a large, white, turbulent wake behind it. The boat has a red hull and a white superstructure. There are several people visible on the deck. The text "CHRONICLE OF SEPTMBER OF THE FACTS IN MEDITERRANEAN" is overlaid on the right side of the image in white, bold, uppercase letters.

CHRONICLE OF SEPTMBER OF THE FACTS IN MEDITERRANEAN

DAY 1

The Fezzan patrol boat of the so-called Libyan Coast Guard, in separate operations, intercepted about 170 people attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea.

DAY 2

The Fezzan patrol boat of the so-called Libyan Coast Guard intercepts a boat carrying 75 people. These were located north of the town of Al-Khums.

DAY 3

The Fezzan patrol boat intercepts, in two separate operations, 168 people. These were on board a boat in the central Mediterranean.

DAY 6

The humanitarian ship Humanity1, formerly Sea Watch 4, carries out its first rescue along with the crew aboard Nadir: 111 people were rescued and rescued from a dinghy in distress.

DAY 8

Two days after the first rescue, the crew aboard Humanity1 rescued 128 people in two separate operations. Around noon, the crew spotted an overcrowded wooden boat. Soon after, a new rescue operation allowed 64 people in distress to board an overcrowded inflatable boat.

DAY 9

In the night, the Humanity1 crew carried out a fourth rescue: 139 people who were aboard two boats in distress.

DAY 10

A new rescue by the crew of Sea Watch 3: 18 people are rescued from the risk of drowning. A few hours later, yet another rescue allows another 18 people to be rescued.

More interceptions by the so-called Libyan Coast Guard: 130 people, aboard a boat in the central Mediterranean, were stopped by patrol boat P-200.

DAY 11

In the early hours of the day, the crew of Sea Watch 3 pulls 34 people to safety.

DAY 14

Yet another migrant shipwreck off Malta: at least 33 victims.

DAY 16

After days of waiting at sea, the crew of Sea Watch 3 declares a state of need. After 10 POS requests, the situation is no longer sustainable. Supplies will run out in a few hours and people are exhausted. A few hours later, Italian authorities will assign the port of Reggio Calabria for safe disembarkation.

DAY 20

In the middle of the night, the Msf team conducts a difficult rescue following an Alarm Phone alert in international waters near the Libyan coast. 76 people were aboard an overcrowded dinghy in distress.

DAY 23

A shipwreck off the Tunisian coast: more than 20 people are reported missing. Only 7 people have been rescued.

After 13 and a half hours of monitoring in Reggio Calabria, authorities block the humanitarian ship Sea Watch 3 under the absurd accusation that it rescued too many people.

DAY 29

After nearly eight days at sea, the 76 survivors will disembark in Taranto harbor. GeoBarents, Msf's ship, will sail for more than a day to reach its assigned place of safety.



**A BORDO!
THE
MEDITERRANEA
FESTIVAL,
DESCRIBED
BY OUR
VOLUNTEERS**

**FROM SEPT. 1 TO 4,
2022, “A BORDO!”, THE
FIRST FESTIVAL OF
MEDITERRANEA SAVING
HUMANS, WAS HELD
IN THE ILLUSTRIOUS
MASCHIO ANGIOINO
CASTLE IN NAPLES:
DEBATES, WORKSHOPS,
BOOK PRESENTATIONS,
EXHIBITIONS,
CONCERTS, INITIATIVES,
REFLECTIONS AND
ENERGY FOR THE FUTURE
FILLED THE CITY AND
THE LIVES OF THE
PEOPLE PRESENT.**

The festival opened on Thursday, September 1 with a press conference, describing our work

“First we save and then we discuss: our network, our missions, our commitment.”

The press conference, coordinated by Vanessa Guidi, MSH President and Serena Sardi, MSH and Mediterranea Barcelona Executive, featured Alessandra Fabbretti (Dire Agency), Luca Trapanese (Naples Municipality Welfare Councillor), Ibrahima Lo (Mediterranea Venice and witness to the sea rescue) and Oksana Olynyk (Ukrainian Mediator).

The Festival then continued with the presentation of the book “Caring for victims, claiming rights. One person at a time”. We recounted Emergency’s experience through the words of Gino Strada, Simonetta Gola and Luca Casarini moderated by Fanpage editor Agostino Biondi.

Friday opened with the Workshop. “Frontex: Overcome Rights (Armored Europe).” Tiziano Schiena, MSH Director and Edt Berlin, tells us.

The September 2 Workshop began with a strong realization that Frontex’s operations over the years have been not only tolerated but also supported by Europe.

Investigations and complaints by international media outlets, human rights activists, associations, NGOs as well as the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) have revealed over the years the involvement of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency in illegal refoulements, human rights violations and abuse of power along Europe’s sea and land borders.

A system made possible only through the complacency and cooperation of EU member states. Frontex’s Executive Director himself, Fabrice Leggeri, resigned in April 2022, uttering these words, “It seems that Frontex’s mandate has been quietly changed.”

Thanks to our panelists, we addressed the various aspects related to the Agency’s role in the Fortress Europe policies operated by the Commission through its longa manus.

“We cannot pretend that Frontex has become a rogue. This was done in the service of the states, they just wanted it done on the sly,” said Salvatore Fachile (ASGI).



Then again, it could not be otherwise, when one considers that since 2004, Frontex has grown enormously in terms of resources, means, men and fields of intervention.

Enormous power granted by states in order to delegate the role of border cop at the borders of Europe, as Enrica Rigo (Roma Tre University) stated, “The European space has become a minefield of rights where the principle of exclusion is in force.”

A confirmation that also came from Iasonas Apostolopoulos (rescue coordinator Mediterranea), a longtime Greek activist who has witnessed firsthand the way the agency operates at sea: “There is documented evidence of Frontex’s involvement in illegal rejections in the Aegean Sea. The Greek Coast Guard has been putting back at sea migrants who arrived on Greek islands and sent back to Greece: it is the only coast guard in the world that creates new shipwrecks instead of rescuing them.”

Evidence of the agency’s involvement, added Yasmine Accardo (LasciateCIEntrare), involves not only sea borders but also land borders. “We find Frontex everywhere, in Lampedusa as in the Balkans. Drones view migrant routes from above and are in constant contact with national border police. We, the whole civil society, have a duty to help people fleeing in every way.”

During the Workshop it was also possible to interact directly with those from the Brussels benches who have the power to change the status quo, reform or abolish this Agency deemed unreformable by the Abolish Frontex network. Like Pierfrancesco Majorino (Democratic Party MEP), “It is not easy, but this is the right moment to take action. Frontex has received a very hard blow in terms of image even if it is nothing compared to what people who try to cross borders suffer on their skin.”

One thing is certain: Mediterranea’s ultimate goal is to no longer be needed. And this goal will be achieved only when freedom of movement is recognized as a universal right, regardless of the reasons that drive human beings to leave their land.

A goal that seems far from being achieved if one looks at the fact that, since the fall of the Berlin Wall to the present, 1,000 km of fences have sprung up in Europe and we have gone from 6 to 63 new walls made of steel barriers, barbed wire, watchtowers, and trenches.

Until the status quo changes, Mediterranea will continue with its search and rescue missions, at sea as well as on land.



The Workshop “**Underground: The Routes of Hope and the Networks of Solidarity.**” coordinated by Denny Castiglione of Mediterranea Venezia, was also held on September 2, attended by Gian Andrea Franchi and Lorena Fornasir of the Shadow Line Collective, Alice Basiglini of Baobab, Duccio Facchini of the Balkan Caucasus Observatory and Piero Gorza of the University of Turin.

In the afternoon, the debate, “**What Kind of Agreements: Libya and the Conscience of Europe.**” led by Nancy Porsia (Journalist) took place with speeches by Luca Casarini (MSH), Angela Caponnetto (RAI Journalist), Claudia Di Pasquale (Report Journalist), David Yambio (Refugees in Libya Spokesperson), Mariano Di Palma (Libera), Lam Makog, who recently arrived in Italy thanks to the humanitarian corridors, and Giuditta Pini (MSH Garanti Association President).

The day of Saturday, September 3, however, began with a discussion on cooperation at sea coordinated by Beppe Caccia (MSH) together with Civil Fleet and Civil Mrcc.

On the same morning, more than a hundred people attended the presentation of the book “**Letter to the White Tribe**” by Father Alex Zanotelli. Antonio Musella, Mediterranea Napoli, tells us about it.

The text is not only a moment of profound analysis on the danger of white supremacism and forms of racism in Western countries toward African communities or Afro-descendants, but it is also a journey of the stages of the Comboni missionary's extraordinary life.

From the shantytown of Korogocho, where he lived for more than 10 years, Zanutelli recounts the stages of his missionary work that led him around the world alongside the last ones, up to his arrival in Naples, his adopted city, which saw him as the protagonist of dozens of social campaigns, mobilizations and real disputes with institutions.

During the meeting, in which there was no shortage of questions and food for thought from the audience, Zanutelli described the assault on Capitol Hill in January 2020 as the plastic image of the times we live in and the renewed and dangerous aggressiveness of white supremacism.

According to the Combonian father, it is precisely Trumpism that has given new life and, above all, armed the worst of the American racist right, which soon set the school in Europe and became a model for the right-wingers of the old continent. From Meloni to Le Pen, via Orban and the extreme Scandinavian right-wingers, white supremacism now becomes the glue of a political right that is running to rule the major countries of the West.

But the roots of supremacist violence are ancient. Zanutelli recalled the colonizations by dwelling on the work of Italians in Africa, in Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Libya. Countries still torn apart by internal wars, in the hands of warlords, human traffickers, arms dealers. For the missionary, the responsibilities of colonial processes, in this case Italian, were decisive for the scenarios we live today.

The narrative, in the book and during the presentation, recalls specific facts of striking violence that characterized the Italian colonial experience. A hatred that has distant roots and that today presents itself with the clean face of the governing right-wingers and at the same time with its activists wielding rifles and pistols.

Zanutelli called on young people: "The only ones who can change the present, because my generation will be judged by history as the one that has done the worst damage to humanity and the planet." And to the youth he reminded, "Do not believe those who tell you that you are the future. You are the present; there is no future if you do not change the present now. It is you who must mobilize, get involved. Do not expect change to come from governments, it is only from you that it can come."



Also on September 3, a debate was held entitled “**We and Wars: Welcoming, Peace and Our Cities.**” Laura Marmorale, MSH and EdT Director of Naples, tells us about it.

It was a significant meeting that, by bringing together a plurality of voices and points of observation, tried to take stock of an issue that is central in the current public debate and diriment in the attempt to build a just and inclusive society: the reaction to wars, welcome, peace starting from the involvement of the territories.

It was not possible to begin the discussion without taking stock of the current situation of the conflict in Ukraine, an unsustainable war of invasion by Russia, which so far has produced hundreds of deaths, destruction, suffering, and misery. Like any other war on the planet, the first victim of the war in Ukraine is the civilian population, who from the first minute have suffered the atrocities of the conflict on their own skin.

It was an opportunity to explain the Med Care project in Ukraine, by Mediterranea Saving Humans, and the Safe Passage missions that are providing war refugees with health care in refugee camps in Ukraine and safe passage to European countries.

The Mayor of Bologna, Matteo Lepore, explained his administration’s anti-war efforts, both in the refugee reception phase and in aid to the civilian population, such as during the mission to send humanitarian aid for the twinned Municipality of Kharkiv, brought to Ukraine by Mediterranea Saving Humans itself.

A clear word also came from Lepore about the role of diplomacy, especially European diplomacy, and the need to make the repudiation of war an indispensable political position.

This was the starting point for the contribution of Don Gennaro Matino, from the Curia of Naples, who brought greetings from the bishop and developed a reflection on the meaning of brotherhood and the need for humanity in a time of violence and abuse.

The debate, rich in content capable of starting from current events but developing critical thinking, was enriched by the intervention of the president of Banca Etica, Anna Fasano, who delivered a reflection on ethical finance and the role of the individual saver, who can do much to prevent the financing of the war machine, starting with the choice of the banking institution and demanding transparency on the direction of investments.

Monica Di Sisto of Fairwatch, who took part in the “Stop the war now” caravan last spring, in which Mediterranea Saving Humans also participated, pointed out the need for civil society mobilization. It is precisely the efforts of the pacifists and organizations that are promoting the caravans in Ukraine that can become the main impetus for a Europe-wide mobilization, starting with the practices of boycotting war and interposition in the war zone, as done by previous peace movements.

Thiago Da Cruz, “From the sea to the cities,” helped broaden the thinking about all the wars going on in the world, not only in Eastern Europe. A scenario that calls for coordination between pacifist realities and local governments to foster a dignified reception.

Precisely on the issue of reception, Mediterranea Saving Humans pointed out the distortions and flaws in the Italian government’s reception, both towards refugees from Ukraine and, in a now sadly established way, towards those arriving from the Mediterranean, thanks to the constant monitoring of our association and territorial nodes, the first to detect in cities and territories the ineffectiveness of the reception system, which involves the lives of thousands of people.

In conclusion, the moment of debate was a call for the resumption of mobilization against wars and an impulse to develop synergies and common actions among those sensitivities that have never stopped opposing bombs and devastation.

MEDFEST 2022: AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS, COMPARE, ORGANIZE. AND TO BE TOGETHER!



For Mediterranea activists and activists, the Naples Festival was not only conferences and concerts, but also an opportunity to be able to come together in presence for the first time. This moment was crucial in cementing the bonds that have been formed over the past four years, and finally having the opportunity to confront in person the issues we hold most dear.

The main membership moments during the Festival were two: **the Piazza degli Equipaggi di Terra and the Mediterranea Saving Humans Membership Assembly.**

The Piazza degli Equipaggi di Terra is a format created during the lockdown, when it was impossible to meet in person and do activism in the squares. The Piazza is the space (virtual or physical) where Mediterranea's Earth Crews discuss a wide range of issues: from fundraising to communications, from advocacy to activities in schools. During these meetings, advice and best practices are also exchanged, bringing out the work of the different territorial groups. In Naples, for the very first time, the Ground Crew Square was held in attendance, with more than 30 activists finally having the opportunity to discuss in person the issues they hold dear. In particular, the discussion focused on what Mediterranea has done in the past and what it can do in the future.

The Members' Assembly, on the other hand, was an opportunity to take stock of the last two years of Mediterranea's work, presenting the excellences that marked the activities of the last board. It was attended by dozens of activists and activists, who had the opportunity to present the work done in Mediterranea's various areas of action, such as fundraising, advocacy, and treasury. In addition, the future of the association was discussed, defining its goals for the coming period. The Assembly also saw the election of the new board, which will serve until 2024.

In general, A Bordo! represented a great opportunity for territorial and national groups to converge, which had the opportunity to build new friendships and define future collaborations. Networking is a key element for an association like Mediterranea, which is scattered all over the country (and beyond!).

The highlight of the Festival was the Demonstration against the Italy-Libya agreements held on Saturday, September 3.

A demonstration, this one, which took place a few weeks after the automatic renewal of the agreements and is worth more than a thousand words. It was a symbolic route that saw many Mediterranea activists and dozens of supporters parading from the Maschio Angioino to Piazza del Plebiscito to, once again, **demand an end to the Italy-Libya agreements and to denounce the atrocities that the agreements not only allow, but encourage.**

Many voices followed to testify to what is happening at sea and beyond. From Iasonas Apostolopoulos (rescue coordinator Mediterranea), who told of his work at sea and the challenges it entails, to Luca Casarini, who made a heartfelt speech to awaken spirits and to call for shared action against the slaughter that continues to be repeated at Europe's doorstep.

There was no shortage of contributions from key Festival guests such as those of David Yambio, spokesperson for Refugees in Libya, and Lam Makog, who recently arrived in Italy thanks to humanitarian corridors. **Both recounted the atrocities suffered in Libya at the hands of torturers in camps, denouncing the co-responsibility of Europe and the many countries that continue to fortify and outsource borders by funding summary policies of containment.**

Also speaking were representatives of Alarm Phone, a hotline that offers immediate support to anyone at sea in need, sharing with authorities and sea rescue NGOs the location of the boat in distress and urging its rescue. Their intervention was also enhanced by a telephone connection with the relative of a shipwreck victim in Tunisia- where Alarm Phone had organized a commemoration-who never reached Europe.

Ultimately, the event was a choral moment of participation and reunion, allowing activists, supporters, guests and the public to come together to parade for one cause and to demand an end to the Italy-Libya agreements.

ITALY-LIBYA MEMORANDUM

WHAT HAPPENED IN 5 YEARS

By 2 November 2022, Italy has a new chance to break the infamous Memorandum with Libya. Let's do it.

Five years of the Memorandum. **Over 785 million spent to manage migratory flows in the Mediterranean**, supporting an agreement that, in fact, has never stopped deaths at sea. **More than 82,000 people pushed back to Libya**, men women and children subjected to arbitrary detention, torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, rape and sexual violence, forced labour and illegal killings.

Two automatic renewals, in 2020 and 2021.

The tragic failure of the pact between Italy and Libya, signed in 2017 to 'fight illegal immigration, human trafficking and smuggling', is there for all to see.

Yet, we are just days away from a new automatic renewal, without knowing whether the agreements will be dismantled and canceled.

By 2 November 2022, in fact, the Italian authorities would have another chance to interrupt this insane agreement, forcefully demanding the closure of the detention centers in the North African country, promoting at European level the approval of a plan for the evacuation from Libya of the most vulnerable people and those at risk of suffering violence, mistreatment and serious abuse, and giving a mandate for the establishment of a European naval mission with the task of searching for and rescuing people at sea.

Otherwise, the agreement will be extended for another three years.

ITALY-LIBYA MEMORANDUM: FIVE YEARS OF FAILURES, ABU- SES AND TORTURE IN THE NAME OF POLITICAL CYNICISM

On 2 February 2017, Paolo Gentiloni and Fayed al-Sarraj signed the 'Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in the field of development, countering illegal immigration, human trafficking, smuggling and strengthening border security between the State of Libya and the Republic of Italy', a text composed of eight articles.

Why was it signed? What do the articles stipulate? And why was it renewed twice?

Let us try to understand what has happened in these five years.

2017

The Italian and Libyan national unity governments sign an agreement **with the aim of reducing the flow of migrants who have been trying to reach Italy from the Libyan coast for years.**

The Gentiloni government promises new aid to that of Fayed al Sarraj to reduce departures, but from the outset it is not clear what effect this will have. In essence, the document envisages that the Italian government will help the Libyan authorities to 'welcome and combat illegal immigration' **in an attempt to reduce illegal trafficking by sea.**

In principle, the agreement was created to find a solution to what happened in 2016, when more than 180,000 people arrived in Italy by sea, many of whom claimed to have left from Libya.

In short, **Italy has long been seeking an agreement with Libya on immigration.**

The main points of the agreement provide for the Italian authorities to provide 'technical and technological support to the Libyan bodies in charge of the fight against illegal immigration' (i.e. the so-called Libyan Coast Guard at sea and the Ministry of the Interior forces on land), and to improve the conditions of the 'reception centres' on Libyan territory, financing the purchase of medicines and medical equipment and training the staff working there.

Two very complicated goals to achieve.

The so-called Libyan Coast Guard is already strongly supported by the European Union and its member states - its men are trained in Europe and its ships and equipment are provided by Italy - yet **internally it suffers from an 'endemic' system of corruption and there are countless cases of failure to rescue those in danger or violent interventions to capture people at sea.**

The living conditions in migrant centres on Libyan territory - which are not 'reception' facilities but detention camps - have also been denounced for years by leading NGOs working on migration issues and by journalists working on numerous investigations reporting repeated cases of violence, torture, sexual abuse and other human rights violations.

2019

Mediterranea too, since its inception, **has been calling for the interruption of the Italy-Libya agreements**, denouncing the presence of a clearly visible red line running through the Memorandum and its consequences.

In just two years, the agreements with Libya have continued to make the Mediterranean Sea one of the deadliest borders of our time, entrusting militias and mafia networks with the lives of thousands of fleeing children, women and men who have come to feel that land is a less safe place than the sea.

It is unthinkable to continue to watch, defenseless, the continuous violations of international law and the ongoing processes of mystification of reality, **which equate Libya with a country with whose authorities one can interact at national and European level.**

Libya is a country plagued by a creeping civil war, and the credibility and legitimacy of its authorities in the management of migration is based precisely on **collaboration with Italy and Europe**: from the self-proclaimed zone of SAR competence in June 2018, to the formation of a 'coast guard' and the provision of means and weapons, even going as far as the promulgation of a Libyan 'code of conduct' for NGOs.

The reasons that must push towards the termination of the agreements with Libya and not their repetition, therefore, are such and obvious from the outset that **those who refuse to do so inevitably make themselves accomplices of these criminals.**

2020

The agreement between Italy and Libya is extended. Despite appeals and protests calling for its amendment, the pact - according to its Article 8 - is tacitly renewed for another three years.

The text signed by the two countries is justified by the need to reduce migratory flows that between 2014 and 2017 had reached the highest levels: about 100 thousand arrivals per year, for a total of 623 thousand in the three-year period 2014-2017. Numbers that Italy had managed alone due to Regulation 604/13 (the so-called Dublin Convention) which imposed - and still imposes - the examination of asylum applications in the first EU country in which an applicant for protection sets foot.

As if this were not enough, the Italy-Libya memorandum of understanding also extends the validity of previously signed agreements. In particular, the 2008 Friendship Treaty (signed in Benghazi by Berlusconi and Gaddafi) and the 2012 Tripoli Declaration (signed by Mario Monti and Abdurrahim El Keib).

Our country therefore signs a further agreement with Libya. Moreover, according to Articles 1 and 2 of the Memorandum, Libya obtains further funds to strengthen development cooperation in its territory. Obviously, it is not known how it actually uses the economic resources received from Italy, since there is no transparent accounting of their use. Only one thing is certain: once the so-called Libyan Coast Guard intercepts migrants at sea, it takes them **back to land, to an unsafe country, and there most of them end up in detention camps, whose inhuman conditions are now known to all.**

2021

On 15 July, the Chamber of Deputies meets to discuss the renewal and refinancing of international missions that engage the Italian state. These include the mission based on the Italy-Libya Memorandum.

The approval of the renewal of the agreement passes with 361 votes in favor, 34 against and 22 abstentions.

The only change - of little incidence - concerns a clause proposed by the executive according to which '[the government undertakes] to monitor, from the next planning, the conditions for verifying the overcoming of this mission'.

A clause, this one, not at all related to concerns about the lack of protection of the human rights of migrants detained or rejected in Libya. The aim is rather to delegate the management of the migratory flow to Brussels and the Irini mission.

The agreement is part of a framework of cooperation 'in the field of development, combating illegal immigration, human trafficking, smuggling and strengthening border security'.

The main focus remains the migration issue, understood not as the orderly management of incoming flows, but as a purely military blockade of departures: **Italy pledges to finance and train Libyan security and military institutions, represented by the border guard, the so-called Coast Guard of the Libyan Ministry of Defense and the competent bodies of the Ministry of the Interior.**

In addition, the subsidies also involve the modernisation and securing of the 'Libyan reception centers' - actual detention centers - and the training of personnel on site.

The so-called Libyan Coast Guard and other organs affiliated to it are tasked with controlling the country's borders - especially its maritime borders - and detaining migrants, 'while also pursuing efforts to return migrants to their countries of origin, including voluntary return'.

The treaty, of course, makes no distinction between economic migrants, migrants for family reunification or people seeking asylum and protection. It only refers to 'irregular' and 'illegal immigration'. So Libya is committed to blocking all foreigners in transit, even those seeking protection, in complete violation of the Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.

From 2017 to 2020, Italy allocates 22 million Euro only for training and support missions of the so-called Libyan Coast Guard.

In 2021 the figure increases by another 10.5 million.

The lack of a common European migration policy is, in the background, always the issue of issues: as long as the Dublin regulation is not reformed, the policy of member states will continue to be one of closing and externalizing borders, such informal agreements with third parties in **open violation of human rights will continue to grow.**

In fact, Italy and the EU do not accompany these agreements with any form of real control on the respect of people's fundamental rights, nor a governmental naval search and rescue mission at sea, so that the Mediterranean continues to be a place of illegitimate and illegal rejections and an **open-air mass grave.**

NO MEMORANDUM

INTERVIEW WITH MATTEO ORFINI AND GIUDITTA PINI

First of all, could you briefly introduce yourselves?

Giuditta: I am a former PD MP and president of the Guarantors of Mediterranea, the Association formed by the group of parliamentarians who participated in the bank guarantee for the loan to purchase the Mare Jonio. As an Association, in recent years we have managed to create a network of support for Mediterranea and other NGOs both logistically (including requesting ports) and politically, fighting to stop funding to the so-called Libyan coast guard and get our country out of the Italy-Libya Memorandum signed in 2017. Since September this year, I have been on the board of Mediterranea Saving Humans.

Matteo: I am a PD MP and a comrade in many of the battles Giuditta told you about. Unfortunately - being just battles - they have often been lost. But there have been times when we have also achieved good results. The support for Mediterranea and the NGOs that were providing relief in the Mediterranean at the very time when the ports were being closed, for example, involved not only support for the surety bond but also the complex work of building a very important extraordinary and informal relief protocol.

The Memorandum was signed in 2017, but after an initial phase of protests, there is a silence that continues throughout 2018. How do you explain this? What happened during those months that excluded the issue in political discussion and public opinion?

Giuditta: The memorandum is a bilateral agreement between the Italian government and the then Libyan government. Because it was classified, we never had access to the full document. We began to understand what it contained only later, thanks in part to national and international journalistic inquiries. But to fully understand what Italy's commitment was and the nature of the agreements themselves took far too long. And still today we don't know everything that is written in the Memorandum. So I guess [the initial silence, ed.] was also due to that. In the beginning there were protests, it's true, which all stemmed from the fact that nothing was understood about the rationale of the agreements. Well-founded concerns, since when it comes to security, immigration and Libyans it is almost all too easy to draw conclusions. At the same time, however, there had been a series of reassurances made by the then Prime Minister. Gentiloni guaranteed, in fact, that the agreements were actually a good thing because they would give the opportunity to access the camps with international associations (Red Cross, UN, etc.). It is mainly these assurances that are the likely cause of the "2018 drop in attention" that you report.

And then there were the elections, of course. Di Maio's tragic "sea cab" rhetoric, Salvini's shouted slogans for port closures. Even the PD had some, shall we say, "complex" positions on these issues. Then when the documents started coming out, awareness also grew. Especially of the things that could be done as parliamentarians, as well as politically.

Matteo: I agree with what Giuditta said. The bottom line here is that the Memorandum is an extra-parliamentary agreement between governments, so we parliamentarians never discussed the form of the Memorandum. It was signed at a time when public pressure on the issue of curbing migration flows was sky-high. Pressure that was interpreted - badly - by the then Gentiloni government. This was the climate in which the Memorandum was born. In itself, the idea of building an interlocution with Libya was not wrong, but the contents of that Memorandum were wrong. The agreement was part of a more comprehensive border externalization strategy that Europe as a whole used. It was done with Erdogan in Turkey, with Libya. A strategy that was, in fact, catastrophic, especially in terms of the impact it had (and still has) on the issue of human rights. All this was not immediately clear. It took a while - too long - before we grasped the concrete effects of that Memorandum, what consequences it would cause, what it would produce. Indeed, what it was already producing. Even the attempt to solicit a discussion was very laborious (even internally within the PD, where some of us tried from the very beginning to problematize the agreements). I remember that Emma Bonino opened a discussion in Repubblica to which I responded with an interview, picking up on the concerns she

was raising and pointing out that what was happening on the ground of human rights violations was quite serious. But, lo and behold, we were also at a stage when it was difficult to ignite a discussion because the whole debate, spoiled by the electoral affair, was completely crushed on the unfounded nexus between immigration and security. We are talking about the times when Minniti on the state plane declared that democracy was in danger because of the increase in migratory flows. An obviously wrong phrase, but one that gives an idea of the climate we were in. Then, little by little, thanks to the investigative work of news outlets and the work of NGOs and institutions, attention to the affair grew. So much so that, on the occasion of the automatic renewal of the Memorandum after three years, we managed to get parliamentary passage on the matter. In the House, Minister Lamorgese said nothing about tacit renewal (in other words, the government would allow it), but promised to take up our urging by committing to activate an interlocution with Libya to secure some changes to the pact. Of course, none of that happened; the changes were not there. And now we are on the doorstep of a second renewal, without even a parliamentary passage. Which, unfortunately, is not mandatory, the Memorandum being an agreement between governments.

How did you vote in 2017 and how in 2021? And, if you changed your opinion, what prompted you to do so??

Matteo: One has not properly voted. This is a misunderstanding that is often generated. In the sense that we never vote on the Memorandum, as it is an agreement between governments. In some cases agreements are ratified by parliament, but this is not the case. We have only voted on certain missions related to the Memorandum, such as the refinancing of the Libyan coast guard and the transfer of an additional stock of patrol boats to Libya. There are times when acts come to parliament that are children of the Memorandum, but never the Memorandum. On those occasions, we try to create a debate. Sometimes it goes well, such as on the last occasion when we led the PD not to vote on the refinancing of the so-called coast guard (although on this last occasion with the chambers dissolved it was only voted on in the relevant committees and did not make it to the chamber). In other cases, alas more numerous, very few of us voted against it, both in the PD and in Parliament. We are talking about 30 or so dissenting votes in the whole Parliament.

So the vote will be in November?

Giuditta: On November 2, there will be tacit renewal of the agreements. Since it is an agreement between two governments, Italy can decide to exit unilaterally, for example, or request that the agreement be modified. In the latter case, however, it is necessary for the other party to accept the proposal (for example: should Italy request Libya's entry into the International Convention on Human Rights, it would be up to Libya to accept these conditions). This is one of the reasons why Lamorgese's words in Parliament have never particularly convinced us. So, on November 2, the Memorandum will be renewed automatically, without any parliamentary passage or vote. At the last renewal we got Lamorgese to come to parliament, but even then there was no vote. It is not a parliamentary act, so it cannot be voted on.

Will it still be possible to question the government as happened with Lamorgese?

Matteo: It is not certain that there will be a new government. In any case, the additional element of complexity is there, since we will be in a moment of transition between the establishment of the chambers and the establishment of the government. I assume that it will come to the day of renewal with a newly installed government, so they will try to seek parliamentary passage. But, it probably won't even be a government in its full capacity.

Could the news that has come out in recent years lead to greater awareness among parliamentarians?

Matteo: A realistic forecast? Let's say that the outcome of the election does not give hope for an improvement in the situation. But we will try. There has been an evolution, at least in the positions of the PD, for example with the vote against (ed. PD abstained) the refinancing of the Libyan coast guard, but also with the statements of the PD secretary in response to *Mediterranea*. I expect at least my party to take a different position than in the past at least on this. There are also other parliamentary forces that seem interested in expressing themselves on the issue, such as *Sinistra Italiana*, *+Europa*, the Greens, some individuals from the M5S. Little hope on the center-right and M5S (which so far has shown little sensitivity on these issues). On the Third Pole, I cannot say, because *Italia Viva* has mostly abstained, while in the election campaign I read Calenda's statements, which seemed to me to take up the Minniti framework. We shall see.

Giuditta: Also because many of *Italia Viva*'s parliamentary guarantors were not re-elected (Bellanova, Migliore, Ungaro). Perhaps only Scalfarotto.

Matteo: Yes, because in all of this it must also be recognized that, even in the difficulty of interlocuting with the government, there have been some members of the government who on the issue of sea rescue and ports to be assigned have spoken out, even in times of difficulty. Minister Guerini always did it, Scalfarotto did it as Undersecretary to the Minister of the Interior, Teresa Bellanova who was Minister of Transport. And, before her, Margiotta. In short, some members of the government always lent a hand, within the limits of their power and in a government that had different positions on the issue.

What can Europe do? What should Europe do?

Giuditta: In recent years, Europe has pursued an approach of externalizing borders, encouraging agreements with neighboring states (Egypt, Morocco, the Balkans, Libya, Turkey). This is Europe's political line. And we all know who has to pay for it. However, what happened with the Ukrainian refugees is emblematic: having applied European regulations on asylum seekers has shown that the means of reception are there. Here, then, our goal must be to change policies at the European level, even with a government of different political ideals.

We have to engage the public and show them with facts that other policies can be made, as the civil fleet, NGOs and all the associations working in the various border territories of Europe show us every day.

Obviously this is a complex debate, involving sovereigntisms, national security, fears, economic crises, Dublin agreements. I am optimistic, though. I think what is happening with Ukraine can serve to show us that Europe can do it. Truly.

Matteo: In recent years, Europe has been part of the problem. Do you remember when Ursula von der Leyen called Greece the "shield of Europe" when the latter was rejecting migrants at the border with less than humane methods? There, that is the imprint and implantation of European policies.

I, too, believe that the reaction to the Ukraine crisis can be a turning point. If properly thematized and discussed, it shows that there is the capacity to adequately deal with much larger numbers than we handle (poorly) in the ordinary. If it is not done, it is because the political will is not there.

We have dealt with innovative regulatory tools compared to Italian legislation and a co-management of flows at the European level-with huge numbers in a very short time, without creating social alarm or tensions. Moreover, guaranteeing very decent standards of reception.

It is a precedent that finally breaks the narrative of unmanageable invasion, of impossible numbers. This must open reflection and discussion.

Given the administrative shutdowns of recent weeks, have we entered a new era? How much worse could the situation get with a new, openly far-right government? Are there the forces (and the will) within parliament to counteract its most human rights-damaging effects?

Giuditta: Certainly this government will continue the policies made so far. But my fear is that it will do so in a more dangerous way than Salvini. He used his role as a political weapon in a forced and disproportionate way (so much so that to this day he is on trial), to gain electoral consensus. Given the League's disappointing results in local government, however, it is unlikely that Meloni will give him the interior ministry. However, Meloni may be even more damaging than Salvini. When she talks about a naval blockade, for example, she means something more dangerous: I imagine the line will be to try to strengthen the work of the Libyan coast guard, supporting this process also with means from the Italian coast guard and navy.

The Italian ships, in this case, would operate below the coast, in Libyan territorial waters, so not in the SAR zone where NGOs can be. At the same time, they would block NGO ships in ports. What is happening to Sea Watch, for example, is worrying.

This zeal of the harbor master's office, which precedes the formation of the government but is also a symptom of it... it almost seems like an operation to show off! I think Meloni

could use this method, which, in fact, is silent, so it is harder to counter and more dangerous because it is invisible. Mobilizing people would also be more difficult.

Actually, given the waiting times that ships are subjected to in order to get a port despite the large number of people on board, it seems that the situation I am foreshadowing is already in place. The average waiting time is 7-10 days, but no one talks about it because these are not visible incidents. That is why I am concerned about the zeal of the captaincy and the political line that could be taken by a right-wing government without Salvini acting for electoral purposes.

Matteo: I have never seen a big difference, regardless of the current government. Lamorgese's administration also fell by the wayside. But, in fact, very serious things happened on the borders. If I think about what happens on the Balkan Route. We went through periods of fierce rejections, illegal re-entries, patrols. Even trying to access the records as a parliamentarian, I have not been able to get the protocols from the Viminal for handling those rejections.

The suspension of the rule of law at our country's borders may have taken place from what we know. And, let me be clear, these mechanisms did not take place only with Salvini as minister.

Not much has ever changed, there have been bad policies mellowed in manners and communication, but in some ways even more effective (negatively). The strategy of administrative shutdowns, for example, has created a problem.

We will probably not return to the levels of propaganda on flow management that there was with Salvini, but we will have continuity in policies.

The funny thing is that the right might say they are in continuity with policies made by a center-left government, the Gentiloni government.

This is an element of strength for them. I expect the worst. I think it will be complicated to counter it. I think to counter it will require a lot of effort within the parliament.

We will have to get votes, of course, but we will also have to use tools such as powers of inspection, which serve to bring out elements of ambiguity. It is important to keep these actions together with the work that is being done “outside,” in dialogue with NGOs, civil society and all those who are trying to raise awareness.

When we have some strength in parliament, it is because we have managed to spark some debate outside of that.

The strength outside gives us the opportunity to question the government, for example, as happened with Lamorgese on the Memorandum.

Why did you decide to join the med board?

Giuditta: First of all, because since I am no longer a parliamentarian, I can do that. And then, of course, I was driven by the work done with and thanks to Mediterranea, which compared to others has very clear political positions. Through actions it makes policy. And that convinced me and many other guarantors to support it.

Even knowing that there are going to be complex months has pushed me to want to help and not to lose the work done over the years. Going from PD assemblies to Mediterranea assemblies was a real culture shock, but a positive one.

Also going from assemblies with a lot of form and little substance to assemblies with a lot of substance (and a different form) was a real quantum leap. I am very happy to have this opportunity, not least because I feel I can be, in my own small way, useful.

Or so I hope. I’m certainly going to try.

REPORT BORDERLINE EUROPE



NEWS FROM CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN

ARRIVALS

In September, *borderline-europe* registered 11,878 arrivals of refugees who crossed the Mediterranean Sea to Italy. The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs registered 13,068 arrivals in the same period. The IOM counts 11,641 new arrivals and the UNHCR speaks of 12,669 arrivals in September. Those numbers also differ from *borderline-europe*'s independent monitoring. These differences are due in part to a lack of transparency and access to information for independent observers.

The goal of *borderline-europe* is not only to collect mere numbers, but to gather all relevant information about the crossing such as failure to provide assistance, the condition of the people on board or illegal behavior at sea.

A worrisome turn of events that will affect not only Italy's political course but also that of the European Union is the electoral victory of the electoral alliance of the Fratelli d'Italia, Lega and Forza Italia parties in the Sept. 25 Italian parliamentary elections, with about 44 percent of the vote. The alliance was congratulated by various far-right parties in Europe. To some extent, the failure of the center-left to emerge united ensured that the right will have a clear, absolute majority in parliament in the future.

It remains to be seen what impact the election of the post-fascist government led by Giorgia Meloni will have on the number of arrivals, as well as on civilian sea rescue. However, Meloni's plan to introduce a so-called "naval blockade" will make it more challenging to welcome migrants coming across the Mediterranean and will make the crossing of people even more dangerous. Moreover, the realization of a state-organized sea rescue becomes even more unlikely.

The joint government program of the parties from extreme right to center-right contains 15 pages and a so-called commitment to NATO and the EU - combined with the announcement that national interests should be more strongly protected in the EU. What that means is debatable, since Meloni is a self-declared EU skeptic. Another proposal in the program is the introduction of so-called "hotspots" for migrants, which, however, are to be set up outside Europe.

These "hotspots" are intended to be used to examine asylum applications from there. It remains to be seen what influence the political developments in the upcoming months will have on the work of the sea rescuers, as well as the arrivals.

In addition to political developments, meteorological factors also had an impact on the number of arrivals. In September there has already been a decrease in arrivals, as weather conditions have deteriorated compared to the previous month. There were 4,390 fewer arrivals than in August. Particularly noticeable, as is it often the case, was the refusal of rescues from Malta in the Maltese Search and Rescue Zone.

Alarm Phone, an emergency hotline for people crossing the Mediterranean, posted several warnings via its Twitter in September that boats were in danger of capsizing; however, Malta did not respond. And even when they did respond, they didn't do what they promised: Saving lives.

A merchant ship reported to the AlarmPhone organization that Malta threatened to prohibit assistance to the ship if it assisted a maritime emergency of 60 people in the Mediterranean Sea.

It shows that Malta does not carry out its own rescues and at the same time makes it difficult for merchant ships or private boats to carry out rescues.

DEAD AND MISSING

The Mediterranean Sea once again claimed many victims in September. borderline-europe counted a total of 510 people who died or are considered missing on the dangerous route. However, the number of unreported cases is probably much higher.

Two cases in particular caused a big media stir in Italy. The 4-year-old Syrian girl Loujin was on a boat with 60 other passengers that had taken off from Lebanon, probably to reach Italy. In the area between Malta and Cyprus, people began sending calls for help, which were not answered.

For ten days, the boat drifted in the sea. The father of little Loujin desperately asked for help through a satellite phone. There were no provisions or water on the boat, people were starving and dehydrated. Witnesses reported that the boat was spotted by several merchant ships, but they ignored the dramatic situation of the people on board.

This attitude can also be attributed to the policy of criminalizing sea rescue, as in some past cases merchant ships had to stay in port for several weeks after rescues and suffered economic losses. Moroccan-Italian activist Nawal Soufi had contact with the boat and informed Maltese authorities, who indicated that help was on the way. However, it was only after a long delay that a freighter reached the boat. The delay in the rescue cost Loujin her life - she died of thirst.

On September 12, an Italian Coast Guard patrol boat arrived at the port of Pozzallo with 34 migrants, six of whom were already dead, including two infants and a child. They had died of thirst, starvation and severe burns due to the sun they had been exposed to for 14 days at sea.

The boat left Turkey on August 29. Accordingly, they came across the Ionian route, which is much longer and more dangerous than the route from North Africa to Europe. The boat drifted to eastern Libya after running out of fuel. The cargo ship Arizona rescued the boat after several days, but it was already too late for the six people.

Many other refugees also did not make it to the coast of Italy. A ship carrying only Tunisians capsized in the night of September 6-7 off Mahdia, a coastal town in eastern Tunisia. Another shipwreck, which caused many deaths, occurred off the Syrian coast, near Tartus.

On the boat, which left Lebanon, there were 150 Syrians, Lebanese and Palestinians. The number of casualties recently rose to 102 people, only 20 could be rescued, the remaining people are still considered missing.

PULLBACKS

From Tunisia, which counts almost 4 million people out of 12 million inhabitants living in absolute poverty, 1,975 people fled reaching the Italian coast in September, while 934 were intercepted by the Tunisian coast guard.

The number has increased by 23% in the first 8 months in 2022 in contrast to the previous year. Escape attempts increase especially in spring and summer. With youth unemployment in Tunisia hovering around 40%, more and more young people are fleeing. A report by the Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights (FTDES) states that in the first eight months of 2022, a total of 13,000 Tunisians reached Italy, of which 2,000 are minors. The number of missing and injured is estimated at 500. Tunisia's status as a "safe country" prevents about 9000 refugees and asylum seekers from leaving the country.

The study "Waiting in the middle ground: blocking the movement of illegalized people on the move in Tunisia, an unsafe country" shows that people trying to cross Tunisia as a transit country on their journey to Europe are victims of the most serious human rights violations. The evidence speaks for itself: many Tunisians left the country in the month of September in order to reach Europe, but in some cases this resulted in shipwrecks and death.

According to the numbers counted by [borderline-europe](#), 2,616 people fled Libya and reached Italy in September. Continuously, the so-called Libyan coast guard receives financial support and military equipment from the EU and the member states.

This increases brutal and illegal repatriations, which is why 923 people who left Libya in September were forcibly taken back. Earlier this month, a shocking video emerged of a young Sudanese refugee being abused by unknown gunmen.

Tarig Lamloum, a human rights researcher specializing in migration, commented on the video, saying, "The video clip that went viral showing an incident in which a Sudanese child, an asylum seeker in Libya, was tortured is neither new nor shocking to me. It may be shocking to those who do not follow the situation."

Severe abuse, violence and rape is the bitter reality of everyday life in Libyan detention centers, which makes the years-long cooperation between the EU and Libyan authorities in this field even more incomprehensible. By providing financial and logistical support, the EU keeps this violent system afloat.

PATHS TO EUROPE

While most people reach Italy from North Africa through the central Mediterranean Sea, more and more people come to Europe by crossing the Ionian route since the beginning of the year. In August, the number was 5366 people. During September, the number of boats with refugees leaving from Lebanon, for example, was increasing.

Since the end of 2019, Lebanon has been in a severe economic crisis. More than three-quarters of the population lives in poverty. To escape the financial crisis, more and more families are fleeing. In September, there were several cases of boats that left from Lebanon that were reported missing.

However, with little response to the alerts, family members took to the streets to call on local and central authorities to search for the missing. They blocked roads to attract attention, but their protests were stopped by the Lebanese army. Since the boats are usually overloaded and in poor condition, and the crossing over the Ionian route is much longer, the chances of arriving at the mainland in Europe are lower.

Also, there were some departures from Turkey. As mentioned earlier, six people, including three children, died trying to reach Italy from Turkey.

The UN refugee agency UNHCR counted about 8400 refugees who came by boat from Turkey to Italy since the beginning of the year. The journey from Turkey to Italy is 2000 kilometers and takes three times longer than from Libya, according to the report. The evasion of the Greek coast guard, which regularly pushes arrivals back violently or abandons them in the middle of the sea, is an important factor here, leading people to opt for this even more dangerous journey across the eastern Mediterranean.

The steady increase in “Ionian cases” over the last few months shows the desperate search for alternatives as the route across the Mediterranean from North Africa to Europe becomes more and more policed. There are increasing numbers of pullbacks and the likelihood of being intercepted is significantly higher.

CIVIL RESISTANCE

The rescues by NGO ships once again brought hundreds of people ashore and to safety. The election of September 25 will most likely have a decisive impact on the situation of civilian rescuers. With Giorgia Meloni and her fascist party coming to power, it will be even more difficult for NGO ships to be assigned a safe harbor in the future.

On September 4, the “Ocean Viking” of the organization SOS Méditerranée was allowed to dock in Taranto with 459 people on board. The “Ocean Viking” carried out ten rescue operations before, after a week of waiting, it received the decision of the Italian authorities to be allowed to dock. A large percentage of the people rescued were minors, 113 of them unaccompanied. The critical health situation on board had led to some medical evacuations.

On September 22, the Open Arms Uno with 402 people docked at the port of the Sicilian city Messina. Among the passengers was a dead body, a 20-year-old Eritrean. According to the NGO Open Arms, he died after being severely beaten by a “smuggler.”

The Sea-Watch 3 posted several alarming messages on its Twitter and Instagram accounts in late September: First, it declared a “state of necessity” as they were not allocated a port after several requests, and were running out of supplies, according to the crew.

After the eventual allocation of a port, they docked in Reggio Calabria in southern Italy and were promptly blocked by Italian authorities.

Now they fear a holdout at the port for weeks, if not months. Italy argues that they have rescued too many refugees at sea. Lawyers have already been called in to take legal action against the blockade. With this decision, the Italian authorities are deliberately defying the ruling of the ECJ, which announced in August that the ships of the sea rescuers may not be blocked for trivial reasons. Sea-Watch’s response to the blockade, but also to the shift to the right in the Italy’s politics, is the plan to send a new ship to the Mediterranean:

The Sea-Watch 5, which is supposed to be “faster, bigger and more efficient than its predecessors.” Also the NGO Emergency announced the purchase of a new ship, which was baptized “Life Support”. It lies still in the port of Genoa, but will soon go on its first rescue missions.



NESSUN ESS
UMANO E'
GALE

MIGRARE
E' UN DIRITTO

MEDREPORT
SEPTEMBER 2022

