Scirocco - Latest news from Italy

04.11.2026: Cutro shipwreck: The trial continues behind closed doors

At least 94 people, including 35 children, died in the Cutro shipwreck off the coast of Calabria, Italy, in 2023. Appeal proceedings have been ongoing since then, with the final hearing scheduled for November 11. The Attorney General's Office has requested a sentence of 12 years in prison and a fine of 3 million euros for Khalid Arslan, a 28-year-old Pakistani national who was sentenced in the first instance to 11 years, one month and 10 days. Even harsher sentences (17 years in prison and a fine of 4 million euros) have been sought for Hasab Hussain, a 24-year-old Pakistani national, and Sami Fuat, a Turkish national. Both were on board the same boat as the approximately 250 people who were trying to reach European shores.

Little information is coming out of the courtroom, as access has been restricted for the national press. One reason may be that, on a parallel track, a first-instance trial is investigating the failure of six military personnel from the Finance Police and the Port Authority to assist the people in distress. At that trial on November 3, regarding the complicity of the Italian authorities, Pascalicchio testified. He is a marshal of the Finance Police who was on duty as a law enforcement expert in the "Frontex Monitoring Room" in Warsaw. He blamed his colleagues for not taking his instructions seriously. He stated that he wanted the Italian Coast Guard to go out and therefore used unofficial channels, such as WhatsApp messages, to inform his personnel. He pointed in particular to Paolo Magistri, who was serving as the Finance Police's liaison officer in Warsaw. However, the witness could not say whether Magistri had contacted his superiors. Meanwhile, questions continue to arise about what went wrong with the "coordination" that had been announced.

Beyond the clear failure of the military personnel and the dubious statements of the officers, one must point to the political responsibility of a system that limits the possibilities of reaching Europe through safe and legal routes while relying increasingly on control and repression to manage human mobility. It is a system that kills and, once again, punishes people such as Sami Fuat for nothing more than seeking a better life.