



Scirocco
borderline-europe, Sicily –
Part 7/2022
Palermo, 08.05.2022



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Scirocco [ʃiˈrɒkko-Schirokko] is a south-easterly, hot strong wind that carries dust and sand across the Mediterranean to Sicily and Italy's north for often only a few hours. This short info in the age of the pandemic will be published from March 2021 in an approx. bi-weekly rhythm. The Scirocco replaces the Corona Update Italy.

Political and Social Situation

A [leaked document](#) on migration cooperation with Tunisia written by the EU Commission reveals that the North African country will accept up to 85 million euros in EU funds to build an "integrated border surveillance and coastal communication system" while still **refusing to cooperate with Frontex**. In addition, further funding is likely to be made available to provide financial support to "young Tunisians who are prone to migration." These measures are part of the EU's efforts to **resume negotiations on a re-admission and visa facilitation agreement with Tunisia**. The leaked document is an update of the EU Commission's Action Plan for Tunisia, which was negotiated last October for the period 2021-2027.

Since mid-April, a [group of refugees and asylum seekers from various African countries](#) have been protesting in front of the UNHCR headquarters in Tunis "against the organization's inadequate performance, the expulsion of hundreds of people from the reception centers and the denial of economic aid" and demand, among other things, their **evacuation to other countries**: "We demand respect for our fundamental rights. We want to be evacuated to another country that respects human rights and human

dignity," said [Saleh Saeed, a 24-year-old Sudanese from Darfur](#) who has been stuck in Tunisia for four years. The protests manifest a **continuation of a sit-in** that began on February 9 in front of the [UNHCR office in Zarzis](#) and, according to the Tunisian NGO Forum for Economic and Social Rights (Ftdes), can be traced back to the UNHCR's unannounced closure of a temporary reception center in Zarzis as well as residential facilities for refugees and migrants. Refugees, especially from sub-Saharan Africa, who are staying in Tunisia, complain of **being regularly subjected to verbal and physical violence** (we reported [here](#)).



Shousha refugee camp in Tunisia (2011)

The [latest report](#) by the Jesuit Refugee Service Centro Astalli concludes that the Italian reception system has been remaining locked in a "logic of emergency" since the adoption of the security decrees more than two years ago. Despite the fact that the number of people seeking protection doubled compared to the previous year and the observation that there has been a **dramatic increase in female victims of torture**, a large number of people continue to be accommodated in the temporary CAS centers (Centro di accoglienza straordinaria – Extraordinary Reception Center) and thus are excluded from the Reception and Integration System (SAI) (we reported [here](#)).

With its report ["Implementation of the Guidelines for the Support and Rehabilitation of Victims of Torture and Other Forms of Violence: Stocktaking and Analysis"](#), Médecins Sans Frontières Italy warns of neglecting mental health care for migrants and refugees who are survivors of pre-meditated violence and torture. **The guidelines drawn up five years ago by the Ministry of Health have not yet been implemented in large parts of Italy** and there is a strong lack of adequate support services. Moreover, adequate medico-psychological care including intercultural mediation, medico-legal certification, diverse professional skills as well as integrated and coordinated approaches to respond to complex needs that are not limited to the health sector are neither implemented, [it added](#).

[Members of the Friuli Venezia Giulia Regional Council](#) are calling for a national legislative reform to **facilitate obtaining birth certificates for children born in Italy** with parents who do not have a residence permit in Italy. According to the first signatories of the legislative proposal, the law "Provisions on Public Security" (Law 94) passed in 2009 poses a serious problem as it denies children the right to a birth certificate and hence forcing them into a state of non-identity and invisibility. Italy has yet achieved the goal set out in the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to provide legal identities for undocumented children.

Situation of refugees in Italy

The Municipality of Ventimiglia has decided **to reopen the refugee camp in Bevera before the beginning of summer**. According to Councilor [Massimo D'Eusebio](#), the extraordinary support for Ukrainian refugees cannot distract from the many tragedies experienced by refugees from the

MENA region who are similarly fleeing wars and decades of oppression, and for whom there are often only "makeshift beds in the train station or under the elevated train" (we reported [here](#)).

The **Villaggio di Cassibile**, a residence intended to house around 100 seasonal workers, was reopened on April 13. It will exclusively host agricultural workers who have a regular residence permit as well as a work contract. More than twenty agricultural workers have already arrived at the Villaggio di Cassibile. With [funds from the national government](#), a kitchen and a laundry are to be built until next year.



Camp for agricultural workers in Sicily.

On April 11 the Court of Cuneo handed down an important verdict in the **case of the agricultural workers of Saluzzo**: Two agricultural companies were convicted of violating the regulations on the exploitation of personnel as well as another person in the role of intermediary ("caporale"). [The Democratic Party \(Pd\) of the Province of Cuneo](#) welcomes the verdict but highlights the remaining structural problems of seasonal work and the widespread forced labor ("caporalato") in the agricultural sector.

Although the public health emergency activated due to the Covid-19 pandemic ended on March 31, some of the Italian quarantine ships are still in operation. It is important to remember that there are no longer any laws or regulations that justify the existence of these ships. [Mauro Palma](#),

president of the National Institute for the Rights of Prisoners (GNPL), warns that **the maintenance of quarantine ships is an illegal deprivation of personal liberty** and that a solution portrayed as "temporary and exceptional" risks to become institutionalized. Quarantine ships could thus become "floating hotspots" and could lead to further violations having serious consequences for the well-being of the people concerned, the organizations ASGI, LasciateCIEntrare & Sea Watch, among others, stated in [an open letter](#). In the last week alone, **160 people** from the Contrada Imbriacola hotspot were taken aboard a quarantine ship that docked in [Cala Pisana on Lampedusa](#).



Quarantine vessel GNV Azzurra (2020).

Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, [at least three people have died](#) on quarantine ships, two of whom were minors in need of urgent medical care that was denied for too long (see the call for ["Basta con le navi quarantena!"](#)).

For more information on the situation in Italy, see our Central Med Info and the previous issues of the 'Scirocco' on our [homepage](#).

Note to the readers of our Streiflicht Italy: Starting this year, our Streiflicht Italy will be published only twice a year with a new layout!

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