



**Scirocco**  
**borderline-europe, Sicily –**  
**Part 8/2022**  
**Palermo, 12.05.2022**



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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

Thanks to [numerous disclosures](#) by international lawyers and investigations by the Italian newspaper Avvenire, violence against and abuse of refugees and migrants in Libya are finally classified as **war crimes and crimes against humanity** by The Hague Criminal Court – contrary to what the tribunal had previously ruled. In the complaints filed, the lawyers denounce European and especially Italian governments for their non-transparent practices of cooperation with Libyan officials. The [public prosecution](#) said it had received a large amount of credible information indicating that migrants and refugees in Libya are subjected to arbitrary arrests, unlawful killings, enforced disappearances, torture, sexual and gender-based violence, ransom kidnappings, extortion and forced labor – crimes that have also been committed in Libyan detention centers.

In the debate on state regulations for the protection of children with migrant parents (we already reported [here](#) and [here](#)), a [national legislative](#) proposal is currently being discussed that would enable non-European applicants to obtain civil status documents, such as birth and parentage certificates, without having to present a residence title. This proposal is based on the

UN guideline for the protection of so-called "hidden children" (children without identification documents). For further information see [Goal 16.9](#) of the UN Sustainable Development Goals as well as [Article 7](#) of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

According to [Matteo Biffoni](#), head of the immigration department at Anci (National Association of Italian Municipalities) and mayor of Prato, the Italian reception system needs significantly more funding than it currently has, otherwise it risks collapsing. The association calls for the **expansion of the SAI reception and integration system** for all migrants and refugees at a time when priority is given to Ukrainian and Afghan citizens. Biffoni also points out that the **high number of unaccompanied minor refugees and migrants** is particularly challenging for municipal social services. Currently, the SAI system has more than 6,000 places for unaccompanied minors, but almost all of them are already in use.



Reception Center in Lampedusa (2012).

The complexities of the Italian reception system are also evident in [reception facilities in the province of Potenza](#), where **uncoordinated bureaucratic procedures have led to a chaotic situation regarding the distribution and relocation of refugees**. They have been "pushed around, uprooted and treated like parcels from



morning to night," despite European guidelines prohibiting unnecessary transfers of beneficiaries of international protection. [Sassilive](#) appeals to the responsibility of the institutions and calls on the prefects to suspend all relevant procedures until a solution for all parties involved is found.

[Antonino Scarpitta](#), a 65-year-old man from Marsala who was charged with aiding and abetting the illegal entry of seven Tunisians, was acquitted on all charges by the court in Trapani. The trial of [Andrea Costa](#), president of Baobab Experience – a non-profit organization that assists migrants passing through Rome – also ended in an acquittal. In both cases, the facts of aiding and abetting unauthorized entry were **not fulfilled**.



World Refugee Day Demo Poster (2018)

The start of the appeal trial against the former mayor of Riace, [Mimmo Lucano](#), was dated to May, 25. Last year, Lucano was sentenced to 13 years and 2 months in prison (we reported [here](#)).

### **Situation of refugees in Italy**

The **protests of African refugees and migrants in front of the UNHCR office in Tunis** (Tunisia) continue. For more than two months, [over 200 children and adults](#) have been protesting against the closure of shelters and demanding recognition of their rights as well as their evacuation to safe places. [Alessandra Sciurba](#), former president and spokesperson for Mediterranea,

captures the stories of the protesters and appeals to the **Italian co-responsibility** in dealing with refugees. The Italian state has made bilateral agreements with North African states and finances the so-called Libyan and Tunisian coast guards. Therefore, it is also responsible for supporting refugees.

Only few weeks after the **re-opening of the camp for seasonal workers in Cassibile**, all available places are occupied. Hence, [more than a dozen people](#) must camp outside although they have a valid residence permit and signed work contracts in exchange for accommodation (more information on the reopening of the camp in Cassibile can be found [here](#) and [here](#)).

Unfortunately, we witness an increase in arrests of so-called "scafisti" again – people who are declared to be smugglers because they steered a boat carrying refugees or were randomly selected by the Italian authorities as the culprits. Just recently, two young Egyptian citizens were arrested (see the report ["From Sea to Prison. The Criminalization of Boat Drivers in Italy"](#)).



Boat with refugees on the Mediterranean Sea

**For more information on the situation in Italy, see our Central Med Info and the previous issues of the 'Sciocco' 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!*

#### Contact

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<https://www.borderline-europe.de/>

[italia@borderline-europe.de](mailto:italia@borderline-europe.de)