



Scirocco
borderline-europe, Sicily –
Part 11/2022
Palermo, 24.06.2022



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Scirocco [ʃiˈrɔkko-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

The **trial against four crew members of the civilian rescue ship Iuventa and 17 other persons**, who are accused of "aiding and abetting unauthorized entry", has been suspended until next fall due to [procedural errors of the public prosecutor's office](#). The defendants had not been adequately informed about the judicial process, which constitutes a **violation of the defendant's fundamental rights**. Kathrin Schmidt, one of the accused crew members, criticized that the investigations have been going on for more than five years and that the proceedings are repeatedly delayed.



Solidarity rally in Trapani on the day of the preliminary hearing against the IUVENTA crew on May, 21, 2022.

Not less affected by the [criminalization of solidarity](#) is the former mayor of the small Italian town of Riace, **Mimmo Lucano**. In the first instance, he was sentenced to 13 years and two months imprisonment for

establishing the so-called „Riace Model“, a reception system for protection seekers (more information [here](#)). On the eve of the appeal trial, Members of the European Parliament, NGOs and activists gathered to discuss the prosecution of Solidarity [by the Italian state](#). In the course of the event, a [dossier](#) about the criminalization of solidarity between January 2021 and March 2022 was presented, as well as two volumes of the ["Black Book of Pushbacks"](#) which documents violence against refugees at the external borders of the European Union, based on data from the Border Violence Monitoring Network (BVMN). In support of **Mimmo Lucano and the Villaggio Globale** in Riace, so-called "Committees of June 11" (named after date of the beginning of the trial) have been formed throughout Italy.

The second quarterly report **"A rising tide lifts all boats – From Sea to Prison"** published jointly by Arci Porco, borderline-europe and Borderline Sicilia was uploaded in mid-June. [Here](#) you can find the report in English.

According to the Italian Interior Minister Luciana Lamorgese, the EU is still working on a new **regulation for the distribution of migrants and refugees within the European Union** ("relocation mechanism"). [Lamorgese](#) said that the historic activation of the "Temporary Protection Directive – TPD" (Council Directive 2001/55/EC) in March 2022 regulating the temporary admission of refugees from Ukraine, shows that a unified and solidarity-based solution is possible. So far, EU member states agreed on a **new distribution mechanism** in which the admission of refugees remains voluntary, but must be compensated with a [financial on-time payment](#) to the initial host states. This regulation is welcomed by the [Med-5 states](#) Italy, Cyprus, Greece, Malta and Spain.

Once again, this so-called ["solidarity mechanism"](#), cynically conveys that the EU will continue to adhere to its [forcible policy of isolation](#).

Situation of refugees in Italy

In the region of Foggia, [agricultural workers](#) are protesting against ongoing acts of **racial violence**. Last weekend, a dozen Black workers in the city of Foggia and in Borgo Mezzanone were hit by cars and violently attacked while riding their bicycles to work. Under the slogan "Campagne in lotta", the agricultural workers are calling for support for **their struggle against all forms of violence and discrimination** as well as for the recognition of documents, houses, and work contracts throughout Italy.

Since November last year, [1,200 Afghans](#) have been waiting to enter Italy via a humanitarian corridor. The Italian government already agreed upon the **evacuation** to support Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran. In August 2021, they were forced to flee the upcoming violence and retaliation by the Taliban government who gained power after the withdrawal of NATO contingents from Afghanistan. However, due to the war in Ukraine, the political situation in Afghanistan, as well as other humanitarian crises and refugee movements, are moving out of the focus of European politics and the public awareness. With the panel discussion ["Safe and legal entry routes: double standards in the Ukrainian and Afghan crises"](#) at the Sabir Festival in Matera, the promised evacuation of 1,200 Afghan people will be recalled. In view of the fast and unbureaucratic reception of more than 120.000 refugees from Ukraine, this number seems extremely low and manageable. Due to the **deterioration of the human rights situation in Afghanistan**, [Francesca Iachini](#) from the organization Pangea, which

together with Arci and Nove Onlus supports Afghan refugees through shelters in Pakistan, demands that more people from Afghanistan be evacuated through humanitarian corridors as soon as possible.

For 35 years now, the **Naga Medical Clinic** has been treating migrants who are excluded from the Italian health system due to their lack of residence papers. On its website, the clinic reports on ["Stories of healing without permission"](#), such as that of a young Egyptian whose life was saved solely by the medical expertise of a volunteer doctor.

The number of unaccompanied minors who went missing between January and April 2022 has risen sharply compared to the previous year. According to official figures, **1,173 children and young people were registered as missing** in the first four months of this year alone. According to the [Pianeta Migranti network](#) "every 2 hours and 45 minutes, an unaccompanied foreign child disappears into thin air in Italy". Unaccompanied minor refugees are at particularly **high risk of violence and exploitation**, as shown by research and reports on organ- and drug trafficking and sexual exploitation. In light of these figures, it is even more tragic that arrivals of unaccompanied children in Italy are on the rise, currently accounting for about [16% of all arrivals](#). For more data about unaccompanied minor refugees in Italy, see [this overview](#) from Openpolis.

On June 15, a [35-year-old Egyptian](#) was shot by a [French police officer](#) when entering France from Italy in a van – a dramatic and unfortunately not singular **racist murder** made possible by the European migration and border regime (see [previous issues](#) of Scirocco). Currently, more and more people are being turned away at the **Franco-Italian border**, at least [24,000 people](#) were affected

in 2021 alone – although the Schengen Agreement does not provide for border controls. Under the pretext of "security", however, France reintroduced them, creating **another border within the European Union**, at which various deaths and countless acts of violence against people on the run have been recorded in recent years.

To counteract these acts of border violence, the NGO [Medici per I diritti umani \(MEDU\)](#) has launched the medical project "Frontiere Solidali" in the northern Italian town of Oulx. The project aims at supporting refugees who arrive in the city by providing basic health care. In addition, MEDU has recently published a report as well as an analysis on the humanitarian situation of refugees at the Franco-Italian border, which can be found [here](#).



A banner with the inscription "Freedom" found on the Franco-Italian border.

As current figures show, the **number of people in the Franco-Italian border area is increasing** again. Amongst other reasons, this is due to the more favorable weather conditions, both on the central Mediterranean and in the Western Alps between Italy and France, during the summer. This is confirmed by the [Organization Caritas](#), which provides migrants with breakfast and lunch. The bishop of Ventimiglia, [Antonio Suetta](#), criticized the precarious situation at the

border and the **unequal treatment of refugees from Asian and African countries** compared to refugees from Ukraine. Suetta hopes that, on the local level, a new reception center would soon be opened to improve this situation. However, the corresponding proposal for the re-establishment of a temporary reception center for refugees in Parco Roja in Ventimiglia (we reported [here](#)) was [rejected](#) by the majority of the Ventimiglia City Council.

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!

Contact

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