



Scirocco
borderline-europe, Sicily –
Part 14/2022
Palermo, 03.08.2022



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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

Italian media will [no longer receive information](#) about the cooperation of Italian authorities with the so-called Libyan coast guard. In the future, information about cross-border "security cooperation" as well as data related to "border and immigration management" will be kept secret from the public.



Coast guard vessel in the port of Palermo

The corresponding **decree which restricts freedom of information** was signed by [Interior Minister Luciana Lamorgese](#) four months ago. This not only concerns the secrecy of the delivery of three boats and [other equipment](#) to the so-called Libyan coast guard, but also information about Italy's "international police cooperation" with other states, including Frontex operations. Accordingly, the EU border agency is no longer allowed to release documents if they concern Italy – even

though Italy leads two large European missions in the Mediterranean ("Irinì" and "Themis") as part of the migration defense of the European border regime. In this regard, [Luisa Izuzquiza](#) of the organization "Frag den Staat" ("Ask the state") criticized that European governments and institutions increasingly deny access to migration-related data so that they cannot be held accountable for their (illegal and inhumane) operations. According to the monitoring platform [Centri d'Italia](#), the Italian Ministry of Interior further withholds [data on migrant reception centers](#). This platform was launched last February jointly by ActionAid Italia and Openpolis in order to encourage civilians to understand political events and decisions and evaluate them based on transparent information. The **importance of a public control mechanism** is further demonstrated by the planned cooperation between Italy, Türkiye and NATO in the Black Sea, as well as the [military-industrial partnership](#) between the two states, which will increase the power of the Turkish government in Libya. Such cooperation must be controllable in democratic states so that human rights violations can be uncovered and condemned.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the National Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI) have published a [report](#) on the **inhumane housing and living conditions of migrant farm workers** ("braccianti"). The report shows that there are hardly any basic services and practically no social and health care measures available in the [informal housing facilities](#) for braccianti. According to the report, the lack of integration into local communities and the [increasing "ghettoization" of the more than 10,000 people](#) facilitates

exploitation and maximizes profits for Italian companies. This situation also worsens the labour, economic and social conditions of entire areas. We reported on the struggles of braccianti in the [previous issue](#) of this newsletter.

Currently, there are more and more cases of **fraud and exploitation of migrants in reception centers** that are discovered and publicly communicated. After we already reported on three such incidents in July, further cases have now become known in Palermo and Santa Cesarea Terme: In [Palermo](#), five people were arrested for exploiting five refugee women in a company for cleaning services of the company “Consorzio Diadema”, among the arrested is the operator of a reception center. The women in question had to work 10-12 hours a day and received only 400€ a month. On the other hand, the company of [Santa Cesarea Terme](#), which manages 14 shelters (CAS) in the province, made false statements in the reimbursement requests in order to enrich itself at the expense of the refugees. Contrary to official statements, the required hygiene and catering standards were not met.

As usually during the summer, the number of autonomous arrivals on the **Mediterranean island of Lampedusa** is relatively high compared to the rest of the year. However, the hotspot of Lampedusa is still overcrowded and the humanitarian situation is still dire, although the [investigations against the operators](#) of the hotspot of Contrada Imbriacola have already begun. Currently, there are [around 1,900 people](#) who have to share an infrastructure that was created for only 350 people. Due to the resignation of Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi and the resulting new elections in September of this year, the situation on Lampedusa is being **politically instrumentalized for the election campaign**. Hence, [Totò Martello](#), former mayor of the island and chairman of

the PD faction in the city council of Lampedusa and Linosa, warns of the [danger of a shift to the right](#).



Contrada Imbriacola, Lampedusa Hotspot

Martello is particularly concerned about the upcoming visit of former Italian Interior Minister Matteo Salvini as Salvini is instrumentalizing the issues of reception and coordination of refugees – and thus the fate of countless people – for his right-wing election campaign. According to current polls, the [fascist Fratelli d'Italia \(Fdi\)](#) party led by Giorgia Meloni could also achieve strong election results in September.

Situation of refugees in Italy

On July 27, about [230 Afghan refugees](#) who had been in Pakistan since August last year were flown out to Italy through a **humanitarian corridor**. This evacuation was already decided by the Italian state on November 4, 2021 and is now being carried out jointly with non-governmental associations. Despite the [deterioration of the human rights situation](#) in Afghanistan, the majority of the 1,200 Afghans are still waiting for their promised release to Italy. Similarly, [85 asylum seekers](#) in need of protection were flown to Italy via another evacuation flight from Libya. They are now being cared for by [MSF Italy](#) (Medici senza Frontiere). Some of them are accommodated in the interdisciplinary outpatient clinic for survivors of intentional violence and torture, others in state-run reception facilities where they receive

medical and psychological support to come to terms with the atrocities of torture, abuse, and mistreatment in Libyan detention centers.

Refugees arriving on the coasts of Italy are increasingly younger, among them more and more (unaccompanied) minors. In the [hotspot of Lampedusa](#) alone, there are about a hundred children and two hundred unaccompanied minors under the age of fifteen – despite the catastrophic humanitarian situation of the Contrada Imbriacola initial reception center, which became public knowledge [weeks ago](#). This worrying trend is also confirmed by civil rescue organizations: There are many children and young people among the 659 people rescued from distress at sea by the civilian rescue ship [Geo Barents](#), the 439 shipwrecked people on the Sea Watch 3 and the 387 people on board the [Ocean Viking](#).



Photo by Ozan Safak, Unplash

The **European Court of Human Rights has condemned Italy for the "inhumane and degrading treatment" of a minor boy from Gambia**: Ousainou Darboe was placed in an adult detention center for more than four months, depriving him not only of peer relationships but also of necessary psychological support. Italy has thus violated both national law and the European Convention on Human Rights with regard to the fundamental importance of the best interests of the child. This is only one of many dangers to which (unaccompanied) children are exposed. In Lampedusa, the [extreme environmental conditions and the](#)

[overcrowding](#) of the hotspot have a particularly critical impact on the living conditions of underage refugees. Further information on the difficult situation of refugee children and young people in Italy can be found [here](#).

In the **province of Ragusa, a man of Ivorian origin has been missing since July 2**. Previously, [Daouda Diane](#) had recorded the terrible working conditions in a concrete factory in two videos and sent them to his brother. "This is hell, this is death," Diane commented on the working conditions in the factory. No one has heard from him since; his cell phone has disappeared and had been turned off. On July 22, around 500 people joined the [Usb union](#) in protesting in front of the prefecture's headquarters in Ragusa and in demanding the continuation of the search for Diane.

On July 29, in [Civitanova Marche](#), **Alika Ogorchukwu was beaten to death by Filippo Claudio Giuseppe Ferlazzo in the open street and in broad daylight**. The 39-year-old Nigerian was the victim of a racially motivated attack, but just as badly, none of those watching helped him as Ferlazzo knocked him down and wrestled with him until Alika died. Instead of intervening, bystanders filmed what was happening. Ferlazzo then took the dead man's cell phone and tried to escape but was arrested. Alika had a wife and a young son. Has this society which allows refugees to die at borders and at sea daily and without any protest, become so brutal that a murder is only considered a video highlight?

Change in the jurisprudence: On July 26, the Constitutional Court ruled that migrants and stateless persons who were married to an Italian citizen [still have the right to acquire Italian citizenship](#), even if their partner dies. This was not foreseen by the legislator and is now to change with Law 195/2022. The requirements for an application for citizenship as well as the

minimum periods of marriage must still be met.

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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