



**Scirocco**  
**borderline-europe, Sicily –**  
**Part 13/2022**  
**Palermo, 25.07.2022**



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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

July 11, 2022, marked the anniversary of the [Bossi-Fini Law](#) (Law No. 189 of July 30, 2002) amending immigration and asylum regulations. The law, named after the former head of the Lega Nord, Umberto Bossi, and the former leader of the post-fascist Alleanza Nazionale, Gianfranco Fini, was intended to drastically tighten regulations on immigration and asylum in Italy. Henceforth, entry into Italy and the extension of residence permits for migrants were to be made considerably more difficult, while faster expulsion of non-EU citizens was to be possible much more quickly. In the following years, the Interior Ministers Roberto Maroni ("Security Package") and Matteo Salvini ("Security Decrees") further tightened these regulations, which sometimes undermined the right to rescue people at sea in the Mediterranean. The Bossi-Fini law, which has become synonymous with Italy's harsh migration policy, has been repeatedly criticized since it was passed. At the same time, migration to Italy has been increasingly illegalized since the law was introduced. This shows once again that **neither a restrictive migration policy nor the increasing isolation of European states can prevent people from seeking safety and protection**. However, twenty years later, the migration issue is still addressed from an

emergency perspective as [Yasmine Accordo](#) of the initiative [LasciateCIEntrare](#) explains. Instead of ensuring respect for and protection of human rights, millions of Euros are being spent on the construction of hotspots, detention centers and the implementation of repatriation procedures (we reported [here](#)). The rapid reception of more than 145,000 Ukrainian refugees since February 2022 shows how well organized the Italian reception system could be – if only there was a political will to act.

The fact that deportation centers and procedures have hardly changed since the court precedent set by [Khlaifia and Others v. Italy](#), shows that the **ongoing emergency on Lampedusa** is anything but a coincidence. In 2011, a group of lawyers and activists filed a complaint with the Palermo prosecutor's office against the [arbitrary detention of asylum seekers](#) at the Contrada Imbriacola initial reception center on Lampedusa as well as their impending collective expulsion. However, this complaint was rejected and archived within a few months. Three Tunisian citizens appealed against the verdict, whereupon the European Court of Human Rights ruled in their favor in a higher instance. To date, the [Khlaifia ruling](#) is the only ruling by a court whether national and supranational, that has declared Italian legislation, asylum and reception practices unlawful. As we have already highlighted in [previous issues](#) of this newsletter, the hotspot Contrada Imbriacola on Lampedusa is currently **militarized as never before**. There is a lack of reception places, the provision of basic care as well as linguistic-cultural mediators, so that one must ask whether the Italian Basic Charter applies to Lampedusa at all.

Four members of the board of the [Omnia Academy](#) – an association that manages **15**

**reception centers in the provinces of Agrigento and Caltanissetta** – have been charged with million-dollar fraud, forgery of documents and criminal conspiracy. Moreover, the former head of several reception centers in the Tuscany region, [Stefano Mugnaini](#), was sentenced to three years in prison for **tax evasion** through false accounting; and the mayor of Augusta, [Giuseppe Di Mare](#), is accused of **embezzling money from a structural fund**. According to the [Regional Council for Family and Social Policies](#) of the Municipality of Augusta, funds earmarked for the integration of migrants were used for the construction of a sports field.



Soumahoro during a demonstration © [Fracost](#)

On July 4, [Aboubakar Soumahoro](#), trade unionist, activist and founder of the [Lega Braccianti](#), held a **seven-hour hunger and thirst strike** to draw attention to the inhumane situation of "braccianti" (day laborers) in Italy. The hunger strike took place at Piazza Montecitorio in front of the House of the Italian Chamber of Deputies in Rome. Later in the day, Soumahoro was invited by the Council of Ministers and thus presented his [demands to improve the situation of "Braccianti"](#), namely the introduction of a legal minimum wage, the

adoption of a national plan against accidents at work and a reform of the agricultural supply chain. Soumahoro also called for the issuance of residence permits to so-called "invisible persons" to combat the system of "caporalato", an illegal form of recruitment and organization of labor.

The Bianchi brothers, charged with the [racist murder](#) of 21-year-old Italian Willy Monteiro Duarte in Colleferro, were sentenced to life in prison earlier this month. The son of Cape Verdean immigrants [was racially insulted](#) in September 2020 and beaten to [death](#) a short time later.

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

Once again, there were incidents of **police violence against refugees** in the [CPR of Caltanissetta](#). Bilel and Raed are two of the victims who were saved thanks to the solidarity of their comrades: despite threats and reprisals from the Italian authorities, they did not stop asking activists outside the CPR for help and contacting emergency paramedics. **Police violence, abuse and medical neglect endanger the lives of more and more people in detention.** For more information on the recent incidents at CPR Caltanissetta, click [here](#).

Although the local reception center of Trieste, [Casa Malala](#), was only half occupied by Ukrainian citizens, non-European refugees were forced to live on the streets around the center. Instead of working for a quick solution to the situation, the current mayor Roberto Dipiazza increased police controls within the city. In addition, he threatened to clear and [fence off](#) the Piazza Libertà, where some of the people slept, in order to banish them from the cityscape in the future. While state authorities fail to provide basic care, the association [Linea d'Ombra](#) supports and provides for the



shelter seekers on site. However, the association also depends on the willingness and support of the municipality for the provision of accommodation. The [Italian Solidarity Consortium \(ICS\)](#) criticized that the police would sanction asylum seekers with fines of up to 500€ for camping at Piazza Libertà. Considering that asylum seekers have a right to adequate housing under both [national](#) and [European](#) regulations, the measures implemented are illegal and unacceptable, the organization added. This example once again highlights the racist and persistent unequal treatment of Ukrainian and non-European people in need of protection. In the meantime, the Ukrainians who had fled were accommodated within other structures and the people who had previously been forced to sleep in the open air were [transferred to the reception center](#).



A banner of the initiative [Presidio Permanente No Borders Ventimiglia](#)

With the slogan **"Since when is supporting migrants a crime?"**, which could be read in Italian, French and Arabic, about [100 supporters of the No Border network](#) protested in Ventimiglia against the inhumane situation of refugees in the French-Italian border region. The activists demanded the opening of borders and freedom of movement for all people. After France reintroduced border controls in June 2015, Ventimiglia became a site of **political and humanitarian crises**. More information on the inhumane situation of asylum seekers

in northern Italy and the ongoing protests on place can be found [here](#).

**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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