



**MED** REPORT  
NOVEMBER 2024

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# MISSION 20: LOGBOOK

## ONE NIGHT, MANY LIVES

After a week of preparation and crew training, the sailing boat Safira set sail from the port of Lampedusa for Mediterranean Saving Humans' Mission 20.

### Being where we need to be

On 26 November, Mediterranean Saving Humans' Mission 20 set sail directly from the port of Lampedusa.

After just two days at sea, thanks to an Alarm Phone warning, a dinghy that had left Zuara three days earlier was spotted with many people in danger. The dinghy was adrift, broken down and about to sink in the Maltese SAR area, 36 miles south of Lampedusa.

As soon as it was spotted, the Safira tried to contact Malta to request an intervention. However, no response was received. Instead, the Italian authorities were asked for assistance and support, and Lampedusa was designated as a safe port for landing.

The 79 people rescued by the Safira on the night of 29 November were transferred to the Coast Guard patrol boat CP322 at the entrance to the port of Lampedusa and disembarked safely on the island.

# STORIES OF BORDERS



SEVEN YEARS OF  
AGREEMENTS  
BETWEEN ITALY,  
THE EUROPEAN UNION  
AND LIBYA

Nearly 21,000 migrants were intercepted and repatriated by the Libyan Coast Guard in 2024. Strongly supported by the European Union, interceptions have continued for seven years aimed at preventing migrants departing from Libyan shores from reaching the other side of the Mediterranean Sea.

### Agreements remain, and abuses continue

Tens of thousands of migrant people arrive in the country each year from the most diverse origins to attempt to cross the Mediterranean Sea and reach Europe. After traveling the infamous routes that are already dangerous and fraught with danger, migrant people then rely on makeshift boats for days on end in precarious conditions. On top of all this, when they are in Libyan waters, they also risk being washed ashore.

For some time now, international humanitarian organizations have been denouncing the fact that Libya is by no means a safe country. Once brought back to Libyan territory, migrant people risk detention in Libyan jails, in inhumane living conditions, forced to face various forms of abuse and extortion, and several rely, once again, on trafficking networks.

According to the U.N. migration agency, IOM, the number of interceptions and forced returns to Libya has increased over the past year to 20,839 from 17,000 in 2023. The agency's most recent data show that in the last week of November alone, 255 people were repatriated to the coastal towns of Azzawya and Sirt. 24 were children.

For seven years now, the cooperation agreements signed by Italy, the European Union, and Libya in 2017 have supported this system of externalizing borders and closing Europe's borders more tightly. Formal support for the management and training of the so-called Libyan Coast Guard has been offered in exchange for a greater guarantee of control of the Mediterranean Sea, with the sole purpose of reducing arrivals on Euro-

pean shores rather than the rescue of people in distress.

The humanitarian organization Doctors Without Borders denounced the agreements, recalling that “this aid comes at the expense of the human rights of migrants and refugees, as virtually everyone intercepted at sea by the so-called Libyan coast guard ends up in a Libyan detention center. The agreement supports the system of exploitation, extortion and abuse in which so many migrants feel trapped.”

Civil society, nongovernmental organizations and rights groups have been opposing cooperation with Libya for years, calling on the European Union to withdraw funding. A complaint has also been filed with the International Criminal Court alleging that officials of the EU and its member states, as well as members of the so-called Libyan Coast Guard, are directly responsible for crimes against humanity against migrants and refugees.

In July 2024, Volker Türk, the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, called for an urgent review of the EU’s agreement with Libya, denouncing the “trafficking, torture, forced labor, extortion the starvation” to which repatriated people are subjected. And it called for a review of support for the so-called Libyan Coast Guard, whose methods of intervention are often controversial if not violent and inhumane.

Indeed, Libyan authorities have been accused of firing in the direction of boats or ramming them, leading them to capsize. Once ashore, abuse, threats, intimidation and violent actions have been reported.

Last month, the civilian sea rescue organization Geo Barents released a video in which migrant women and children were picked up by the so-called Libyan Coast Guard and transferred, at gunpoint, from a boat that was deflating onto a speedboat, abandoning men and boys in the water. Sometime earlier in June, a video by the German organization Sea-Watch showed the so-called Libyan Coast Guard using sticks against migrant people rescued from a merchant ship and forced to return to Libya. In April, on the other hand, during a rescue by the Mare Jonio crew, fire had even been opened on one of the lifeboats, generating panic among migrant people. In March 2024, the crew of the German rescue vessel Humanity 1 was threatened by a ship of the so-called Libyan Coast Guard while trying to rescue 77 migrant people from three small boats; the incident resulted in the drowning of at least one person and the deportation of more than 20 to Libya.

Incidents such as those described have been countless over the years, and complaints continue from actors operating in the Mediterranean Sea.

But despite the fact that the European Union has admitted that Libyan authorities overuse perhaps against migrant people, violating international law, the agreements remain and the abuses continue.

# EGYPT'S NEW ASYLUM LAW

AN INSTRUMENT OF  
GOVERNMENT CONTROL



The Egyptian parliament recently passed a controversial asylum law that threatens to undermine the fundamental rights of thousands of refugees and asylum seekers in the country. Although the government presents it as a step towards a national protection system in line with international obligations, the law actually contains deeply problematic provisions.

### **Management that excludes independence**

To date, refugee management in Egypt is mainly entrusted to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which ensures fair procedures for registration and recognition of refugees status, as well as providing access to essential services such as health and education. Under the new law, these powers will be transferred to a governmental Standing Committee, under the direct control of the Prime Minister.

This body will be composed exclusively of government representatives, without any independent oversight mechanism. The lack of transparency may compromise the impartiality of decisions, and open the way for abuses of power. Unlike the UNHCR, which operates as a neutral agency, the Committee will inevitably be influenced by political and national security interests. This dynamic could turn international protection into an instrument of governmental control, putting refugees, especially those from politically or ethnically marginalised groups, at risk.

### **Restrictions and marginalisation**

Among the most worrying points of the law are the severe restrictions on the personal freedoms of refugees. The legislation prohibits them from participating in political or trade union activities and joining parties, justifying these restrictions with vague concepts such as 'public order' and 'national security'. These ambiguities could easily be used to repress any form of organisation or protest, making the refugees increasingly invisible and vulnerable.



Another critical element concerns access to essential services, limited exclusively to those who obtain official recognition of refugee status. This leaves the asylum seekers trapped in lengthy and uncertain processes, depriving of fundamental rights such as access to health and education. This exclusion risks pushing thousands of people into extreme poverty, increasing the risk of exploitation and abuse.

The law also provides for the creation of a centralised register for refugees, but without ensuring adequate measures to protect the confidentiality of personal data. Egypt has previously been accused of sharing sensitive information with countries of origin, exposing the refugees to the risk of persecution or retaliation. The lack of guarantees in this regard poses a serious threat to those who have found refuge in Egypt to escape violence and persecution.

### **A law that must be rejected**

On 15 November, a coalition of 22 human rights organisations, including the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR) and the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS), issued a joint statement condemning the new law. The NGOs highlighted how the transfer of refugees management from the UNHCR to the Government Committee undermines independent decision-making and increases the risk of arbitrary deportations.

The statement also highlights the lack of consultation with experts in humanitarian law and civil society during the drafting of the law. This approach has resulted in a law that appears to aim more at controlling the refugee population than protecting it, in stark contrast to Egypt's obligations under the 1951 Refugee Convention. Particularly worrying are the provisions allowing for the revocation of refugee status or deportation on the basis of vague grounds such as 'national interest', which could be used to target politically active refugees.

This law sets a dangerous precedent not only for Egypt, but for the entire region, where restrictive policies towards refugees are already observed. Human rights organisations have called on the Egyptian government to immediately withdraw the law and initiate an inclusive dialogue with civil society and international experts to develop a protection system that respects fundamental rights. The international community, including Egypt's partners, must press for the country to fulfil its obligations and ensure safe conditions for those seeking refuge in Egypt.

The ball is now in the court of President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, who will have to sign the law for it to come into force. If this is the case, Egypt could become a country that fuels a spiral of human rights violations, and risks leaving tens of thousands of people left to their own devices.

# MSH MONTHLY REPORT ON MIGRATIONS



## **Tunisia, 8 November**

Refugees in Libya reports that 18 people intercepted at sea by the Tunisian National Guard were deported by the Tunisian authorities to the desert near the Algerian border and left without food or shelter.

## **Morocco, 16 November**

In Agadir, a group of migrants was attacked by some Moroccan citizens, causing chaos. The police intervened, killing two people and injuring a dozen others.

Libya, 25 November

More than 300 migrants were detained in the desert by the Libyan militia Brigade 444 in inhuman and degrading conditions.

## **Tunisia, 28 November**

Dozens of European and Tunisian organisations signed an appeal calling for the release of activist Abdallah el Said, arrested by the Saïd government on 12 November for his work in defence of the human rights of migrants.

## **Spain, 2-3 November**

In the space of a few days, 55 people drowned on the Atlantic route, while around 2,000 were rescued by the Spanish authorities off the Canary Islands.

## **France - UK, 2-14 November**

Over the course of two weeks, the bodies of six people who drowned trying to reach the UK were found off the coast of northern France.

## **Germany, 11 November**

Somali President Muhamud visited Berlin and German Chancellor Scholz announced an agreement to deport more Somalis living in Germany back to Somalia.

## **Netherlands, 11 November**

The Dutch government announced that from December 9 the Netherlands would suspend the Schengen Agreement for at least six months and introduce stricter border controls.

## **Spain, 20-26 November**

Along the Atlantic route, Spanish authorities rescued at least 450 people on 7 boats off the Canary Islands.

**Crotone, 1 November** 41 people on a boat in distress were rescued by the Italian authorities off the coast of Calabria and disembarked in the port of Crotone.

**Lampedusa, 3 November** A boat carrying 44 people was rescued by a merchant vessel and kept until the Italian Coast Guard arrived to transfer them ashore.

**Samos, 3 November** 4 boats were intercepted by the Greek authorities off Samos and sent back to Turkey.

**Lampedusa, 5-7 November** At least 1050 people on 25 distressed boats arrived in Lampedusa on their own or were rescued by the Italian authorities and then disembarked on the island.

**Civil fleet, 6 November** Ocean Viking (SOS Méditerranée) rescued 185 people in 3 operations and disembarked them in Genoa, a port assigned by the authorities more than 3 days away from the central Mediterranean.

**Rhodes, 6 November** 4 people died in a shipwreck caused by a smuggler who forced them into the sea. 25 survivors reached the island of Rhodes on their own.

**Civil fleet, 6 November** Sea-Eye 5 rescued two boats with 79 people on board following a distress call. A third operation was carried out in cooperation with Trotamar III (Compass Collective), which transferred 62 people on board, while 31 people were rescued by the Sea-Eye 5. 93 people were disembarked in Lampedusa, while the rest in Pozzallo.

**Civil fleet, 6-7 November** Responding to a distress call, Nadir (ResQShip) assisted 2 boats with 67 people on board until the arrival of the Italian Coast Guard, who carried out the rescue.

**Shengjin, 7-8 November** 8 people rescued off Lampedusa were transferred to identification and repatriation centres in Albania by the Guardia di Finanza ship Libra as foreseen in the “Italy-Albania protocol”.

**Sfax, 7 November** A boat carrying 80 people was rammed by the Tunisian National Guard, killing 52 people. The survivors were deported to the desert on the Tunisian-Libyan border.

**Civil fleet, 10 November** The Nadir rescued a boat in distress with 35 people on board and brought them to Lampedusa.

**Sfax, 11 November** Following a shipwreck off the Tunisian coast, 15 or 16 people were reported missing from a boat with 51 people on board.

**Civil fleet, 11 November** The new sailing boat Nihayet Garganey VI (ARCI-Sailing for Blue LAB), in collaboration with Nadir, rescued 43 people and brought them to Lampedusa.

**Samos, 11 November** One child was reported missing off Samos, while the other 45 people arrived on the island independently.

**Civil fleet, 12 November** Life Support (Emergency) rescued 49 people on a boat in distress and disembarked them in the distant port of Ancona, designated by the Italian authorities.

### **Libya, 12 November**

The Nadir crew witnessed the interception and subsequent deportation of people on a boat in distress by the so-called Libyan coastguard.

### **Crete, 12-13 November**

Around 206 people on four boats were rescued by the Greek coastguard off Crete and disembarked on the island.

### **Lebanon, 15 November**

Around 26 people on a boat in distress off Cyprus were pushed-back by the Cypriot authorities.

### **Sicily, 15-16 November**

136 people on 2 boats in distress were rescued by the Italian Coast Guard.

### **Ceuta, 16-17 November**

In 48 hours, at least 44 people swam from the Moroccan coast to the Spanish enclave of Ceuta.

### **Civil fleet, 19 November**

The Nadir rescued 51 people on a boat in distress and brought them to Lampedusa.

### **Lampedusa, 19 November**

A boat reported by Alarm Phone landed independently in Lampedusa.

### **Tripoli, 20 November**

25 people drowned in the wreckage of a boat that had set sail from Tripoli.

**Civil fleet, 20 November** Humanity 1 (SOS Humanity) rescued 70 people on a boat in distress and landed them in the distant port of Reggio Calabria.

**Rhodes, 22 November** 5 people who landed independently in Rhodes were abandoned on the streets by the Greek authorities, who did not allow them to apply for international protection.

### **Greece, 25 November**

3 shipwrecks occurred off the coast of Lesbos. At least one person died.

### **Civilian fleet, 26 November**

Despite the threatening presence of the so-called Libyan coastguard, Ocean Viking rescued 48 people on a boat in distress and disembarked them in Ravenna, a port assigned by the authorities despite being almost 1600 km away from the central Mediterranean.

### **Civil fleet, 27 November**

Humanity 1 rescued 195 people on three boats in distress and landed them in Trapani, despite repeated threats from masked Libyan militiamen.

## **Civil fleet, 28 November**

Responding to a distress call, Sea Punk rescued 49 people on a boat in distress and landed them in Lampedusa.

## **Selski, 28 November**

About 15 people arriving independently on the island of Selski were rescued and transferred by the Greek authorities to Symi.

## **Sicily, 29 November**

Around 49 people were rescued by the Italian coastguard off the coast of Sicily.

## **Crete, 30 November**

About 64 people were rescued by the Greek coastguard off the coast of Crete and landed on the island.

## **Libya, 30 November**

35 people on a boat in distress were intercepted in the Maltese SAR area and transferred to Libya by the Libyan Coast Guard.

## **Trapani, 1 November**

Mediterranea Saving Humans appealed to the Court of Agrigento against the 20-day administrative detention of the Mare Jonio following the rescue of 58 people. A further appeal has been lodged with the Lazio Regional Administrative Court against the illegal order to land the rescue equipment.

## **Catania, 5 November**

The Court of Catania overturned the 'safe countries' decree and released five Bangladeshi and Egyptian nationals from the Modica centre, as their countries of origin have been declared unsafe.

## **Crotone, 6 November**

The Public Prosecutor's Office of Crotone has requested the indictment of 6 military personnel (2 from the Coast Guard and 4 from the Guardia di Finanza) for wreckage and manslaughter following the Cutro massacre, in which at least 98 people lost their lives.

## **Brindisi, 12 November**

The court of Rome did not validate the detention of 7 people deported to Albania, remitting the decision on the legitimacy of the Italy-Albania protocol to the European Court of Justice. The deportees returned to Brindisi, in Italy.

### **Rome, 12 November**

The Italian government proposed an amendment to the so-called “Decreto flussi” (“flows decree”), in which the Court of Appeal would replace the Court of Rome in deciding whether or not to validate the detention of migrants in Albania.

### **Agrigento, 13 November**

Sea-Watch has filed a manslaughter complaint with the Public Prosecutor’s Office in Agrigento against the Italian state for failing to rescue a boat in distress with 28 people on board, reported by Seabird, which then sank two days later after a complete lack of rescue efforts, killing 21 people.

### **Rome, 15 November**

The journalist Maurizio Belpietro has been accused of defamation by several civil maritime rescue organisations because he called them “the new pirates” on the cover of Panorama in November 2022.

### **Rome, 15 November**

In a joint appeal, several civil maritime rescue, assistance and right to health organisations condemned how the Italy-Albania protocol violates the code of medical ethics and human rights.

### **Trieste, 20 November**

The Trieste authorities evacuated about 200 migrants from Porto Vecchio, where they had been living in precarious conditions since the evacuation of the former silos last June.

### **Rome, 20 November**

Italy announced the extension of the suspension of the Schengen agreement with Slovenia for another six months, maintaining strict border controls.

### **Turin, 20 November**

The Court of Appeal declared the 19 activists of the Casa Cantoniera, which hosted hundreds of people in transit along the border between Italy and France between 2018 and 2019, not guilty. The charge was squatting, but the judge recognised the social purpose of the illegal action.

### **Rome, 22 November**

The Italian government sent back home the police forces used in the identification and deportation centres in Albania. The use of these centers seems to have been temporarily suspended.

### **Ragusa, 27 November**

The fourth preliminary hearing in the case of the Mare Jonio/Maersk Etienne was held at the court in Ragusa. The ship’s doctor, Agnese Colpani, testified that the psycho-physical condition of the 29 people on board the Maersk Etienne was critical and that their transfer to the Mare Jonio was necessary.

# REPORT BORDERLINE EUROPE

NEWS FROM  
CENTRAL  
MEDITERRANEAN





# ARRIVALS

According to [borderline-europe](#) counts, 8,002 people reached Italy by sea in November 2024. The majority of people on the move (81%) arrived in Sicily - especially Lampedusa. In addition, there were again some arrivals in Calabria via the Ionian route (8%), most of which departed from Turkey. In addition, some boats reached Sardinia (2%) via the Algerian route. It can also be noted that there is still an increase in departures from Libya (around 57%), compared to 18% departures from Tunisia this month. According to our counts, the Italian authorities rescued around 56% of those who arrived, while rescues by NGO ships accounted for around 18%. According to [borderline-europe](#) data, Frontex was involved in around 10% of rescues in September. 8% of the refugees reached Italian coastal waters autonomously (12 nautical miles off the coast) without first being intercepted or rescued. In 16% of arrivals, no rescue information was available.

According to official figures from the Italian Ministry of the Interior, 8,124 people arrived in Italy in November. The - albeit small - discrepancy in the figures gives an indication of the lack of publicity of the data on the part of the Italian authorities.

# ROUTES TO EUROPE

In mid-October, the European border protection agency Frontex published a preliminary report on the development of the number of so-called irregular border crossings into the European Union. According to the report, 166,000 entries were recorded in the period from January to September 2024, which represents a decrease of 41% compared to the same period last year. However, all border crossings are recorded here, i.e. the same person can be counted several times at the same border. In addition, a shift in flight routes is apparent. The number of people crossing via the Central Mediterranean fell by 64% and by 79% via the Western Balkans route. According to [Tageschau](#), this decline can be explained by the fact that Indian and Tunisian citizens can no longer travel to Serbia without a visa and that the border states of Romania and Bulgaria have recently massively upgraded their border protection. Meanwhile, the number of EU entries on the West African route increased by 100%.

So although the number of migrant arrivals is declining, legal walls are being built within Europe. At the beginning of November, for example, first Norway and then the Netherlands suspended the Schengen Agreement in order to introduce border controls. The Netherlands, along with Germany, Italy, France and Austria, cited the risk of so-called irregular migration as a motive.

Norway, on the other hand, justifies the measure with the political tensions with Russia.

However, the fact that the number of arrivals in Europe is falling says nothing about the danger of the journey. On the morning of November 28, at least eight people from Turkey, including a pregnant woman, were rescued in a container on the Vento di Grecale ship at the port of Salerno. They were discovered during an inspection after docking and were initially taken to the Ruggi di Salerno hospital for initial treatment before the bureaucratic process with the authorities followed. The fact that people repeatedly opt for such dangerous crossings - whether in shipping containers or on poorly equipped boats - is a consequence of the European policy of isolation, according to which regular ferry tickets to Italy can only be purchased with a corresponding passport and visa.

While many countries continue to pursue this policy of sealing Europe off, news from Spain comes as a positive surprise: on November 20, 2024, a reform of the immigration guidelines was passed there, which should enable the legal and labor integration of 300,000 migrants per year.

Withdrawal from Albania for the time being?

Since our last Central Mediterranean Info in October 2024, another eight migrants have been brought to the Albanian port of Shëngjin. One of the men was transferred to Italy after a second examination because he was considered vulnerable due to health problems. The other seven also spent barely 48 hours in the border center. The judges in Rome did not confirm the detention in Albania in this case either and appealed to the European Court of Justice. More details on the case and the legal dispute can be found in Scirocco 16.

Since the departure of the second group, the Shëngjin hotspot and the Gjadër border center have been empty, so that the social workers from Medihospes (operator of the center) and most of the Italian officials were also withdrawn by the end of November. However, the Italian government insists that the facilities in Albania can still be used. Their hopes are based on the expected ruling by the Italian Supreme Court on December 4, which may revoke the rulings of the immigration courts.

# DEAD AND MISSING

The number of dead and missing people in the central Mediterranean increases with every passing month.

According to data from [borderline-europe](#), 88 people lost their lives while fleeing in November, while 227 people are still considered missing.

Let's start with the Tunisian mainland: 16 bodies were found by the coast guard on the east coast of the country in Mahdia at the end of October. However, the poor condition of the bodies makes identification extremely difficult, which is why work is continuing. In September, 15 Tunisians, including three young children, and 13 people from sub-Saharan Africa were found dead. According to the Tunisian Ministry of the Interior, 341 bodies have been found on the country's coast since the beginning of the year.

The events of November 7 and 8, when a boat with 80 migrants on board was rammed by the Tunisian coast guard until it finally capsized, seem even more dramatic. According to a survivor, the authorities watched 52 people drown without intervening. Among others, a mother with her three-year-old child and a sixteen-year-old died. A Tunisian fisherman was able to rescue 27 people and stayed at sea with them for a day and a half before a coastguard boat escorted him to the port of Sfax. There he was forced to hand the people over to the state authorities.

The group was separated and 13 women were abandoned in the desert on the border with Libya, while the men were handed over to Libyan militias from the Al-Assah prison. This story seems particularly perfidious with the background knowledge of the Italy-Tunisia memorandum on “strengthening sea rescue and the fight against human trafficking”: the patrol boats that were deployed here were donated to the state by the Meloni government as part of an agreement for effective border protection. Italian support is said to amount to a total of €4.8 million. Ursula von der Leyen has even promised the Tunisian government €105 million as part of a European deal.

There were also reports of four missing persons who had probably left Tunisia by boat. On the morning of November 30, the Italian military rescued eleven men who were swimming off the southern coast of Sardinia towards the coast. As soon as they reached the port of Teulada, the fugitives were treated by army medical personnel and a major search operation was launched to rescue the other people from the shipwreck. 16 people were found on land between Cala Zafferano and Poligono di Teulada. However, despite helicopter, diving and ship operations, four people are still missing as of December 1.

# PUSHBACKS

This month, we recorded 2,217 interceptions in the Central Mediterranean, where boats carrying refugees were pushed or pulled back to the North African coast. 2,092 people were towed back to Libya, while 125 were forcibly returned to Tunisia. These figures are not guaranteed, as the number of unreported cases is probably much higher.

After these pushbacks and pullbacks, migrants are often held in camps under precarious conditions. Human rights violations are regularly documented in these camps. Violence is also frequently used here.

At the beginning of October, for example, around 40 migrants who had set off for Italy on a boat near Sfax on the east coast of Tunisia were surrounded by two Tunisian coastguard jet skis after around two hours. The waves that arose left the people with no choice: after a brief discussion, they handed over the boat engine and the fuel to the so-called coast guard. They were then towed back to the coast by a Tunisian patrol vessel. Land was already in sight when the ship stopped abruptly and the officers told the refugees to swim to the beach. Although some people were non-swimmers, according to witness reports, all the people - including women and children - made it to the shore alive with solidarity and help from each other.

Another incident occurred on November 28 with the so-called Libyan coast guard. The Geo Barents, the ship of Doctors Without Borders, was on a rescue mission for over a hundred people in international waters about 40 km off the Libyan coast. While the crew was able to take 83 men and male minors on board, 29 women and female minors were forced onto two black rubber boats by armed militias. They claimed to belong to the Libyan coast guard. However, when asked, the coast guard claimed to have no knowledge of the incident. According to eyewitnesses, the militias had fired into the air, causing many migrants to jump into the water out of fear. The Geo Barents crew's attempts to negotiate the transfer of the women and minors to their ship were unsuccessful: the armed militias left with the victims for the Libyan coast, while the Geo Barents sailed to Brindisi on the Italian Adriatic coast. It will probably be months or years before the families separated at sea are reunited, if they are reunited at all.

# CIVIL RESISTANCE

In November 2024, 18 percent of all rescues were carried out by NGOs. Together, the civil fleet was able to rescue 1,429 people. There were a total of four multiple rescues, which were carried out by the Humanity I, the Sea-Eye 5, the Life Support and the Ocean Viking.

Italian authorities often hinder rescue operations by assigning distant ports. In November, ports changed several times due to medical emergencies and weather conditions. The Humanity I (SOS Humanity) rescued a total of 195 people and took them to Trapani (Sicily) instead of to the distant Marina di Carrara. In another case, it brought 70 people to Reggio Calabria. The Geo Barents (MSF) rescued 83 people and also took them to Reggio Calabria, having previously been assigned to Brindisi and then Crotona. The Life Support (Emergency) rescued 75 people in a multiple rescue and brought them to Vibo Valentia (Calabria). In two further missions, however, 49 people had to be taken to distant Ancona and 72 to Livorno in Tuscany. The new Search and Rescue sailboat Nihayet Garganey VI from ARCI and Sailing for Blue LAB rescued 43 people with the support of the Nadir (RESQSHIP) and brought them to Lampedusa. The boat Safira (Mediterranea Saving Humans), which was also deployed in November, rescued 79 people, the Sea Punk I (Sea Punks) 49. In two missions, the Aita Mari (Salvamento Marítimo Humanitario) rescued 33 people to Salerno and 53 to Catania. The Ocean

Viking brought 185 rescued people to the distant port of Genoa and rescued 25 and 48 people in further missions. The Sea-Eye 5 (Sea-Eye) rescued 172 people in three missions. 110 were to be taken to Ortona, but were ultimately allowed to go ashore in Pozzallo (Sicily). The remaining 62 were brought to Lampedusa by the Trotamar III (Compass Collective). The Solidaire (Open Arms) rescued 43, 50 and 81 people in three missions and brought them to Catania, Ortona and Naples. The Sea-Watch 5 (Sea-Watch) arrived in Palermo (Sicily) instead of Ravenna on the Adriatic coast with 49 people due to medical emergencies. Following a request from the court for minors, minors, women and medical emergencies were allowed to go ashore first, followed by the remaining 32 men after a day and a half.

## **Failure off Lampedusa: Sea-Watch files lawsuit against coast guard**

Sea-Watch filed a complaint against the Italian coast guard with the Agrigento public prosecutor's office on November 12. The reason for this was a shipwreck off Lampedusa on September 2, in which 21 people died. Despite a distress call from Sea-Watch, it took the coastguard two days to reach the boat with 28 people from a distance of one hour - too late, as it had already sunk. Only seven people were rescued. The complaint, supported by survivors and relatives, accuses the coastguard of multiple ho-

micides due to negligence, failure to render assistance and dereliction of duty. Sea-Watch is calling for investigations and an end to impunity for such incidents.

### **NGOs take legal action against blockades and for rescue rights**

Mediterranea Saving Humans is taking legal action against the financial sanctions, the detention and the denial of certification of their ship Mare Jonio. They criticize the Piantedosi Decree as unconstitutional, as it links sea rescue to state permits, and want to take the case to the Constitutional Court (see CMI October).

Sea-Watch has successfully filed a lawsuit against the Piantedosi Decree: On October 31, the court in Ragusa overturned a fine against the NGO and had previously already lifted the detention of the Sea-Watch 5 in Pozzallo. The court found that the ship did not cause a dangerous situation and that accusations of disobeying orders were unfounded. Sea-Watch continues to criticize the decree as arbitrary and warns of the new “Decreto Flussi”, a new law that will finally be voted on by the Senate in December and which is also intended to prevent surveillance flights in order to make rescues and the documentation of human rights violations more difficult.

On 6 November, the Council of State declared the detention of the Alan Kurdi ordered by the Olbia port authority (Sardinia) in 2020 to be unlawful, as the blockade violated international regulations. The Administrative Court of Sardinia had already lifted the blockade in 2021 as it was causing economic damage to the NGO.

### **Elon Musk vs. Sea-Watch**

Elon Musk, designated head of a new US authority under Donald Trump, called the German NGO Sea-Watch a “criminal organization”. The statement met with approval from Matteo Salvini, who is himself on trial for his actions against the rescue ship Open Arms. An exchange of blows broke out between Elon Musk and Sea-Watch when the NGO accused him of endangering the Italian justice system by calling for judges who vote against the detention of refugees to be replaced.

NGOs defend themselves against agitation and demands

Italian journalist Maurizio Belpietro, editor-in-chief of Panorama and La Verità, is being tried for defamation. He had described NGOs that rescue refugees in the Mediterranean as “new pirates”. Several organizations, including Open Arms, Emergency and Sea-Watch, filed charges in November 2022. The trial begins in March 2025.



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**MED REPORT**  
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