

10 YEARS

Civil sea rescue in the Central Mediterranean

In support of migrants' freedom of movement and against border deaths!



Border externalisation and criminalization:

These agreements lay the foundation for people fleeing to be systematically intercepted and pushed back to Libya

February 2017: Signature of the Italy-Libya Memorandum of understanding. Italy and EU member states undertake reinforcement of the capacities of the so-called Libyan coastguard.

October 2015: The EU military operation "Sophia" is launched to combat human trafficking and smuggling.

May 2015: several civilian SAR NGOs emerge to fill the deadly gap left by state actors.

November 2014: The Italian search and rescue operation "Mare Nostrum" is replaced by the European Frontex operation "Triton".

2017

2016

2015

July 2017: Italy issues a code of conduct for search and rescue organisations.

August 2017: Seizure of the rescue ship Iuventa.

Summer 2018: Malta and Italy close their harbours to people rescued from the sea, leading to long stand-off.

Italian authorities criminalise sea rescue and begin to investigate into activities of different NGOs and detain ships

June 2019: The Italian government issues a decree making the rescue of people in distress at sea a criminal offence (Salvini Decree II).

April 2020: Italy and Malta declare their ports unsafe under the pretext of the COVID-19 pandemic. Italy starts using port state controls to detain NGO ships and thus hinder their work.

2018

2019

2020

The Italian government issues a decree containing several administrative regulations obstructing sea rescues and contradicting international law

January 2023: Italy issues the Piantadosi Decree which imposes requirement on NGO ships to sail to the assigned port immediately after the first rescue. NGOs face administrative detentions, fines or even the permanent seizure of the ship.

December 2022: The Italian government begins to allocate distant harbours in the north of the country for disembarkation.

Despite numerous investigations opened against NGOs, no conviction has ever been issued so far

March 2021: Following the investigations initiated after the seizure of the Iuventa, 21 people from SAR NGOs are charged. An investigation is also launched against members of the NGO Mediterranean.

2023

2022

2021

The EU member states replicate in Tunisia the regime of refoulement by proxy set up in Libya

July 2023: The EU signs a Memorandum of Understanding to enhance cooperation across several sectors, including border management and building SAR capacities with Tunisia.

June 2024: Tunisia sets up its own search and rescue zone with the support of the EU and Italy.

October 2024: The Italian government adopts a new decree law to extend the "Piantadosi Law" to further hinder the work of SAR organisations.

Since January 2023, NGO ships have been subjected to 30 detentions, amounting to a total of 720 days in harbours instead of supporting people on the move at sea. They spent an additional 822 days at sea navigating to reach arbitrarily far assigned ports

2024

2025

Since 2015, in the Central Mediterranean:



More than **336,000** people have been intercepted while fleeing and **forced back to Libya and Tunisia**, with the actual number likely to be much higher



The EU has provided around **€242 million** in funding to the Tunisian and Libyan authorities for **border control**



More that **22 000** people have been reported **dead or missing** (IOM figures). with the real number is likely much higher

Despite the brutalisation of the border regime...

- Since 2015, more than **950 000** people have **arrived to Italy** and **9 000** to **Malta** by sea, many of whom arrived **autonomously**
- **22 SAR and monitoring vessels** and **4 monitoring planes** are currently active along the Central Mediterranean route
- **175 500** people were **rescued by the Civil fleet** over the past 10 years
- Approximately **4 000 boats** have been supported by the emergency hotline **Alarm Phone** since 2015 in the Central Mediterranean

10 years of Solidarity And Resistance!

