



This factsheet provides a summary of political developments and operational updates regarding our ships and aircraft.

1. Political developments	1
2. Updates on our aerial operations with Seabird 1, Seabird 2 and Seabird 3	3
Overview of boats in distress spotted	3
Details and outcomes for selected boats in distress	5
3. Updates on our operations at sea with Sea-Watch 5 and Aurora	9

## 1. Political developments

### The Italian authorities detain NGO aircraft and shut down civilian monitoring over the central Mediterranean Sea

As of October 2024, with the "Flussi" decree-law, the Italian authorities can detain NGO aircraft, implementing a similar legal framework as with that already applied to ships.<sup>1</sup> In summer 2025, the Italian authorities detained Sea-Watch's aircraft *Seabird 1*, and then *Pilotes Volontaires' Colibri 2* for a total of 40 days. First, on August 7th, the Italian authorities detained *Seabird 1*, claiming that the aircraft did not "inform them immediately and as a matter of priority" during a previous aerial operation. *Seabird 1* had abided by the law and its standard procedures during the operation in question on June 30th. Authorities also did not provide further details,<sup>2</sup> thus restricting our right to a fair and proper defense. Later, *Colibri 2* was detained for 20 days. Alongside multiple other accusations, the Italian authorities reproached the aircraft for not having systematically alerted the so-called *Libyan coastguard* and *Tunisian National Guard* - while the crew had acted in line with international maritime and human rights law.<sup>3</sup> **The "Flussi" decree-law (Law 145/2024) restricts freedom of flight and attempts to close civilian eyes monitoring state crimes in the Mediterranean. Without NGO aircraft, persons in distress are left alone at sea and the public is blind to human rights violations and crimes against humanity.**

In the meantime, in July 2025, the Italian Constitutional Court clarified the legal framework for detaining NGO assets, and in doing so, denounced previous arbitrary detentions. Indeed, the Court ruled that "an order which leads to a breach of the primary order to save human life and which is likely to endanger it is therefore not binding and its non-observance cannot be sanctioned". Orders by the so-called *Libyan*

<sup>1</sup> See Sea-Watch's previous factsheet: <https://sea-watch.org/en/quarterly-factsheet-july-september-2024/>.

<sup>2</sup> See Sea-Watch's press release on the matter: <https://sea-watch.org/en/italy-detains-human-rights-monitoring-aircraft/>.

<sup>3</sup> See *Pilotes Volontaires'* communication on the matter: <https://www.facebook.com/pilotesvolontaires/posts/1104382591837616/>.



coastguard and *Tunisian National Guard* are often unlawful due to their violent behaviours and the fact that they can never provide a safe place for disembarkation. Based on this interpretation, the Italian authorities cannot sanction NGOs for not following those orders as has been done in the past.<sup>4</sup>

#### **Over 60 incidents of violence at sea and yet the EU met with Libyan actors**

On 24th August 2025, while the NGO ship *Ocean Viking* was engaged in the search for a boat in distress, as alerted by *Seabird 3* and authorized by Italian authorities, a so-called *Libyan coastguard* patrol vessel opened fire for 20 minutes, targeting people on board the NGO vessel. A day earlier, while engaging in the search for a boat in distress reported by *Seabird 3*, the NGO ship *Trotamar III* was also threatened by the same militia. **These are not isolated incidents but part of a wider pattern of violence at sea.**<sup>5</sup> At the time of the editorial deadline, Sea-Watch had documented 76 cases of violence by Libyan militias against people in distress and NGO vessels since 2016, with 21 incidents in 2025 alone.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, the number of unreported cases is estimated to be substantially higher. Recorded are, among other incidents, shootings, incidents leading to the deaths of people, dangerous manoeuvres, threats against rescue crews, the beatings of persons in distress and the abandonment of dead bodies at sea. Sea-Watch has compiled the most visible and direct forms of physical violence taking place within this system of border violence externalization, which is, by nature, illegal and coercive. People attempting to reach the EU are by far those most affected by violence at sea. Many incidents remain underreported, as upon their interception to Libya and referral to detention camps, the possibilities for people to report violence are extremely limited. Since 2016,<sup>7</sup> the EU and several of its member states have supported Libyan militias through funding, training and the provision of equipment, disguising them as a “coastguard”, while in reality their task is to prevent people from reaching Europe by sea. Since Libya is not a place of safety for persons rescued at sea, each “rescue” and forced return to Libya is illegal under international law.

**4** See for instance *SOS Humanity*’s detention: <https://sos-humanity.org/en/press/court-confirms/or-Sea-Eye's-detention>; *Sea-Eye*’s detention: <https://sea-eye.org/en/sea-eye-wins-third-case-against-italy-this-year>.

**5** See Sea-Watch’s report: “Episodes of violence by the so-called Libyan coastguard and other Libyan militias at sea from 2016 to September 2025”, available at: [https://seawatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Sea-Watch-Violence-at-sea-2016-September-2025.pdf?mc\\_cid=82e9cf8f8](https://seawatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Sea-Watch-Violence-at-sea-2016-September-2025.pdf?mc_cid=82e9cf8f8).

**6** An updated overview of all incidents is available at: <https://justice-fleet.org/en/incidents>.

**7** The European Commission and Frontex have recently met with delegations of Western and Eastern Libya, in Warsaw and Brussels: <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2025/10/14/eu-has-long-engaged-with-libyas-haftar-on-technical-migration-matters-sources-tell-euronew>.

#### **Frontex requested Sea-Watch to pay for legal costs, disregarding EU Parliament resolutions**

In April 2022, Sea-Watch together with the organization *FragDenStaat* filed a lawsuit for information to be released proving Frontex’s involvement



in human rights violations on the Mediterranean Sea. A *Frontex* asset was allegedly involved in the illegal interception of around 20 people in distress by the so-called *Libyan coastguard* in the Maltese Search and Rescue (SAR) zone.<sup>8</sup> *Frontex* had previously refused all requests under the Freedom of Information Regulation. In April 2024, the General Court of the EU rejected the complaint. However, the judges ruled that *Frontex* had unlawfully failed to disclose the existence of over a hundred photographs. The refusal of access to these photographs was not justified.<sup>9</sup> In May 2025, *Frontex* requested that Sea-Watch cover the Agency's court costs - more than 11,000€. The invoice was issued despite repeated resolutions by the European Parliament in former cases urging *Frontex* not to burden civil plaintiffs with such costs.<sup>10</sup> In January 2026, Sea-Watch was ultimately forced to cover *Frontex*' external legal expenses, amounting to 8,290€.

#### **"Justice Fleet": 13 SAR NGOs launch a new alliance and suspend communications with the Libyan Rescue Coordination Centre<sup>11</sup>**

Since the end of the search and rescue programme "Mare Nostrum", European Member States have continuously supported and thus legitimized violent actors at sea, such as the so-called *Libyan coastguard*. The aim of the newly founded alliance, the "Justice Fleet", is to join forces and ultimately defend the rights of persons seeking safety. Upholding international maritime and human rights law, 13 SAR NGOs thus decided to end operational communication with the *Libyan Joint Rescue Coordination Centre* and the so-called *Libyan coastguard*. These actors do not meet international standards and use violence, and thus cannot be considered as legitimate. Acknowledging that this decision may breach the "Piantedosi" and "Flussi" decree-laws and lead to sanctions, SAR NGOs will stand together and challenge any detentions and fines in court.

## **2. Updates on our aerial operations with *Seabird 1*, *Seabird 2* and *Seabird 3***

### **Overview of boats in distress spotted**

From July - December, we conducted 61 operations with our aircraft *Seabird 1*, *Seabird 2* and *Seabird 3*,<sup>12</sup> with a total flight time of 526 hours, equivalent to almost 22 days. We spotted approximately 5008 persons in distress aboard 106 different boats.

- 1100 persons, on board 26 boats in distress were intercepted by the so-called *Libyan coastguard* and pulled back to Libya

**8** See *Human Rights Watch* and *Border Forensics*' report: [https://www.hrw.org/video-photos/interactive/2022/12/08/airborne-complicity-frontex-aerial-surveillance-enables-abuse?mc\\_cid=59dc1fc138&mc\\_cid=fb8083501d](https://www.hrw.org/video-photos/interactive/2022/12/08/airborne-complicity-frontex-aerial-surveillance-enables-abuse?mc_cid=59dc1fc138&mc_cid=fb8083501d).

**9** More information on the court case is available at: <https://sea-watch.org/en/700-life-jackets-in-front-frontexs-office/>.

**10** See for instance the discharge procedure: <https://media.frag-den-staat.de/files/docs/19/19/b5/1919b5a0e45e-444fa640136978f870d1/eu-parliament-frontex-discharge-decision.pdf> or the European Parliament resolution on this matter: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2023-0295\\_EN.html#-def\\_1\\_25](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2023-0295_EN.html#-def_1_25).

**11** More information can be found at: <https://justice-fleet.org/>.

**12** Since 2017, together with the Swiss NGO *Humanitarian Pilots Initiative*, Sea-Watch monitors the central Mediterranean with its aircraft *Seabird 1*, *Seabird 2* and *Seabird 3*.



- 135 persons, on board 3 boats in distress, including 2 from the Maltese SAR zone, were intercepted by the *General Administration for Coastal Security (GACS)*<sup>13</sup>
- 120 persons were intercepted by 3 unidentified Libyan actors and disembarked in Libya
- 1534 persons, on board 30 boats in distress, were rescued by the Italian authorities and disembarked in Italy
- 139 persons, on board 2 boats in distress, were rescued by a *Frontex* ship and disembarked in Lampedusa, Italy
- 97 persons, on board 1 boat, were rescued by the merchant vessel *Port Fukuoka* and ultimately disembarked in Italy - 3 persons died
- 1096 persons, on board 22 boats in distress, were rescued by NGO vessels and disembarked in Italy
- The outcomes for 776 persons, on board 18 boats in distress, remain uncertain
- One boat capsized, where only 11 persons could be rescued by the Italian authorities - 24 persons died

Between July and December, at least 37 persons on board boats in distress sighted by *Seabird 1*, *Seabird 2* and *Seabird 3* lost their lives.

From July to December, we must assume that the European Border and coastguard Agency *Frontex*<sup>14</sup> was involved in the narratives - with ships and aerial assets - for at least 2367 persons, on board 48 boats in distress sighted by *Seabird 1*, *Seabird 2* and *Seabird 3*. **775 persons, on board 18 boats, were pulled back to Libya by the so-called Libyan coastguard, and 70 persons on board 2 boats, by the GACS.** 90 other persons on board 2 boats were intercepted by unidentified actors and pulled back to Libya. The outcome for 320 persons, onboard 7 boats in distress, remains unknown. ***Frontex' transparency and accountability are still missing in those cases.***

From July to December, Italian authorities released **7 Inmarsat messages<sup>15</sup> on behalf of the so-called Libyan coastguard (or) the Tunisian Navy** in cases involving Sea-Watch's aircraft, instead of launching or coordinating a rescue operation with a disembarkation in a place of safety. Three of the boats, with around 140 persons, were intercepted and pulled back to Libya by Libyan actors, including the so-called *Libyan coastguard*.

**13** The General Administration for Coastal Security (GACS) under the Libyan Minister of Interior. Their mandate is to operate within the 12 nautical miles off the Libyan coast only, in the territorial waters. They are equally known for violence at sea: [https://sea-watch.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Sea-Watch-Violence-at-sea-2016-September-2025.pdf?mc\\_cid=82e9cf8f8](https://sea-watch.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Sea-Watch-Violence-at-sea-2016-September-2025.pdf?mc_cid=82e9cf8f8).

**14** For more information on *Frontex'* activity in the central Mediterranean Sea: <https://sea-watch.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Frontex-Factsheet-2nd-Report.pdf>.

**15** An International Maritime Satellite is a satellite tele-communication system transmitting messages from ship-to-shore, shore-to-ship, and ship-to-ship. This system is particularly used by Rescue Coordination Centres to communicate with ships regarding boats in distress.



## Details and outcomes for selected boats in distress

Between July and December 2025, Sea-Watch's aerial operations documented the systematic outsourcing of rescue operations by Italy and Malta to Libyan militias, such as the so-called *Libyan coastguard*, the GACS and the *Tareq Bin Zayed* brigade. Some even occurred from the Maltese SAR zone and/or involved *Frontex*, even though NGO ships in the vicinity were operational. Furthermore, merchant vessels were left alone with boats in distress by European authorities or became complicit in illegal transshipments and pullbacks to Libya.

**16** A "mayday relay" is an emergency procedure that provides information about a boat in distress via maritime or aerial radio, requesting any asset in the vicinity to assist.

### **A merchant vessel and NGO ship filled the gap left by the authorities, Italy issued an inmarsat message on behalf of Tunisia instead of coordinating a rescue operation**

On the afternoon of July 2nd, *Seabird 3* spotted a sinking boat with approximately 55 people on board within the overlapping Tunisian and Maltese SAR zones. Around 20 persons were already in the water. *Seabird 3* immediately issued several mayday relays<sup>16</sup> and alerted authorities as well as ships in the area. The merchant vessel *Maridive 208* responded to *Seabird 3*'s calls and reached the boat in distress one hour later. At that time, *Frontex* aircraft *Sparrow 1* also arrived on scene and observed the situation for an hour. The people eventually refused to be rescued by the merchant vessel, out of the fear of being pulled back to Tunisia. Thus, the *Maridive 208* stabilized the situation, until the NGO sailing vessel *Nihayet Garganey VI* arrived on scene in the evening. Since the NGO ship already had over 60 survivors on board from a previous rescue operation, the *Nihayet Garganey VI* requested support from the Italian authorities. All people were eventually transferred onto two *Italian coastguard* patrol boats and disembarked in Lampedusa. While the rescue operation was already ongoing, the Italian *Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre* (MRCC) issued an inmarsat for the boat "on behalf of the *Tunisian Navy coastguard*" in the night. Another example of Italy outsourcing its duties instead of implementing them.

### **The so-called *Libyan coastguard* conducted an interception: the "rescue" was "complete" under *Frontex*' watch**

On the morning of July 5th, *Seabird 1* overheard a mayday relay sent by *Frontex*' drone *Heron1*. *Seabird 1* spotted the boat in distress in the Libyan SAR zone shortly after. The *Frontex* asset stated their intention to stay on scene to *Seabird 1*. Two hours later, *Frontex* informed *Seabird 1*'s crew that the "rescue" was "complete", without specifying by whom. When *Seabird 1* returned to the area half an hour later, a so-called *Libyan coastguard* patrol boat was leaving with around 30 persons on board. *Frontex* had been on



scene the whole time until the interception was finished. The NGO ship *Solidaire* was operating and heading to the boat in distress and still, a Libyan interception took place under *Frontex*' watch.

#### **Interception in the Maltese SAR zone by the GACS following *Frontex* orbits, even though NGO ships were available**

On the night of July 6th, the hotline *Watch the Med - Alarm Phone* informed about a boat in distress in the Maltese SAR zone with approximately 20 persons on board. According to open sources, *Frontex*' aircraft *Sparrow 2* was orbiting the scene. Two NGO ships changed their courses to assist the people. When *Seabird 1* arrived on scene in the morning, the crew were only able to observe the Libyan *General Administration for Coastal Security* (GACS) towing an empty boat, matching the description of the one previously reported. They eventually set the boat on fire. We must assume that the 20 people were intercepted by the GACS within the Maltese SAR zone - even though two NGOs were on their way. **Transparency on *Frontex*' actions is still missing.** Furthermore, **it remains unclear why the GACS intercepted the persons in an European SAR zone**, even though this militia is supposedly operational in Libyan territorial waters only.

#### **A boat in distress sank and a merchant vessel was left alone by Italy and Malta for several days**

On July 28th, *Seabird 2* spotted 99 people in distress in the overlapping area of the Libyan and Tunisian SAR zones. The crew sent a mayday relay immediately, which was acknowledged by the Italian authorities. Two hours after the first alert, *Seabird 2* observed that persons were falling off the boat. In the evening, *Frontex*' aircraft *Sparrow 2* was on scene according to open sources. *Seabird 2* spotted the boat in distress, together with a few people in the water again the next morning. The nearby merchant vessel *Port Fukuoka* reacted to *Seabird 2*'s mayday relay and headed towards the position. Unfortunately, the boat capsized: one person went missing, and the merchant vessel's crew had to recover the bodies of two children. *Frontex* was also on-scene and eventually deployed a life raft.<sup>17</sup> The merchant vessel was then left alone for two more days, as Italy ignored any calls for support while issuing inmarsat messages on behalf of the so-called *Libyan coastguard* for the missing person. Thanks to public support from civil society,<sup>18</sup> Italian authorities evacuated a 9-month pregnant woman. The remaining 96 survivors eventually disembarked in Italy on August 1st.

<sup>17</sup> According to media report, *Frontex* can deploy such liferaft at least since April 2024, see <https://digit.site36.net/2024/04/23/frontex-now-drops-life-rafts-first-mission-in-the-mediterranean-allegedly-successful/>. Still, it is the first time that Sea-Watch witnessed *Frontex* using this possibility.

<sup>18</sup> See Sea-Watch's press release: <https://sea-watch.org/en/merchant-ship-with-over-90-people-at-sea-for-days/>.

**A Tareq Bin Zayed vessel intercepted persons in distress in the Maltese SAR zone**

On August 4th, the civilian hotline *Watch the Med - Alarm Phone* was called by persons in distress in the Maltese SAR zone. When *Seabird 2* searched for the boat on August 5th, the crew was only able to spot an empty boat burning which matched the position and description provided by the *Alarm Phone*. Half an hour earlier, the crew had also observed a vessel from the *Tareq Bin Zayed* militia with approximately 30 persons on deck, and probably the engine from the empty boat, leaving the area. We must assume that the people were illegally pulled back by the *Tareq Bin Zayed* ship, in the Maltese SAR zone. **The *Tareq Bin Zayed* brigade is led by a son of the convicted war criminal Khalifa Haftar and can be linked to “a catalogue of horrors including unlawful killings, torture, enforced disappearance, rape and forced displacement”.**<sup>19</sup> The same brigade is accused of having shot at persons in distress in the Maltese SAR zone.<sup>20</sup> **How they knew about the persons in distress and were allowed to conduct the interception in a European SAR zone remains unclear as of today.**

**Between August 7th and 27th, the Italian authorities detained *Seabird 1*.**  
Sea-Watch kept operating from Lampedusa with its aircraft *Seabird 3*.

**An unidentified voice insulted *Seabird 1* on the radio for asking on the whereabouts of persons in distress**

On September 18th, the offshore platform *Farwah* informed *Seabird 1* over the radio that the merchant vessel *Bos Aphrodite* had conducted two rescue operations during the night, likely in the Libyan SAR zone. The vessel had 93 survivors on board, including children and 3 pregnant women. Later, *Bos Aphrodite* stated on the radio that they had contacted the Libyan authorities only and were waiting for the so-called *Libyan coastguard* to (illegally) transfer the survivors. The merchant vessel did not respond when *Seabird 1* reminded them that Libya was not a place of safety. *Seabird 1*’s ground crew unsuccessfully reached out to the merchant vessel multiple times. On two occasions, someone hung up immediately. On September 20th, *Seabird 1* observed that no survivor was on the *Bos Aphrodite*. The crew unsuccessfully tried to call the merchant vessel for clarification. Instead, one unidentified voice said on the radio: “f\*ck you and your aircraft”. It is still unclear what happened to the 93 survivors. We must assume that they were transferred to the so-called *Libyan coastguard* and pulled back to Libya.

<sup>19</sup> See AlJazeera’s article on the brigade: [aljazeera.com/features/longform/2023/8/11/eastern-libya-militia-operates-illegal-pull-backs-in-mediterranean](https://www.aljazeera.com/features/longform/2023/8/11/eastern-libya-militia-operates-illegal-pull-backs-in-mediterranean).

<sup>20</sup> See *Alarm Phone*’s communication on this case: [https://x.com/alarm\\_phone/status/1978450084002939321](https://x.com/alarm_phone/status/1978450084002939321).

**The so-called *Libyan coastguard* pursued a boat in distress, engaging in dangerous maneuvers, and at least 1 person drowned**

On the morning of September 28th, *Seabird 2* spotted a boat in distress with approximately 30 people on board in the Libyan SAR zone. The persons in distress were situated between two merchant vessels and the oil platform *Bouri*. The merchant vessel *Everest* informed *Seabird 2* that the so-called *Libyan coastguard* were on their way and thus, they would not assist. *Seabird 2* sent out a mayday relay, where *Frontex*' aircraft *Sparrow 2* reached out to *Seabird 2* on the radio, stating that they were heading to the position. In the meantime, the vessel *Maridive 704* headed towards the persons in distress. Shortly after *Frontex* were on-scene, the so-called *Libyan coastguard* approached the scene and engaged in very dangerous manoeuvres, chasing the boat in distress instead of rescuing the persons that were in the water. 4 persons fell overboard and at least 3 persons drowned. The remaining people first were taken aboard the merchant vessel *Maridive 704*, and then illegally transshipped to the so-called *Libyan coastguard*.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Some footage is available at: [https://x.com/seawatch\\_intl/status/1972595550416675232](https://x.com/seawatch_intl/status/1972595550416675232).

**While looking for a shipwreck, Italy transferred the responsibility to Malta and Malta hung up on the phone**

On the morning of October 17th, the crew of *Seabird 2* became aware of an ongoing search and rescue operation by the *Italian coastguard*. *Frontex* aircraft *Sparrow 2* and an *Italian coastguard* patrol boat were communicating over the radio about several persons in the water in the Maltese SAR zone, without a boat visible in the near vicinity. Shortly after, *Seabird 2*'s crew found a capsized boat. On this day, *Seabird 2*'s ground crew tried to reach out to the Italian and Maltese rescue authorities several times, in order to support and coordinate the search and rescue activities. Italy referred the ground crew to the Maltese authorities, who, after a first fruitful call, then repeatedly hung up on the phone. In the end, the *Italian coastguard* brought 11 survivors to Lampedusa. According to reports, around 35 persons were on the boat in distress.

**A merchant vessel refused to render assistance for security reasons, persons were intercepted and brought back to Libya**

On the morning of November 8th, *Seabird 1* overheard a mayday relay from an unknown station, for a boat in distress in the Libyan SAR zone. From the accent heard, this may have been a Maltese station. *Seabird 1*'s crew headed towards the relayed position and spotted the boat in distress one hour later. The crew informed the merchant vessel *Normand Sapphire*, flying the Norwegian flag, as the closest vessel in the area. On the radio, the captain refused to render assistance for 'security reasons', due to the gas that the vessel was



shipping. When *Seabird 1*'s crew reached out to the captain again the next day, he confirmed that the people had been intercepted by the so-called *Libyan coastguard*.

<sup>22</sup> See Sea-Watch's communication: [https://x.com/seawatch\\_intl/status/1952640669350039920](https://x.com/seawatch_intl/status/1952640669350039920).

### **3. Updates on our operations at sea with Sea-Watch 5 and Aurora**

Between July and December 2025, Sea-Watch 5 and Aurora's crews were able to rescue 1117 persons in distress from 21 boats. Furthermore, Aurora's crews assisted and secured 281 persons in distress on board 6 different boats, until the people were eventually rescued by Italian authorities.

#### **Aurora detained by the Italian authorities for guaranteeing safety onboard**

After the rescue of 70 persons on July 14th, the *Aurora* was detained by Italian authorities under the "Piantedosi" decree-law. Initially, Pozzallo was assigned as a port of safety for *Aurora*. However, *Aurora* was forced to head to Lampedusa, due to worsening weather conditions and while continuously keeping authorities informed. Indeed, the shipmaster had to guarantee the safety of the crew and the rescued people on board. The authorities allowed the ship to enter the port of Lampedusa, but still detained it afterwards, arguing that in retrospect, the weather was not as bad as it seemed. On August 4th, the Civil Court of Agrigento suspended the detention,<sup>22</sup> and confirmed its decision on October 21st. The court recognized that the ship follows a humanitarian purpose in line with international law. Furthermore, the court mentioned concerns related to the fundamental rights of the individuals involved and the organization itself, specifically regarding the right to property, which is protected by the Italian Constitution.

#### **The Aurora filled a 4 day gap left by authorities and evacuated persons from a supply ship**

On August 29th, the civilian hotline *Watch The Med - Alarm Phone* was informed about persons being on board a merchant vessel, the *Maridive 208*, in the overlapping area of the Maltese and Tunisian SAR regions. On August 30th, *Seabird 1* headed to the ship, which was located next to the offshore platform *Miskar*. The platform reported that the *Tunisian Navy* was informed and had not come due to "bad weather". On the next day, the platform informed that they were expecting the *Tunisian Navy* later and that the platform was not allowed to contact the Italian and Maltese RCCs, as company policy. When *Seabird 3*'s



ground crew called them, the Italian authorities referred the ground crew to the Tunisian authorities. Later, the offshore platform reported that the people had refused to embark on to a *Tunisian Navy* patrol boat and that the merchant vessel was lacking food. On the next day, August 31st, in the evening, the NGO sailing vessel *Nihayet Garganey VI* arrived on-scene. On September 1st, the NGO conducted several medical and humanitarian assessments on board the merchant ship, and repeatedly urged authorities to intervene. The Italian authorities sent out an inmarsat message “on behalf of MRCC Tunis”, regarding 7 missing persons as had been reported by the survivors. Once on-scene, *Seabird 3* observed how the merchant vessel refused the requested medical evacuation of 2 persons via an Italian helicopter, as the ship had to work. On September 2nd, filling the gap left by the authorities, the *Aurora* was deployed and successfully evacuated the 41 remaining people from the supply ship *Maridive 208*.<sup>23</sup> The people disembarked in Lampedusa. The people had been stranded at sea for six days, and 7 were missing. In this case, as requested by the 41 survivors, the NGOs ARCI, *Sea-Watch* and the UN Human Rights Committee issued interim measures and requested Italy and Malta to coordinate the rescue of the persons and their disembarkation in a place of safety.<sup>24</sup>

**The Aurora was again detained by the authorities**

A few days later, on September 9th, and after another rescue of 70 people, *Aurora* was again detained by Italian authorities. Due to a lack of fuel that was communicated transparently to the authorities, the ship was not able to reach the assigned port of safety.<sup>25</sup> The Italian MRCC ignored *Aurora*'s requests for a closer port for over 10 hours.

**The Sea-Watch 5 was shot at by the so-called *Libyan coastguard*, while fulfilling its duty to render assistance**

On September 26th, shortly after a rescue, the *Sea-Watch 5* was aggressively ordered to leave the area and eventually shot at by the so-called *Libyan coastguard*. The ship that fired the shot was donated by Italy to the Libyan militia in 2018.<sup>26</sup>

**23** See *Sea-Watch*'s press release on the case: <https://sea-watch.org/en/rescue-ship-aurora-evacuates-41-people-after-six-days-at-sea/>.

**24** See *Sea-Watch*'s press release on the decision: <https://sea-watch.org/en/un-human-rights-committee-rules-against-malta-and-italy-s-non-assistance/>.

**25** See *Sea-Watch*'s press release on the detention: <https://sea-watch.org/en/rescue-ship-aurora-blocked-after-rescuing-75-people/>.

**26** See *Sea-Watch*'s press release on the case: <https://sea-watch.org/en/libyan-militia-fires-on-rescue-ship-sea-watch-5/>.