

On the Move – Latest migration news

MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES IN MALTA

10/05/2022-24/05/2022

- On 12 May 2022, Alarm Phone reported of a distress case where [24 people](#) were in danger in the Maltese SAR zone. Water was coming into the boat, they had no food nor drinking water. A Frontex airplane was overseeing the vessel, but no authority intervened, nor did a commercial vessel nearby. Finally, after many hours at sea, the rescue vessel Sea Eye 4 rescued all the 24 people.
- On 6 May 2022, Alarm Phone reported about a distress case of [34 people](#) in danger off Libyan coasts. The people then entered the Maltese SAR zone, but Maltese authorities did not intervene. The commercial vessel Berlin Express tried assisted the people but was unable to take them on board due to bad weather conditions. Due to Malta's unresponsiveness, the MRCC in Bremen – Germany – took the lead in the coordination of the operation. The people were then assisted by another commercial vessel, BSG BAHAMAS and finally rescued by the NGO Sea Eye after more than 36 hours of non-assistance.

22/03/2022-05/04/2022

On 2 April 2022, [Pope Francis](#) visited Malta and urged support for migrants.

08/02/2022 – 22/02/2022

- The EU Commissioner for Human Rights, **Dunja Mijatović**, [published](#) the report on her visit to Malta in October 2021. The recommendations include safeguarding media freedom and ensuring the safety of journalists; protecting the lives and dignity of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants; strengthening women's rights. Specifically on migration, the Commissioner recommended Malta to step up its capacity for coordination of SAR operation in the Mediterranean and review its cooperation with Libya, as Libya cannot be considered a Place of Safety for the disembarkation of migrants. She also recommended to invest in alternatives to detention and end the detention of migrant children.

25/01/2022 – 08/02/2022

- Amnesty International will [attend](#) the El Hiblu proceedings for the first time. The case dates back to March 2019, when the merchant vessel El Hiblu rescued 108 people and was instructed to return them to Libya. The vessel

however entered Malta, and three teenaged migrants on board were accused of having “seized control of the vessel”. They face 30 years in prison, but international actors are calling for the dismissal of the case and insists that the three were only acting as translators between the captain and the other survivors.

- In the spring of 2020, 425 migrants were detained offshore on vessels used for quarantine, due to the outbreak of Covid. However, 32 people who were detained in the Captain Morgan vessel have now [sued](#) the Maltese government claiming that the detention was against their human rights.

11/01/2022 – 25/01/2022

- A legal team composed of lawyers from the associations UpRights, Adala For All, and StraLi filed a Communication to the International Criminal Court demanding the investigation of [war crimes](#) against migrants carried out by Libyan armed groups and officials with the support of Italian and Maltese authorities. As the organisations [state](#) “The Communication requests the ICC to investigate international crimes committed by Libyan armed groups against thousands of migrants, including women and children, trapped in detention centres in Libya following their interception at sea. Once returned to Libya, the victims were routinely and systematically subjected to various forms of mistreatments and abuse including murder, torture, rape, forced labour and forced conscription. The Communication underlines that the ICC Prosecutor should scrutinise, in addition to Libyan actors, the potential criminal conduct of Italian and Maltese authorities and officials for the support they provided to Libyan actors.”

14/12/2021 – 11/01/2022

- On 26 December 2021, Alarm Phone warned about a boat in distress in the Maltese SAR zone carrying 30 people. Despite the numerous requests for assistance no authority intervened for more than one day, putting the lives of the people on board at risk. After 38 hours from the first distress call, commercial vessel [Pan Unity](#) rescued the people who were then transferred to Maltese authorities and disembarked in Malta.
- On 22 December 2021, Alarm Phone [launched](#) an alarm about two boats in the Maltese SAR zone carrying respectively 30 and 40 people. Authorities were informed but no one intervened. Later in the day, two boats arrived in Lampedusa. However, due to lack of information by relevant authorities, it is impossible to confirm whether it is the same boats.
- Migreurop published a report on the systematic detention of asylum-seekers in Malta after disembarkation. Asylum seekers are deprived of their liberty in [terrible conditions](#), where lack of hygiene, access to healthcare

and overcrowding are widespread. The report also highlights the complicity of the EU in this approach. The report is available [here](#).

30/11/2021 – 14/12/2021

- Various NGOs in Malta are demanding that the government increase protection measures for [stateless people](#) by including the status of statelessness in the law. According to the organisations, Malta is not fulfilling its obligations to protect stateless people despite being signatory to the 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons.

16/11/2021 – 29/11/2021

- 32 migrants filed a [complaint](#) against Maltese authorities claiming their human rights were violated. The migrants were held for weeks on boats rented by the government at the beginning of the pandemic, and they demand compensation for inhuman and degrading treatment and violations of the European Convention on Human Rights. The first hearing was held on the 18th of November 2021 and the next will be in January 2022.
- Between November 21st and 22nd 2021, Alarm Phone reported various distress cases in the Maltese SAR zone. Some of the boats were rescued by Italian authorities during the night of the 22nd of November 2021. However, the fate of three boats carrying respectively [92](#), [60](#) and [22](#) people remains unknown.

25/10/2021 – 15/11/2021

- On the 29th of October, [Lamin Jaiteh](#), a Gambian migrant living in **Valletta**, fell from a building where he was working. His colleagues placed him on a plank of wood and brought him to the van of the boss. The latter refused to call an ambulance as he was scared to “end in jail” since the migrant was working for him illegally. Instead of bringing him to the hospital, the boss abandoned him on the streets in agony where he was later found by a couple who called an ambulance.
- On the 30th of October, migrants and Maltese citizens held a [peaceful demonstration](#) in Valletta to protest exploitative policies and precarious working conditions for migrants. The theme of the protest was “There is no us and them. There is only us.”

05/10/2021 – 25/10/2021

- During her visit to Malta, the [Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights](#), Dunja Mijatović, stressed that “the human rights of those in distress at sea should never be put at risk. Particularly, the authorities should ensure that their actions do not lead, either directly or indirectly, to returns

to Libya, which is not a safe place for disembarkation". The Commissioner visited the Safi Detention Centre and two open migrant centres in Hal Far.

23/09/2021 – 05/10/2021

- Around [70 people in distress](#) in Malta Search and Rescue (SAR) zone after two days at sea. The authorities were alerted but [Alarm Phone](#) lost contact with them and don't know if they were eventually rescued.
- On 4 October 2021, another [49 people](#) are in distress in Malta SAR zone, authorities are informed but they have not carried out yet a rescue operation.

27/07/2021 – 19/08/2021

- On 30 July 2021, 33 people in distress in Malta's SAR zone were [rescued](#) by the SAR NGO Sea Watch 3 during attempted illegal pullback by so-called Libyan Coast Guard.
- Between 27 and 28 July 2021, 37 asylum seekers, including minors, who had been in distress at sea for at least a day were eventually [rescued](#) by the Armed Forces of Malta.

5/07/2021 – 27/07/2021

- Maltese authorities rescued 81 people in distress at sea, while three people had already died on board the boat. The NGO Sea-Watch has [claimed](#) that authorities purposely delayed the rescue.

21/06/2021 – 05/07/2021

- On 1 July 2021, the rescue vessel Ocean Viking from **SOS Méditerranée** [rescued 44 people](#) – including 15 minors, 5 women and 2 people with disabilities – in two different operations in Malta SAR waters who had been in distress at sea for 2 days. Malta had [refused](#) to help and rescue them. At the same time, Ocean Viking [found](#) a small empty wooden boat adrift in **Malta's SAR zone**: a very worrying prospect. On 4 July 2021, the Ocean Viking [rescued](#) another 67 people, including four women, one child and 20 unaccompanied minors, in distress in Malta SAR zone. Between 4-5 July 2021, the Ocean Viking [rescued](#) another 369 people: 572 people are now on board the vessel.