



PRESS STATEMENT

SYSTEMATIC WALLS-UP POLICY: Investigations against crew members of Jugend Rettet e.V.

Berlin, 09.07.18 After the rescue ship IUVENTA of Jugend Rettet e.V. has been detained under the pretext of a preventive seizure last August, the Italian public prosecutor's office is now expanding its investigations against individual crew members of the organization. The criminalization of search and rescue organizations with the aim of a complete isolation of Europe shows once again its cruel and deterrent face.

Jugend Rettet e.V. was informed that concrete investigation steps had been initiated against individual crew members. Thus, the criminalization by the Italian authorities continues to take shape. Private technical equipment confiscated during the ship seizure is now to be searched. After almost a year seizure of the ship IUVENTA, Youth RETTET e.V. sees this as a further political step to criminalize maritime rescue and deter activists to continue their life-saving work. To date, there is no evidence of a crime on the part of the association or individuals.

"The investigation against crew members and the seizure of the ship are political measures. Until today, Jugend Rettet could disprove all known allegations together with Forensic Architecture. In the context of the events of recent weeks, an even clearer pattern can be seen here. The area between Libya and Italy is left to Libyan militias, who act as bouncers of Europe for the illegal return of the refugees. This fact not only endangers the rescue and protection of human lives, but also becomes invisible to the eyes of the public. We strongly condemn the investigation and call for the immediate cessation of this politically motivated trial, ", explains Sophie Tadeus, board member of Jugend Rettet.

In recent weeks, all humanitarian rescue units on the Central Mediterranean route have been brought to a standstill by European politics. Even at the legal level, rescuers have to justify for saving human live. Last week, Claus-Peter Reisch, captain of the lifeboat "Lifeline", was accused by the Maltese authorities and has not been allowed to leave the Mediterranean island since then.

At the same time, the death rate has been increasing to a threatening degree in recent weeks. More than 600 people have drowned in the Mediterranean since mid-June trying to reach a safe place in Europe. Private maritime rescuers are currently forced to stand by and watch the tragedy despite the existing rescue capacities. In addition to the rescue ships, two reconnaissance planes are no longer allowed to start from Malta.

Jugend Rettet calls for the immediate reversal of flight and departure bans on civilian rescue units. All rescue ships must return to the area of operation as soon as possible to prevent further deaths. Jugend Rettet also calls for the immediate end of the training and financing of the Libyan Coast Guard for the purpose of European border protection and the observance of maritime and international law by the European states.

The documentary "IUVENTA", which portrays the work of Jugend Rettet on land and at sea, is celebrated its premiere yesterday and will be screened in selected cinemas throughout Germany from now on. More information at: <https://www.facebook.com/iuventa.film/>.