



PRESSRELEASE

**RESCUE SHIP IUVENTA OF JUGEND RETTET E.V.
REMAINS SEIZED**

JUGEND RETTET

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Berlin, 24.4.2018: The First Criminal Section of the Cassation Court in Rome rejects objection to the seizure of IUVENTA by Jugend Rettet e.V. Despite the lack of evidence for the allegations against the organization and high death toll on the central Mediterranean route, the IUVENTA until further notice will not be able to operate. A more detailed explanation of the decision is currently pending.

On 2nd of August 2017, the rescue ship IUVENTA was ordered to the port of Lampedusa, where it has been subsequently seized preventively by the prosecutor of Trapani/Sicily. Jugend Rettet had initially filed an appeal against the measure with the court in Trapani. However, this was rejected by the local court. Hereafter, the organisation submitted an appeal at the next instance, the Court of Cassation in Rome.

"We are deeply shocked that today, after months of waiting and difficult times for all supporters of the organisation, the court decided against the release of IUVENTA." said Sophie Tadeus, board member of Jugend Rettet, on Monday in Berlin. "The situation which, even more so recalls of David vs. Goliath, indicates a huge challenge for the organisation in the future. These possibly can only be solved by further networking with other NGOs, as well as increased focus on political lobbying and more comprehensive campaigning over a long period of time. We see the case as clearly politically motivated, since we are operating in a politicised humanitarian space: According to Jugend Rettet, the rule of law is put to the test against the background of obviously unfounded and false allegations. It is quickly forgotten that exemplarily in the case of the IUVENTA there are basic values of our democratic culture at the disposal: the right to escape and the preservation of human dignity. Today this serves us as an engine and motivation to continue to stand up and fight for those same values. "

The task of the association will now be to weigh up further legal steps and initiate them if necessary. Already before the verdict was announced, human rights lawyers were contacted and it is currently being examined to let the case continue to be negotiated at European level.

Furthermore, possible options for the return to the operational and political work, irrespective of the case of the IUVENTA, are under discussion, which must be furthered in the light of current developments.

"The fact that the IUVENTA has now been withdrawn from its area of operation for over 8 months, and that the Italian authorities have not turned down today is a scandal. The number of dead and missing persons, which is only marginally lower than in 2017, speaks for itself and should give European politicians and citizens much to think about. We are highly concerned about the political developments at European and national level, in view of the situation in North African countries, in particular Libya and the role of its so-called Libyan Coast Guard. Thus, we are motivated to continue to fight against these developments, despite all the reprisals against us. We will stand up for the rights of refugees and migrants in distress at sea" said Philipp Külker, spokesperson of the organization.