



PRESSRELEASE

JUGEND RETTET

NEW THREATENING GESTURES OF THE ITALIAN INTERIOR MINISTER AGAINST GERMAN MARITIME RESCUE ORGANIZATIONS

Berlin, 22.06.2018: Matteo Salvini's ambitions to close down Italian ports as a place of safety for NGO vessels and to hamper the work of NGOs, as well as to reduce rescue capacity, cost numerous lives again.

In parallel with the allegations made by the Italian Minister of the Interior against MISSION LIFELINE and Sea-Eye, another 220 people have lost their lives in the past few days on the Central Mediterranean route, according to estimates by the [UN refugee agency](#).

JUGEND RETTET stands in solidarity with the crew members of the rescue ships LIFELINE and Seefuchs and strongly condemns the actions of the Italian Minister of the Interior.

JUGEND RETTET, whose rescue vessel IUVENTA was confiscated by Italian authorities last August, is concerned about recent developments and threatening gestures by the Italian Ministry of Interior against rescue ships:

"The tone of words directed towards the civilian maritime rescue efforts is getting rougher: Salvini publicly threatens to confiscate ships in public and demands that German crew members of the LIFELINE should be detained. The criminalization of NGOs reaches a new peak. The case of the Aquarius has shown how Salvini's right-wing populist propaganda and the disunity of the EU make the lives of refugees the playing ball of an inhuman migration policy. Europe's silence on the matter is shameful. Right now, we have to be united in our commitment to European values", says Julian Pahlke, board member of JUGEND RETTET.

On instructions of the Italian Minister of the Interior Matteo Salvini the rescue ship LIFELINE of the German rescue organization MISSION LIFELINE was denied access to Italian ports on Thursday evening. In the following hours, Italy's Transport Minister Danilo Toninelli of the populist Five-Star Movement announced his intention to seize the ships Seefuchs (of the organization Sea-Eye) and LIFELINE.

The allegation that the LIFELINE had operated in Libyan territorial waters was strongly rejected MISSION LIFELINE early Friday, pointing out that people had been rescued in international waters under existing maritime law.

"We ask the European community at local and national level to work with us for a humanitarian solution because the responsible authorities are failing to meet their obligations under international law," says Marie Naass, Head of Advocacy for MISSION LIFELINE.

The LIFELINE is currently in international waters with 234 rescued people on board, awaiting further instruction from the relevant MRCC (Maritime Rescue Coordination Center) and speedy assignment of a safe port of call.

JUGEND RETTET calls on the competent authorities to take immediate responsibility for the people on board and the volunteers of the organizations and to comply with applicable international laws and the law on the sea.