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Berlin, den 15.07.2015

Situation report of the MS Sea-Watch after: 2nd operation: sea rescue of 587 people and request to the European Union to take over their responsibility for sea rescue

Dear Sirs,

Our ship, the MS Sea-Watch, is now, after rescuing 587 people in 6 separate rescue missions on the way back from its second operation, and arrived in Lampedusa yesterday evening. „Our crew being on a constant rescue mission for six days shows that we are exactly what is needed here. However, it also shows that the European Union does not seem to take sea rescue seriously“ says the initiator of Sea-Watch, Harald Höppner.

“Not a single day passed out here without a rescue mission, we have in the meantime used up all our life rafts and have to return to Lampedusa to take new rescue devices on board “ says Sea-Watch skipper Ingo Werth. “We would like to thank very much the organizations MSF (Doctors Without Borders) and MOAS, who also do excellent work here, for the fantastic cooperation. We would also like to thank the Italian coast guard for the great cooperation – but we do ask ourselves what the ships of the EU mission Triton and EUNAVFORMED are actually doing. We have not seen them here!“

During the operation of the MS Sea-Watch, which has already been going on since 05 July 2015, the MS Sea-Watch was sometimes the only ship available for sea rescue in the area of the Libyan coast as the ships of the MSF and MOAS also have to keep returning to land to drop off the rescued people. “But we cannot be everywhere at once“, explains Skipper Ingo Werth. “In the case of one sinking rubber dinghy we literally arrived in the last second and could save 116 people on two of our life rafts.“ One seriously injured person was given first aid by our doctors on board the MS Sea-Watch. If we hadn't found the dinghy just in time, the majority of those people would most likely have drowned. “

„We feel left alone by the European Union and the Federal Government“, says Sea-Watch initiator Harald Höppner. “Where are the “Schleswig Holstein“ and the “Werra“? The European Union is responsible for the desolate situation on the Mediterranean Sea, they force the people onto boats that are absolutely not seaworthy, because they block all the legal ways into the EU for them. Therefore it cannot be the task of the civil society to take over the sea rescue“, Höppner continues. “We ask ourselves, what is happening with the funds which were increased for the Frontex mission Triton after the boat disasters in April, the funds which were intended for sea rescue. Where are the ships? “

„The situation as we experienced it in the area leaves the impression that the rescue mission of the Bundeswehr was nothing but a mere PR activity. If they really cared about the rescue they would still be cruising here at the 24-mile zone in front of Libya's coastline. The majority of the boats we found did not

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have a satellite phone on board and so could not send distress alerts. Those people can only be rescued when someone is actively looking for them “says skipper Ingo Werth. ”The Bourbon Argos of the MSF alone twice took rescued refugees from us on board and took them back to land whilst we continued our mission. We would like to thank the MSF for their support and the great cooperation, but at the same time also hold the EU responsible „ says Höppner.

„We are glad that we could save almost 600 human lives during our second operation. However, the operation of the MS Sea-Watch once again shows how desperate the situation is on the Mediterranean Sea. Legal ways to get into the EU finally have to be opened for those people, everything else will not solve the situation in this area in the long term. As long as those people are still forced onto the boats, there will always be tragedies. However, as an immediate emergency measure, we strongly request the European Union to take over their responsibility in the sea rescue and finally send more ships into the sea near Libya which actually run rescue missions themselves. Anything else is negligence and failure to render assistance! “

Please see the following link for photos

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/gymg1enhku5e8jg/AAASok7jkxGbrbQSx0shvmAoa?dl=0>

Please see our YouTube channel for videos: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WGwjiM3GoLo>

Feel free to contact us if you have questions:

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