



Andrej Hunko, MdB

European policy spokesman for the Left Party parliamentary group in the German Bundestag
Member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Press release

18.12.2017

Libyan coast guard attacks rescuers after training by EU military operation

“The support for Libyan militias in the framework of the EUNAVFOR MED military operation is helping them in the brutal persecution of refugees. It has nothing whatsoever to do with training in sea rescue. This is proved by the answer received from the German Federal Foreign Office regarding an incident on 6 November, in which the crew of a Libyan patrol boat once again caused the death of a number of people. Eight of the thirteen crew members had previously been trained in the framework of EUNAVFOR MED”, stated Andrej Hunko, European policy spokesman for the Left Party parliamentary group in the German Bundestag.

There have already been several cases where the Libyan coast guard, which is part of the navy, has launched offensives against rescue operations in the Mediterranean; in some cases shots were fired. A ship from the German navy was attacked as well. At the same time, the European Union is supporting the Libyan Presidency Council by providing equipment for the military border forces. The training is intended to focus amongst other things on “teaching skills in the areas of search and rescue services, seamanship, radio and language training, first aid, international humanitarian law, human rights and maritime law”.

Andrej Hunko continued:

“The Libyan ship “Ras Jadir” was involved in the incident four weeks ago. This is one of the Bigliani-III patrol boats donated by Italy to Libya in May 2017. The provision of equipment to the Libyan navy and coast guard must therefore on no account be extended. The German Federal Government must also seek to ensure that the current second package of training for the Libyan coast guard in Greece and Italy is stopped.

In July, the Libyan government explained the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) of the establishment of a search and rescue (SAR) zone. However, this zone has not yet been officially delineated by the IMO, because it lacks certain conditions. On 10 December, the Libyan authorities withdraw the application. The request will be repeated soon with the help of the Italian navy.

Instead of building the capacity of the so-called Libyan “coast guard” to act as the gatekeeper of Fortress Europe, the Federal Government should instead ensure relentless efforts to investigate the attacks and bring it to prosecution. It is not sufficient to merely pay lip service to this, or pass on responsibility to a toothless monitoring mechanism. What is

even more urgent, however, is for the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre in Rome to avoid as far as possible tasking the Libyan military with the coordination of sea rescue missions.”

The (German) answer by the Federal Government to Andrej Hunko’s minor interpellation entitled “deadly rescue mission following intervention of the so-called Libyan coast guard”: can be found here:
http://www.andrej-hunko.de/start/download/doc_download/1079-toedlicher-rettungseinsatz-nach-intervention-der-sogenannten-libyschen-kuerstenwache