



New Law in Italy Threatens Fines and Prison for Operators of NGO Rescue Ships that Illegally Traffic Migrants

Italy passed a controversial new law, promoted by Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini, calling for the arrest of boat captains bringing unauthorized rescued refugees to Italy. Their vessels could be confiscated, and the owners of the operations will face fines from \$168,000 to more than a million dollars. In June, a so-called 'rescue' ship, the Sea Watch, came into Italian waters and, after a 17-day stand off and ramming an Italian Coast Guard ship, the captain was arrested.

[Refugee rescue](#)

boats carrying stranded migrants face fines of up to €1m (£918,000)

after the Italian parliament passed a controversial law promoted by [Matteo Salvini](#), the far-right interior minister.

Under the law, boat captains bringing rescued refugees to [Italy](#) will face arrest if unauthorised. Their vessels could be confiscated and the owners of the operations face steep fines of between €150,000 and €1m.

The Italian Senate, the country's upper house, approved the law on Monday with 160 votes in favour and 57 against.

The lower house had already passed the law, which now has to be ratified by Sergio Mattarella, the Italian president.

The bill, which was [introduced as a decree](#) in June 2019, also introduces harsher penalties for crimes associated with public demonstrations, such as threatening a public official.

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