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[NATIONAL](#) Wednesday, July 21, 2010

Laura Boldrini, UNHCR spokesperson, disputes voluntary repatriation claims as 'not credible and scarcely realistic'

By [Karl Stagno-Navarra](#)



UNHCR spokesperson Laura Boldrini: “How can it be that an asylum seeker voluntarily opts to be returned to a place where he cannot get asylum?”

UNHCR spokesperson Laura Boldrini says Armed Forces claims that 27 migrants chose to go back to Libya are not credible.

The spokesperson for the United Nations’ High Commissioner for Refugees in Italy, has said the claims by the Armed Forces of Malta, that 27 migrants chose to be ‘voluntarily repatriated’ to Libya [during a joint Maltese-Libyan rescue](#), are “not credible and scarcely realistic.”

According to the AFM, 27 from a boatful of 55 migrants ‘voluntarily’ opted to be returned to Libya on board a Libyan flagged patrol boat.

This statement has been criticised over its credibility, with Boldrini insisting that throughout her long years working with migrants in the Mediterranean, “not once have I met one single migrant that expressed his wish to be returned to Libya.”

“How can it be that an asylum seeker voluntarily opts to be returned to a place where he cannot get

asylum?” she asked, adding that the Maltese version of events “simply doesn’t make any logical sense.”

She added that migrants pay thousands of dollars, often make heavy debts, risk their lives, make a treacherous crossing across the Mediterranean and “then we hear that they ‘voluntarily’ accepted to go back to Libya? This is not credible,” Boldrini stressed. “Migrants wish for security, safety and a better future, and surely not the contrary, and what Malta is saying is simply not realistic,” she added.

Meanwhile Laura Boldrini tonight launches her latest book ‘Tutti indietro’ (Back, everybody), which chronicles the plight of forcefully repatriated migrants and the stories of those who were forced back to Libya through the controversial Italy-Libya accord.

Meanwhile, questions are also being raised by the UNHCR [about the Home Affairs ministry version as told to MaltaToday](#), that although Malta has no agreement with Libya over migrants, it is riding on the Italo-Libyan accord.

The office of the prime minister, which is responsible for the Armed Forces, has still not replied to a number of questions by MaltaToday on who assumed the responsibility of ‘sorting’ the migrants on the high seas, when all were eligible for asylum.

Article images



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- Submitted by [Joe South](#) on Wed, 07/21/2010 - 23:58.

[And the Bible says.....](#)

The poor man who was beaten by robbers was not an illegal immigrant to that area, the priests in Malta do not act like the priest in the parable, the Levite crossed the street like the UN and the EU are doing and the Good Samaritan took him to an inn and told the innkeeper to look after him, he didn't take him to Samaria with him.

So the parable of the Good Samaritan has nothing to do with human trafficking.

Read my lips....the EU and the UN should open up immigration centres in African nations so they can process potential immigrants in their own countries....only THEN will the very profitable trafficking of humans will be greatly reduced or stopped.

The AFM rescued a lot more Africans than Scandinavian countries, Germany, France and the eastern bloc of the EU did...and just for that they don't deserve the insinuations they're getting.

[Joe South](#)

- Submitted by [joeellis](#) on Wed, 07/21/2010 - 23:20.

[UNHCR](#)

I think people should get their facts straight before they rush to print. Only a couple of months ago, UNHCR was kicked out of Libya and has only just been allowed to re-establish a limited presence. Clearly, it cannot do much in Libya. Moreover, Libya is not a signatory to the Geneva conventions and is not legally obliged to grant asylum to migrants.

Instead of pointing fingers at other countries and at the U.N., the crux of the matter is whether the action of the A.F.M. is justifiable or not. People have been turned back on the high seas when they were in Malta's SAR and sent back to a country where they face a highly uncertain future.

Not that this is the first instance that this has happened. When a plane-load of Eritreans was repatriated from Malta many years ago, it has been documented that they were tortured and some of them did not survive.

Somehow the parable of the Good Samaritan comes to mind and it seems that our country is acting as the priest and the Levite rather than the Good Samaritan in all this.

[joeellis](#)

- Submitted by [Joe South](#) on Wed, 07/21/2010 - 22:24.

[Say it ain't so .Joe.....](#)

Joe, if Boldrini and her employer, the UN are so worried about what's happening in Libya, then they should make sure, and they have the resources and the means to do it, but not the will, that these people are informed of what they'll face in Libya before they leave their "war-torn" countries.

Or maybe she can persuade her PM not to give billions to Libya until this issue is solved OR persuade BP not to drill in Libyan waters and return the killer of over 300 people back to prison. Of course those are a lot harder to do than picking on little Malta and its AFM whose only "crime" is to make sure that the human traffickers' clients get to where they want them to go.

[Joe South](#)

- Submitted by [Christopher A. Park](#) on Wed, 07/21/2010 - 19:21.

[Who Pays the Piper](#)

It is most convenient for Boldrini to chastise a small nation state like Malta, whilst she gets comfortably paid a handsome salary into a Swiss bank account to avoid Italian state taxes. Her vociferous diatribes of laments and rhetoric have hardly scratched the surface on how Italian naval assets of the Finanza, Guardia Costiera, Marina Militare or Carabinieri tackle the recovery and forced repatriation out at sea in international waters of illegal immigrants. Nobody is addressing questions to the Libyan authorities, and are taking the usual rogue keyboard-warrior's pot-shots the the Maltese military for having, once more valiantly, done their job, a life-saving duty in helping mariners at sea. Why isn't anybody engaging Libya on human rights? Simply because there are dodgy underhanded energy deals between Tripoli, Rome and other major EU capitals, to let a corrupt regime in power, at the expense of human rights and democracy. We see no overtures from the major G8 players for regime change in Libya like they advocate in North Korea, or Iraq, or Afghanistan. Boldrini must stop being a liberal mouthpiece, and grasp the reality of facts for what they are, instead of paying lip service to the Italian government. Just note how low profile in the Italian media this latest incident has been. Malta-fed ANSA Rome only blurted the same hogwash we've read on these pages!

[Christopher A. Park](#)

- Submitted by [joellis](#) on Wed, 07/21/2010 - 19:07.

[Laura Boldrini](#)

Truth is obviously highly misinformed about Laura Boldrini. Ms Boldrini has led a campaign against the policy of respingimento which the Italian authorities have been implimenting with the concurrence of the Libyans, a policy which our government is now emulating. It is not true that she is picking up on Malta and the AFM but is rather being consistent in her criticism of this inhumane practice. Truth should do some research to find out about the manner these immigrants are treated in Libya. It is quite easy to do so but he may wish to refer directly to http://archivistorico.corriere.it/2010/luglio/06/Torturati_picchiati_Al...

and

http://archivistorico.corriere.it/2010/luglio/12/Immigrati_eritrei_Ghed...
out

No wonder that Gaddafi himself has ordered an enquiry into the manner Eritreans are treated in Libya.

J. Ellis.

P.S. What is Truth afraid of to conceal his identity ?

[joeellis](#)

- Submitted by [Matthew Vella](#) on Wed, 07/21/2010 - 16:56.

Glad the light-touch

Glad the light-touch moderation hasn't scared you off Truth. Let's keep this space civilised.

[Matthew Vella](#)

- Submitted by [Truth](#) on Wed, 07/21/2010 - 16:20.

Laura Boldrini

Sorry. Guess I went over the top because I was frustrated by the UNHCR always picking on and criticizing the Maltese authorities. Can Laura Boldrini please tell us why she is always criticizing the Maltese authorities and not the Italian authorities. Can she please tell us what she does when the Italian navy picks up illegal immigrants and sends them back to Libya? Can she tell us whether il-cavaliere listens to her or does he just brush her off?

[Truth](#)

- Submitted by [Truth](#) on Wed, 07/21/2010 - 15:23.

Laura Boldrini

This comment was flagged for abuse and has been deleted.

- Matthew Vella

[Truth](#)

- Submitted by [Joe South](#) on Wed, 07/21/2010 - 15:12.

Is it possible.....

Is it possible that these guys wanted to go back to Libya so they can try again to enter Italy instead of coming to Malta to those inhuman conditions that the Maltese govt. let them live in??

As for credibility, maybe Laura should look at the UN peacekeepers in Africa, those who rape, molest and use as sex objects, before she starts attacking the AFM and the government.

[Joe South](#)

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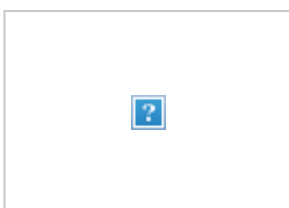
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