

SOS MEDITERRANEE IS A CIVIL EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION THAT SPECIALIZES IN MARITIME RESCUES, CREATED IN 2015 BY DETERMINED CITIZENS IN RESPONSE TO THE SHIPWRECK TRAGEDIES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN. WITH THE *AQUARIUS* AND THEN THE *OCEAN VIKING*, WE HAVE SAVED 39,435 PEOPLE BETWEEN FEBRUARY 2016 AND DECEMBER 2023 IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS OFF THE COAST OF LIBYA.

This document summarizes the **SOS MEDITERRANEE France 2023, activity report**, for which the complete version is available in French online: <https://sosmediterranee.fr/publication/rapport-dactivite-2023/>

EDITORIAL

We can only lament the complete absence of debate on the protection of human life at sea, as 2023 has been the deadliest year in the Mediterranean since 2017, with 3,105 people losing their lives.

In January, the Italian government passed the 'Piantedosi decree' exclusively targeting NGO rescue ships with the aim of keeping them away from distress zones at sea. The promises made after the Lampedusa shipwreck on October 3, 2013, 'never again!', have been forgotten. Not only are the means to save lives not being implemented by European states, but the actions of humanitarian workers at sea, inconvenient witnesses to a disastrous situation, are being obstructed. Europe finances the Libyan coast guard, which intercepts boats in distress and sends the people back to detention centers where human rights are violated, while also threatening NGO ships. Reaffirming

his support for rescue NGOs and SOS MEDITERRANEE in September 2023, Pope Francis nonetheless reminded us that rescue is "a duty of humanity, a duty of civilization."

It is time for solidarity and humanity to finally be placed at the heart of European migration policies, and for sea rescue operations to be an integral part of these policies.

In the face of attempts to shut down humanitarian efforts in the Mediterranean, we continue our mission with determination thanks to the exceptional mobilization of citizens, volunteers, supportive local authorities, sponsors, and donors who give us the means to act. Thanks to you, the teams aboard the *Ocean Viking* were able to rescue 2,299 people in 2023. We thank you.

François Thomas
President of SOS MEDITERRANEE France

“ I knew we couldn't save them all

We saw many boats on the horizon, and we saw the type of vessels people were trying to cross with: makeshift metal boats that fill with water very quickly, several on the verge of capsizing... The survivors told us they had seen several bodies floating on the surface of the water. ”

DOMINIKA, chair of the medical team

Record operation in August 2023
off the coast of Tunisia: 623 people saved
in 15 operations

OUR MISSION:



Jérémie Lusseau /
SOS MEDITERRANEE

THE CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN: CONTEXT

- > **Mortality is increasing** in the Central Mediterranean
- > **The "Piantadosi decree"** drains the Mediterranean of rescue resources
- > **Chaos, violence, and human trafficking** in Libya compel thousands of people to attempt crossing the Mediterranean on overcrowded boats that are unsuitable for navigation in high seas
- > **The rise of hostile attitudes in Tunisia** towards those with Subsaharan origin is provoking an increase in departures and fatal shipwrecks
- > **The interceptions of boats** by the Libyan coast guard and their forced return to Libya continue
- > **The Tunisian coast guard** is carrying out thousands of pushbacks of people trying to flee by sea
- > **A study in the scientific journal *Nature***¹ refutes the "pull factor theory" which suggests that the presence of NGOs at sea encourages departures

1 <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-023-38110-4>

THE NUMBERS IN 2023



At least **3,105 people died or went missing** (compared to 2,406 in 2022).^{*} Among them, **2,476 people**

were in the Central Mediterranean. (compared to 1,417 in 2022)²

17,190 people were intercepted by the Libyan coast guard and forced to return to Libya (compared to 24,488 in 2022).³

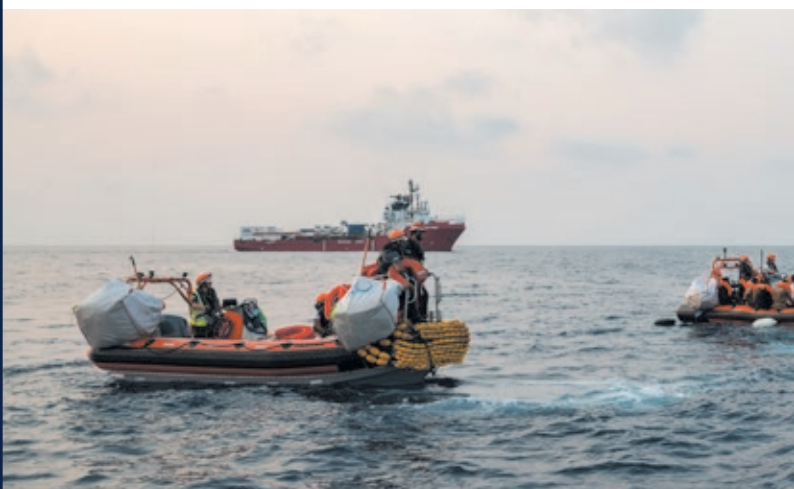
43,394 people were intercepted by the Tunisian coast guard and forced to return to Tunisia.



2. International Organization for Migration (IOM), projet Missing Migrants
3. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

OUR RESCUE OPERATIONS

- > **Detentions and fines** for the *Ocean Viking* under the «Piantadosi decree»
- > **Rescues complicated** by poor coordination
- > **15 operations in 60 hours in August:** an absolute record for the *Ocean Viking*
- > **A sailboat rescued** in the Ionian Sea: a first
- > **Assaults on *Ocean Viking* teams** with firearms by Libyan coast guards



15 missions at sea



51 rescue operations in international waters



2,299 people rescued by the *Ocean Viking*



31 days of detention of the ship in Italy



At least **66 additional days of transit** (round-trip) from the distress zone to distant ports



Approximately **€561,000 spent unnecessarily on fuel** during these 66 additional days of transit to distant ports



38 different nationalities represented among the people rescued by the *Ocean Viking*

SAVE, PROTECT, BEAR WITNESS

PROTECTION AND CARE FOR RESCUED PERSONS

- > **A mission of protection and care** conducted on the *Ocean Viking* in partnership with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)
- > **Onboard medical care** to treat the consequences of the crossing and violence experienced on land
- > **Specific care** for women and children



 Stefano Belacchi / SOS MEDITERRANEE

MOBILIZING AND BEARING WITNESS

- > **19 highly mobilized** volunteer branches
- > **Major solidarity concert on June 24th** featuring 24 artists in front of 8,000 people, organized in partnership with Solimut, the "Fédération des mutuelles de France", and the City of Marseille
- > **Meeting with Pope Francis** on September 23rd in Marseille, who denounces shipwrecks in the Mediterranean
- > **Commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the Lampedusa shipwreck** (October 3rd) by 10 volunteer branches: "10 years of shame"
- > **Organization of a summer camp** by the youth volunteer movement and events for youth, by youth
- > **New partnership with Matteo Garrone's film "Io Capitano"** to raise public awareness
- > **Report and campaign "Women at Sea"** amplify the voices of women rescued by SOS MEDITERRANEE

231 women (10 % of those rescued)



665 minors (29 %), of which 75% were unaccompanied
27 children under 5 years old (4 % of minors)



468 people travelling with family



20 people with a handicap



1,279 medical consultations provided on board



16,000 meals distributed to survivors



750 volunteers mobilized in **19 branches** in France



443 events



23,404 students educated between elementary and high school



104 local and regional governments supporting SOS MEDITERRANEE



13,183 media mentions recorded in France and **150 interviews** with our spokespersons



24,200 new followers on our social media channels

 Nairi



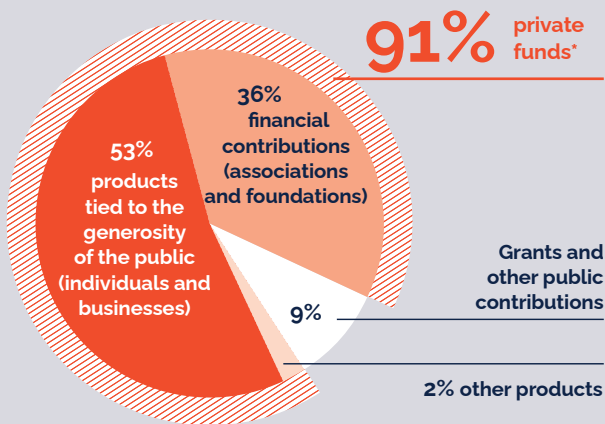
TOGETHER WE SAVE LIVES

FINANCIAL REPORT 2023

- > €14.1 million in resources and €12.2 million in expenditures
- > 35,300 donors, including 12,000 who make monthly regular donations
- > 91% private funds, 9% grants and other public contributions
- > 82% of expenditures dedicated to the association's social mission

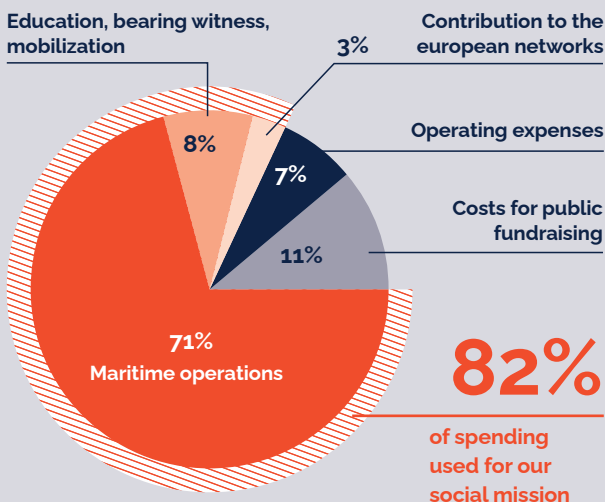
DISTRIBUTION OF RESOURCES BY ORIGIN (€14,038,267*)

* Excluding provision reversals

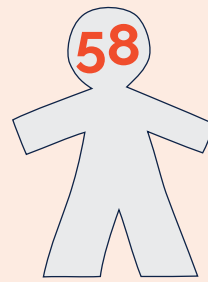


DISTRIBUTION OF SPENDING BY CATEGORY (€11,901,289*)

* (Excludes provisions, taxes, and transfers to dedicated funds)



HUMAN RESOURCES



ONSHORE

- 40 people in Marseille (including 4 interns and 1 volunteer in civic service)
- 15 people in Paris (including 2 volunteers in civic service)
- 1 person in Brittany
- 2 people in Bordeaux (including 1 volunteer in civic service)

AT SEA (for each mission)*

- 1 search and rescue coordinator
- 1 deputy search and rescue coordinator
- 1 search and rescue team leader
- 10 rescuers
- 1 medical team leader
- 1 doctor
- 1 nurse
- 1 midwife
- 1 post-rescue team leader
- 1 cultural mediator
- 1 protection delegate
- 1 logistician
- 1 communications officer
- 1 1 photographer (occasionally)



* Since September 2021, certain members of the medical and protection teams have been recruited by our partner on board, the **International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)**.



Camille Martin Juan
SOS MEDITERRANEE



Thank you to the thousands of individuals in civil society who make SOS MEDITERRANEE's actions possible!



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