

## Illegal immigration: 11 people arrested in Italy and Germany

An international smuggling organization, which operated between Italy, Libya, Eritrea and other north African countries and facilitated illegal immigration to Europe arranging boat trips to Italy, was dismantled by the Italian Police. 11 Eritreans were arrested.

The operation, called Tokhla, was conducted by the Central Operations Service (SCO) and the Criminal investigation department of Catania in the provinces of Catania, Milan, Rome and Trapani.

The people arrested were charged with conspiracy and aiding illegal immigration.

The investigation into the smuggling ring entirely made up of Eritrean nationals had began in May. They favored the illegal entry into Europe of thousands of compatriots in exchange for money. The criminal group, which is alleged to have cells in several European countries, including Italy, contacted the migrants and organized their journeys from their villages to the final destination, mainly north European countries.

The investigations revealed that some of the boat trips ended up with shipwrecks that killed hundreds of people. In particular, two tragic incidents occurred off the coast of Libya on May 13 and June 28, 2014, as a result of which about 300 migrants died.

During the operation, the police in Catania also found nine Somali and Eritrean minors, who had been locked inside an attic in Catania, belonging to one of the people arrested.

The last person was placed under arrest yesterday in Germany. He was one of the heads of the criminal network, responsible for the shipwreck of June 28, 2014, which caused about 200 people to die.

Italian

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