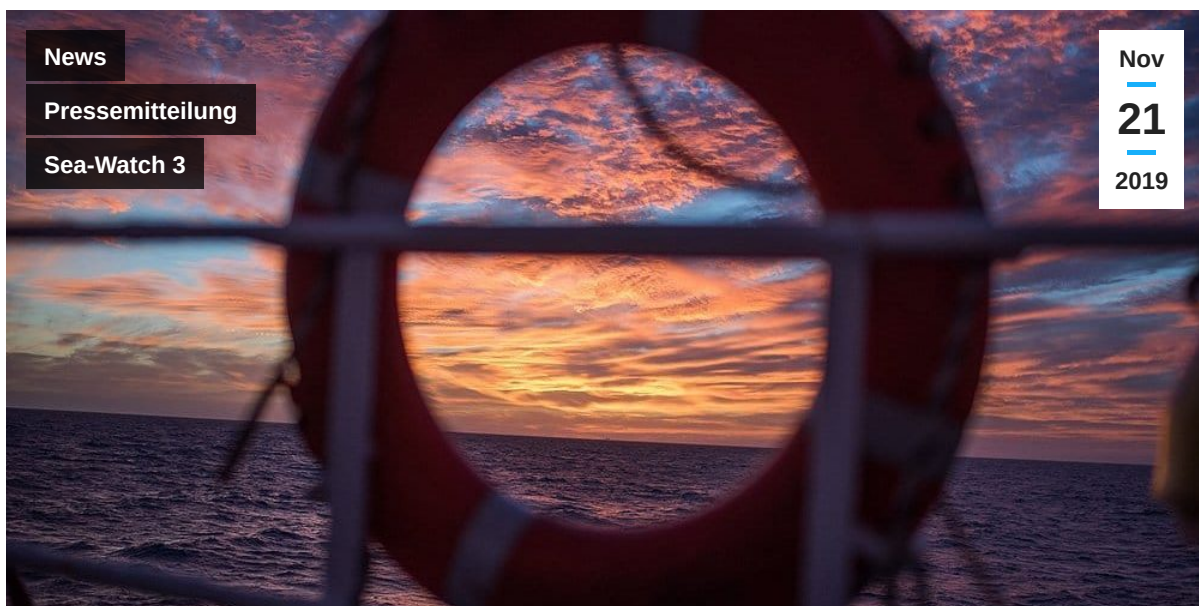



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# #ElHiblu3: Teenagers out on bail after almost 8 months of detention.



**Three teenagers who saved themselves and 105 other refugees on the high seas from illegal return to Libya were released on bail yesterday after almost eight months of detention. The #ElHiblu3 (16, 17 and 19 years old today) are accused of terrorism for convincing the crew of the tanker that saved them to bring them to Malta. Their bail is provided by the German foundation “Zivile Seenotrettung” (Civil sea rescue)**

The Foundation “zivile Seenotrettung” manages the money from the fundraiser of German TV-Entertainer Klaas Heufer-Umlauf and Jan Böhmermann, following the blockade of the Sea-Watch 3 under captain Carola Rackete, and with the bail set yet another sign against the criminalization of refugees and of solidarity with them. The committee, which consists of representatives of Sea-Watch, Sea-Eye, Seebrücke, Solidarity at Sea and CivilFleet, had already announced the financing of the defence of the #ElHiblu3 in October.

*“The fund enables us to provide support to those who lack other funds quickly and uncomplicated. If people, let alone minors, are dragged to court because they stand up for their rights and those of others who are regularly trampled underfoot by the EU, we can support them promptly and purposefully,”* says Lea Reisner of *Solidarity at Sea*, a member of the committee of the *Foundation “Zivile Seenotrettung”*.

On 26 March 2019, the Turkish tanker *El Hiblu 1* had rescued 108 migrants in international waters north of the Libyan coast from a rubber dinghy in distress and had then headed for Tripoli. Shortly before reaching the coast, the ship had turned around and set course for Malta. The captain claimed that he had been threatened, the rescued said that panic had broken out when the Libyan coast appeared. A fact is: Nobody was injured, but 108 people were taken to safety. The three young people on board have since been accused of terrorism in Malta. Already in May, the UN Office for Human Rights called on Malta to drop these main charges.

After the previous hearings had been postponed several times, the decision on the release was only taken 4 days after final submissions were presented. The imprisonment of #ElHiblu3 at the end of March 2019 will thus end after 237 days. Nevertheless, they must now appear every day at the police station and keep at least 50 meters distance from the port, shore and airport. *“It is a scandal that teenagers sit behind bars for more than half a year without conviction for peaceful self-defence. Malta once again presents itself as a ruthless outpost of the European border regime,”* says Alina Krobok of Sea-Watch e.V. Even though the #ElHiblu3 are no longer in prison cells, they are threatened with life imprisonment if sentenced at worst.

*“Of course we are happy that they are now free, but now the charges have to be dropped. Even if the accusations were true, they would have saved 105 people from deportation to a civil war country where they would have been threatened with torture, rape and death – using peaceful means. Instead of spending months in prison, they should be rewarded a prize.”* says Ruben Neugebauer from Sea-Watch.

Together with 16 other organizations Sea-Watch formulated a statement demanding the immediate release of the three accused. You can find the statement [here](#)