

**Croce Rossa Italiana
Presidente Nazionale**



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The Italian Red Cross mostly welcomes the opportunity to thank the Norwegian Red Cross which decided to donate this important award to the National Society for the humanitarian support and assistance provided to thousands of migrants arriving every day in Italy , in particular in Sicily Island.

As well known ,for many years, the Italian Red Cross has been on the front line of the humanitarian response to the needs of migrants and refugees.

The Italian Red Cross in partnership with other humanitarian organizations provides humanitarian, social and medical assistance to refugees and asylum seekers, adults as well as minors who land in the Italian ports .

Most of the migrants arrive by boats, in southern Italy, especially in the region of Sicily, Puglia and Calabria. In particular on the islands of Sicily and Lampedusa, the southern most point of Europe, the Italian Red Cross takes part in rescue operations during landings of boats carrying migrants from Libya and Tunisia and from other countries of the Mediterranean and Middle East regions.

Red Cross Volunteers and staff daily provide health care and logistical support, distribute basic supplies and transport unwell migrants to hospitals and clinics.

During the disembarkation operations, volunteers and staff will prioritize the most vulnerable according to the following criteria: rescued people in need of urgent medical care, children, nursing mothers, and pregnant women.

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Upon their arrival, migrants spend short periods at reception facilities. where the Italian Red Cross provides not only an initial medical assistance and treatment but also psychosocial support and help confirm peoples' identification. Furthermore, aware of the number of missing persons on the migration trail, the Italian Red Cross, is conducting Tracing and Restoring Family Links services and in collaboration with the ICRC to allow migrants who arrive in Italy to contact their family in the country of origin and also to learn the fate of their loved ones who also tried to reach the Italian shores but that have been separated in doing so.

“Praesidium Project” is one of the most important programs in the area of migrants' assistance in South of Italy. This project formed part of an innovative model for the reception of those arriving irregularly by sea, based on partnership between national authorities, multilateral agencies and national non-governmental institutions. It proved to be an effective operational model, enabling the provision of information to those who arrived and the identification of appropriate channels for their reception and access to appropriate legal and administrative procedures.

In few words I tried to summarize all the support that the Italian Red Cross is providing for migrants in southern Italy.

I would like to take this opportunity to thanks all Red Cross volunteers and in particular I would like to express my appreciation for the humanity of citizens of Lampedusa.

The Mediterranean is a sea of migration. In the middle of that sea is located Lampedusa, place that has always been a meeting point for those people who run away and people who are attached to their piece of land. All at sea.

Full of hopes, fears, emotions, strengths, Lampedusa is the symbol of a difficult events, sometimes cruel, sometimes noble. Citizens of Lampedusa, in this tormented journey, after winning resistance and mistrust, have eventually chosen the noble size: accepting and giving first aid, gesture recognition, women, men and children in search of a future. At some point those migrants who have arrived in Lampedusa were more numerous than the habitants.

Citizens of Lampedusa work for the defense of fundamental human rights of individuals, groups and communities, with particular attention to the rights of the most vulnerable people and victims of violence, forced migration, persecution and serious exploitation. Most of them has became volunteers of Red Cross embracing the red cross value of Humanity and spending their time to welcome and protect people from different countries with different cultures, languages and background.

For this reason I would like to dedicate this award to People of Lampedusa.

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The Italian Red Cross has decided to spend this financial present to buy a kit of basic items for migrants when they land as drink, food, hygiene items, slippers and basic medical supplies. It will be very useful for them especially because they have experience

of long and difficult journey, they are exposed to stress and fair. So when they arrive they necessary need of basic items of care as first help.

Thank you again for this Award.

Francesco Rocca

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