

# INTERNATIONAL AND TRANS-EUROPEAN CALL FOR SOLIDARITY WITH VINCENZO VECCHI !

BECAUSE WE, AS MEMBERS OF COLLECTIVES AND ASSOCIATIVE ORGANIZATIONS, ARE CONCERNED.

## **Who is Vincenzo Vecchi and why is it important to stop his extradition to Italy ?**

Vincenzo Vecchi was arrested on August 8th in Brittany under two European Arrest Warrants (EAW), for 13 and 4 year jail convictions issued in Italy. Those convictions were imposed in the absence of proof and are completely disproportionate in view of the alledged charges. Vincenzo had first participated in the anti-G8 demonstration in 2001 in Genoa, then in an unauthorized anti-fascist demonstration in 2006 in Milan. The latter was protesting against the « Fiamma tricolore » far-right party parade, that should have been prohibited for fascism apology, according to the « Scelba law ».

As many others italian fellows, he was victim of the « Rocco Code » repression, inherited from Mussolini's fascist years, under the title "ransack and destruction" based on the notion of "moral support". The text is based on a principle of collective guilt that is completely at odds with the presumption of innocence and with fundamental rights. It allows 6 to 15 year jail sentences for a mere presence at a demonstration with no requirement of material proof. This law has been reactivated in order to condemn Vincenzo and his comrades to very heavy sentences. <sup>[1]</sup>

Vincenzo support committee has proved that the EAW linked to the 2006 antifascist demonstration conviction was unlawful, deceptive and therefore unfair, as the related sentence has already been served.<sup>[2]</sup> The EAW linked to the 2001 demonstration in Genoa was also shown to be incomplete and illegal, which is why the court of appeal dealing with the case has asked the italian justice for additional information.<sup>[3]</sup>

Lets not forget the extremely brutal repression that marked Genoa counter summit. The event traumatised the whole Italy, discouraged several generations of Italian people from using their demonstration right. An alter-globalist student died from a bullet in the head. Hundreds of others were beaten (for exemple at Diaz school<sup>[4]</sup>, « a true butchery » according to one of the convicted policemen), locked up, humiliated and tortured. « At Genoa, an incalculable number of innocent people suffered physical and psychological abuses that marked them for life », the chief of Police recognised in 2017. <sup>[5]</sup>

This brutal police repression was condemned by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) <sup>[6]</sup> and by Amnesty International <sup>[7]</sup>, but nevertheless was subject to complete impunity : no trial followed Carlo Giuliani 's death, and no jail conviction was pronounced against the Carabinieri. The G8 meeting in Genoa marks a turning point in struggles as well as in States reactions in Europe. That is how Vincenzo's case shows we can all be directly concerned, we can all be directly affected.

## **Understanding the European Arrest Warrant**

The European Arrest Warrant was implemented to substitute the extradition process in Europe, and it only generates an automatic administrative relationship between justices, where the civil society can't take action anymore, especially regarding political prisoners. Any action on the political power to stop the handing of a person to another country will be vain as this same political power can't express itself or stop the extradition anymore....<sup>[8]</sup>

Pia Klemp, the German captain of the migrants rescue boats Luventa and Sea Watch-3, who was accused of "suspicion of assistance and complicity with illegal immigration" by the Italian justice, is a very good example of it. <sup>[9]</sup> If a sentence was pronounced and confirmed by the Italian Supreme Court, Pia Klemp couldn't find asylum in any European country, except if there was a procedural defect.

Vincenzo's case clearly shows that a state can falsify or make a European Arrest Warrant with the vindictive intention of recuperating an activist which they want to silence by imprisoning them. This warrant comes with totally insufficient counterparts to have our basic and procedural rights respected. And so, we have the right to question : **Out of the yearly 18 000 to 19 000 european arrest warrants issued, how many aren't actually reported as such ?** <sup>[10]</sup> **The warrant is reported by human rights organisations as « allowing to muzzle political opponents, particularly through an abusive extension of the notion of "terrorism" that can now cover any political expression considered as radical. »** <sup>[11]</sup>

Due to the integration of exceptional courts in the legislative arsenal, there is an increasingly oppressive drift, that is extreme, repressive and harmful. Everywhere in Europe, «law enforcement» is escalating, police brutality is gaining intensity, and freedom restricting laws are passed. In France, the «anti-troublemakers law » is used to repress contests by throwing the responsibility for violence onto the demonstrators, alter-globalists, ecologists, youngsters from suburb estates, yellow vests, migrants at borders... It enables to arrest people for the only crime of "participating in a gathering in order to commit damages and violences», like the « moral support» of the « Rocco code » in Italy.

How can we therefore not get worried about the fate that awaits those arrested in this context of extreme-right raising movements ? What safeguard would actually exist if this world was to tumble into « the unsayable » ? How, in the name of of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, could we be able to protect those who stand up against it for their ideas? **For all these reasons, we refuse Vincenzo Vecchi to be handed over to italian authorities. In the present political context, we don't want him to become a trophy of the repressive politics led by the Italian government, nor do we want the French justice to serve as a link for it.**

**We can state that Vincenzo Vecchi, like the other « Genoa ones » and« the Milan ones », is a political prisoner. He has been charged with disproportionate sentences, without the need to prove his guilt, and therefore illegal since unrespectful of « common legal proceedings» and of the European Union Fundamental Rights Charter.** <sup>[8]</sup>

**We are calling all committees and all cultural, trade-union and political organizations, to sign this call for the release of Vincenzo Vecchi and to question the repressive weapon that is the European Arrest Warrant.**

**We are calling to join in all the gatherings requesting the release of Vincenzo, and to support all initiatives against the criminalization of the right to demonstrate.**

*Vincenzo's support committee*

[www.comite-soutien-vincenzo.org](http://www.comite-soutien-vincenzo.org)

[facebook](#) - [Petition](#) – [Youtube](#)

**To sign the call :** [appel.vincenzo@gmail.com](mailto:appel.vincenzo@gmail.com)

## Notes

- [1] Infokiosques.net, 24/09/2012 [https://infokiosques.net/lire.php?id\\_article=975](https://infokiosques.net/lire.php?id_article=975)
- [2] The official decree is downloadable (in Italian) on Vincenzo's support committee website <https://www.comite-soutien-vincenzo.org/documents-a-diffuser/>
- [3] "Le Télégramme", 23/08/2019 <https://www.letelegramme.fr/ille-et-vilaine/rennes/vincenzo-vecchi-la-justice-demande-un-supplement-d-information-23-08-2019-12365760.php>
- [4] Film « Diaz » (2013), see Vincenzo Vecchi's support committee documentary resources : <https://www.comite-soutien-vincenzo.org/info-kiosque-genes-2001/>
- [5] "Libération", 20/07/2017 [https://www.liberation.fr/planete/2017/07/20/g8-a-genes-des-manifestants-ont-ete-tortures-admet-le-chef-de-la-police-italienne\\_1585042](https://www.liberation.fr/planete/2017/07/20/g8-a-genes-des-manifestants-ont-ete-tortures-admet-le-chef-de-la-police-italienne_1585042)
- [6] "Le Monde", 7/04/2015 [https://www.lemonde.fr/europe/article/2015/04/07/l-italie-condamnee-par-la-cedh-pour-des-violences-policieres-lors-du-g8-de-genes-en-2001\\_4611183\\_3214.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/europe/article/2015/04/07/l-italie-condamnee-par-la-cedh-pour-des-violences-policieres-lors-du-g8-de-genes-en-2001_4611183_3214.html)
- [7] "Amnesty international" statement, 5/04/2005 <https://www.amnesty.be/infos/actualites/article/italie-g8-de-genes-un-proces-attendu-et-bienvenu>
- [8] *For more information about the European Arrest Warrant (EAW), see Vincenzo's support committee text, « How EAW plagues fundamental freedoms : Vincenzo Vecchi's case » [Download .pdf](#) on the committee website*
- [9] "L'Obs", 12/06/2019, <https://www.nouvelobs.com/migrants/20190612.OBS14266/mobilisation-pour-l-humanitaire-pia-klemp-poursuivie-en-italie-pour-avoir-sauve-des-migrants-en-mer.html>
- [10] « Le Monde », 9/10/2019 : [https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2019/10/09/le-recours-au-mandat-d-arret-europeen-par-les-procureurs-fragilise\\_6014811\\_3224.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2019/10/09/le-recours-au-mandat-d-arret-europeen-par-les-procureurs-fragilise_6014811_3224.html)
- [11] « Mille Babords », 8/03/2011 <https://www.millebabords.org/spip.php?article16791>