

# Italian Navy Is Ordered To Turn Back Albanians

Compiled by Our Staff From Dispatches

BRINDISI, Italy — Italian coastal authorities received orders Monday to turn back boats of Albanian refugees, forcefully if necessary, port officials in Brindisi and Bari said.

The chief of Brindisi's port, Captain Giovanni Biso, said that what he called firm orders had been given Monday morning to intercept Albanians fleeing the chaos and violence in their country and stop them from landing.

If the Albanians' boats could not be persuaded to turn around, they were to be towed back to their ports of origin, sources said.

Two fishing craft carrying around 100 Albanians were intercepted by the Italian Navy and were being towed back to Albania on Monday afternoon.

In another incident, refugees aboard a boat cut the tow-rope from an Italian Navy ship, and one of them fired shots toward the Italian authorities.

Italian sailors did not return fire out of concern for the 100 refugees aboard, they said, but escorted the boat into Brindisi at a distance.

"The shots were fired by a desperate man who was angry that the Italian Navy was stopping the boat from arriving in Italy," said Admiral Angelo Mariani, Italy's navy chief.

The new orders are a hardening of Italy's stance toward its troubled neighbor. For the last few days Italian boats have been patrolling Albanian territorial waters to discourage Albanians from departing for nearby Italy.

In all, as many as 12,000 Albanians have arrived in Italy this month.

Italy initially offered hospitality for up to three months to fleeing Albanians. But the government has toughened its stance amid reports that many refugees were not hardship cases and that criminals had been posing as refugees.

A government official who inspected relief facilities in Brindisi said that Albanians now arriving were no longer those who left because of fear. "They are looking for a better life — in short, immigrants," said Giannicola Sinisi, undersecretary of the interior.

In Brussels, European Union foreign ministers struggled to find the best way to send and protect emergency aid shipments to Albania.

With pressure rising on the 15-nation EU to take forceful action to help defuse the crisis, foreign ministers could not agree to send a small security force to ensure the delivery of aid.

While ministers agreed that aid would never reach needy Albanians without some form of protection, some stressed that the country must first contain the chaos.

"Albania has to create conditions for a humanitarian aid mission and for the security of advisers," said the German foreign minister, Klaus Kinkel.

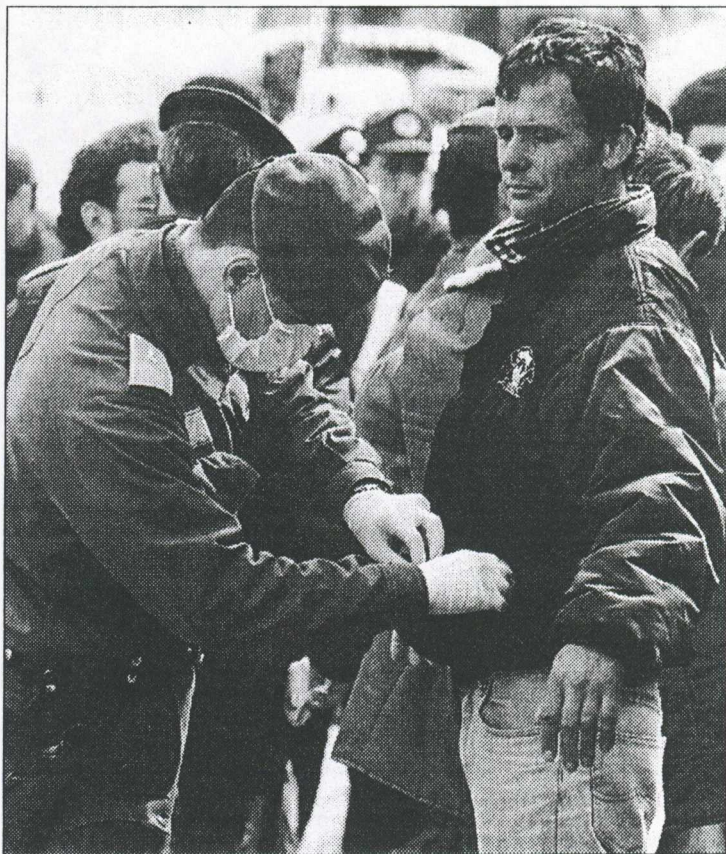
On Tuesday, EU foreign ministers will meet in Rome with the Albanian prime minister, Bashkim Fino, who is expected to issue new appeals for EU support.

Mr. Kinkel and some other EU foreign ministers pushed for institutions like the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to share responsibility for the relief efforts.

The situation in Albania continued to be tense Monday, with gunmen running half the country and President Sali Berisha resisting demands by rebels to resign.

Nevertheless, Italy continued to fly emergency aid to Albania on Monday.

An Italian Air Force transport plane landed in Tirana with six tons of emergency medical aid requested by Mr. Fino for the northern part of the country, which is under government control.



Armando Franca/The Associated Press

An Italian sailor searching an Albanian who arrived in the port of Brindisi on a small fishing boat Monday. Several shots from the boat were fired toward the Italian Navy as it tried to repel the Albanians.

Italy has already sent some two tons of medical aid for the rebel-held south.

The latest aid cargo arrived in Tirana shortly before an Austrian Airlines jet flew in, the first Western commercial flight to land there since the airport was closed last week as the country descended into anarchy.

The arrival of the airliner from Vienna was the most visible sign yet that the country, at least the government-con-

trolled part of it, was returning to normal. In the south, local committees run major towns, although lawlessness is reported to be rife because of the activities of armed gangs.

Last week civilians looted thousands of weapons from army depots, following the example of rebels in the south, and the army and the police disappeared, leaving the country to be ruled by the gang.

(AFP, AP, Reuters)