

# *Nearly 500 Migrants Rescued in Mediterranean Sea*

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Rome, May 15 (RHC)-- Over 480 asylum seekers and refugees were rescued in the Mediterranean as they attempted the perilous crossing from North Africa, with seven bodies also recovered, Italy's coastguard has announced.

At least 484 migrants were plucked from dinghies over the weekend in four operations involving coastguard boats, an Italian navy ship, the German NGO Sea Eye and the OHIO mercantile ship. The bodies of seven men were recovered during the operations.

More than 45,000 people have been rescued and brought to Italy so far this year, a 44-percent increase from the same period in 2016, according to Italy's Interior Ministry. More than 1,300 have died or are feared dead after trying to make the journey, the International Organization for Migration announced.

Nigerians make up the largest group, followed by people from Bangladesh, Guinea, and the Ivory Coast. Nigeria is home to the Boko Haram terrorist group, which has terrorized the country with an eight-year fight that has killed at least 20,000 people and forced at least 2.6 million others to flee their homes.



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