

Eight dead, 25 missing as refugee boat sinks off western Turkey



Ankara, October 11 (RHC)-- Eight people drowned after a boat filled with refugees sank off the western coast of Turkey and another 25 were missing, the Turkish coast guard announced.

It was not clear where the boat was headed or from where it left. Hundreds of thousands of refugees crossed the sea channel from Turkey to Greek territory in 2015 before Ankara curbed the flow under a deal it struck with the European Union.

The coast guard said the boat sank off the coast of Turkey's Izmir province after taking on water shortly after its departure. Search and rescue operations for the missing refugees were continuing, a coast guard statement said. It reported there were initially a total of 35 refugees on the boat.

Turkey became one of the main launch points for more than a million refugees taking the sea route to EU territory in 2015, many fleeing conflict and poverty in the Middle East and Africa. The influx of refugees was drastically curtailed by a 2016 accord between Ankara and the EU, after hundreds died crossing to Greek islands a few miles off the Turkish shore.

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