

Dozens of migrants heading to Yemen thrown overboard, feared dead



IOM says five bodies have been recovered, and survivors are being treated in Djibouti. (Photo: Thomas Lohnes/AFP)

Geneva, March 4 (RHC)-- The International Organization for Migration has said that at least 20 migrants and refugees are dead after smugglers threw 80 people overboard during a voyage from Djibouti in East Africa to Yemen.

A statement says “smugglers started shouting there were too many on board” after the boat with 200 migrants, including children under 18 years old, set off on Wednesday.

The IOM said five bodies have been recovered, and survivors are being treated in Djibouti. It is not immediately clear what countries the migrants in this latest journey were from.

Drownings in the waters off Djibouti, typically involving migrants and refugees from Ethiopia or Somalia trying to escape poverty and war at home by finding work in Saudi Arabia or the United Arab Emirates, have become common.

In October, at least eight migrants drowned after smugglers forced them off a boat near Djibouti.

In 2017, up to 50 migrants from Somalia and Ethiopia were “deliberately drowned” when a smuggler forced them into the sea off Yemen’s coast.

And in 2018, at least 30 migrants died when a boat capsized off Yemen, with survivors reporting gunfire.

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