

Dozens of bodies wash ashore after boats sink off Libya coast



People carry the body of a refugee whose boat sank in the sea, after the Libyan Coast Guards took them out from the Mediterranean Sea [Hazem Ahmed/Reuters]

Tripoli, April 25 (RHC)-- At least 57 bodies have washed ashore after two boats sank in the Mediterranean Sea off different towns in western Libya, a coast guard officer and an aid worker have said. A survivor said there were about 80 passengers on one of the boats that set off for Europe at around 2am local time (00:00 GMT) on Tuesday.

Eleven bodies, including that of a child, were recovered off Qarabulli in eastern Tripoli, said coast guard officer Fathi al-Zayani. The refugees were from Pakistan, Syria, Tunisia and Egypt, he said. A Red Crescent aid worker in the coastal city of Sabratha, west of Tripoli, said authorities had recovered 46 bodies since a boat sank off Libya's coast five days ago.

The latest toll follows the recovery of 11 bodies on Monday, which were "handed over to authorities" in Sabratha, the Red Crescent confirmed on Facebook. Pictures were posted online by the Sabratha Red Crescent agency showing bodies in black bags being placed at the back of pick-up trucks by the aid workers wearing face masks and gloves. The aid worker said more bodies were expected to be washed up in the coming days.

The International Organization for Migration said this month that 441 people had drowned in early 2023 while attempting to cross the Mediterranean from North Africa to Europe, the most deaths over a three-month period recorded in the past six years.

The central Mediterranean route remains the world's deadliest migratory sea crossing.

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