

At Least 39 Asylum Seekers Missing Off Morocco Coast in Mediterranean



Madrid, October 29 (RHC)-- Nearly 40 refugees have gone missing after their boat capsized off the coast of Morocco in the Mediterranean Sea.

On Thursday, Spain's coastguard said it rescued 15 refugees from a boat that was sinking in Mediterranean waters after one of its coastguard vessels spotted a troubled boat just some 72 nautical kilometers north of Morocco.

According to a statement from the Spanish coastguard, two women and 13 men were clinging to what was left of the boat, which had lost its base. "One of the rescued women said the boat had lost its floor at around two in the morning, and many people who were traveling it were lost," the statement said, adding, "According to the numbers provided by the rescued migrants, the boat was carrying 54 people, so 39 may be missing."

The rescued refugees were on their way to the southern Spanish port of Malaga in a coastguard ship, Spanish authorities confirmed.

Two helicopters and another coastguard vessel were searching for the missing asylum seekers that include women and children.

The Spanish coastguard had received a warning from an NGO, saying that a small boat loaded with men, women and children departed from Morocco, shortly before it capsized.

This year alone, more than 3,000 people have died while trying to make the dangerous journey to Europe across the Mediterranean Sea, data from the European Union showed.

Over a half a million refugees made the trip to Europe this year from the Middle East and North Africa, in what is being dubbed as Europe's worst refugee crisis since World War II.

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