

One Thousand Boat Migrants Rescued off Italy's Coast, 16 Bodies Found



Rome, December 7 (RHC)-- More than 1,000 migrants were rescued from overcrowded boats and 16 bodies were recovered in the past two days, Italy's coastguard said, adding to the already record number of arrivals this year. Coastguard ships recovered some 800 migrants from nine different vessels on Sunday, the coastal service said, and coordinated the rescue of another 230 boat migrants on Monday.

As of December 1st, Italy had taken in more than 173,000 boat migrants this year, beating the previous record of 170,000 set in 2014. In all, about a half million have come in the past three years. Italy has borne the brunt of new arrivals since the implementation in March of an agreement between the European Union and Turkey to curb the flow of migrants sailing for Greece.

The influx is putting the country's asylum process and legal system under increasing pressure. Prime Minister Matteo Renzi had threatened to veto the European Union's budget to force partners to take in a greater share of asylum seekers, but he resigned on Monday after losing a referendum on constitutional reform on Sunday by a landslide.

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