

Ten migrants jump into sea from Open Arms rescue ship



Rome, August 20 (RHC)-- Tensions increased on the Open Arms rescue vessel on Tuesday when ten of the immigrants aboard jumped into the sea in a desperate attempt to reach the Lampedusa port in Italy.

"First a man, who was rescued by the Coast Guard, threw himself into the water... Then nine other migrants did, too... others continue throwing themselves trying to reach the island's shore by swimming," the Repubblica reported and added that eight people in critical conditions were evacuated from the rescue vessel on Monday afternoon.

After remaining stranded for 19 days in the Mediterranean Sea with more than 100 people on board, the Open Arms is currently half a mile from Lampedusa and awaiting the Italian government's authorization to dock.

Since such an authorization will not be issued as soon as a humanitarian emergency emerges, Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez announced on Tuesday that his country is sending a ship to take the migrants to Mallorca.

The vessel of the Spanish Army Audaz is on its way to the island of Lampedusa and assist the Open Arms and its occupants. It will join the boat to the Port of Palma, in Mallorca. With this measure Spain will solve, this week, the humanitarian emergency, Prime Minister Sanchez tweeted.

Nevertheless, the Audaz will take three days to reach the current location of the Open Arms, a vessel which is going through an emergency situation that gets more complicated every day. For his part, the Italian Interior Minister, Matteo Salvini, the far-right politician who has made a career by attacking non-white migrants, suggested on Tuesday that human rights defenders are exaggerating the situation at the Open Arms.

"I will never go back," Salvini said with reference to his "Closed Ports" policy, which seeks to punish humanitarian vessels entering Italian territory with African migrants rescued at sea.

The Interior Minister' intransigency, however, created a crisis at the ruling class which acquired a new nuance: the Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte announced his resignation on Tuesday morning.

"Bringing about this governmental crisis is highly irresponsible. It seems to me that the Minister of the Interior is following personal interests when he acts in this way," Conte said as reported by France 24.

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