

France rescues 240 UK-bound asylum seekers in 24-hour period

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French policemen stand beside a dinghy lying on the beach after migrants tried to start the engine of a rubber dinghy they wanted to use to leave the coast of northern France and to cross the English Channel, in Sangatte near Calais. [Pascal Rossignol/Reuters]

Paris, November 30 (RHC)--French emergency services have rescued 240 asylum seekers heading in small boats across the English Channel to the southern coast of England, according to local authorities. The 240 were rescued in five different operations between Monday and Tuesday off Calais on France's northern coast, France's Maritime Prefecture of the Channel and the North Sea said in a statement on

Tuesday evening.

According to the UK authorities, 426 migrants and refugees were detected crossing the Channel on Monday after very few crossed a week earlier during a period of bad weather. Britain and France this month signed a deal for UK authorities to increase what their French counterparts are paid to prevent the crossings, as ties warm under new Prime Minister Rishi Sunak.

UK police arrested a man suspected of playing a “key role” in the deaths of at least 27 people who drowned attempting to cross the Channel in a dinghy last November in the deadliest such tragedy.

Among the 27 people – aged seven to 47 – were 16 Iraqi Kurds, four Afghans, three Ethiopians, one Somali, one Egyptian and one Vietnamese person.

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