

At least 79 migrants die after boat capsizes off Greece



Athens, June 15 (RHC)-- At least 79 migrants have died and hundreds of others went missing after their overloaded boat capsized on its way to Greece. The incident took place on Wednesday, marking one of Europe's deadliest shipping disasters in recent years.

The vessel is suspected to have been packed with around 750 migrants, mostly from Egypt, Syria, and Pakistan, who had set out on the perilous journey from Libya. "There were too many people on the outer deck. It was full," said Greek coastguard spokesperson Nikos Alexiou.

The precise site of the disaster has been identified as the Mediterranean waters about 80 kilometers (50 miles) southwest of the southern Greek coastal town of Pylos. So far, as many as 104 people have been rescued. The survivors were taken to the Greek port of Kalamata near Pylos.

The Greek coastguard reported earlier that its agents had approached the vessel and offered help, but the migrants refused assistance.

The Greek migration ministry blamed international smuggling networks for putting migrants' lives at risk, while Filippo Grandi, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, called on European governments to work together on creating safe pathways for people fleeing poverty and warfare.

The shipwreck was the deadliest to take place off the Greek coastline in several years.

In related news, the United Nations says dozens of migrants are believed to have died in a shipwreck off Libya, and only seven have been rescued so far.

In February, 96 people died when their wooden boat smashed into rocks on Italy's Calabrian coast during a storm.

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