

Ten Refugees Drown on Way to Greece



Athens, October 29 (RHC)-- At least 10 refugees, including seven children, have drowned in an incident during which their boats overturned in waters near Greece, amid the ongoing influx of refugees to Europe.

The fatalities occurred on Wednesday when four vessels en route from Turkey to Greece went down. Over 200 people were rescued from one of the boats sinking off the north coast of the Greek island of Lesbos, which is regarded as a main entry point for the refugees who try to reach Europe.

Later in the day, the bodies of a woman and two children were discovered floating off the Greek island of Agathonisi, near the Turkish coast. Rescue efforts were underway as patrol ships, fishing boats and even locals on jet skis were looking for more survivors in the water into the night.

The new deaths have reportedly brought the number of the refugees who drowned in Greek waters so far this month to 39.

Greek Shipping Minister Thodoris Dritsas has said in a statement that the priority for Europe should be "the secure resettlement of refugees arriving from their countries of origin." He added: "As long as European nations feed their national egos, smugglers will make enormous sums to the detriment of the lives of refugees."

Meanwhile, Amnesty International's Deputy Europe Director Gauri van Gulik has also denounced as "obscene" the fact that European leaders have allowed "such a chain of tragedies on its shores."

According to figures released by the International Office for Migration (IOM), 560,000 refugees have entered Greece by sea since the beginning of this year. Over 3,200 people have died during these crossings, most of them children.

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