

At Least 14 Refugees Die in Boat Sinking Tragedy Off Turkish Shore



Ankara, November 11 (RHC)-- At least 14 refugees, including seven children, have died after their boat capsized off Turkey's Aegean coast, local media reported. According to Dogan news agency, the incident took place on Wednesday and the Turkish coastguard rescued 27 refugees, including a pregnant woman.

The boat was transferring refugees from the Turkish province of Canakkale to the Greek island of Lesbos. "The boat probably sank after hitting rocks. It was severely damaged and apparently started to take on water, but they decided to go ahead anyway," Canakkale governor, Hamza Erkal, said, adding, "They apparently turned back after the boat took in more water, but it sank before reaching the shore."

Turkey has become a launching point for refugees trying to reach Europe's front states of Greece and Italy. Most of the refugees then try to reach Germany through Balkan states.

UN figures show that more than 700,000 asylum seekers have reached Europe's shores so far this year and that more than 3,000 others have died or gone missing in their dangerous boat journeys.

The latest fatality came as EU and African leaders meet in Malta later on Wednesday to discuss the refugee crisis. The European Commission is expected to give \$1.8 billion to African states to help them tackle the economic and security problems that have led people flee their countries and take refuge in Europe.

The President of the European Council Donald Tusk said the EU plan "also includes the issue of taking back in an efficient manner those who do not yet qualify for a visa, or those who do not require international protection." The European Union has predicted that at least three million more refugees would enter the bloc by 2017.

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