

Five Refugees Dead as Boat Sinks Off Turkey



Athens, January 27 (RHC)-- Another five refugees have drowned in waters off Turkey while trying to reach Greece in the latest boat accident involving asylum seekers, reports say.

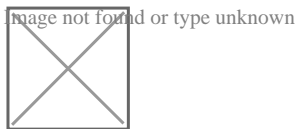
The incident occurred on Tuesday when the boat carrying the refugees sank in the Aegean Sea, the Dogan news agency said, adding that Turkish coastguard saved 16 more people in a search and rescue operation.

The refugees are said to have set off from the Aydin province in southwestern Turkey in an apparent bid to enter the Greek island of Farmakonisi. Many of those asylum seekers that try to make their way to Europe start from Turkey, a country which hosts more than two million refugees from Syria.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) said in a Tuesday statement that more than 45,000 refugees have entered Greece by sea so far this year. The statement added that some 90 percent of the new arrivals are Syrians, Iraqis and Afghans.

Greece served as the main entry point for more than a million refugees who reached the EU last year. Austria and Sweden have recently threatened Athens with potential expulsion from Europe's passport-free travel zone unless it does more to stem the refugee influx into the continent.

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