Fifteen people drown in latest shipwreck tragedy off Libya
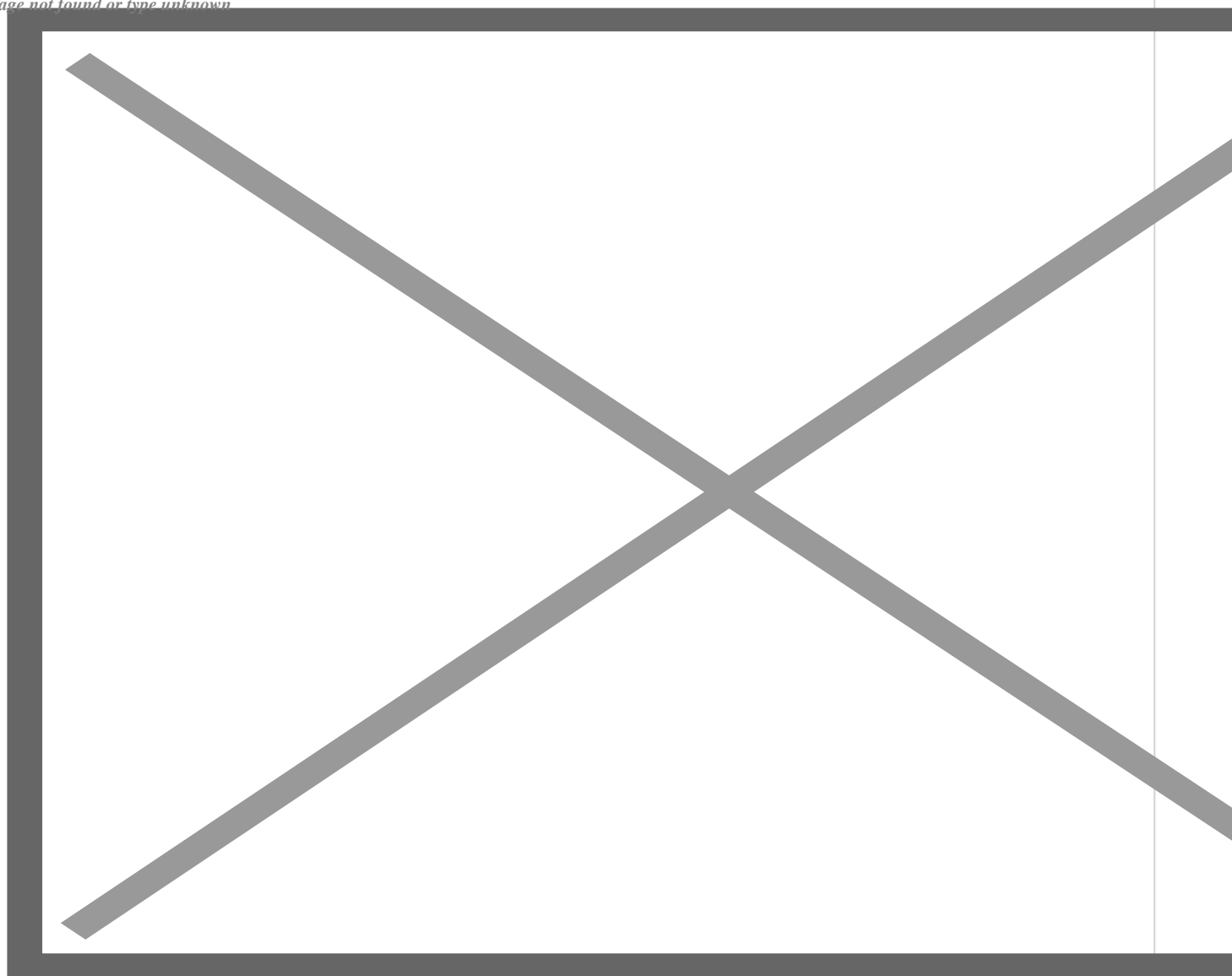
Rescued migrants receive snacks as they sit aboard a Libyan coastguard vessel arriving at the capital Tripoli's naval base. (Photo: Mahmud Turkia/AFP)

Tripoli, March 1 (RHC)-- At least 15 people drowned when their boat capsized off Libya, the second shipwreck in just more than a week involving people undertaking a dangerous sea journey in the hope of seeking a better life in Europe.

Safa Msehli, a spokeswoman for the International Organization for Migration (IOM), said on Sunday the dead were on a rubber boat carrying at least 110 people, who had embarked from the Libyan coastal town of Zawiya on Friday.

The boat started to sink early on Sunday and the Libyan coastguard managed to rescue at least 95 people, including two children, she said. "Tragedies and avoidable loss of life continue as a policy of silence and inaction persists," she said in a Twitter post.

Msehli said many of the survivors suffered burns from engine fuel, and hypothermia, with some taken to hospital. Sunday's shipwreck was the latest along the so-called Central Mediterranean migration route. On Wednesday, international agencies said in a joint statement at least 41 people had drowned when their boat capsized off Libya on February 20.

On Saturday, German charity Sea-Watch said it had saved nearly 150 people off the Libyan coast in two operations.

Libya has become the major transit point for people hoping to reach Europe, after the North African country plunged into a bloody conflict following a NATO-backed uprising that toppled and killed longtime leader Muammar Gaddafi in 2011.

Smugglers often pack desperate families into ill-equipped rubber boats that stall and founder in the Mediterranean Sea. According to the IOM, more than 20,000 people have died in the Mediterranean since 2014.

---

https://www.radiohc.cu/index.php/en/noticias/internacionales/249203-fifteen-people-drown-in-latest-shipwreck-tragedy-off-libya

Radio Habana Cuba