

UN Rights Chief Says Mediterranean Turning into Vast Cemetery



United Nations, April 21 (RHC)-- The UN's High Commissioner for human rights says "callous" EU migration policies are turning the Mediterranean into a "vast cemetery" as migrant death toll is skyrocketing. "Europe is turning its back on some of the most vulnerable migrants in the world, and risk turning the Mediterranean into a vast cemetery," Zeid Ra'ad Zeid al-Husseini said on Monday.

He added that he was not "surprised" by the latest tragedy, referring to a fishing boat which capsized off the Libya coast on Sunday and is believed to have been carrying some 700 migrants on board. The ship capsized about 60 miles (96 kilometers) off the Libyan coast and 120 miles south of the Italian island of Lampedusa on its way to Europe. Only 30 people survived the incident and were rescued. According to an unconfirmed survivor account, the number of illegal migrants on the ship was 950.

"These deaths, and the hundreds of others that preceded them in recent months were sadly predictable," he said, blaming "a continuing failure of governance accompanied by a monumental failure of compassion."

Earlier in the month, two other boats carrying migrants sank, killing around 450 people. The commissioner called on the EU governments to stop "pandering to xenophobic populist movements that have poisoned public opinion on this issue," and to take more sophisticated and courageous approach to the situation.

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