

At Least 21 Refugees Drown as Boats Sink Off Greek Islands



Athens, October 30 (RHC)-- At least 21 refugees have died in an incident in which their boats capsized on the way from Turkey to Greece in the eastern Aegean Sea, Greek authorities say.

Eighteen people drowned while 138 others were rescued after their boat sank Friday overnight off the Greek island of Kalymnos. A second boat capsized near the island of Rhodes early Friday killing three people.

Thousands of refugees have lost their lives in dangerous boat journeys from Turkey to Europe. On Thursday, ten refugees drowned in waters near Greece after four boats overturned. Some 200 people were also rescued in the incident.

Earlier, German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier paid a visit to the Greek capital, Athens, pledging further help for Greece. "At a moment when Greece is trying to recover economically, this influx is an extraordinary burden," he said on Thursday.

Europe is facing record refugee arrivals. While a few European leaders support an open-door refugee policy, others are in favor of controlling the EU's external borders, deporting more people and paying third countries to keep asylum seekers on their soil.

According to the latest figures released by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), over 704,220 refugees have reached Europe's shores so far this year while a total of 3,257 people have either died or gone missing in their perilous journey to the continent.

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