

Dozens Drown in Tragedy at Sea

Dozens of African migrants capsized off the coast of Tunisia on Wednesday after setting off by boat for Europe from Libya, a government source and the Tunisian Red Crescent said.

Some of the four initial survivors told the Tunisian coast guard on Thursday that the boat had sunk off the town of Zarzis, Red Crescent official Mongi Slim told Reuters.

One of the four died later in hospital, Slim said.

A government source said that some of a group of African migrants who were rescued nine miles off the town of Zarzis had informed coastguards that they had set out from Zuwara in Libya, and that dozens had drowned.

At least 65 migrants heading for Europe from Libya drowned last May when their boat capsized off Tunisia.

Libya's west coast is a main departure point for African migrants hoping to reach Europe with the help of human traffickers, though numbers have dropped due to an Italian-led effort to disrupt smuggling networks and support the Libyan coast guard. Although the fighting in Libya has made the situation more difficult for people-trafficking rackets, international aid officials have warned that it could also prompt more Libyans to flee their country. {eoa}

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