



UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has called on the international community to protect the rights of migrants and take action to prevent such tragic incidents, following reports of a second ship capsizing off the coast of the Italian island of Lampedusa

“The Secretary-General is deeply saddened to hear reports of the loss of lives as another boat carrying migrants capsized yesterday off the coast of Italy, only a few days after the tragic incident near Lampedusa which had already claimed more than 300 lives,” Mr. Ban's spokesperson said in a statement.

According to media reports, at least 27 people died and 221 were saved on Friday after their boat capsized near Lampedusa. The incident occurred just over a week after more than 300 migrants, mostly Ethiopian, lost their lives when their boat caught fire half a mile from the coast, leading the vessel to capsize in the same area.

“The Secretary-General calls on the international community as a whole to take action to prevent such tragedies in the future, including measures that address their root causes and that places the vulnerability and human rights of migrants at the centre of the response,” the statement said.

Earlier [UNHCR, the United Nations refugee agency urged](#) wider responsibility-sharing among European Union countries to process asylum claims and find lasting solutions for people in need of international protections.

“With 311 confirmed deaths, that tragedy is already one of the deadliest incidents on recent record,” UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) spokesperson Adrian Edwards told journalists in Geneva, referring to the Lampedusa tragedy. Lampedusa currently faces “serious overcrowding,” the spokesperson said, with more than 1,200 people occupying facilities with the capacity of 250.

The UN agency welcomed comments earlier this week by the President of the European Commission, Jose Manuel Barroso, on the need for measures including strengthened capacity for rescue at sea, and better surveillance to track boats.

*Photo: The death toll from the tragedy off Lampedusa stands at over 300, but searchers fear there may still be more. Photo: UNHCR/ANSA*