Beat: News

Up to 30 Haitian migrants die in Bahamas boat capsize

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USPA News - About 30 Haitian migrants were killed and more than 100 others were rescued after their overloaded sail freighter ran aground and capsized in rough seas near the Bahamas, the U.S. Coast Guard said Wednesday. It is unclear if anyone is still missing.

The incident may have begun as early as Saturday when the ship ran aground, but it was not until Monday night when the sailing vessel capsized and nearly 150 Haitian migrants fell into the water. It happened about 15 nautical miles (27.7 kilometers) southwest of Staniel Cay, which is located in the Exuma Islands of the central Bahamas. The U.S. Coast Guard 7th District command center was later notified after an unsuccessful search by the Royal Bahamas Defense Force, in part because all three of its planes were out of service. An MH-60 helicopter crew from the U.S. Coast Guard arrived at the scene and deployed a mass rescue raft before hoisting 13 people from the water. A 108-foot (32.9-meter) patrol boat from the Royal Bahamas Defense Force was also launched to assist with the rescue of the Haitian migrants, who were seen clinging to the hull of the capsized 40-foot (12.1-meter) vessel. Two additional aircraft from the U.S. Coast Guard dropped food, supplies and eight additional life rafts. By late Tuesday evening, as both the U.S. Coast Guard and the Royal Bahamas Defense Force continued their joint rescue operation, they had recovered the bodies of "approximately" 30 people, officials said. A total of 110 migrants had been rescued and transferred to Nassau, the capital of the Bahamas, for medical care. Another survivor from Monday`s capsizing was rescued at approximately 7 a.m. local time on Wednesday on a small uninhabited island about 13 miles (20.9 kilometers) northeast of Green Cay. The man was found by an MH-60 helicopter crew from the U.S. Coast Guard as they were conducting a first light search for possible survivors. "The man was located on a small island northeast of Green Cay, Bahamas where the helicopter crewmembers landed the aircraft and safely embarked the man," a U.S. Coast Guard spokesperson said. "The man was later transferred to the Royal Bahamas Police Force crewmembers at an airport on Black Point."

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Editorial program service of General News Agency:
United Press Association, Inc.
3651 Lindell Road, Suite D168
Las Vegas, NV 89103, USA
(702) 943.0321 Local
(702) 943.0233 Facsimile
info@unitedpressassociation.org
info@gna24.com
www.gna24.com