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10 October 2013 Last updated at 22:54



## Lampedusa toll at 311 as Italy divers finish boat search



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The BBC's Matthew Price: "Symbols of vivid desperation that people are prepared to go to"

**Italian divers say they have finished searching a boat that sank carrying migrants from Africa, as the death toll from the accident reached 311.**

An Italian coast guard official said the hunt for victims would go on beyond the wreck near the island of Lampedusa.

Nine more bodies were recovered on Thursday, a week after the overcrowded boat caught fire, capsized and sank.

Only 155 people were rescued of more than 500 migrants, mostly Somalis and Eritreans, on the boat from Libya.

At least 50 passengers were still missing, according to those on board.

"There are no more bodies inside the wreckage. The search will continue in areas outside the wreckage," a coast guard official said, according to Agence France-Presse.

Divers from Italy's coast guard, military and emergency services have all taken part in the operation to recover victims from a depth of about 50m (164ft).

### Robotic devices

Aircraft and underwater robotic devices would be used to search beyond the wreckage, the official said.

Italy said Wednesday it would hold a state funeral for the migrants who died in the accident, but no date has been set.

Prime Minister Enrico Letta made the announcement during a visit to Lampedusa with European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso.

Mr Barroso pledged 30m euros (\$40m; £25m) of EU funds to help refugees in Italy.

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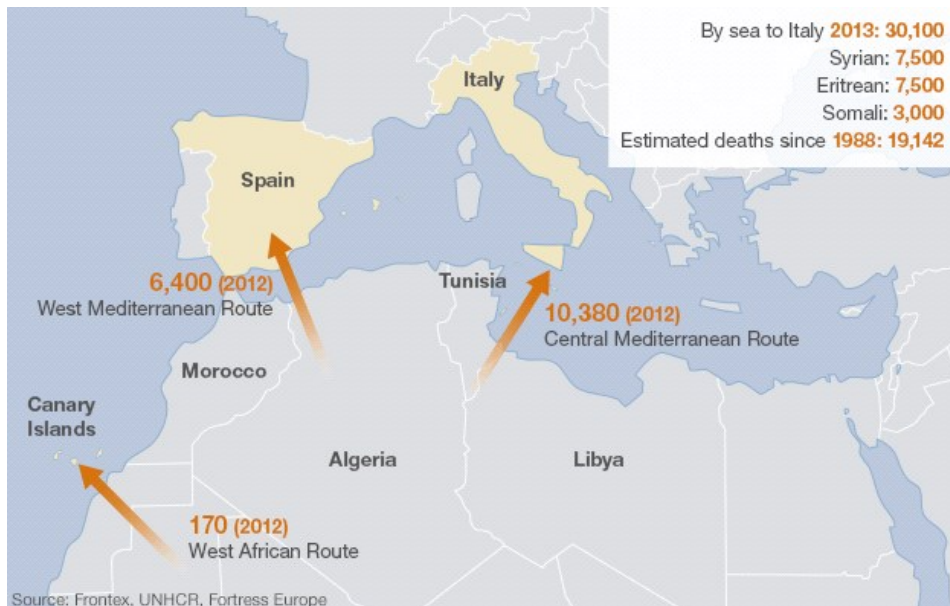
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The sinking is one of Italy's worst disasters involving a boat carrying Europe-bound migrants from Africa.

Lampedusa, which lies 290km (180 miles) off the coast of Africa, is a key destination for migrant vessels bound for Europe.

Many of the island's residents have long complained that EU and Italian authorities are not doing enough to deal with the thousands who come ashore.



## Why people flee Eritrea and Somalia

### Eritrea:

- UN says 3,000 people try to flee each month
- Human rights groups say the country is becoming a giant jail, with some 10,000 political prisoners
- Young people conscripted to army - sometimes until age of 40

### Somalia:

- Much of the country controlled by al-Shabab Islamist militants
- Country ravaged by two decades of war

## Why men flee Eritrea for Europe

### My two weeks on a migrant boat

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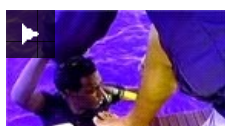
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## Background

### Two weeks on boat

## Video



#### Survivor's plea: 'Keep searching'

A man is rescued off the island of Lampedusa after a boat sank carrying hundreds of migrants sank off southern Italy.

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