

《也门海域再现难民被迫跳海事件 恐超过55人死亡》

Five migrants have died and more than 50 others went missing after smugglers forced them from a boat off the coast of Yemen in the second such drowning in two days, the UN migration agency said on Thursday.

The International Organization for Migration's (IOM) statement came less than a day after it said up to 50 migrants from Ethiopia and Somalia were "deliberately drowned" by a smuggler in a separate boat off Yemen.

Up to 180 migrants were forced from the boat on Thursday morning, the IOM said.

Members of the Aquarius rescue ship run by non-governmental organizations (NGO) SOS Mediterranee and Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF - Doctors Without Borders) prepare to load a body bag of a migrant who died at sea onto a small vessel on August 3, 2017. /AFP Photo

"We have the five bodies for sure ... but we believe that there are certainly more than 50 who are still in the sea," Laurent de Boeck, the IOM's chief of mission in Yemen, told The Associated Press.

The narrow waters between the Horn of Africa and Yemen have been a popular migration route despite Yemen's conflict. Migrants, most of them Ethiopians, try to make their way to oil-rich Gulf countries.

"They are not aware at all that there is a war. Sometimes they don't even believe us when we explain it to them," de Boeck said. Just by making land they feel "they are halfway to wealthy."

In the first drownings on Wednesday, a smuggler forced more than 120 migrants into the sea as they approached Yemen's coast, the IOM said. Its staffers found the shallow graves of 29 migrants on a beach in Shabwa during a routine patrol. At least 22 migrants remained missing.

Migrant girls (rear) sit aboard a boat of Spanish NGO Proactiva Open Arms, after they were recovered with others by Santa Lucia merchant ship in the Mediterranean Sea, 20 nautical miles from the Libyan coast, on August 1, 2017. /AFP Photo

The passengers' average age was around 16, the IOM said.

"The survivors told our colleagues on the beach that the smuggler pushed them to the sea when he saw some 'authority types' near the coast," de Boeck said Wednesday. "They also told us that the smuggler has already returned to Somalia to continue his business and pick up more migrants to bring to Yemen on the same route."

De Boeck called the suffering of migrants on the route enormous, especially during the current windy season on the Indian Ocean. "Too many young people pay smugglers with the false hope of a better future," he said.

The IOM says about 55,000 migrants have left Horn of Africa nations for Yemen since January, with most from Somalia and Ethiopia as they flee drought and unrest at home. Many leave from points in Djibouti, with some departing from Somalia. A third of them are estimated to be women.

Migrants sleep on the beach on August 9, 2017 in Ventimiglia, near the French border. Groups of migrants wander in the small city of Ventimiglia trying to cross the border between Italy and France. /AFP Photo

"Some are coming for the third time. They didn't succeed, they went back home, but the parents didn't agree with the fact that they didn't succeed so they send them back. And they have no choice," de Boeck told the AP. "They are between 12 and 25 years old."

Migrants travelling from Djibouti pay about 150 US dollars, while migrants travelling from northern Somalia pay between 200 US dollars and 250 US dollars because the route to Yemen is longer.

More than 111,500 migrants landed on Yemen's shores last year, up from around 100,000 the year before, according to the Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat, a grouping of international agencies that monitors migration in the area.

