

《英语新闻：韩国客轮沉没107人下落不明》

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SEOUL/JINDO, South Korea -- A passenger ship carrying more than 470 people, mostly high school students, sank off South Korea's southern coast on Wednesday, leaving at least two people dead and 107 others missing.

A total of 368 people have been confirmed rescued as of 1 pm local time, including 13 injured, but the death toll could rise sharply as 107 others remain unaccounted for amid fears that they could be trapped inside the sunken vessel.

The 6,325-ton Sewol was carrying 477 people, including 325 students on a school trip, when it sent out a distress signal at around 8:58 am in waters 20 kilometers off the island of Byeongpoong, said the Coast Guard and a government official.

The accident prompted a massive rescue operation involving Coast Guard and military vessels and helicopters, but one person was found dead. The Coast Guard said that it has recovered the body of a 27-year-old female crew member.

Officials said another died after being rescued, but no further details were available.

The ship completely capsized in about two hours, the Coast Guard said, adding that most of the students had been rescued from the capsized ferry without giving further information.

"A total of 179 people had been officially rescued as of noon," Lee Jae-youl, a Ministry of Security and Public Administration official, said at a press briefing.

The cause of the accident and the condition of those rescued were not immediately known.

"There was a banging noise then the boat suddenly started sinking," a rescued passenger was quoted by the Coast Guard as saying.

South Korean ferry with 477 passengers sinks off south coast

The ferry set off from the western port of Incheon on Tuesday evening and was to arrive at the southern resort island of Jeju later on Wednesday, Lee said.

The students are from a high school in Ansan, about 40 kilometers south of Seoul, and they were on their way to Jeju, a popular tourist destination, for a four-day trip, Lee added.

The Navy dispatched 22 vessels and a Lynx helicopter for rescue and search operation, while preparing to send Navy special forces and an underwater demolition team to rescue passengers who jumped into the water wearing life jackets after the captain told them to abandon the ship.

The Air Force dispatched a C-130 military transport aircraft carrying life boats, while the Army sent about 10 helicopters and the emergency rescue teams, military officials said.

South Korean President Park Geun-hye ordered maximum efforts to rescue all of the passengers, stressing that all available Navy, Coast Guard and other vessels nearby should be mobilized to make sure that not a single life is lost, presidential spokesman Min Kyung-wook said.

In a phone call to Coast Guard chief Kim Suk-kyoon, Park also ordered the mobilization of Coast Guard commandos to search every corner of the vessel to ensure that no one is left behind, the spokesman said.

There were no Chinese passengers on board the vessel, according to the Chinese Embassy in South Korea.

