

Press release 26 April 2023

RESQSHIP rescues 41 people in distress at sea **Successful rescue operation in the central Mediterranean - 41 people safely disembark in Lampedusa**

On Wednesday morning the crew of the motor sailer *Nadir* of RESQSHIP e.V. encountered a unmaneuverable steel boat with 41 people on board. After a two-hour rescue operation, all people were successfully rescued and afterwards brought to Lampedusa. Among the survivors were a pregnant woman and a child.

A note from Frontex's *Osprey 2* aircraft alerted the *Nadir* to the distress case at sea. About half an hour later, the crew found the overcrowded and capsize-prone boat in the Maltese SAR zone. The people, who had been underway for two days, were adrift in the open sea, unable to maneuver due to the defective engine. After reporting the emergency and providing the people with life jackets, the crew was ordered by Italian authorities to take the people on board and bring them to Lampedusa. Late at noon, the crew finished the evacuation and set off for Lampedusa with the rescued people on board. Among the 41 rescued are, in addition to the pregnant woman and a four-year-old child, six other women and numerous minors.

"The situation was very critical. The steel boat was completely overloaded. This type of boat has no float of its own and can sink within a very short time after water enters. We were prepared for anything," describes Cat Spangehl, communication coordinator on the *Nadir*. This type of boat has been appearing more frequently since last year and is highly dangerous.

For weeks, the situation on the Mediterranean Sea has been getting worse and worse. In the last few weeks alone, several thousand people arrived on the island of Lampedusa. Since arriving in the area of operation, the *Nadir* has continuously received radio messages about boats in distress. "We would have been happy if we didn't have to bring the survivors to Lampedusa ourselves so we could support other boats in distress. But we are glad that we were able to help and relieve the strain on the Italian rescue forces, which are completely overwhelmed at the moment," says Friedhold Ulonska, captain of the *Nadir*. The *Nadir* is not a rescue ship. While it is well suited for first aid, it is not designed to transport a large number of people.

Since Sunday night, at least four boats have capsized in the central Mediterranean, many people are missing. According to the IOM, 2023 is the deadliest year so far since in 2017. Just during the last operation of the *Nadir* on the Easter weekend, the crew of the *Nadir* had to witness the death of 23 people.

About RESQSHIP:

Resqship e. V. has been sailing observation missions in the central Mediterranean Sea since 2019 to draw attention to the precarious situation of people fleeing and to document human rights violations. In case of emergency, the crews provide supportive measures for sea rescue and thus fulfill their maritime duty to help.

Further information about RESQSHIP: <https://resqship.org/>

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