

Press release 28 April 2023

Sailing vessel *Nadir* rescues 47 people in distress at sea **Successful rescue operation - refugees go safely ashore in Lampedusa**

For the second time within a few days, the Italian authorities asked the *Nadir* of RESQSHIP for assistance in bringing people in distress at sea to Lampedusa. On Friday morning, the crew of the motor sailing vessel encountered a steel boat in severe danger of capsizing with 47 people on board. Water was entering the boat. As the weather conditions worsened, the crew took the people on board the *Nadir* and brought them to Lampedusa where they could safely go ashore. The night before, the crew had already provided emergency assistance to 54 people on a wooden boat that was unable to manoeuvre.

The *Nadir* found the iron boat, overcrowded with 47 people, early on Friday morning in the Maltese SAR zone. It reported the distress case to the authorities, provided the people with life jackets and escorted the boat, which was still running, towards Lampedusa. Among the people on board were 14 women, including a pregnant woman, a small child and several minors. The people had set off from Sfax (Tunisia) on Thursday evening. They are mostly from Guinea and the Ivory Coast. When weather conditions deteriorated around noon and water entered the boat, Italian authorities asked the crew to take the people on board the *Nadir* and bring them to Lampedusa. After an one hour rescue operation, the *Nadir* made its way to Lampedusa, attending to two medical emergencies along the way. There, people were able to safely disembark in the early evening.

"The boat was unstable, completely overloaded and very low in the water. There was an acute danger of capsizing due to the waves. There was already water inside. People were getting more and more panicky. Despite the critical situation, we had to wait a long time for permission from the Italian authorities to take the people on board. We are glad that all the people are now well and could go ashore safely," says Cat Spangehl, crew member on the *Nadir*.

Just the night before, the crew of the *Nadir* had supported another distress case: A wooden boat overloaded with 54 people was drifting unmanoeuvrable in the Maltese SAR zone. The *Nadir* accompanied the boat for hours before the people were rescued by the Italian coast guard and brought to Lampedusa. "We can hardly keep track of all the distress cases that has been reported over the last few days. Europe's blind spot is currently recording more deaths than it has for a long time. At the same time, civilian sea rescue ships with capacity for many hundreds of people are being detained or sent to ports in northern Italy, putting them out of action for days or weeks. What is urgently needed now is all available capacities on the ground as well as a European rescue operation to support the Italian coast guard. In the long term, safe migration routes must be created to end the deaths," demands Leon Salner, crew member on the *Nadir*.

This is the crew's third rescue operation within a few days. Only on Wednesday, the Italian authorities had ordered the *Nadir* to take 41 people from a boat in distress on board and

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bring them to Lampedusa. The Italian coast guard itself was on duty around the clock and could not rescue all the people in distress at sea itself. Because of the current situation in Tunisia, more people have been making their way across the Mediterranean again since the beginning of the year.

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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