

Press release 6 Mai 2023

## **Iron boat with 41 people aboard sinks - three missing 38 people rescued by fishermen - crew of the *Nadir* takes medical emergencies and then assists five other boats with 200 people**

**On Friday evening, the sailing vessel *Nadir* was called by radio to a distress case at sea where a boat carrying 41 people had sunk and the people were drifting in the water. By the time the *Nadir* arrived, three fishing boats had already picked up 38 of the shipwrecked people, with no trace of three others. The *Nadir* had to take three medical emergencies on board in order to provide them with adequate care. Late in the evening, they were all rescued by an Italian coast guard vessel. The *Nadir* then rushed to five other boats in distress with a total of 193 people on board, providing them with life jackets and staying with them. Five hours later, they were evacuated by the Italian Coast Guard.**

At around 6 pm on Friday, the crew of the sailing ship *Nadir* of the German NGO Resqship overheard a radio message from fishermen, containing that a boat with refugees had sunk a few miles away and the people were in the water. The iron boat was on its way from Sfax (Tunisia) to Lampedusa and drifting in the Maltese SAR zone when it sank. When the *Nadir* reached the position, three fishing boats were already pulling people out of the water. Three people still missing were searched for in vain. The survivors were in shock and hypothermic. Among them were many women, including one pregnant woman in severe pain. Three other women needed urgent medical attention, so the crew took them on board of the *Nadir*.

"One woman was unconscious with breathing problems and in a very critical condition," said board doctor Alina Bureau on the *Nadir*. "Two other people also needed urgent medical attention, they were severely hypothermic, in shock and had breathing and circulatory problems. There were other medical cases, about four people with burns and a pregnant woman. But since these were not in acute danger of death, they remained on the fishing boats while we attended to the more urgent cases."

Immediately after the *Nadir* arrived at the scene of the accident, the crew informed the relevant authorities and requested assistance. However, it took about three hours before help arrived from an Italian Coast Guard vessel. As the medical emergencies had been stabilized, all survivors could be taken over by the coast guard.

While the *Nadir* was tied up by this distress case, there were other boats in distress nearby that the crew could not help at that moment. "The current situation shows again that all active rescue forces, whether civilian or governmental, are completely overloaded and there is a massive lack of rescue capacity. At the same time, the Italian authorities continue to prevent civil rescue vessels from carrying out their work, very deliberately accepting the loss of life," says Cat Spangehl, communications coordinator on the *Nadir*.

Immediately after evacuating the medical emergencies by the Italian Coast Guard, the *Nadir* rushed to other reported distress cases four nautical miles away. The crew encountered five

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Observation missions in the central Mediterranean Sea

boats with a total of 193 people on board, including 46 women, six babies, three children and one person with disabilities. The crew distributed life jackets, alerted the authorities and assisted the Italian Coast Guard with the rescue until late at night.

Already in the early hours of Saturday morning, the *Nadir* supported another boat with 35 people in distress, which was later recovered by the Italian Coast Guard.

This was already the seventh operation of the *Nadir* crew since the start of the current observation mission just over a week ago. It was possible to assist a total of around 450 people in distress at sea. Unfortunately, any help came too late for the three missing people on Friday evening.

***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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