

New Mediterranean boat tragedy is worst this year: UNHCR

This is a summary of what was said by UNHCR spokesperson Charlie Yaxley – to whom quoted text may be attributed – at today's press briefing at the Palais des Nations in Geneva.

26 July 2019 | [Español](#) | [Français](#)



Waves lap the shore of the Mediterranean Sea in southern Spain. © UNHCR/Markel Redondo

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sea rescues and help with alleviating the suffering of the thousands of refugees and migrants caught in the conflict in Libya.

Should the toll of 150 lives lost be confirmed, yesterday's shipwreck will be the biggest known incident since May 2017. Even before this incident, 669 deaths had been reported on the Mediterranean Sea so far in 2019.

UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi said: "The worst Mediterranean tragedy of the year has just occurred. Restoring rescue at sea, an end to refugee and migrant detention in Libya, increasing safe pathways out of Libya must happen now before it is too late for many more desperate people."

UNHCR takes this opportunity to urge States once again to come forward with additional help, including further resettlement places and other safe pathways out of Libya for people who are vulnerable and at risk. Such actions are just as important as sea rescues for saving lives. In addition, more must be done to arrest and prosecute the ruthless traffickers and smugglers who profit from people's desperation, and overturn the business model on which they rely.

See also our [11 July joint statement with IOM](#)

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