

At least 70 migrants drown after their boat sinks off Tunisia: State agency TAP

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An official with the International Organization for Migration in Tunisia said the smuggling boat was coming from Libya when it sent a distress signal in international waters early Friday off the Tunisian coastal city of Sfax.

Rescued migrants disembark from the Mare Jonio rescue ship of the Italian NGO Mediterranea Saving Humans as it docked at the port of the Italian island of Lampedusa, southern Italy, Friday. (Photo: AP)

Tunis: A UN migration official and Tunisia's state news agency say as many as 70 migrants have drowned when their boat capsized in the Mediterranean Sea and at least 16 other people have been rescued.

An official with the International Organization for Migration in Tunisia said the smuggling boat was coming from Libya when it sent a distress signal in international waters early Friday off the Tunisian coastal city of Sfax. The official said between 60 and 70 people drowned.

The state news agency TAP said 70 people drowned as the boat sank and that fishing boats rescued 16 people.

The IOM official says the migrants are now being questioned and cared for by Tunisian authorities. She said the migrants included people from Bangladesh and Morocco, among other nationalities.

- AP