

At least 15 migrants drown off the Italian coast

Death toll could rise in incidents that spill passengers into the sea

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ROME - At least 15 migrants drowned in the waters off the Italian coast in two separate incidents, including the disintegration of a boat that spilled more than 100 passengers into rough seas, reports said Sunday.

More than 120 people were on board a boat that ran aground about 200 yards off the Calabrian coast, the “toe” of boot-shaped Italy, near Roccella Jonica, the ANSA and Apcom news agencies reported. At least seven people died, and the death toll was expected to rise.

The boat broke into at least five hulking pieces of splintered wood and metal that washed up on shore.

Separately, off Sicily’s eastern coast, the bodies of eight migrants were pulled from the water Sunday, port officials in Catania said. Seven survivors were found on shore and two were considered missing, officials said.

Illegal migrants routinely are ferried in overcrowded boats by smugglers making the lucrative run between North Africa or Turkey and Italy’s southern coast.

If the migrants do not have the necessary documents and a job awaiting them in Italy, they are ordered deported, but authorities say many never leave and instead make their way up the peninsula to find work or family in [continental Europe](#).