

HUNDREDS OF MIGRANTS RESCUED NEAR MALTA

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sea, the last two without food or water.

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Doctors Without Borders brought approximately 440 migrants to safety on Wednesday after a difficult rescue in international waters off the coast of Malta.

On Tuesday, April 4th, the NGO's vessel *Geo Barents* received a distress call from Alarm Phone, a charity that relays distress calls from migrant boats. *The Geo Barents* changed course and headed south to assist the overcrowded fishing boat. Nearby merchant vessels also assisted the migrant boat, sheltering it from the rough seas.

Stormy weather through the night and into the morning of April 4th only allowed the *Geo Barents* to monitor the migrant boat and offer life jackets. On Wednesday afternoon, the *Geo Barents'* crew was able to bring the 440 migrants, including 8 women and 30 children, on board.

According to Reuters, Alarm Phone had warned two days earlier that the boat was in difficulty.

"440 people rescued!!" the organisation tweeted.

https://twitter.com/alarm_phone/status/1643494721103314945?s=20

The migrants had left from the eastern coast of Libya, near Benghazi, on April 1st, Doctors Without Borders spokesperson Flavia Pergola [told](#) Reuters. They spent four days at sea, the last two without food or water, before being rescued.

One of the migrants was airlifted to Malta via helicopter after fainting from dehydration, she said.

The migrants are from Syria, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Egypt, Somalia, and Sri Lanka.

Doctors Without Borders tweeted that they would be taken to Italy.

“Following the long and challenging rescue that occurred yesterday, Italian authorities informed our team that 100 people will be transshipped to an Italian naval asset off Sicily, while the 339 other survivors will be disembarked in Brindisi,” the organisation tweeted.

The migrants are part of a surge in sea migration from North Africa to Italy, as arrivals have more than quadrupled compared to the first quarter of 2022.

On Monday, Italy's Coast Guard rescued [32 migrants](#) stuck on a desert islet near the island of Lampedusa island in what was another difficult rescue.

Reuters also [reported](#) in March that, according to an internal interior ministry document seen by the news outlet, of the 105,000 migrants who arrived in Italy in 2022, only around 10% were brought ashore by NGO boats.