

RESCUE AT SEA BY ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA FLAGGED VESSEL

BARBUDA FLAGGED VESSEL



On March 11th, 2023, at 22:25 hrs. UTC the Antigua and Barbuda flagged vessel the MV Froland received a distress alert from the Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre (MRCC) in Rome reporting the location of a boat with immigrants on board.

In keeping with the duties under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the SAR Convention, and the SOLAS Convention, to render assistance to all persons in distress, the MV Froland proceeded to the distress position, off the coast of Italy.

The vessel then had to lay adrift due to bad weather conditions, high swells, and darkness but at approximately 5:00 hrs. UTC the ship was able to approach the boat and the crew could see that there were survivors still onboard.

Unfortunately, in their haste and panic to exit the boat, the passengers capsized the vessel, and all fell into the water. This was after five days at sea with insufficient rations of water and food, along with the traumatic experience of losing many of their companions to the sea. The interview with the Italian Coast Guard would later reveal that approximately

10 people died due to exhaustion and another 4 had jumped overboard as a result of diminished psychological capacity due to overexposure.

Captain Denys Rusakov from the MV Froland, using all available means of manpower and equipment, wasted no time in rescuing seventeen people from the water. The survivors were provided with first aid, food, and fresh water as well as dry clothes. They were subsequently taken to Sicily where they would receive further support.



The loss of life of migrants at sea is a humanitarian tragedy that needs to be addressed through appropriate and effective action at the United Nations. The International Maritime Organization (IMO), of which Antigua and Barbuda is a member State, recognizes the crucial role that both governments and non-governmental organizations play in search and rescue operations. The IMO also acknowledges the critical role played by merchant ships in coming to the aid of persons in distress at sea as is evidenced by the abovementioned incident.