

76 dead, dozens missing after migrant boat sinks off Yemen

32 people rescued from the shipwreck in the Gulf of Aden

● The accident occurred off Abyan governorate in southern Yemen

AFP | Dubai, United Arab Emirates

At least 76 people have been killed and dozens are missing after a boat carrying mostly Ethiopian migrants sank off Yemen, in the latest tragedy on the perilous sea route, officials said yesterday. Yemeni security officials said 76 bodies had been recovered and 32 people rescued from the shipwreck in the Gulf of Aden. The UN's migration agency said 157 people were on board. The accident occurred off Abyan governorate in southern Yemen, a frequent destination

for boats smuggling African migrants hoping to reach the wealthy Gulf states. Some of those rescued have been transferred to Yemen's Aden, near Abyan, a security official said. UN agency the International Organization for Migration earlier gave a toll of at least 68 dead. The IOM's country chief of mission, Abdusattor Esoev, told AFP that "the fate of the missing is still unknown." Despite the civil war that has ravaged Yemen since 2014, the impoverished country has remained a key transit point for irregular migration, in particular from Ethiopia which itself has been roiled by ethnic conflict. Each year, thousands brave the so-called "Eastern Route" from Djibouti to Yemen across the Red Sea, in the hope of eventually reaching oil-rich Gulf countries such as Saudi Arabia

and the United Arab Emirates. The IOM recorded at least 558 deaths on the Red Sea route last year, with 462 from boat accidents. Last month, at least eight people died after smugglers forced migrants to disembark from a boat in the Red Sea, according to the UN's migration agency. The vessel that sank off Abyan was carrying mostly Ethiopian migrants, according to the province's security directorate and an IOM source. Yemeni security forces were conducting operations to recover a "significant" number of bodies, the Abyan directorate said on Sunday. On their way to the Gulf, migrants cross the Bab al-Mandab Strait, the narrow waterway at the mouth of the Red Sea that is a major route for international trade, as well as for migration and human trafficking.

Once in war-torn Yemen, the Arabian Peninsula's poorest country, migrants often face other threats to their safety. The IOM says tens of thousands of migrants have become stranded in Yemen and suffer abuse and exploitation during their journeys. In April, more than 60 people were killed in a strike blamed on the United States that hit a migrant detention centre in Yemen, according to the Huthi rebels that control much of the country. The wealthy Gulf monarchies host significant populations of foreign workers from South Asia and Africa.



Suspects on trial over Moscow venue attack that killed 149



A group of defendants accused of involvement in the 2024 Crocus City Hall music venue gun attack that killed 149 people, goes on trial in Moscow

Moscow, Russia

Nineteen people went on trial in Moscow yesterday over an attack on a city concert hall that killed 149 people in one of the deadliest strikes in Russia. Armed men stormed the Crocus City Hall on the outskirts of Moscow on March 22, 2024, opening fire and then setting the building alight, injuring hundreds of people. The Islamic State (IS) group claimed responsibility. The four suspected attackers, all from Tajikistan -- an ex-Soviet republic in central Asia -- and another 15 people accused of being accomplices have gone on trial. An AFP reporter at the courtroom before saw some of the

defendants in glass cages, their hands cuffed behind their backs. Around 30 survivors were also present. One of them, Tatiana Ruzanova, told AFP she came to the court to see the defendants. "They all sit quietly with their heads slumped in cages... I didn't see if they felt guilty, they all had their heads down," Ruzanova said. On the night of the attack, she came to the concert of the Russian rock group Piknik with a friend but did not make it inside the hall. "We saw everyone already in the foyer, maybe that saved us. We inhaled smoke. It was a miracle that we didn't make it," Ruzanova said.



(from L) Rachabalizoda Saidakrami, Dalerdjon (alternatively spelled Dalerdzhon) Barotovich Mirzoyev, Shamsidin Fariduni and Muhammadsobir Fayzov suspected of taking part in the attack

Iran says US accountability for attacks on nuclear sites part of any future talks

● The United States struck key Iranian nuclear facilities on June 22

● Washington has dismissed Tehran's call for compensation as "ridiculous"

● Iran said future cooperation with the UN agency would take on a "new form"

AFP | Tehran, Iran

Iran said yesterday it would hold the United States accountable for attacks on its nuclear sites in any future negotiations, while ruling out direct talks with Washington. The United States struck key Iranian nuclear facilities on June 22, briefly joining a war launched by Israel that had derailed talks on Tehran's atomic programme. "In any potential negotiation... the issue of holding the United States accountable and demanding compensation for committing military aggression against Iran's peaceful nuclear facilities will be one of the topics on the agenda," foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei told a press briefing on Monday. Asked whether Iran would engage in direct talks with the United States, Baqaei said: "No." In mid-June, Israel launched an unprecedented attack target-

ing Iranian nuclear and military sites, but also hitting residential areas over 12 days of war. US forces joined with attacks on nuclear facilities at Fordo, Isfahan and Natanz. The fighting derailed talks that began in April and had been the highest-level contact between Tehran and Washington since the United States abandoned in 2018 a landmark agreement on Iran's nuclear activities. Following the war, Tehran suspended cooperation with the United Nations' nuclear watchdog and demanded guarantees against military action before resuming any negotiations. Washington has dismissed Tehran's call for compensation as "ridiculous". Baqaei said on Monday that Iran was committed to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, but criticised what he described as the "politicised and unprofessional approach" of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The foreign ministry spokesman said that the IAEA's deputy chief is expected in Iran "in less than 10 days". Later on Monday, the head of the Iranian parliament's national security commission, Ebrahim Azizi, said the visiting delegation from the IAEA "will be strictly and exclusively authorised to conduct technical and expert-level discussions with Iranian officials and experts". "Under no circum-

stances will physical access to Iran's nuclear facilities be granted, and no inspections by this delegation or any other foreign entity will be permitted at the country's nuclear sites," the law-maker said, according to Tasnim news agency. Last month, Iran said future cooperation with the UN agency would take on a "new form". On July 25, Iranian diplomats met with counterparts from Germany, Britain and France, in the first such meeting since the war with Israel ended. The three European powers are parties to the 2015 nuclear deal, which unravelled after the US withdrew during Trump's first term.



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Iran is not known to possess nuclear weapons, and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has consistently reported no credible evidence of a current, coordinated nuclear weapons program

In recent weeks, the trio has threatened to trigger a nuclear war if Tehran failed to agree a deal on uranium enrichment and cooperation with UN inspectors. Iran has repeatedly called re-imposing sanctions "illegal" and insisted on its right to enrich uranium. Israel and Western nations accuse Iran of pursuing nuclear weapons, a charge Tehran has consistently denied.