

Four dead, two dozen injured after migrant boat capsizes off California coast

Kevin Martinez
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A vessel carrying immigrants capsized off the coast of San Diego, California on Sunday, killing four people and injuring another 24. The boat crashed on the rocks of the Point Loma reef near the Cabrillo National Monument, a peninsula on the edge of San Diego Bay and a popular tourist destination. Images and video of the dead and debris went viral online.

Authorities say that the 40-foot cabin cruiser had been pummeled by the surf and broken into pieces by the time they received a call from a commercial boat just before 10 a.m. A rescue boat was dispatched, believing there was only one person on board. By the time it arrived, the vessel had broken into pieces and dozens of people had been thrown into the turbulent ocean.

Rick Romero, lifeguard lieutenant for San Diego Fire-Rescue, told Reuters, “When we arrived on the scene... There were people in the water, drowning, getting sucked out of the rip current...”

He added, “The boat was on the reef bouncing back and forth and then just slowly disintegrated into a bunch of pieces...There’s no boat there. It’s all debris.” The exact cause of the capsizing is still under investigation.

On Monday, the US Coast Guard said it was suspending the search for more survivors as five of the rescued were taken to hospital and one was still in critical condition. The boat has been declared a likely human-smuggling vessel by the US Border Patrol, though the nationalities of those on board has yet to be identified. The operator of the boat is in custody and reportedly cooperating with federal agents.

The Border Patrol stated that there has been an increase in maritime border crossings in recent years, but that Sunday’s incident involved a boat that was larger and held more people than most smuggling

boats.

From 2019 to 2020, the Border Patrol reported a 92 percent increase in apprehensions at sea, with this year on track to meet and possibly surpass such numbers. Last week, the CBP said its agents stopped a small wooden boat off the coast of Point Loma without navigation lights that had been carrying 21 people on board.

Sunday’s tragedy along the California coast is the direct result of the Biden administration’s brutal immigration policies, which in all essentials are no different from that of the previous Trump administration. President Biden has continued the attacks on asylum seekers, the caging of children, and the construction of a border wall between the US and Mexico.

More than 22,500 migrant children are currently being held in detention centers run by the Department of Health and Human Services, more than double the number held one month ago, while 790 minors are detained in Border Patrol jails along the southern border. Meanwhile the Biden administration continues to use the COVID-19 pandemic to justify dumping adults back into Mexico soon after they are detained.

An ongoing review of Trump’s border wall project has resulted in the returning of \$14 billion of Pentagon funds which had been reappropriated for the project. However, Department of Homeland Security head Alejandro Mayorkas indicated last month in a meeting with Immigration and Customs Enforcement staff that DHS would still be able to consider filling in “gaps” in the wall, carrying out renovations and installing surveillance equipment.

The Biden White House has responded to the recent influx of refugees and migrants at the border by demanding that the Mexican government increase its

military and border patrol forces to prevent anyone from even reaching the US-Mexico border. In this way, President Biden has continued and expanded Trump's efforts to outsource immigrant repression to other countries.

Recently, millions of coronavirus vaccine doses were offered to Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopes Obrador (AMLO) in exchange for increased border patrols, forcing migrants into deadlier journeys by sea or through the desert.

Before the pandemic, extreme violence and poverty drove millions of immigrants to the US in search of asylum and a better life. The pandemic has only worsened their plight, as governments across the Western hemisphere have refused to offer any assistance to immigrants.

Internationally, scenes of immigrants drowning at sea have become all too commonplace and are increasing in frequency. On the same day as the tragedy off the San Diego coast, at least 11 people drowned in the Mediterranean when their rubber dinghy carrying two dozen people bound for Europe capsized off the coast of Libya.

The European governments have conspired to block aid groups from rescuing those stranded at sea, pushing asylum seekers back to Libya where they face rape, torture and slavery. This has compelled desperate migrants to take even riskier routes across the Mediterranean and Atlantic Ocean to reach Europe.

Last Monday, the Spanish coast guard announced finding 17 migrants dead on a boat after it was stranded off the Canary Islands. Another 130 immigrants were presumed dead after their boat capsized off the Libyan coast just last month.



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