

43 dead as migrant boat breaks apart off Italy

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Online Desk: The Italian coast guard has recovered about 43 bodies after a migrant boat broke apart in rough seas Sunday off the southern coast of Italy's mainland, RAI state radio reported. Rescuers said so far there were some 40 survivors. Quoting unidentified port authorities near the coastal town of Crotona, in Calabria, the toe of the Italian peninsula, RAI said the boat was carrying more than 100 migrants when it ran into trouble at dawn in the Ionian sea.

By mid-morning, about 40 survivors had been found, said Luca Cari, a spokesperson for firefighters who were involved in rescue efforts. State TV said some 27 of the survivors made it to shore, apparently on their own. "At the moment there are various victims," Cari said, without specifying a number of dead as rescue efforts were still underway. The Italian news agency AGI put the number of recovered bodies at 27 and said a baby a few months old was among the dead.

The radio report said vessels from the coast guard, border police and firefighters were involved in rescue efforts. The coast guard was not immediately available for more details. Details about the nationalities of the migrants were not immediately provided in the reports. It was not immediately clear where the boat had set out from, but migrant vessels arriving in Calabria usually depart from Turkish or Egyptian shores. Many of these boats reach remote stretches of Italy's long southern coastline unaided by the coast guard or humanitarian rescue vessels.