



National Council for Human Rights

Fact-Finding Mission on the Sinking of the Tourist

Launch Sea Story

November 24th, 2024

In accordance with its mandate to monitor and report on incidents potentially impacting the protection of the right to life, security, and safety, the National Council for Human Rights (NCHR) established a fact-finding mission to investigate the circumstances surrounding the tragic sinking of the tourist vessel Sea Story in the territorial waters off Marsa Alam, within the Red Sea Governorate of Egypt.

The decision to launch the mission was taken following official reports of the maritime accident, which involved the vessel Sea Story, a passenger boat constructed in 2022 with a registered capacity of 36 individuals. The incident occurred during the early morning hours, under circumstances that are presently under review.

According to preliminary information provided by the Governor of the Red Sea Governorate, the vessel had departed from Porto Ghalib Port on 24 November 2024 as part of a scheduled diving expedition. At the time of the incident, the vessel was carrying 31 international tourists of various nationalities, in addition to 14 crew members. The voyage was intended to conclude with the vessel's return to Hurghada Marina on 29 November 2024.

At approximately 05:30 a.m., the Control Centre of the Red Sea Governorate received a distress signal from a crew member aboard the vessel. In response, relevant state authorities were promptly notified. The Egyptian Naval Base and the Maritime Rescue Centre, operating under the Naval Forces, immediately initiated coordinated search and rescue operations. These efforts included aerial surveillance via helicopter and the deployment of a naval vessel (Al-Fateh Frigate) to assist in the search and facilitate emergency rescue operations.

The NCHR's fact-finding mission aims to assess compliance with international and national standards concerning maritime safety, emergency response, and the protection of the right to life, and will continue to liaise with relevant authorities to obtain verified information and ensure accountability and redress where applicable.

Based on initial information gathered by the National Council for Human Rights' fact-finding mission, the sinking of the Sea Story tourist vessel occurred in the Shab Satayah area, north of Marsa Alam. While the precise cause of the incident remains under investigation, the vessel—a four-deck yacht with a wooden hull—reportedly encountered harsh maritime conditions. Notably, the Egyptian Meteorological Authority had issued advance warnings on



National Council for Human Rights

Saturday regarding unstable weather conditions and high waves in the Red Sea, advising maritime companies to suspend all navigation activities on Sunday and Monday.

Rescue operations were significantly challenged by adverse weather conditions and the vast area requiring coverage. Despite these difficulties, intensive search efforts continued throughout the day. According to Major General Amr Hanafy, Governor of the Red Sea Governorate, rescue teams successfully located several survivors in the Al-Ghadir area of Wadi El-Gemal. Survivors were airlifted by helicopter to receive urgent medical care, while others were secured on-site until naval vessels, including the frigate Al-Fateh, could transport them safely ashore.

Despite partial success in the rescue efforts, search operations for those unaccounted for remain ongoing. Local authorities have confirmed that all available resources are being deployed to locate the missing and to provide necessary support to those rescued.

It is also noted that the Sea Story was operating as part of a popular underwater excursion known for taking tourists on two-hour submarine tours to explore marine life, coral reefs, and aquatic biodiversity at depths of up to 25 meters. These tours typically depart from local marinas, with guests boarding yachts to access the submarine, which then descends to panoramic viewing chambers beneath the waterline.

In response to the incident, the Red Sea Health Directorate and the Egyptian Ambulance Authority declared a state of maximum alert. A total of 21 ambulances were dispatched to the site, with several injured individuals transported to local hospitals due to the severity of their conditions. As of this preliminary reporting, 29 tourists were rescued with minor injuries. Tragically, six individuals lost their lives, and nine others sustained injuries in the sinking of the tourist submarine operating near Hurghada.

Relevant state agencies have been formally notified and are actively monitoring the situation. The Council will continue its independent investigation to assess the causes, responsibilities, and potential human rights implications of the incident, particularly regarding the rights to life, safety, and health of all those affected.

Visit to Injured Survivors and Follow-up on the Sea Story Vessel Incident – Red Sea Governorate

As part of its investigative mandate, members of the fact-finding mission conducted a visit to Marsa Alam Hospital to meet with five survivors who sustained minor injuries following the sinking of the tourist vessel Sea Story. The incident occurred during the period in which the NCHR delegation was present in the Red Sea Governorate. According to official reports, a distress call was received at approximately 5:30 a.m. by the Red Sea Governorate Control Centre, relayed through the Emergency Operations Room, from a crew member aboard the Sea Story. The vessel had departed from Porto Ghalib in Marsa Alam on 24 November 2024 for a diving expedition, with its return scheduled for 29 November 2024 to Hurghada Marina. It was carrying 31 tourists of various nationalities and 14 crew members.



National Council for Human Rights

Initial information provided by the Governorate indicates that the vessel sank in the Shab Satayah area, north of Marsa Alam. In response, the Control Centre promptly notified the relevant authorities, including the Maritime Rescue Centre. Rescue operations were launched utilizing a helicopter and the naval vessel Al-Fateh, which was dispatched from Berenice Port towards the reported distress location. The five survivors visited by the mission—four of foreign nationality and one Egyptian—confirmed that they received comprehensive medical care from the hospital, and expressed their appreciation for the prompt and professional response.

During subsequent meetings with relevant security authorities, the mission received an official list of the tourists onboard the sunken vessel. All 46 individuals were identified as Russian nationals and were traveling under the arrangements of the tourism agency Biblio Globus. The complete list of passengers, including adults and minors, was provided and has been recorded for the mission's documentation purposes.

Of the total passengers, 29 individuals were successfully rescued and transferred to local hotels and hospitals for medical observation and necessary care. Tragically, six individuals lost their lives in the incident. The Public Prosecution Office was immediately notified and initiated an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the sinking. A team of prosecutors was dispatched to collect testimonies from the injured survivors in hospital facilities.

Preliminary findings from the investigation indicate that the Red Sea Ambulance Authority received a report of the sinking of the Sindbad submarine in Hurghada. Emergency medical response teams transported 25 individuals from the scene, including 19 injured and six deceased foreign nationals, to various medical institutions in the area.

The Consulate General of the Russian Federation in Hurghada issued a public statement confirming that all passengers aboard the sunken Sindbad submarine were Russian tourists affiliated with Biblio Globus. The statement added that the majority of the passengers were rescued and transported to their respective hotels or medical facilities in Hurghada. It further confirmed that the health status of the survivors was stable and not a cause for concern. Four Russian nationals were confirmed deceased, while search and rescue operations for the remaining individuals continue.

The NCHR reiterates the importance of upholding the rights to life, health, and physical integrity of all individuals affected by the incident, and will continue to follow developments and engage with national authorities to ensure full accountability and the protection of all persons involved.