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## **Migrants rescued at sea after fleeing Libya must be allowed to disembark in Malta**

The Maltese authorities must urgently allow a boat carrying 102 sub-Saharan Africans to disembark those on board, Amnesty International said.

The private vessel 'MV Salamis', which rescued the group stranded at sea and reportedly includes pregnant women, one injured woman and a five-month-old baby among its passengers, was stopped by the Maltese navy before it entered Maltese territorial waters last night. The group is currently stranded off the Maltese coast.

"The Maltese authorities have a humanitarian duty to ensure the safety and well-being of those rescued. They must allow the boat to disembark in Malta and its passengers to be given any necessary medical treatment, as well as a chance to apply for asylum," said Jezerca Tigani, deputy director for Europe and Central Asia at Amnesty International.

"Otherwise, the highest price may be paid by the women, men and children who may have to spend another night at sea with the fear of being sent back to Libya."

The Maltese government has said it does not intend to take the passengers ashore, saying the ship's captain should have taken them back to Libya.

"The Maltese government is wasting precious time in refusing to disembark people in immediate need," said Jezerca Tigani.

Amnesty International considers that no passenger onboard MV Salamis should be removed to Libya. This would violate the international prohibition against removing anyone to a place where they would face a real risk of ill-treatment or other serious human rights abuses.