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| 1. Annotate the article to show evidence of understanding and thinking. 2. Write a 1-page response that includes an introduction with a thesis, supporting body paragraphs, and a conclusion.  * How much responsibility should wealthy countries take for rescuing endangered migrants? Explain. * What can be done to decrease migration catastrophes worldwide? Explain. * Pick another way to respond to the article. |

**Migrant boat sinks off Libya with up to 900 feared dead**

Excerpted from the *Daily Mail,* April 20, 2015

Hundreds of terrified migrants drowned on board a smuggler boat because they were locked in the ship's hold when it capsized, a survivor revealed today. More than 900 people—including 200 women and up to 50 children—are feared dead after the boat overturned in the one of the worst maritime disasters since the end of World War Two. Only 28 passengers were rescued after their overcrowded fishing boat tipped over at night on its way from Libya to Italy.

One of the survivors, a man from Bangladesh, told prosecutors about 300 migrants were trapped in the ship's hold when it sank. The small numbers of survivors makes more sense if hundreds of people were locked in the hold, because with so much weight down below, “surely the boat would have sunk,” said General Antonino Iraso, of the Italian Border Police, which has deployed boats in the operation.

This tragedy comes just days after another shipwreck in the area claimed 400 lives. It is thought both boats capsized after those on board rushed to one side to signal to passing merchant ships.

Politicians and charities have attacked the British government and other EU states for supporting Italy's controversial decision to stop search and rescue operations last year. Last October Britain and other EU nations backed Italy's decision to scale back the migrant patrol operation, replacing it with a much more limited EU 'border operation' plan. This operates within just 30 miles of the coast and does not conduct search and rescue missions,

Italy claimed the presence of rescue ships was encouraging migrants to attempt the crossing. Yet their new policy does not seem to be deterring migrants. Last week alone 10,000 were rescued by the Italian navy—an unprecedented number.

Charities Amnesty International and Save The Children joined the calls for search and rescue operations to be reinstated. And Italian prime minister Matteo Renzi said he had asked for an urgent meeting of EU leaders, adding: “Italy asks not to be left on its own. The trafficking of migrants amounted to ‘a new slave trade.” We must all fight against human traffickers that are the slavers of the 21st century, he added. “We are not talking about statistics but our brothers and sisters and of human lives.”

Loris De Filippi of Medecins Sans Frontieres [Doctors without Borders] said EU states were culpable for the tragedy. He said: “A mass grave is being created in the Mediterranean Sea and European policies are responsible. Faced with thousands of desperate people fleeing wars and crises, Europe has closed borders, forcing people in search of protection to risk their lives and die at sea.” He said the number of casualties was comparable to “a warzone.” He said, “European States must immediately launch large-scale search and rescue operations, with proactive patrolling as close as possible to Libyan shores. The current means are obviously not enough. This tragedy is only just beginning, but it can and should be stopped.”

Growing numbers of Africans have been setting off on ill-fated voyages to Europe from Libya and the country's coastlines has become a prime target for people-smugglers. The warm weather has also tempted tens of thousands of migrants in the past week alone to attempt the crossing.

The boat in the latest tragedy set off from Libya on Saturday and sent out a distress signal shortly before midnight 120 miles south of the Italian island of Lampedusa. The boat initially set off from Egypt and then stopped off on the Libyan coast near the city Zuwarah to pick up more passengers, it reported.

A rescuer said one of their first discoveries was the body of a boy, no older than 15, who was discovered face down in a pool of oil.

Given that the sea is as deep as 3 miles (5 kilometers) or more in the area, it is possible that many bodies will never be recovered, as was the case in similar tragedies off the coasts of Libya, Italy, and other Mediterranean nations in recent years.

Malta's prime minister Joseph Muscat said the incident was further evidence that Italy and Malta need more support in dealing with the migrant crisis. “A time will come when Europe will be judged harshly for its inaction as it was judged when it had turned a blind eye to genocide,” he said. “They are literally trying to find people alive among the dead floating in the water.”

Foreign ministers have added the issue of migrants to the agenda of a European Union meeting in Luxembourg on Monday. “Europe can do more and Europe must do more,” said Martin Schulz, president of the European Parliament. “It is a shame and a confession of failure how many countries run away from responsibility and how little money we provide for rescue missions.”