

Irish naval vessel rescues 329 people off Libya coast

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Dublin: Irish naval vessel rescued 329 people from three vessels in the Mediterranean Sea, the military said.

The military said LE Niamh vessel was tasked by the Italian Marine Rescue Coordination Centre on Saturday morning to investigate a sighting of three possible migrant vessels around 58 km north of the Libyan capital Tripoli, Xinhua news agency reported.

LE Niamh deployed rigid-hulled inflatable boats (rhibs) to take the migrants on board. A short time later more ships were located, with the Irish naval vessel rescuing everyone on board.

The 329 people rescued comprise 317 men, 11 women and one child, all of whom are receiving water, food and medical assistance.

The Irish naval vessel has now rescued a total of 3,343 migrants since commencing operations in the Mediterranean in July.

LE Niamh, with a crew of 55 naval service personnel and two medics, continued the work started by LE Eithne, the first Irish Naval vessel, which was deployed to the Mediterranean in mid-May to assist the Italian authorities in the humanitarian operation to rescue migrants fleeing North Africa.

- IANS