Beat: Miscellaneous

38 dead, 101 injured after boats collide near Hong Kong

-, 03.10.2012, 23:18 Time

USPA News - A tug boat and a ferry collided off the coast of Lamma Island in Hong Kong on Monday evening, killing 38 people and injuring more than 100 others, local authorities said on Wednesday. Seven people have been arrested in connection with the deadly crash.

The accident happened at around 8:23 p.m. local time on Monday when two vessels, "Sea Smooth" and Hong Kong Electric`s "Lamma IV", collided off Yung Shu Wan Pier at Lamma Island, the third largest island in Hong Kong. The vessels were carrying at least 140 people combined, but likely more. Hong Kong`s Information Services Department said at least 38 people were confirmed to have died by 7:30 p.m. local time on Wednesday. Thirty of them were pronounced dead at the scene while eight others were pronounced dead upon arrival to hospitals in the region. There are fears others may still be missing. In addition to the fatalities, the department said a total of 101 people were reported to have been injured and were taken to five different hospitals. Two of the victims remained in a critical condition on Wednesday evening while 76 others, many with relatively minor injuries, were already discharged. Seven people were arrested on Wednesday in connection with the accident, which caused the Lamma IV vessel to sink. Among those arrested were the 56-year-old male captain and two male crew members of the sunken vessel, and the 54-year-old captain and three male crew members of another vessel for endangering the safety of others at sea. All were later released on bail. "From the investigation so far, we`ve come to the suspicion that the crew responsible for manning the two vessels have not exercised the care required of them by law to ensure the safety of the vessels that they are navigating as well as the people on board their vessels," said Police Commissioner Tsang Wai-hung. "It is on this basis that they have been arrested to assist police inquiries. .. The investigation will focus on criminal liability." The accident came as Hong Kong residents were celebrating the mid-autumn festival and China`s National Day. It is the worst maritime accident since August 1971 when Typhoon Rose caused the ferry `Fat Shan` to capsize between Hong Kong and Macau, killing at least 73 people and leaving 15 others missing and presumed dead. Only four people survived.

Article online:
https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-16/38-dead-101-injured-after-boats-collide-near-hong-kong.html

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