

Migrants test positive for coronavirus after arriving in Italy



Charity group Mediterranea's Mare Jonio ship rescued 43 migrants on Wednesday, eight of whom tested positive for coronavirus Handout MEDITERRANEA/AFP/File - Rome (AFP)

Eight migrants who disembarked in Sicily this week after being rescued in the Mediterranean by a charity boat are in quarantine after testing positive for coronavirus, the group Mediterranea said.

The eight migrants were part of a group of 43 people aboard the humanitarian vessel Mare Jonio who disembarked at the Sicilian port of Augusta on Wednesday.

On Thursday, Mediterranea said in a statement that health authorities had informed them of the positive results, adding that the individuals represented no risk for the wider population as they were in quarantine, along with the remaining migrants and the crew.

The mayor of Noto in Sicily's lower tip, where the migrants were being quarantined about 20 kilometres (12 miles) outside of town, similarly sought to

quell any worries.

“There should be no concern for our community because no possible contact will be allowed,” said Mayor Corrado Bonfanti.

Still, news of the migrants infected with coronavirus immediately drew political fire.

Sicily’s regional president, Nello Musumeci, wrote on Facebook that requests to quarantine the migrants on a ship rather than on land had been rejected by the government as too expensive.

“And so they can stay at Noto, where they are. You heard correctly: in Noto, the pearl of our tourism,” Musumeci wrote, adding that he would check whether ordering a red zone around the facility housing the migrants would be appropriate.

“Why the quarantine on dry land? Why is no one telling us about the real conditions in the Libyan camps? These are questions that Rome has a duty to answer,” he wrote.

Far-right leader Matteo Salvini also attacked the government.

“The rest of Europe looks at us with pity, while the human traffickers rub their hands. The government? It’s silent and sleeps,” Salvini, head of the anti-immigrant League party, wrote on Facebook.

Source:

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