

## Ship With 27 Migrants Locked in Limbo for More Than a Month

A commercial **tanker** has been **anchored** in the Mediterranean Sea with 27 rescued African migrants aboard for more than a month, caught in a stalemate as ports in the region refuse to allow the Maersk Etienne to dock.

The migrants, including a pregnant woman and a child, have remained on board under worsening conditions since the Danish-flagged vessel pulled them from a small fishing boat on Aug. 4. Malta's government requested the rescue but Maltese authorities and those in nearby Tunisia have denied the **vessel** entry to their ports.

"Unfortunately, we haven't been informed about a solution from the responsible governments," said Kis Soegaard, a spokeswoman for Maersk Tankers, which owns the ship. Maersk Tankers is part of A.P. Moller Holding A/S, the parent company of shipping giant A.P. Moller-Maersk A/S.

The crisis **escalated** over the weekend, when Maersk Tankers said three migrants had jumped overboard before being recovered by a rescue team. The three were given "due care," the Denmark-based shipping company said on social media, adding that "we continue to plead for urgent humanitarian assistance for the 27 migrants stranded aboard Etienne."

The vessel's captain, Volodymyr Yeroshkin, said in a video appeal last Friday that the ship cannot accommodate more people than its 21 crew members. "The crew are professional seafarers and none of them is qualified for medical assistance or for care for rescued people," he said. "We require immediate assistance." The ship has enough food and water for now, the crew said, but the supplies will eventually **run out**.

Maritime-industry officials say international maritime law obliges vessels to help others in distress and then take the passengers to the nearest safe port.

The stalemate is **stirring** longstanding tensions in the European Union over the waves of migrants that have reached Europe's shores in recent years.

Northern European countries are reluctant to take them in, leaving thousands stranded in overcrowded migration camps in Southern Europe.

Mediterranean countries including Italy, Malta, Greece and Spain have received hundreds of thousands of refugees on small boats from the North African coast. This year more than 44,000 migrants have arrived in Europe, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Some Southern European countries have been denying entry in recent months to migrants picked up by commercial vessels. The bars against entry have grown stronger under the coronavirus pandemic, with authorities in the region saying they risk allowing infected migrants to enter their countries.

Speaking on Maltese television on Monday, Malta Prime Minister Robert Abela said it was up to Denmark to solve the problem because the ship is operated by a Danish company.

Several groups, including the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Chamber of Shipping, issued a joint statement Monday calling for a resolution to the standoff.

“The conditions are rapidly deteriorating onboard, and we can no longer sit by while governments ignore the plight of these people,” Guy Platten, secretary general of the ICS, said in a statement.

1. What did you think of the article?
2. How easy or difficult was it to understand?
3. What do you think of the situation aboard the ship?
4. What options did the captain have?
5. Do you think the Maltese government are right in their position?
6. Why do you think some of the migrants jumped overboard?
7. What can be done to resolve the stalemate?
8. How can the Danish government resolve the situation? Do you think they have the responsibility to do so?
9. Why do so many migrants want to leave their countries and cross into Europe?
10. What do you think European governments should do?
11. What do you think Europeans think about migration?
12. How can migration be stopped and should it?
13. What do you think about migration into Chile?
14. Vocabulary:
  - Tanker
  - Anchored
  - Vessel – how else can we use this word?
  - Escalated
  - Run out
  - Stirring – what else can you stir?
  - To be up to
  - Standoff
  - Sit by
  - Plight
15. Final thoughts.