



**ACTIVITY:** Sea Disaster

**CASE:** GSAF 2014.12.28.d

**DATE:** Sunday December 28, 2014

**LOCATION:** The disaster took place in the Adriatic Sea between Albania and Italy, 33 nautical miles from the island of Othonoi, Greece.

**SHIP:** The 26,900-tonne Italian-flagged ro/ro ferry *Norman Atlantic*, chartered by the Greek ferry line ANEK.

**NARRATIVE:** The *Norman Atlantic* was sailing from Patras in western Greece to the Italian port of Ancona when fire broke out in her lower car deck at 04h00, and quickly went out of control. The captain sent a distress signal and cargo ships and tugs in area rushed to assist. Although fire and weather conditions made the burning ship impossible to approach, they formed a circle in an effort to provide a lee for rescue operations. Airborne evacuation was the only means of rescue. Italian and Greek helicopter crews winched hundreds of passengers to safety in pairs of two, despite rough seas, low temperatures and strong winds. It was thought that 458 people were on the ferry but a number of stowaways may have also been onboard in an attempt to illegally migrate to Italy, and many truck drivers are known to sleep in their cabs during the voyage. Some passengers jumped into the water and at least 11 people were killed.

One of the nine bodies recovered bore wounds which resembled shark bites and a marine biologist will assist the autopsies undergoing in Bari, Italy. Based on information available at present, it is not known if they drowned or were bitten by sharks prior to death.

**SOURCES:** Gazzetta Del Sud, January 12, 2015

<http://www.gazzettadelsud.it/news/english/123985/Norman-Atlantic-victims--may-have-been-attacked-by-sharks-.html>

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Agence France-Presse, January 13, 2015  
<http://www.interaksyon.com/article/102862/norman-atlantic-ferry-victims-possibly-attacked-by-sharks-report>

Aggelos Skorda, Greek Reporter, January 13, 2015  
<http://greece.greekreporter.com/2015/01/13/norman-atlantic-victims-may-have-been-attacked-by-sharks/>

<http://www.keeptalkinggreece.com/2014/12/28/norman-atlantic-ablaze-dramatic-rescue-efforts-to-evacuate-478-passengers-crew/>

