

More than 150 abandon sinking cruise liner

by UPI

LONDON -- A Chilean navy captain said more than 150 people had fled a cruise liner in British-claimed Antarctic waters after the ship hit an iceberg. The passenger ship Explorer began sinking Thursday evening after it hit ice near the South Shetland Islands, a British-claimed sector of Antarctica south of Argentina, CNN reported Friday. Capt. Carlos Munita of the Chilean navy said a Norwegian rescue ship had arrived at the scene of the crash to assist in evacuating the Explorer. The ship, which flies a Liberian flag, was reported to be carrying 154 people -- including 100 passengers -- when it struck the iceberg Thursday evening. "The great majority of people, including all the passengers, have been safely taken off the Explorer and are now being recovered by the first of the vessels to arrive on scene in response to the distress call," Dave Jardine-Smith, head of the British Maritime and Coastguard Agency's search and rescue team, told CNN. "The passengers and crew from the Explorer have not been in lifeboats very long," Jardine-Smith said. "They should be, hopefully, in good condition. We are told that there are no injuries."

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