

SAILING IN INFESTED WATERS

3 RESCUED AFTER SHARKS ATTACK YACHT

Sailors unhurt, but stern torn away from catamaran on round-the-world trip

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SYDNEY

THREE people on board an inflatable catamaran in the Coral Sea off the northeast coast of Australia have been rescued after the vessel was damaged from several shark attacks, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) said yesterday.

Satellite photos and a video on the AMSA website showed a large part of the stern of the yacht torn away.

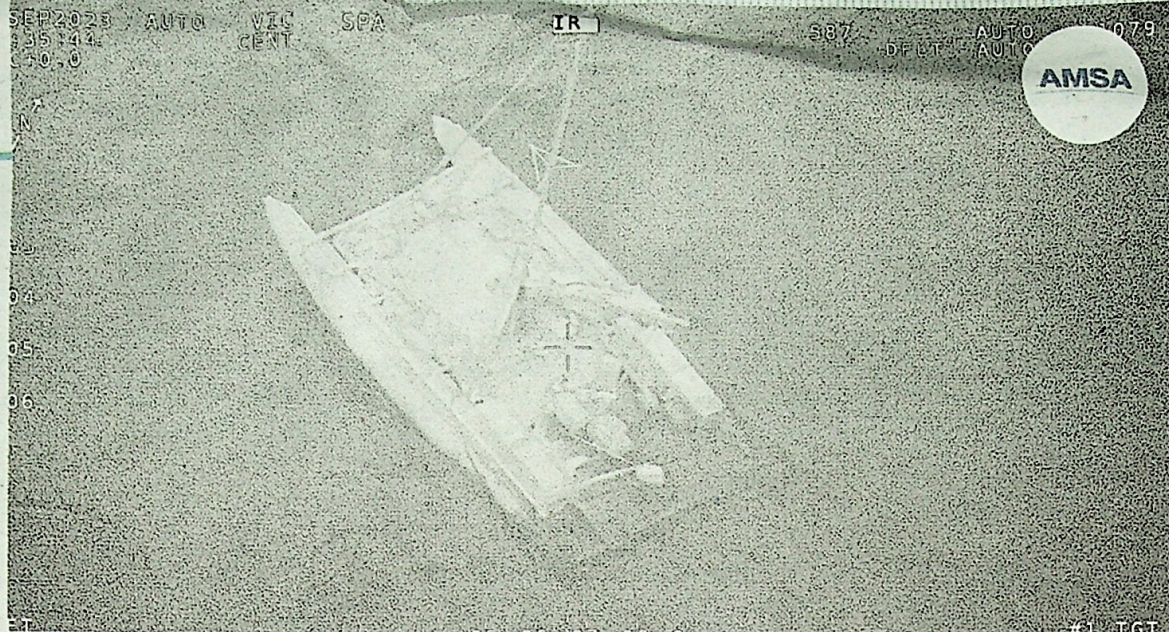
"The vessel departed from Vanuatu and was bound for Cairns (Australia) when contact was es-

tablished. Both hulls of the vessel have been damaged following several shark attacks," the AMSA said in a statement.

Rescue crews responded to an emergency positioning beacon registered to the *Tion*, a nine-metre inflatable catamaran on a round-the-world expedition, early yesterday. The yacht was located about 835km southeast of Cairns in the Coral Sea.

AMSA requested the assistance of a Panama-flagged vehicle carrier, which successfully conducted the rescue.

The three passengers — two Russian and one French citizen



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A picture released by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) yesterday showing the damaged inflatable catamaran in the Coral Sea, some 800 kilometres southeast of Cairns. (Inset) A general view of the catamaran on June 14. AFP PIX

— are due to arrive in Brisbane today, AMSA said.

The three men on board the boat were unharmed, said Anna Kosikhina, a spokesperson for the voyage, which she said was aimed at promoting Russia and Siberia and began two years ago.

"They were all intact. Nobody is hurt," she said.

"The only thing is that the balloons of the inflatable catamaran were blown away."

This was not the first accident on the voyage, Kosikhina said, with the steering device of a pre-

vious vessel failing during a previous leg from Chile to Easter Island.

The crew continued the expedition on an inflatable catamaran by the same manufacturer that had been stored on the island for several years. **Reuters**