


[Taller Map](#) [Smaller Map](#)

19/08: 2 cases: one group north of Lesbos, one south of Lesbos, all put into inflatable life rafts and pushed back to Turkey

In Distress Push-Back

VERIFIED

20.08.2020 / 14:45 / Aegean Sea

Watch The Med Alarm Phone Investigations – 19th of August 2020

Case name: 2020_08_19-AEG700

Situation: 34 travelers pushed back by Greek coastguard, put into inflatable life rafts in Turkish waters and brought back to Turkey. Same procedure for a group south of Lesbos.

Status of WTM Investigation: Concluded

Place of Incident: Aegean Sea

Summary of the Cases:

On 19th of August 2020, the Alarm Phone was informed about two cases in the Aegean Sea. The first boat called from north of Lesbos, and the travelers were deposited in inflatable life rafts in Turkish waters after a push-back. The second call came in from a group south of Lesbos in Greek waters. They were also put into life rafts by Greek authorities. Both groups were brought back to Turkey.

Case one:

On 19th of August 2020 at 5:45h CEST, the Alarm Phone was called by a group of 34 travelers (among them men, women, and minors) in distress north of Lesbos. The GPS location we received from them showed them in Greek waters and in the Greek Search and Rescue zone. They reported that the Greek coastguard had stolen their fuel and were still close to them, making waves to push them back into Turkish waters. At 5:50h, they sent us pictures and videos from the situation, showing an official vessel. They reported that the waves were getting higher and water was entering their boat. They said that the Turkish coastguards were already on scene and observing. At 6:20h, we sent an e-mail to the Greek and Turkish authorities, reporting about the case and asking for a rescue of the people. At 6:25h, we talked to an officer of the Turkish coastguard on the phone. They stated to have a vessel at the given location and to have spotted a travelers' boat but claimed not to know if the travelers were in Greek or in Turkish waters. Our shift team could not get through to the travelers anymore and at 9:30h, we talked to the Turkish coastguard again but did not receive further information. At 9:59h, the Turkish coastguard sent us an e-mail saying that the people had been taken onboard of a Greek patrol boat. At 10:42h, we called the Greek coastguard, asking for a confirmation of this information, but they refused to give out any information. At 12:13h, we got through to the travelers again and they reported "Greece broke our boat". But due to a bad connection we could not understand more and could not re-establish the contact. Calling the Turkish coastguard again, they repeated their last information. At 14:51h, our shift team received a video from the travelers, showing them floating in inflatable life rafts in Turkish waters.

Alarm Phone is still investigating the details of this case and will include potential updates into this report.

Twitter chronology:

06:59h CEST – https://twitter.com/alarm_phone/status/1295948599101214723

16:33h CEST – https://twitter.com/alarm_phone/status/1296092934572564486

Case 2:

At 10:10h CEST, our shift team was called by a group of an unknown number of travelers south of Lesbos. They were drifting in the Greek Search and Rescue zone after the Greek coastguard had stopped them and put them into inflatable life rafts. At 10:30h the travelers informed us that the Turkish coastguard had arrived. Later, at

Related Reports

13:00 Oct 15, 2015 / Aegean Sea Kms

[8 distress calls in the Aegean Sea, near the Greek islands of Lesbos, Chios and Farmakonisi](#)

11:51 Nov 30, 2015 / Aegean Sea Kms

[29/11: Alarm Phone alerted to 9 distress cases near Lesbos and Chios](#)

14:12 Oct 06, 2015 / Aegean Sea Kms

[Alarm Phone alerted to 5 distress cases in the Aegean Sea near Chios and Lesbos](#)

17:20 Sep 20, 2015 / Aegean Sea, Greek islands of Lesbos and Chios Kms

[5 distress calls in the Aegean Sea, near the Greek islands of Lesbos and Chios, all rescued](#)

18:20 Jan 14, 2016 / Aegean Sea, Lesbos Kms

[13/1 Alarm Phone alerted to 1 vessel crossing the Aegean Sea, arrived on Lesbos Island](#)



14:29h, we received the confirmation from the Turkish authorities that the people were back in Karaburun, Turkey.

Alarm Phone is still investigating the details of this case and will include potential updates into this report.

Twitter chronology:

16:33h CEST – https://twitter.com/alarm_phone/status/1296092934572564486

Last update: 18:58 Dec 20, 2020