



23/06: 32 travellers pushed back to Turkey between Samos Island and Kusadası district

In Distress Push-Back Testimony

VERIFIED

24.06.2022 / 11:30 / Eastern Med

Watch The Med Alarm Phone Investigations – 22nd of June 2022

Case name: 2022_06_23-EasternMed-923

Situation: 32 travellers pushed back to Turkey between Samos Island and Kusadası district

Status of WTM Investigation: Concluded

Place of Incident: Eastern Med

Summary of the Case:

In the morning of June 23 we were alerted about 20 travellers stranded on Ikaria island. It took a longer time, until we managed to get in contact with the stranded group. They reported that they had been on the island for five days. They were about 20 people, including 5 children and 7 women. Two people reported medical problems: one child with mental health issues and one woman who was diabetic.

At 12:30h CEST we sent an email to authorities and at 12:42h CEST called to JRCC Piraeus. On the phone, the officer said that they forwarded our mail to the operation center, as it is a case on land. At 12:46h CEST we also called the local police on Ikaria. The officer on the phone said they will take care of this case.

At 14:30h CEST the police on Ikaria stated that the police has searched, but did not find the group. They also told us if we want information, we should call the port authorities. In a phone call at 14:39h CEST the port authority of Aghios Kirykos stated exactly the same: They received our email, they know about the group and they searched for them but did not find them.

As we feared that this group might have become a victim of a push-back from land, we alerted as well the Turkish Coastguard who informed us during the night that a Turkish Coast Guard vessel rescued 32 people between Samos Island and Kusadası district at 19:50 (CEST) near to the above mentioned position. The nationalities of the rescued migrants were 14 Yemeni, 12 Syrian and 6 Palestinian.

Several days later we manage to reach out to the people who clarifies the developments:

One part of the group was first brought to Samos and then in the evening pushed back to Turkey. The other part remained on the island of Ikaria and was directly brought back. They were finally rescued from two different life rafts by the Turkish Coast Guard at 21:00 off the coast of AYDIN/Kuşadası. A Palestinian family sent us photos showing their family on the island.

Testimony1 (from a Somalian refugee):

"We had arrived on the Greek island of Ikaria but the Greeks pushed us back to Turkey. They took us first down from Ikaria and told us they will bring us to the camp and actually brought us to Samos. We stayed there 24 hours, but then they pushed us back. They put us back in the sea!"

Testimony2 (Palestinian family from Syria):

"I am with my wife. And my wife's three children, a 9 years old boy, a 5 years old girl and a 3 years old girl. They are all the children from my wife. My wifes husband and father of the children died in Syria. The grandparents of the children live in Germany.

We were happy when we made it to Greece. I send you pictures of us when we were on the island. We stayed on the island for 9 hours.

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the island. we stayed on the island for 8 hours.

They told us "we will take you to Samos" - but then it turned out really bad. They have thrown us into the water. And they took everything we had: They took phones, money and they left us absolutely nothing. They threw us into the sea. They have no mercy, not even for the children.

The Turkish coast guard saved us at the last moment. Now back in Istanbul we urgently need help. I do not have identification papers in Turkey and I am in trouble. I am afraid that they will deport me from Turkey. Thank you for asking about us."

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