



## Boat with 13 people on board capsized near Lesvos Isl. (Gr), one missing woman survived after drifting for 18 hours in the Aegean Sea

In Distress

VERIFIED

30.08.2014 / 12:01 / Nees Kydonias, Lesvos Isl. (Gr)

Lesvos 30/8/2014

Life not death

29th of August 2014 morning: We received the information of a rescue operation in the Nees Kydonias area on the island of Lesvos. A 38 year old woman 38 went missing. There were strong winds in the area. The coast guard boats are not sailing, only a helicopter flies for a while over the area.

At noon 25 Afghan refugees arrive in PIKPA (the welcome centre in Lesvos Isl. ran by volunteers). Two rubber dinghies had arrived. Strong winds and waves can't stop smugglers but also can't stop the need of the people to escape war.

Among the survivors of the first boat is a five years old girl with her uncle. Her mother is missing. The child is having some rest in PIKPA which is over-crowded again. More than 150 people arrived yesterday. No bed is available and the families taking care of the girl give her their own beds.

We inform the Doctors of the World in Moria detention camp about the tragic incident as well as the Red Cross International.

The child has a sister and her father in Belgium and they talk on the phone when the child is transferred to Moria to be examined and supported by the doctors. Unfortunately the Doctors of the World are not offering support in the PIKPA open reception camp. They are insisting on operating only the detention camp of Moria. The doctors confirm that the child knows very well that the mother is missing. She heard her screaming her name twice and after that couldn't hear her any more. As the time passes we make sure that the girl would not be detained in Moria (as it is the case for many shipwreck victims) and that police will transfer her back to PIKPA

In PIKPA we are all shocked. The survivors are describing that the boat with 13 passengers capsized 30 minutes after they had left Aivalik coast. It was shortly after midnight and the uncle of the child together with another man tried to save the child. The woman was taken very quickly by the waves.

Some men who could swim managed to turn the boat and 12 of them were back in the small dingy boat. Strong waves led them in Nees Kydonias Lesvos after many hours. When coast guard took them out of the sea they declared the missing woman.

Faces are dark in PIKPA we have experienced these tragedies before. We all feel exhausted by sorrow.

Late that afternoon we get an unexpected information. A woman was found walking alone in the area near Xambelia. She was taken to the hospital and an interpreter who is also supporting PIKPA immediately went there. The woman was in shock. She is convinced that her child and son in-law are dead in the sea. She was fighting with the waves for 18 hours. She was wearing a bad quality life vest that in a point became very heavy. She didn't know how to swim and she was scared by the sea. Once at the coast of Lesvos she found an orange life jacket and she believes that this was her daughters life jacket and starts screaming in despair. She managed to walk bare foot to the nearest buildings.

When the interpreter very carefully announced that the child was alive and waiting for her outside she refused to believe him. It took long time and calm discussion with the interpreter to overcome the shock and be able to meet her child. The moment of the meeting is something that nobody can describe. A real life present.

### Related Reports

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[03/02: 35 people attacked and then rescued to Mytilene](#)

10:00 Sep 10, 2017 / Aegean Sea Kms  
[09/09 45 travellers in distress East of Lesvos, rescued to Greece](#)

16:44 May 04, 2019 / Aegean Sea Kms  
[03/5: 1 boat with 31 travelers \(10 women and 6 children\) rescued to Lesvos. 1 group stranded on Samos.](#)

18:27 Jun 16, 2020 / Aegean Sea Kms  
[15/06 45 stranded on Lesvos feared pushback, but were eventually taken into quarantine](#)

12:11 Aug 25, 2015 / Lesvos, Greece Kms  
[Vessel in distress near Lesvos/Greece, fate unknown](#)



Mytilini Hospital really supported the woman. Together with the interpreter (it sound very normal but interpretation in Greek Hospitals for refugees is another big problem) the doctors did all the tests and decided to keep her for one day to be sure that she will overcome the shock physically and psychologically.

The child and the son in law went back to PIKPA where the woman would be transferred to today.

In PIKPA she will recover and get all the information and support about the family reunification procedure as her husband and eldest daughter are in Belgium.

We asked UNHCR to insist in this case on the 6 months protection from deportation order that is offered to the victims of shipwrecks. We also demanded the survivors of the shipwrecks not to be detained in the Moria detention centre.

We experienced a real miracle of life this time after so many deaths.  
But we scream that the life of refugees should not depend on miracles.  
A woman who flees war with her little child having a family in Belgium should never risk her life in the sea.  
We need to change this lethal border regime immediately.

Our cost is a cost of life and not a cost of death.

Efi Latsoudi  
member of "the village of all together"-Lesvos

**Last update: 19:32 Aug 30, 2014**

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### Sources

<http://tuxs.gr/news/ellada/agnooyntai-treis-metanastes-se-agathonisi-kai-lesbo>

<http://www.emprosnet.gr/article/63078-zontani-urethike-i-agnooymeni-afgani>