



## 18 people in distress near Lesbos Island, all rescued

In Distress

VERIFIED

19.06.2015 / 19:30 / Aegean Sea, near Mithymna

### Watch The Med Alarm Phone Investigation – 18th of June 2015

Case name: 2015\_06\_18-AEG16

Situation: Vessel in distress near Mithymna, rescued by Greek coastguards

Status of WTM Investigation: Concluded

Place of Incident: Aegean Sea, near Mithymna, north of Lesbos Island, Greece

*Summary of the Case:* On Thursday the 18th of June 2015, one Alarm Phone member had learned about a vessel in distress in the Aegean Sea and passed on obtained information to our shift team on duty. Following his account, there were 18 or 19 people on a vessel trying to reach the Greek island of Lesbos. They had been in the water for 4-5 hours already and their engine had broken down. The shift team reached out to the passengers but the phone connection was interrupted and no further information could be obtained. At approximately 10:50am, the shift team contacted the coastguard of Mytilene who required, however, a more exact indication of the position of the vessel to launch a rescue operation. Approximately 20 minutes later, someone in Turkey who had knowledge of the vessel in question contacted the Alarm Phone and passed on another phone number of one of the passengers.

At approximately 11:50am, a Farsi-speaking member of the Alarm Phone succeeded to establish a direct connection to the passengers and found out that they were located about 1.5km away from the coast of Mithymna, north Lesbos. Water had started to enter their vessel and they were in urgent need of rescue. The travelers also stated that they could see several fishing vessels in vicinity that, however, did not come to their rescue. At noon, the shift team contacted the Greek coastguards in Mytilene once again and they confirmed to be in the process of conducting a search and rescue operation. Shortly afterwards, the passengers passed on photos of themselves on the vessel and maps that indicated their location. The shift team also contacted the Hellenic Rescue Team who reached out to their colleagues on Lesbos and passed on the confirmation that they were searching for the vessel.

In a further exchange with the passengers, it became clear that the situation was becoming increasingly worrisome with passengers starting to panic and asking how to behave if the vessel capsized. At 1pm, the Greek coastguards in Piraeus confirmed the rescue of a vessel with 18 people on board, close to Mithymna. While it was nearly certain that this would be the vessel in question, the shift team sought to receive final confirmation from the passengers. When they could not be reached, we contacted the Hellenic Rescue Team who suggested that, to their knowledge, there had been three vessels in distress on the day, with coastguards rescuing 200 people. Finally then, at approximately 2:45pm, the passengers sent us a text message saying: 'Thanks for your help, we have been rescued!'

Last update: 20:15 Jun 23, 2015

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