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8 distress calls in the Aegean Sea, near the Greek islands of Lesvos, Chios and Farmakonisi

 In Distress

VERIFIED

15.10.2015 / 13:00 / Aegean Sea

Watch The Med Alarm Phone Investigations – 14th of October 2015

Case name: 2015_10_14-AEG99

Situation: 8 distress calls in the Aegean Sea, near the Greek islands of Lesvos, Chios and Farmakonisi

Status of WTM Investigation: Concluded

Place of Incident: Aegean Sea

Summary of the Cases: On Wednesday the 14th of October 2015, the Alarm Phone was alerted to eight distress cases in the Aegean Sea, close to the Greek islands of Lesvos, Farmakonisi and Chios.

The 1st alert reached us at 2am in the morning. A contact person told us that a boat carrying 46 persons on its way to Lesvos was in distress, as water was coming into the boat. He gave us a contact number. Just a few minutes later, we received a call from this number and another one, but the connection could not be established. We informed the Greek coastguard, who already knew about the case, and who promised to send help. At 3am the contact person told us that he had lost contact with the boat and when we called the Greek coastguard at 5am, they told us that they had checked the position but had not encountered a boat. The coastguard officers suspected that the travellers had reached land by themselves. After several unsuccessful attempts, we managed to get into direct contact with the travellers who had called us. The person we talked to said that they were safe and that they had been about 55 person on the boat. Later in the evening, our contact person also confirmed that the boat he had called us about had been rescued. We could not find out, whether the boat supposed to carry 46 persons and the other were one and the same boat, but both were in safety.

At 2:16am a contact person forwarded us a 2nd alert with one number and two different positions, one in Turkey and one already in Greece. He informed us that the boat carried 40 persons with mainly women and children and pressed us to call the Greek coastguard. Since we could not reach the travellers directly, we passed on both positions to the coastguard. One hour later, at 4am, we finally reached the boat directly via Viber. They told us that they had managed to reach Chios by themselves. We provided them with the number of the police on Chios and information about the asylum system in Greece.

Shortly after the second alert, at 2.30am we received our 3rd alert of the night, this time directly from a boat. The communication with the travellers proved very difficult. We could not find out, which language they spoke. Our Arabic translator told us that they did not speak Arabic. We told them to call 112, if they were in a situation of distress, which they did. A few minutes later they called us back to say that they had spoken with the Turkish coastguard, but that they could not communicate with them. We then tried to organize a translator for Farsi, but could not reach them anymore. On Wednesday evening, we finally managed to reach the number again. We were still unable to communicate, but they were laughing now and seemed to be on land in a quiet place. At ten to nine, an alarm phone member forwarded us a 4th distress call to the shift team. A boat carrying 46 persons with a baby on board was in distress in the Southeast of Chios. The same information reached us from another contact person with an Iraqi number. At 9.30am, after several unsuccessful attempts, we managed to reach the boat directly. The connection was bad, but we understood that they were panicky and asked for help. As we located them in the Greek Search and Rescue Zone, we decided to alarm the Greek coastguard. They were not informed about the case and took phone number and coordinates. We held contact with the boat and informed them that we had informed the Greek coastguard. Half an hour later, rescue still had not arrived so we contacted the coastguard again. They said that they had saved another boat with 21 travellers, and that the boat we were calling about was in Turkish waters. We thus called the Turkish coastguard, who was very cooperative, but who located as we did the boat in Greek waters. We told the person on duty that the Greek coastguard was already

Related Reports

14:45 Aug 20, 2020 / Aegean Sea Kms

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

11:51 Nov 30, 2015 / Aegean Sea Kms

29/11: Alarm Phone alerted to 9 distress cases near Lesvos and Chios.

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

5 distress calls in the Aegean Sea, near the Greek islands of Lesvos and Chios, all rescued


12:56 Nov 22, 2014 / Plomari, Lesvos Isl. Kms

A refugee boat capsized near Plomari, Lesvos Isl. - 4 people missing

14:12 Oct 06, 2015 / Aegean Sea Kms

Alarm Phone alerted to 5 distress cases in the Aegean Sea near Chios and Lesvos





boat in Greek waters. we told the person on duty that the Greek coastguard was already informed and that they were not going to search and rescue. Our interlocutor thus promised help. We also informed the coastguard of Chios about the case. At noon, the travellers told us that they were had been rescued to Greece.

At 9am the shift team received a 5th alert again through an Alarm Phone member. The shift team managed to get into touch with the travellers directly. They were 40 persons travelling toward Chios and in panic, as the waves were extremely high, but the boat was still moving. They gave us their coordinates and the number of a family member of one of the travellers. We tried to hold contact with the boat, but the phone was switched off during the next hour. At 11.58am the family member informed us that the boat had been saved by the Greek Coastguard.

On Wednesday afternoon, we worked on three cases (cases 6, 7 and 8) in the north of Lesbos. In two cases (6 and 8) we had no exact information about the number of persons on board and the exact situation, but we could pass on coordinates to the Greek coastguard. In case 8, the contact person confirmed the rescue through the coastguard and in case 6 we managed to reach the travellers directly, who did not seem to be in a situation of distress (anymore). In case 7, a group of 36 persons with 16 children had unwillingly stopped their journey, due to a lack of fuel. Shortly after the alert had reached us, the Greek coastguard rescued the travellers.