



07/03: 3 boats in distress near Lesvos

In Distress

VERIFIED

08.05.2016 / 12:01 / Lesvos, Aegean Sea

Watch The Med Alarm Phone Investigations – 7th of March 2016

Case name: 2016_03_07-AEG227

Situation: Alarm Phone alerted to 3 distress cases in the Aegean Sea, near Lesvos

Status of WTM Investigation: Concluded

Place of Incident: Aegean Sea

Summary of the Cases: On Monday the 7th of March 2016, we were alerted to three distress cases in the Aegean Sea, near Lesvos. In one case, the travellers were rescued by the Greek Coastguard to Greece, in the second case, the Turkish Coast Guard picked up a boat in distress between Dikili, Turkey and Lesvos. In the last case, we had no direct contact with the travellers, but we were told that they made it to Greece without any assistance.

Case 1: At 1:05am we received a call from travellers on a boat in distress. They were about 80 persons from Afghanistan on a 12 meter long white wooden boat. They were in panic and did not know how to use the GPS-function on Viber. After about half an hour, they finally sent us a picture indicating a position north of Lesvos. At 1:40am we called the Greek Coast Guard and sent them an e-mail with the details of the distress case. They promised to help. In the meantime, we kept in touch with the travellers, who were afraid of capsizing. At 2:02, when we were just about to inform the civil rescue boat Sea Watch, the travellers informed us that the Coast Guard had arrived. However, they had only taken about 20 people and then had left. Just before 3am, we informed the Sea watch team about the case and reached out to the Coast Guard again. The officer on duty explained that they had three patrol boats in vicinity of the boat in distress, but that the rescue operation would take a long time due to bad weather conditions. We kept contact with the boat. The travellers were more and more worried about their boat capsizing at any moment. At 3:15am we decided to inform other actors in the area as well, since we were not sure whether the Coast Guard was really going to rescue the remaining people on the boat. At 3:26am we reached Doctors without borders who were not informed about the case yet. Their boats were in the harbour, but the Sea Watch team told us that a boat of Pro Activa/Open Arms was searching for the boat in distress north of Lesvos. They had difficulty finding the boat, as we could only provide them with the picture of the position. At 3:32am the travellers told us that the Coastguard had rescued another 13 persons from the boat. We asked them to send us their current position, but they had difficulties with the GPS function of their Viber again. At 4:15am Doctors without Borders informed us that they had sent a boat to search the travellers as well. Just before 5am, a contact person from Sea Watch called us, saying that they had heard that the rescue operation was already finished. At 5:19am the Greek Coast Guard confirmed that all 80 travellers had been saved. We passed on the good news to Doctors without Borders and the Sea Watch team.

Case 2: At 2:20am, a contact person alerted us to a rubber boat with 45 persons on the way to Lesvos, but still close to Dikili, Turkey. The boat's engine was not working and the waves were high, we were told. We tried to call the boat, but could not reach them. We thus decided to inform the Turkish Coastguard about the case. At 2:50am, our contact person confirmed via WhatsApp that the boat had been rescued by the Turkish Coastguard. We tried to confirm this information with the travellers, but could not reach them.

Case 3: At 4:13 am, we were alerted to a third distress case near Lesvos: a boat carrying 37 persons North-East of Lesvos apparently had problems, because of extremely high waves. We could not establish a direct connection with the boat and did not have to become active, as the travellers reached Greece by themselves, according to the contact person.

Related Reports

19:13 Aug 16, 2020 / Aegean Sea Kms

15/08: 55 travellers reportedly pushed back to Turkey by Greek coastguard

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.

17:07 May 15, 2018 / Aegean Sea Kms

14/05: 40 travellers returned to Turkey and imprisoned

20:52 Oct 14, 2017 / Aegean Sea Kms

13/10: 30 travellers rescued to Lesvos

15:20 Nov 14, 2019 / Aegean Sea Kms

13/11: One boat rescued North of Lesvos by Greek coast guard; one boat rescued East of Lesvos by Turkish coast guard



