



14/1 Alarm Phone alerted to 14 emergency situations in the Aegean Sea, near Lesvos, Pasaos and Chios, one vessel attacked at sea

In Distress

VERIFIED

15.01.2016 / 15:50 / Aegean Sea, Lesvos, Pasaos and Chios

Watch The Med Alarm Phone Investigations – 14th of January 2016

Case name: 2016_01_14-AEG183

Situation: Alarm Phone alerted to 14 emergency situations in the Aegean Sea

Status of WTM Investigation: Concluded

Place of Incident: Aegean Sea

Summary of the Cases: On Thursday the 14th of January 2016, the Alarm Phone was alerted to 14 emergency situations in the Aegean region. 4 vessels in distress were rescued by Turkish coastguards and another 2 were presumably rescued by them. 4 vessels were rescued by Greek coastguards near Lesvos and two vessels reached the island independently. We also received a first-hand testimony of a group of travellers who had been attacked at sea and were later rescued by Turkish coastguards.

The first case reached us at 00.45am when a contact person informed us about a group of 40 people travelling toward Lesvos Island (case 1). As the vessel was on the borderline between Turkey and Greece we contacted the Greek coastguards which, however, stated that the boat was in Turkish waters. We were later informed by our contact person that the people had been rescued by the Turkish coastguards and returned to Turkey.

A few minutes later, at 00.52am we received another distress case near Lesvos, this time concerning a vessel carrying 100 people (case 2). We spoke to the Greek coastguards who knew about the vessel and stated that they would do their best to rescue it. Only in the morning we received the confirmation through our contact person that they had been rescued, but again by Turkish forces.

At 00.53am we were alerted to a group of 18 people who had stranded on Pasaos Island (case 3). We were not able to contact the group directly and reached the out Greek coastguards to inform them about the situation. They said that they could not go out and rescue them before the morning. In the morning we informed also the Port Authority on Chios Island. They took down the information and said they would look for them. At 10am they told us that they had not found anyone at the given position. We were unable to receive further information about this group.

At 2.03am an informant alerted our shift team to a vessel on its way to Lesvos, but still in Turkish waters (case 4). We informed the Turkish coastguards and they confirmed that they would go and rescue the vessel. For several hours we did not obtain further information about the vessel. At 3.40pm we were able to reach one of the travellers who told us that they were safe but back in Turkey. He said that the group of about 60 people, including 20 children had faced a violent attack during their journey. He said that a vessel had approached theirs and men boarded their boat and disabled the engine, threatened them with knives and a stun gun in order to keep them away from Greek waters. After that they left and much later the Turkish coastguards came and rescued them back to Turkey. When we spoke to them they were in a basketball stadium where they would stay for about 24 hours. He said they would try to cross the sea again. In the evening we reached him again and he added to his earlier account that the men who had attacked them had worn ski masks. Besides disabling their engine they had also punctured their boat. He also said that many stories were going around amongst the refugees about similar attacks at sea.

At 5.40am we received information about a group of 40 people in distress north of Lesvos (case 5). When we could not reach the travellers directly we contacted the Greek coastguards. A few minutes later, our contact person confirmed that they had been rescued to Greece.

Related Reports

11:35 Jul 05, 2017 / Aegean Sea Kms

[04/07: 60 people rescued by Greek coastguard south of Lesvos](#)

18:41 Aug 30, 2017 / Aegean Sea Kms

[29/08: Alarm Phone in contact with 35 travellers south of Lesvos: rescued to Greece](#)

13:01 Sep 15, 2015 / Aegean Sea, Greek islands of Lesvos and Samos Kms

[Three boats in distress near the Greek islands of Lesvos and Samos](#)

20:31 Nov 20, 2019 / Aegean Sea Kms

[19/11: 3 Cases - 16 people rescued to Lesvos: 30 people rescued to Samothraki, 6 people rescued to Kos](#)

14:38 Sep 20, 2019 / Aegean Sea Kms

[19/09: 35 travellers rescued by the Greek Coastguard.](#)



At 7.50am we received information about a vessel in severe distress near the Turkish coast (case 6). They were on their way to Chios but their engine stopped working. We informed the Turkish coastguards at 8am and they confirmed that they would look for the boat. At 8.33am the Turkish coastguards told us that a rescue vessel was on its way. At 10.21am we obtained the confirmation from our contact person that the boat had been found and its passengers rescued.

At 9.35am we received a distress case via WhatsApp, concerning a boat carrying 40 people east of Lesbos (case 7). We informed the Greek coastguards and at 11.35am we received the confirmation that the vessel had been rescued.

At 10.05am the contact person from the previous case alerted us to another group in distress, again on its way to Chios but in Turkish waters (case 8). We reached the travellers at 10.07am and while communication was difficult we got the sense that their situation was urgent. A minute later our contact person informed us that a man who had fallen off the boat had died. At 10.10am the Turkish coastguards confirmed that they would look for the boat. So far we could not verify whether one person had actually died.

The same informant told us about a third distress case at 11.15am, this time east of Lesbos, involving a group of 35 people (case 9). We informed the Greek coastguards when we could not reach the travellers and they took down the information. Only minutes later we learned that they had been rescued.

At 12.15pm we were informed about yet another vessel in distress east of Lesbos (case 10). The group could not be reached. Their rescue was later confirmed to us.

At 12.39pm we received information about a group in distress close to Lesbos Island via a contact person (case 11). Their engine had stopped and they could not steer the vessel. We contacted the Greek coastguards at 12.50pm and they said that they would look for the boat. For hours no new information about the fate of the people could be obtained, also because the Greek coastguards were unwilling to update us about the situation. In the evening, at 7.40pm, we were told that the boat was presumably amongst many in the area that had been rescued earlier in the day.

At 10.45pm we received a distress message on Facebook, telling us about a group in distress in Turkish waters (case 12). We called the boat and spoke to a man who said that their engine had stopped working. He reported that the Turkish coastguards were already nearby. We were alerted to the same case by another informant who told us at 11.11pm that he thought that the vessel had been rescued. Afterwards, the group could not be reached. We assume that they had been rescued by the Turkish coastguards.

At 11.33pm we received information about a distress situation near Lesbos (case 13). The contact person had sent us a voice recording from the group of travellers, and it was clear that they were in panic and in distress. We then tried to reach the vessel several times, without success. Without coordinates we could not do much. A few hours later our contact person told us that the group had reached Lesbos independently and they were safe.

At 11.36am we were told about a group of 50 people, again near Lesbos (case 14). We could not reach them and had limited information about their situation. At 4am we then managed to reach one of the travellers. He confirmed that they had arrived on Lesbos independently and were safe.

Last update: 02:18 Jan 22, 2016

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