



04/09: 54 travelers with 7 children pushed back to Turkey

In Distress Interception Push-Back

VERIFIED

05.09.2020 / 11:45 / Aegean Sea

Watch The Med Alarm Phone Investigations – 4th of September 2020

Case name: 2020_09_04 AEG705

Situation: 54 travelers with 7 children pushed back to Turkey

Status of WTM Investigation: Concluded

Place of Incident: Aegean Sea

Summary of the case:

On the 4th of September at 01:45h CEST the Alarm Phone received a call about a boat in distress carrying around 54 travelers, among them 1 pregnant woman and 7 children between the age 1 and 13, possibly all of Syrian nationality. According to the travelers, their petrol was stolen by masked men they assumed to have been the Greek Coast Guards (GCG), who cut their wires and left them adrift. At 03:05h we informed the GCG, however they refused to rescue and claimed that the boat was in Turkish waters. They added that the Turkish Coast Guards (TCG) already knew about the case and would "take care" of it. At 12:55h we received a confirmation by friends of the travelers that they were pushed back to Turkey.

We later got in touch with the travellers again when they were back in Turkey. One of the travellers gave the following testimony about a pushback they experienced only 11 days after the situation we were alerted to, which points to the regularity of these violations against international law and to the amount of violence travellers have to endure when forced to cross the border several times. "We landed in Greece the 15.09.2020. We walked until we saw a police car. We didn't want to go to the police but they found us. They told us: follow us, we'll bring you to a safe place. We were 17 people. We walked to a farm. They told us: give us your phones and register here. They searched us also for other things. Which we did. I was pregnant. I thought that I will give birth. They thought I am lying. But they didn't give us any water and food. Two days later I gave birth back in Turkey. The children and also we were very hungry. A day later they gave us bread. After two days they picked us up, they came with 5 people. They put us on a rubber dinghy and pushed us back in Turkish waters. There we have been picked up by TCG and brought back to Bodrum. I am alone, I raise my six children alone. My oldest child is 13 years old. My daughter is one month and 2 days old. I need support."

Last update: 11:04 Mar 30, 2021

Related Reports

18:03 Aug 10, 2020 / Aegean Sea Kms

[09/08: 35 travellers transferred to liferafts south of Lesbos and finally picked up and brought back to Turkey.](#)

20:06 Jan 29, 2016 / Aegean Sea Kms

[28/01: More than hundred persons stranded in the Aegean on Pasas island. 2 cases of distress near Lesbos](#)

18:01 Aug 06, 2020 / Aegean Sea Kms

[05/08: 40 travellers pushed back to Turkey south of Lesbos](#)

11:19 Oct 30, 2015 / Aegean Sea Kms

[Most deadly day in the Aegean Sea with more than 50 travellers drowned](#)

11:35 Jul 05, 2017 / Aegean Sea Kms

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

