



18/12: 33 people, including 10 children stranded on Chios, pushed back to Turkey

In Distress Push-Back

VERIFIED

19.12.2020 / 09:31 / Aegean Sea

Watch The Med Alarm Phone Investigations – December 18th 2020

Case name: 2020_12_18-AEG736

Situation: 33 people stranded on Chios, illegally pushed back to Turkey after contact with Greek police

Status of WTM Investigation: Concluded

Place of Incident: Aegean Sea

Summary

In the morning of December 18th we were contacted by a relative who had lost contact to a group of 33 people, including 10 children, on fleeing Turkey. The relative provided us with a GPS position from earlier on this morning, which suggested the group of travellers was stranded on Chios. We forwarded this information to Greek authorities at 10.54h CET. An operator confirmed that a search was being conducted to find the group. Half an hour later the relative sent us a list of names, highlighting that all of the 33 individuals were in need of international protection and were seeking to claim asylum in Greece. We forwarded this information to authorities via e-mail at 12.40h CET. We contacted the local UNHCR; the operator answering the call informed us they would call back once they had further information. At 16.23h CET we called the local UNHCR for an update but had to find their office had already closed. Upon calling local authorities on Chios at 22.08h CET the operator refused to provide any information and suggested that neither the hospital nor the police station had had any recent arrivals.

Shortly after midnight the relative who had first informed us of the case called. According to them, the 33 people had been illegally returned to Turkey. We informed the UNHCR in Greece and Turkey about this violation of international laws at 01.25h CET December 19th.

We are still investigating the detailed developments and will include potential updates into this report.

Twitter Chronology:

December 19th https://twitter.com/alarm_phone/status/1340313828207308800?s=20

Last update: 10:03 Mar 16, 2021

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