



## 08/10: 12 people pushed back near Simi

In Distress Push-Back

VERIFIED

09.10.2021 / 15:46 / Aegean Sea

### Watch The Med Alarm Phone Investigations – 8th of October 2021

*Case name:* 20211008-AEG831

*Situation:* 12 people pushed back near Simi, according to testimony Frontex involved in the illegal pushback

*Status of WTM Investigation:* Concluded

*Place of Incident:* Aegean Sea

#### Summary of the Case:

Around 12:00 CEST our team was alerted by a relative about a group of 12 people including 4 women, 5 men and 3 children, refugees from Syria, Iraq and Palestine. Shortly after the alert we were able to get in contact with them. We received a GPS-location near Simi (36.6250710, 27.9485340 at 12:32 CEST). The people were drifting in life-rafts in Turkish waters. This happened after being pushed back by a vessel of the Hellenic Coast Guard from Greek waters. When the travellers contacted us, they were in a state of panic. Therefore, we alerted the Turkish coastguard who took them back to Turkey. Around 14:55 CEST we received confirmation that the people had been rescued.

Days later a Syrian woman reported:

“We are from Syria and on 8th October we were on our way to Greece. In the middle of the sea we saw a military ship. It was not too big, but also not small and it had a flag of the European Union and also another flag I cannot remember. The men on this ship had dark uniforms. They were watching us until the Greek coastguard came, then they left. The Greeks took us on board of their ship. Then they destroyed our boat. Then they started driving around with us. They did not go directly back towards Turkey, they were driving around a bit before. After a while they first took all women and children they put us on one thing like boat [she does not find the word for life-raft] and then put this “boat” to the sea. The men they also took them and put them on another one, which was damaged and water was entering. Then they left us there and went back. We were full of fear and some people panicking. I had fear that we would all drown now, that we would die. We started then calling for help. We called the Turkish coastguard and we called also different NGOs. Finally the Turkish coastguard came and rescued us. We had to stay for 2 days in quarantine and then we were free again. Since then I tried to go two more times – because I have to find a place of safety.”

From the witness’ testimony the first vessel on the spot could belong to the Nato or Frontex mission in this area. We demand answers as to who was on spot and did not prevent this illegal push-back.

Last update: 16:08 Dec 13, 2021

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11:22 Mar 31, 2019 / Aegean Sea Kms

[30/3: Two groups of travellers stuck in the Turkish mountains, rescued by the Turkish coast guard](#)

11:25 Dec 23, 2020 / Aegean Sea Kms

[22/12: 10 travellers pushed back from close to Simi](#)

22:26 Sep 19, 2020 / Aegean Sea Kms

[18/09: 10 travellers pushed back to Turkey by the Greek coastguard](#)

00:55 Jul 17, 2019 / Aegean Sea Kms

[16/07: Two travellers stranded on Symi Island](#)

