



## Five Distress Situations in the Aegean Sea, all rescued

In Distress

VERIFIED

31.08.2015 / 11:32 / Aegean Sea

### Watch The Med Alarm Phone Investigations – 30th August 2015

Case name: 2015\_08\_30\_AEG55

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

Status of WTM Investigations: Concluded

Place of Incidents: Aegean Sea

*Summary of the case:* On Sunday the 30th of August 2015, the Alarm Phone was alerted to five distress situations in the Aegean Sea. The first emergency call reached us in the middle of the night, at approximately 3.06am. Via text message we were told to reach out to a group of about 43 people, including pregnant women and children, who were in serious danger at sea. We reached out to the Greek coastguards who said that they knew of the vessel and had informed the Turkish coastguards as the vessel was still located in Turkish waters. Shortly afterwards the Turkish coastguards confirmed that they had been informed about the emergency situation. At 10.06am, we reached the group who reported that they were back on Turkish mainland but were lost and very tired. They were 42 people in total, including 2 pregnant women, 5 children and 2 babies. They said that they had moved back to Turkey when nobody came to their rescue. They had run out of food and water and were now trying to reach a village or city. At 11.30am they said that they were still disoriented and that cars had passed by without helping them. The Turkish coastguards in Izmir confirmed at 12:46pm that they would take care of the situation. A few minutes later the coastguards contacted us to inform us that they had found the group who were safe now. However, at 2.36pm, when we were able to communicate with the group again, they said that they were still walking. They said that they would try to reach Izmir by foot by themselves. At 3.30pm they told us that they were now on buses heading to a village nearby. They said that they would rest the next few days before deciding on what to do next.

Shortly after having received the first SOS call, our shift team received a second one, at about 3.36am. We were informed, presumably by the father of one of the people, about a group of 13 travellers, including 5 children, who were in distress near the Greek island of Samos. We contacted the Greek coastguards who confirmed that they had also received a distress call from the same location. They told us that they had already sent a vessel in their direction. In the morning we reached out to our contact person again who had lost contact to the group and did not know more about it. At 11.33am, the Greek coastguards informed us that they had concluded all rescue cases. However, they did not want to confirm the rescue of the group in question and were rather uncooperative overall. We were then finally able to reach one of the travellers directly. He said that they were all fine and had been rescued by the Turkish coastguards. We told him to contact us directly when trying to cross the sea again.

At 5.45am we were alerted to a third emergency situation via text message. We were informed about one man who seemed to be on his own, floating on some device in the Aegean Sea, for several hours already. He agreed to our suggestion to contact the Turkish coastguards as he was still very close to Cesme/Turkey. The Turkish coastguards knew about the case and asked us to provide them with the person's most recent GPS position which we did. They said that they would take care of the situation. At 10.55am we spoke to the man who confirmed that he had been rescued by the Turkish coastguards.

At 3.45pm, we were informed about a group of about 60 people who were on a vessel in distress north of the Greek island of Lesbos. We were able to reach the contact person who knew of the vessel at 4.01pm via WhatsApp. He said that water was entering their vessel and asked for an urgent rescue mission. We contacted the Greek coastguards who noted down the information and promised to search for the vessel. At 4.05pm our contact person was able to pass on the phone number of one of the travellers who we called at 4.08pm. People were shouting for help in the background and the connection was too bad to follow up on what they were saying. They few were then one hour

### Related Reports

22:13 Mar 02, 2020 / Aegean Sea Kms

[01/03: 4 boats arrived in Greece and 4 boats pushed back to Turkey.](#)

19:33 Mar 19, 2016 / Aegean Sea, Chios, Lesbos and Pasas Kms

[18/3 Alarm Phone alerted to 5 emergency situation in the Aegean Sea, Chios, Lesbos and Pasas](#)

17:48 Mar 30, 2017 / Aegean Sea Kms

[20/03: 22 travellers stranded on Pasas, rescued by the Greek coast guard](#)

22:56 Mar 04, 2016 / Aegean Sea Kms

[03/03: 4 boats in distress near Greek islands of Chios, Lesbos and Pasas, 4 groups stranded on Pasas](#)

18:49 Mar 21, 2019 / Aegean Sea Kms

[20/03: 17 people, including 9 children, rescued to Chios](#)



was too bad to fully understand what they were saying. Then, for more than one hour, the group could not be directly reached again. At 5.44pm, our contact person told us that the Greek coastguards rescued the travellers who had already been disembarked on Lesvos Island.

The fifth emergency cases reached us at 4.33pm. A British sailing boat contacted us after its crew had spotted a vessel adrift north of Lesvos Island. The British sailor said that he would want to talk to Greek coastguards. He also said that he could see a fishing vessel approaching which might rescue the travellers. However, due to strong winds, communication with him was difficult and GPS coordinates could not be passed on. We then informed the Greek coastguards about the distress call. At 5.30pm we were able to communicate with the British vessel again and, this time, the connection was much clearer. He told us that he could see several vessels floating in the sea. They did not seem to be in urgent distress but he said that it would be impossible to cross over to Greece on these small vessels due to strong winds and waves. He called us again to report that he could see two larger Turkish vessels pulling the refugee vessels back to shore. Following his account, everyone was safely brought back to land.

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