

## 5 distress calls in the Aegean Sea, near the Greek islands of Lesvos and Chios, all rescued

In Distress

VERIFIED

20.09.2015 / 17:20 / Aegean Sea, Greek islands of Lesvos and Chios

### Watch The Med Alarm Phone Investigations – 10th of September 2015

Case name: 2015\_09\_19-AEG75

Situation: 5 distress calls in the Aegean Sea, near the Greek islands of Lesvos and Chios

Status of WTM Investigation: Concluded

Place of Incident: Aegean Sea

*Summary of the Cases:* On Saturday the 19th of September 2015 the Alarm Phone dealt with five emergency situations in the Aegean Sea. In three cases the travellers safely arrived on Greek islands and in two cases they had been returned to Turkey.

Nawal Soufi's activist network passed on a phone number of a boat in distress to us at 12.20am (case 1). We called the travellers and spoke to them in Arabic. Their engine had broken down and water was entering. At 12.30am we alerted the Turkish coastguard, which had already been informed about this case and had sent a rescue vessel. At 9.45am we reached the group again. They had all been rescued and had been returned to Turkey.

At 1.10am the same network alerted us to a boat in distress between Çeşme/Turkey and the Greek island of Chios. It headed in the direction of Chios but was still in Turkish territorial waters. We were not able to reach the boat by phone but talked to the Turkish coastguard at 1.50am. They knew about the case and had worked on it. Nevertheless, at 2.27am we received new coordinates of the boat, indicating that they had already reached the island of Chios. At 10.30am the activist network confirmed that the group of travellers had arrived on the island of Chios independently.

At 6am we received a call from a German phone number, informing us about a boat in distress near the Greek island of Lesvos and providing us with a phone number of the travellers on board (case 3). After several unsuccessful attempts we reached the travellers at 6.20am, a group of 49 people. Their engine had broken down and they had lost orientation, unable to provide us with their current position. They saw another boat not far away that had been rescued by the Turkish coastguard. But as they were supposed to be in Greek territorial waters, the Turkish coastguard refused to help them. In two phone calls at 6.44am and 6.53am we could not obtain any further information and advised them to call the international emergency hotline 112. At 6.56am we alerted the Greek coastguard in Piraeus. Afterwards, contact to the travellers could not be established anymore. But at 9am we spoke to the initial contact, who handed over our number to another contact person. This person confirmed to us that the group was close to Lesvos and promised to get in touch with the travellers again. In the afternoon, this contact person informed us that his brother and the entire group had arrived safely on Lesvos.

The Alarm Phone received another contact number and GPS data of a boat in distress near the northern shore of Lesvos at 10.20am (case 4). We informed the Greek coastguard in Piraeus about the case via e-mail and tried to contact the travellers. At 11.45am we got in touch with them, a group of around 50 people, including many women and children. They provided us with their current position via WhatsApp, which we immediately forwarded to the Greek coastguard. The person on duty told us that they had sent a patrol boat already but had found nobody. Obviously this was false, as we had spoken to the travellers in distress just a couple of minutes earlier. Afterwards we wrote another e-mail to the Greek and the Turkish coastguards, providing them with the latest GPS position that clearly indicated that the travellers in distress were in Greek waters. Several subsequent attempts to reach the group via WhatsApp were unsuccessful but at 4.20pm we talked to them again. We learned that they had safely arrived in Greece and were all fine.

At 12.40pm a friend reported another distress case to us, this time between Bekovo (Turkey) and Lesvos (case 5). The engine of the vessel had stopped and at 1pm

### Related Reports

13:00 Oct 15, 2015 / Aegean Sea Kms

[8 distress calls in the Aegean Sea, near the Greek islands of Lesvos, Chios and Farmakonisi](#)

14:45 Aug 20, 2020 / Aegean Sea Kms

[10/08: 2 cases: one group north of Lesvos, one south of Lesvos, all put into inflatable life rafts and pushed back to Turkey](#)

12:56 Nov 22, 2014 / Plomari, Lesvos Isl. Kms

[A refugee boat capsized near Plomari, Lesvos Isl. - 4 people missing](#)

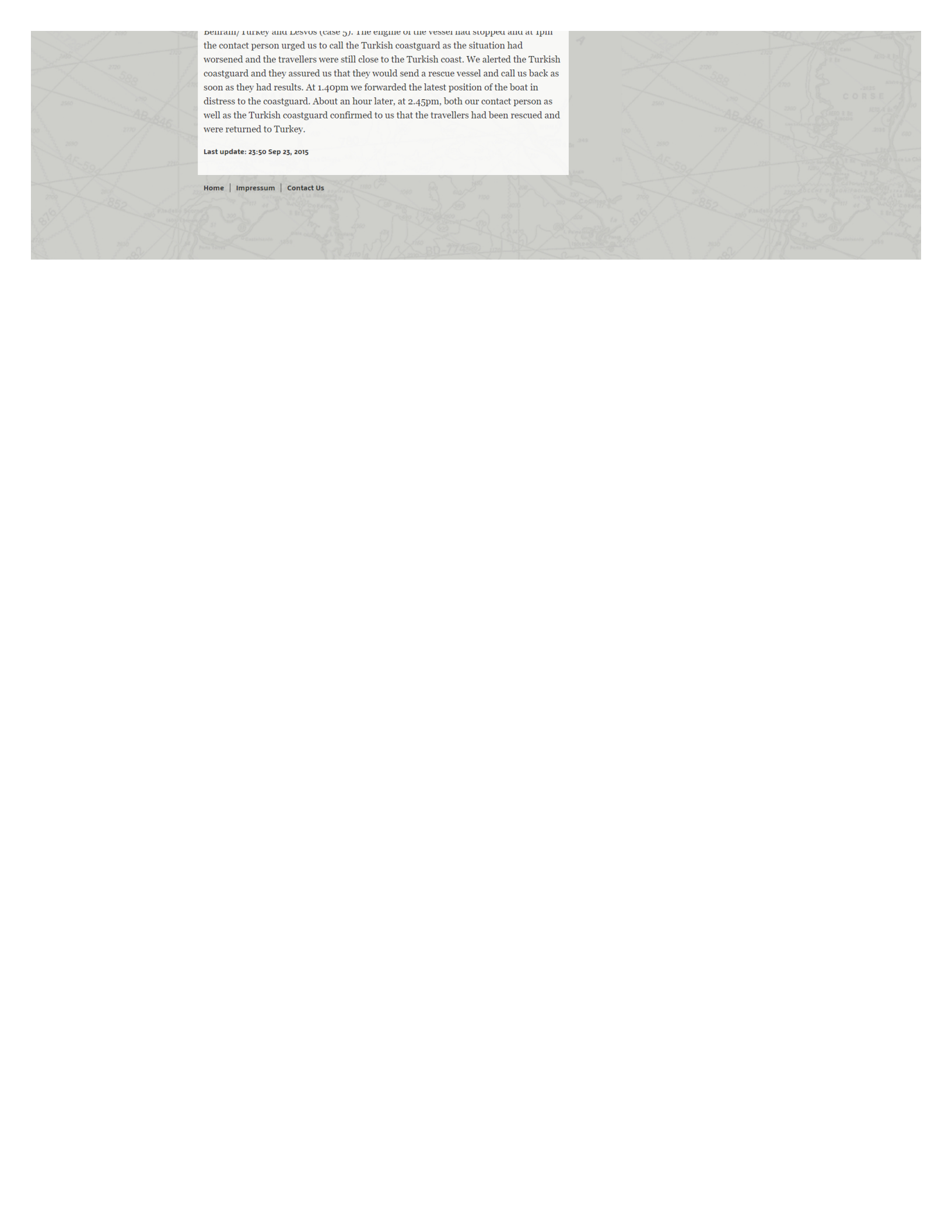
17:19 Apr 17, 2021 / Aegean Sea Kms

[16/04: 43 Travellers report about attack and push back to Turkey that happened North of Lesvos](#)

20:23 Sep 12, 2021 / Aegean Sea Kms

[11/09: Boat with 24 people pushed back and picked up by the Turkish Coastguard](#)





Beniam/ Turkey and Lesbos (case 3). The engine of the vessel had stopped and at 1pm the contact person urged us to call the Turkish coastguard as the situation had worsened and the travellers were still close to the Turkish coast. We alerted the Turkish coastguard and they assured us that they would send a rescue vessel and call us back as soon as they had results. At 1.40pm we forwarded the latest position of the boat in distress to the coastguard. About an hour later, at 2.45pm, both our contact person as well as the Turkish coastguard confirmed to us that the travellers had been rescued and were returned to Turkey.

**Last update: 23:50 Sep 23, 2015**

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