



Alarm Phone alerted to 12 distress cases in the Aegean Sea near Lesvos, Samos, Chios, Farmakonisi

In Distress

VERIFIED

01.10.2015 / 13:06 / Aegean Sea near Lesvos, Samos, Chios, Farmakonisi

Watch The Med Alarm Phone Investigations – 30th of September 2015

Case name: 2015_09_30-AEG85

Situation: 12 distress cases in the Aegean Sea, near Lesvos, Samos, Chios, and Farmakonisi

Status of WTM Investigation: Concluded

Place of Incident: Aegean Sea

Summary of the Cases: On Wednesday the 30th of September 2015, the Alarm Phone was involved in a total of 12 emergency situations near Greek islands. The first case reached us at 1.13am when we received a WhatsApp message from a contact person who told us about a group of 30 people on a vessel in distress (case 1). The father of the contact person's friend was amongst them. With the provided GPS coordinates we could see that they were in Greek waters, near the island of Lesvos. The contact person told us that water was entering the vessel and asked us to alert the Greek coastguards. We also suggested that the travellers should call the international emergency number 112 in any case. We reached the Greek coastguards at 1.25am who were very impatient and told us to ask the travellers to call by themselves. At 2.44am our contact person informed us that they had reached Lesvos independently and were safe.

A few minutes later, at 2.48am, a contact person informed us about two distress situations in the Aegean Sea. The first concerned a vessel near Lesvos (case 2). The contact person had already informed the Greek coastguards and we agreed to wait for further information from the travellers. About twenty minutes later, we received updated GPS data which showed them very close to the island and a few minutes later their independent arrival was confirmed. The second case from the same contact person concerned a group of 35 people, including 4-5 children and 4-5 women, who had stranded on a small Turkish island on their way from mainland Turkey to Lesvos (case 3). We could not reach them ourselves but our contact person was in regular contact with them. We asked her to advise the travellers to call 112. Then, for several hours, no new information could be obtained. In a conversation with the Turkish authorities at 8.48am, they told us that they were aware of the situation and had been in direct contact with the groups already. They said the people would be rescued during the day but due to the bad weather conditions and high waves, they could not estimate when this would take place. At 3.42pm, we finally learned that they had been rescued off the island by some fishermen who transferred them on to the Turkish coastguards.

At 4.11am, we received another alert through WhatsApp and a contact person (case 4). A vessel was in distress near Lesvos and we received a voice message from the group in which they sounded very anxious and agitated. We asked our contact person to tell them to call 112. At 4.28am we informed the Greek coastguards about the case involving 43 people in total. At 5.26am our contact person let us know that the vessel had been rescued by the Greek coastguards.

At 4.55am the 5th distress case came in, again via WhatsApp. The vessel carrying 35 people was still in Turkish waters, seeking to reach Samos Island/Greece (case 5). Their engine had broken down and the boat was drifting. Our contact person said that the people on board wanted us to inform the Turkish coastguards and we did so after speaking to them directly. The Turkish authorities told us that they had already been informed by their Greek colleagues about a vessel in that position. They confirmed that they would send a rescue vessel to them. However, at 5.27am, we were informed that the people on board had managed to re-start the engine and were moving again. Afterwards, we were unable to receive further information about this situation.

At 5.27am, we were informed about a distress situation via Facebook and we asked our contact person to provide further details (case 6). He was able to obtain a phone

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[29/11: Alarm Phone alerted to 9 distress cases near Lesvos and Chios](#)

09:24 Dec 19, 2020 / Aegean Sea Kms

[18/12: 27 people, mostly women and children shipwreck near Lesvos, one woman died while one man remained missing at sea](#)

17:20 Feb 04, 2016 / Aegean Sea, Lesvos and Farmakonisi Kms

[03/2 Alarm Phone alerted to 4 emergency situations in the Aegean Sea, near Lesvos and Farmakonisi](#)

14:12 Oct 06, 2015 / Aegean Sea Kms

[Alarm Phone alerted to 5 distress cases in the Aegean Sea near Chios and Lesvos](#)



number of one of the travellers and, when calling them, received the confirmation that they had reached Chios Island already and were safe.

At about the same time, we learned about a group of 36 people, stranded on Farmakonisi Island/Greece (case 7). They were exposed to the cold and afraid that the island was deserted so that they could not ask anyone for help. The Greek coastguards asked us to tell the group to call 112. They said that the Greek army would quickly detect them due to Farmakonisi's small size. Farmakonisi is an island only used by military, under control of the Greek army. We passed these information on to our contact person.

At 6.57am we were called by someone who informed us about a vessel in distress near Lesvos Island (case 8). We checked the different coordinates we received which showed that they were moving toward the island. The travellers did not want to alert the Turkish coastguards and it seemed likely that they would be able to reach Lesvos independently. At 7.49am the travellers sent us an image with an indication of their position, they had moved even closer to the island. At 8.44am we learned that they had safely arrived on Lesvos Island on their own.

At approximately 9am, we received a case through Facebook but with conflicting information (case 9). It seemed to concern a large group of about 150 people who were in distress near Lesvos. Several individuals had already alerted the Greek coastguards and at around noon, their rescue was confirmed.

At 9.42am we were called by a woman in Denmark who provided us with a phone number of one of her relatives who was on a vessel in distress (case 10). She told us that a group had left Izmir two hours earlier and were on a vessel with a malfunctioning engine. She had very limited information and could not pass on the coordinates of the travellers. We were unable to reach them through the provided phone number. Then someone with a Lebanese number called us and informed us about the same situation. For a long time afterwards, no news about this case could be obtained. At 12.38pm, the second contact person told us that the 45 travellers had returned to Turkey after their engine had broken down. In the afternoon, at around 4pm, we were finally able to speak to the travellers directly. They were about 50 people and had been rescued by the Turkish coastguards.

At 9.52am, we were informed about 35 people in distress (case 11). We could locate them near Lesvos but were unable to reach them directly on their phone. At 1.27pm we were told that the strong currents had pulled them back to Turkey. While they were unable to reach Greece, at least they were safe.

The last case of the day reached us at 9.59am through Nawal Soufi's activist network. We received the GPS position of a vessel north of Lesvos and also the phone number of the travellers who, at first, could not be reached. An Arabic speaking Alarm Phone member was able to speak to them at 11.20am and was informed that they had safely arrived on Lesvos Island.

Last update: 20:42 Oct 04, 2015

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