



Taller Map \* Smaller Map

## 18/3 Alarm Phone alerted to 5 emergency situation in the Aegean Sea, Chios, Lesvos and Pasas

In Distress

VERIFIED

19.03.2016 / 19-33 / Aegean Sea, Chios, Lesvos and Pasas

### Watch The Med Alarm Phone Investigations – 18th of March 2016

*Case name:* 2016\_03\_18-AEG236

*Situation:* Alarm Phone alerted to 5 emergency situations in the Aegean Sea

*Status of WTM Investigation:* Concluded

*Place of Incident:* Aegean Sea

*Summary of the Cases:* On Friday the 18th of March 2016, our Alarm Phone shift teams were alerted to 5 distress cases in the Aegean region. One vessel on its way to Chios was able to reach the island independently while two vessels were rescued by coastguards. Two groups had stranded on Pasas Island and were later found and transferred to Chios.

At 2.31am, one of our activist allies informed us about a boat on its way to Chios (case 1). He had monitored the boat but had lost contact to the travellers. He passed on their most recent GPS position as well as a phone number. Our ally did not want us to act but said that he would try to find out whether they were in acute distress or not. Shortly afterwards, at 3.02am, he said that he still could not reach them and asked us to notify the Greek coastguards. We informed the Greek coastguards about the case at 3.03am. At 3.17am, the Greek coastguards called us and informed us that they had tried but failed to reach the travellers. They told us that they had a boat in the area and they had detected a boat near the position we had passed on but that boat was not in acute distress and still able to move on. At 4.22am we spoke to the coastguards again and they said that they had not seen any boat in distress but only the one that was moving toward Chios. They confirmed that that boat had safely reached the island. At 4.40am we finally reached the travellers and they reported that they had safely arrived on the island. Shortly afterwards we informed the Greek coastguards about these good news.

At around 3.23am, we received messages from a range of contact persons about a boat in distress, carrying many children and women (case 2). With the GPS position we localised them near Lesvos Island. Already shortly afterwards one of the contact persons told us that the people had been rescued to Greece.

At 6.25am, we received messages from activist allies who told us about 15 people travelling on a boat to Pasas Island (case 3). We located the boat deep in Turkish waters and were informed that the boat's engine had broken down. One of our allies contacted the Turkish coastguards about the case. At 6.45am we received the confirmation that the Turkish coastguards had rescued the group.

At 9.50am we were informed by a contact person about a group of about 50 people, including 10 children, who had stranded on Pasas Island (case 4). A few minutes later we received updated coordinates, showing them near the location where coastguard vessels would moor. At 10.03am we contacted Chios Port authority and told them about the case. They said they were aware of the situation. Following their account, 5 boats had reached Pasas and dozens of travellers were waiting to be transferred off the island. They confirmed that they would send a vessel. At 10.30am we were alerted to another group stranded on the island (case 5). At 11.14am, the travellers of case 4 told us that a small coastguard vessel had arrived and picked up 3 people, informing the rest that a larger vessel would soon arrive. They said that they were about 180 people. They confirmed at 1.05pm that they had been picked up by a commercial ferry which charged 10 Euros each for the transfer. Those who did not have the money had to stay behind. We informed the Chios Port authorities about the situation and they said that the vessel would be the Oinoussai III and they suggest that possibly some organisation could cover the expenses. Due to this novel situation on the island, we contacted a solidarity group on Chios, as well as the UNHCR. In a phone conversation with the UNHCR at 1.32pm, they said that they were not aware of these practices. They promised to call to the Chios Port authorities directly. At 2.10pm we also contacted the Greek police via email, to notify them about these apparently new and inhumane practices. The local activists went to the port of Chios and reported at 3pm that they confirmed that those who had paid had arrived were fine. We were unable to establish contact to those on the island who had been left behind.

### Related Reports

02:16 Sep 10, 2020 / Aegean Sea Kims  
[09/09: 6 people pushed back to Turkey near Chios](#)

17:45 Aug 23, 2019 / Aegean Sea Kims  
[22/08: 17 travellers in distress in Greek waters close to Chios](#)

16:23 Mar 15, 2016 / Aegean Sea Kims  
[14/3 Alarm Phone alerted to 1 emergency situation in the Aegean Sea, Chios](#)

16:34 Sep 28, 2017 / Aegean Sea Kims  
[27/09: 51 people including 13 children arrived on Greek island of Pasas](#)

17:48 Mar 30, 2017 / Aegean Sea Kims  
[20/03: 22 travellers stranded on Pasas, rescued by the Greek coast guard](#)



