

The Pylos Massacre

Another deadly entrance to
Fortress Europe



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A photo provided by the Hellenic Coast Guard shows migrants on board the crowded fishing vessel (BBC)

The logo consists of the text "open assembly against / border violence" arranged in a circular arc around the word "Lesvos" in the center. The text is in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

**open assembly against /
border violence**

Lesvos

The text “The Pylos massacre” was published in Mytilene in August 2023. It was printed in both Greek and English, is available in other different languages online and is free of charge. Its use is free for non-commercial purposes.

Read our other publications *Against Pushbacks: notes from Lesvos* and *How Lesvos Learned to Love the Pushbacks*.

The meetings of the Lesvos Open Assembly Against Border Violence take place every Wednesday at 17:00 at Mpineio squat.

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Introduction

This text, *The Pylos Massacre: another deadly entrance to Fortress Europe*, arises from a need to speak out, to shout once again that the Hellenic Coast Guard, with the complicity of the Greek State, FRONTEX and, ultimately, the European Union, kills every day at the borders of Fortress Europe.

These lines were written on Lesbos, a Greek island located 12 kilometers from Turkey where, over the years, the violence applied to people on the move has only increased. This time it is not our beaches that have been littered with corpses, nor our waters that have been silent witnesses to indescribable violence. But the causes are shared here.

Since 2020, pushbacks at the Greek borders have become systematic. With the ban on civil Search and Rescue in Greece has come impunity at sea. The Hellenic Coast Guard violently stops migrant boats on a daily basis, breaking their engines and abandoning them adrift in Turkish waters. In cases where people manage to reach land, their only option is to hide in the forests to avoid being pushed back. On our island masked men hunt them down and, if they find people, strip them of all their possessions, beat them, sexually assault them and finally force them back onto a Coast Guard vessel to abandon them at sea. In spite of these circumstances, the increase in pushbacks has not led to a decrease in attempted crossings. People continue to try, often taking longer and more dangerous routes.

This text aims to make a meticulous analysis of the events that took place during the hours leading up to the shipwreck at Pylos, one of the deadliest shipwrecks in recent European history. In the early morning of 14 June 2023, more than 600 people died 47 nautical miles from Pylos, a coastal town in the southwestern Peloponnese. The bodies of more than 500 people are still missing and will most likely never be recovered. From the beginning the massacre was blamed on human traffickers, even on the people on board. But distress alerts had been issued as early as the previous morning by organisations that had been in contact with the passengers, as well as by MCCR-Rome and FRONTEX. The Hellenic Coast Guard ignored those distress calls and did not arrive on the scene until much later, with a small and inadequate vessel. Their more than

questionable maneuvers, trying to tow the ship towards Italian waters, most likely caused the shipwreck.

More than 600 people died that day, but the Pylos Massacre is not an isolated event. It is a consequence of the migration policies implemented by the European Union. In 2022 alone, 2367 people are recorded as dying in the Mediterranean. The real figure is surely much higher. Borders produce death and suffering on a daily basis, and not only at sea. We cannot forget the Melilla Massacre on 24 June 2022, the deaths in the desert on the Libyan border with Tunisia, all those on the Balkan route, or on the Evros border between Greece and Turkey.

Through the deal with Turkey in 2016, the deal with Morocco, and finally the current deal with Tunisia, the EU allocates billions of Euros to these countries so that they act as the guards of Fortress Europe, meanwhile allocating an increasing proportion of its budget to border surveillance. This creates the narrative that we have to “protect ourselves”, that people on the move are dangerous and criminal. These arguments are reinforced by the criminalisation of migration. At the moment “illegal entry” is a crime, and all migrants who have entered “illegally” (because they cannot enter otherwise) are criminals. For almost every ship arriving there is an attempt to find someone to blame. There are thousands of people in jail under the legal framework against “facilitation of migration” accused simply of having driven the boat.

Migration policies do not kill only at the borders. The violence never ends. The narrative of “protection” is internalised, allowing societies to not only justify killing at borders, but also the indefinite detention of people in closed camps, far from urban centers, in prison conditions.

This text is one more example of the daily violence at the borders, one more example of death. We will not forget. States try to present these deaths as unfortunate incidents, accidents... But in reality they are just another of their tools for “migration management”. These are not errors of the system, this is the system itself.

Despite all this violence, people still try to cross. There will always be people in solidarity fighting against borders, against the system that creates and needs them.

The facts

The early hours of 14 June 2023, 47 nautical miles off the coast of Pylos, saw one of the worst shipwrecks in the modern history of the Mediterranean. The fishing boat *Adriana*, which had, according to survivors, set sail on 8 June with around 750 people onboard, capsized and sank.

The Hellenic Coast Guard (HCG) was officially informed about a boat in distress by the Italian Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre – MRCC Rome – at around 11:00 EEST¹ and via FRONTEX, which had spotted the boat from an aeroplane on 13 June at 12:47. A HCG helicopter was sent from Mytilene, Lesbos and found the *Adriana* at 15:35. Only after all of this did the HCG finally decide to send a vessel: the *LS-920*.

Setting off from Crete, the *LS-920* arrived on scene at 22:40. While the *LS-920* is not equipped to take aboard so many people, the *Aigaion Pelagos*, one of the most modern rescue ships in Europe, was docked relatively close to the site of the disaster in the port of Gytheio.² Instead of deploying this well-equipped vessel, according to a HCG statement two merchant vessels were ordered to remain on standby next to the *Adriana* and provide the passengers with food, water and fuel before being relieved and leaving the scene a few hours later.³

At 2:04 on 14 June 2023 the *Adriana* sank under the watch of the Coast Guard.

While the HCG claims that it kept its distance and never “touched” the *Adriana*, survivors state that the Coast Guard attempted to tow them to a maritime area under Italian responsibility and that this reckless attempt to tow the overcrowded boat was the cause of the disaster.

In total, 104 people were rescued and 82 bodies were recovered. There were no other known survivors. The majority of passengers at the time of the shipwreck were travelling below deck, including the women and children, which led to them being trapped when the boat sank. Up to 100 children were reportedly onboard. Their bodies will likely never be recovered, as the ship sank at the deepest point of the Mediterranean.



HCG handling bodies (*Hellas Posts*)

The Open Assembly Against Border Violence Lesvos is a group consisting, among others, of Search and Rescue activists, comrades supporting survivors of shipwrecks, as well as supporting the relatives of missing and deceased people. We focus on organising against the pushbacks carried out in the Aegean Sea. With this text, we will try to summarise how the Pylos massacre took place, and to expose the lies of those responsible.

The lies

Many doubts arise when reading the Hellenic Coast Guard's official statements.⁴ We cannot be expected to believe the HCG's narrative after the long trajectory of lies around its treatment of people on the move arriving in Greece. Regardless, its claims around the Pylos massacre are contradicted by other witnesses and the available evidence.

"The boat was not in distress, the passengers refused assistance"



People on the *Adriana* rising their hands asking for assistance (BBC)

There are very good reasons to doubt these claims. The HCG claimed in its initial statement, the morning after the shipwreck, that the passengers or the so-called captains of the *Adriana* "refused assistance". Even if this was true, it would not relieve the HCG from its duty to intervene.

Whenever a situation of distress is reported, whether or not by the captain of the boat in question, an objective assessment must be carried out, even if the captain says that rescue is not needed.

It is possible that even a licensed captain could misjudge the severity of the situation. If a boat is overcrowded, does not fly any country's flag (meaning it is not registered and therefore regulated by any country), has no certified captain on board, or is unseaworthy for any reason, the people on board should still be considered as in distress and be rescued as fast as possible. International law unambiguously states that, on receiving information "from any source" that persons are in distress at sea, the master of a ship that is in a position to render assistance must proceed with all speed to their assistance.⁵

There were multiple warnings that the *Adriana* was in immediate danger. In pictures published by the HCG itself, we see people raising their arms towards a helicopter, appearing as if asking to be rescued. In addition, people on the ship had informed Alarm Phone (a civil hotline for people in distress at sea) that they were in distress and wouldn't survive the night. Survivors testify that by the 4th and 5th day of the journey, two people had died due to the unbearable conditions. Further, there was no more food and water available on the boat leading passengers to drink water from the engine's cooling system.

In fact, at 11:00 the HCG had been informed by MRCC Rome that two children had died aboard the *Adriana*.⁶ The Consolidated Rescue Group, an organisation reporting on distressed migrant boats at sea, stated that everybody onboard was in a state of "slow death" and that they asked for the help of "whatever coast guard".⁷

Later the Captain of the *Faithful Warrior*, a commercial vessel that was ordered by the HCG to approach the migrant boat, informed the HCG that the boat was "swaying dangerously" due to the "excessive number of people on all decks".⁸ This is also confirmed by a video taken by the HCG itself, which shows the *Adriana* at the time the commercial vessel provided water and food to the passengers.

All ships and authorities alerted to distress have an obligation to rescue, even if the ship in distress is not in their territorial waters but at high sea.⁹ Search and Rescue zones include waters in the high sea. The state in charge of each Search and Rescue zone has an obligation to coordinate a rescue. In this case, that obligation fell on the Greek State and its executive organ, the HCG. The HCG did receive an SOS call on behalf of the passengers via Alarm Phone, clearly declaring an emergency.¹⁰ Of course, this is not mentioned at all in any HCG statement.

In any case, the moment a vessel such as the *Adriana* leaves port, we must consider it a case of distress because the vessel is unseaworthy. Distress means a duty to rescue, not to simply stand by and watch, regardless of any contradictory claims from passengers, or so-called captains.

The HCG was obliged to launch a large-scale rescue operation without delay. Instead, it sent a helicopter from Mytilene and a vessel that was too small to take even the 104 survivors. Too little, too late, from too far.



Alarm Phone Timeline – 13/14 June 2023

In the morning of 13 June, from 9:35h CEST, the Twitter user Nawal Soufi alerts about a large boat in distress, carrying, according to them, 750 people. Over the following hours, Nawal Soufi adds further information, including the GPS position of the boat in distress and that authorities in Italy, Greece, and Malta have been alerted.

14:17h: Alarm Phone receives the first call from the boat in distress. It is difficult to communicate with the distressed. They say that they cannot survive the night, that they are in heavy distress. Alarm Phone tries to receive their current GPS coordinates in order to be able to alert authorities – but the call cuts. We try to reconnect with them.

14:30h: The distressed call again, telling Alarm Phone that they would send their location. However, they do not.

15:52h: The distressed called Alarm Phone twice but it was impossible to understand them.

16:04h: We speak to the distressed again. They say that they would send their GPS position.

16:13h: We receive the position from the people in distress: N 36 15, 21 02. We try to gather further information but we cannot reconnect with them.

16:53h: We alert the Greek authorities per email as well as other actors, including Frontex and UNHCR Greece.

17:13h: We reestablish contact to the people in distress. We hear “hello, hello”, then the call drops. We try to reconnect, which is not possible.

17:14h: We receive a call from the boat in distress but cannot hear anything.

17:20h: We speak to the distressed and they report that the boat is not moving. They say: “The captain left on a small boat. Please any solution.” They say they need food and water.

17:34h: We receive another call from the boat in distress and their updated position: 36 18, 21 04 – very close to the previous position. They say that the boat is overcrowded and that the boat is moving from side to side.

18:00h: We call the company of the merchant vessel “Lucky Sailor”, informing them about the boat in distress. They say that they only act under the authority of the Greek coastguards.

Over the following hours, Alarm Phone tries to re-establish contact to the distressed but either calls are not connected or it is impossible to understand one another.

20:05h: Alarm Phone is informed by the distressed that they received water from the merchant vessel Lucky Sailor and that they have been in contact with the “police”. Alarm Phone also notices that a second merchant vessel, the Faithful Warrior, is close to the distressed.

Over the following hours, Alarm Phone tries to re-establish contact to the distressed but either calls are not connected or it is impossible to understand one another.

00:46h on 14/06/2023: Last contact to the boat in distress. All we hear is: “Hello my friend. The ship you send is ...”. The call cuts.

"The ship maintained a steady course and speed from 22:40 until 01:40"

In its official statement, the HCG describes the moments just before the boat capsized as follows:

-At 22:40 the vessel of the Coast Guard from Crete sailed near the fishing boat. It remained at a distance and observed discreetly, without noticing any problem in its sailing, as it had a steady course and speed.

-This continued until 01:40 on 14 June. At the above time the passenger of the fishing vessel informed the Headquarters Operations Centre that there was a failure in the engine of the vessel and it stopped moving.

-This event was confirmed by the present Coast Guard's vessel.

-Immediately the Coast Guard ship tried to approach the fishing boat to ascertain the problem.

The BBC published an analysis of data provided by Marine Traffic, a maritime tracking platform through which one can see the positions of commercial and larger private vessels. Of course, the position of the *Adriana* does not appear since it was making an irregular journey. However, according to the data there were 7 hours of activity in close proximity to the single location where the boat later sank.¹¹ The *Lucky Sailor*, one of the merchant vessels on scene, abruptly changed course at 18:00. About 3 hours later, the *Faithful Warrior* travelled to the same area. In a video, reportedly provided by the crew of the *Lucky Sailor*, we can see that they are providing the *Adriana* with food and water.¹²

From this we can ascertain that if the vessels interacting with the



Picture of the floating fishing boat in the hours before it sank (BBC)

Adriana all stayed in the same area for several hours, the *Adriana* was barely moving at all. This seems to be confirmed in a picture taken at the time by the HCG, which shows the *Adriana* floating with no visible waves around or behind the boat.

At 2:04 the boat sank. At this same time Marine Traffic shows that many vessels rapidly moved towards the location of the incident.¹³ This data verifies the position of the *Adriana*'s sinking. The position is not far from the same position in which the *Adriana* was floating for hours while receiving water from commercial vessels.

"We did not attempt to tow the boat"

The HCG is trying to frame what happened as a tragic accident, even blaming the people on board. Still, it is absolutely clear that the HCG is responsible for the death of hundreds of people.

The Coast Guard says in its official statement:

-At 02:04 a.m. the Captain of the present HCG Vessel informed the Operations Centre that he saw the fishing vessel take a starboard then a steep port tack and then another starboard tack so large that it resulted in the fishing vessel capsizing.

-About ten to fifteen minutes later the vessel sank completely. A number of passengers on the outer decks fell overboard.¹⁴

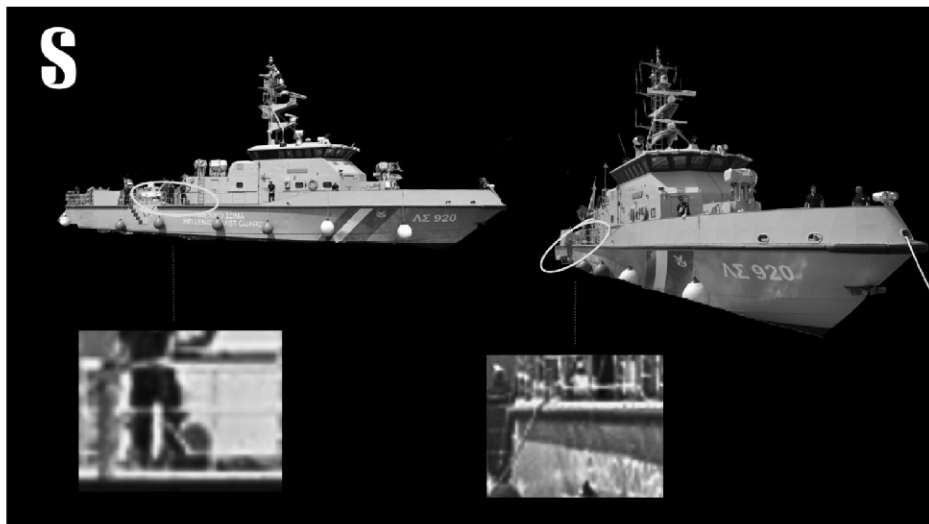
Professional Search and Rescue workers raise severe doubts about the credibility of this scenario. It is highly unlikely that a boat would behave like this in good weather and calm seas, even if it is overcrowded, and even if it has a high centre of gravity due to the large number of passengers on the top deck. The Captain of the *Faithful Warrior* described the sea that day as "like a mirror"; in other words, there were no waves that could have caused the boat to list so suddenly.¹⁵ At this point, none of the survivors describe a fight or a panic that could have caused a mass movement of passengers to one side of the boat, destabilising it. Such a movement would most likely not have been enough to capsize such a boat anyway.

We find a more likely explanation for the *Adriana's* sinking in survivors' testimonies, which state that the HCG caused the boat to capsize by attempting to tow it. In its first official statement, the HCG did not mention any attempt to tow or approach the distressed vessel. In fact, a spokesperson for the HCG, outright denied any attempt to tow the boat.¹⁶

Nevertheless, once the testimonies of the survivors were published, a Hellenic Port Authority official told *Efsyn* and *Ethnos* newspapers that the HCG did in fact tie a rope to the *Adriana*, although this was supposedly untied by the passengers as they did not want to be brought to Greece.¹⁷ According to the same official, this attempt to attach a rope would have happened at 23:00.¹⁸ He claimed that the rope was only tied in order to stabilise the boat. According to professionals this does not make sense. How would you stabilise a boat with one rope?

The survivors recollected the event very differently than the officials did. According to survivors, the HCG did in fact tie a blue rope to the *Adriana* and started to tow it.¹⁹ According to them, this is what caused the abrupt rolling, ultimately leading the distressed vessel to capsize. Some survivors added that the HCG also fled the scene once people were in the water as the boat sank, only to return much later.²⁰ A survivor further stated that the masked HCG officers boarded the *Adriana* and told the passengers that they would be towed to Italy.²¹

A blue rope matching the description of the one used during the towing can be seen in pictures of the HCG vessel *LS-920*.²²

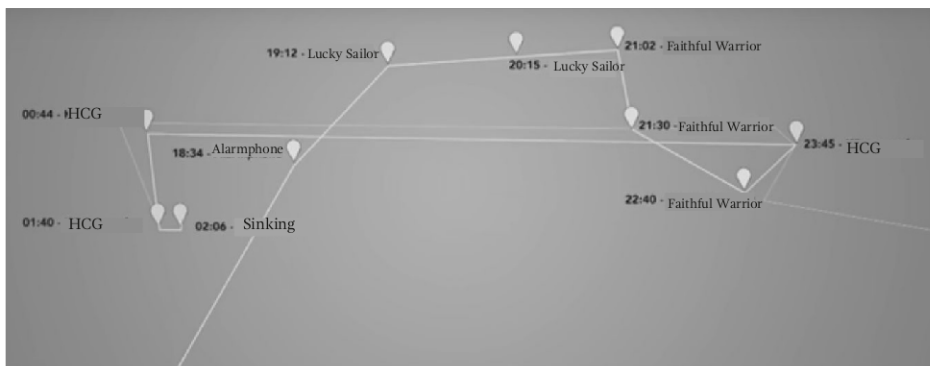


The blue rope (*We Are Solomon*)

A joint investigation by the research group *Forensis*, the *Guardian*, German public television channel *ARD*, *Strq_F* and others confirms survivors' testimonies, while adding some interesting details. *Strq_F* claims to be in possession of the crew list. It confirms that the HCG vessel *LS-920*, which departed from Chania in Crete, took four members of a special force on board. These men are trained to board vessels at sea for the purposes of intervention. They would have been trained for an operation such as entering the *Adriana* and attaching a rope to tow it.

In the logbook of the HCG vessel *LS-920*, which was on scene when the boat sank, the Captain mentions the coordinates of the *Adriana's* position when they arrived on scene, when the engine stopped, and its coordinates when it sank. At 22:40 the *LS-920* arrived on scene. From this moment the pattern of the *Adriana* changes. While it was more or less lost before, constantly changing course, now it moves together with the HCG directly west in the direction of Italy. At 1:40, the engine fails.

Strangely, after the engine suddenly failed, the *Adriana* continued to move a few hundred metres east. This movement can not be explained by the wind or currents. A logical explanation might be that this was the distance the boat was towed by the HCG before it sank. This would also match with the survivors' testimonies, which either state they had seen the blue rope, or felt a "harsh forward movement" before the boat started tilting and sank.²³



Pattern of the *Adriana* and other vessels in the last hours before the sinking (*Strq_F*, translated)

This would not be the first time that the HCG sank a boat by towing it. In January 2014, a small fishing boat carrying 27 people capsized and sank off the Greek island of Farmakonisi in the Aegean Sea “while under tow by the Greek coastguard”.²⁴ Eleven people died. After this deadly shipwreck, Greece was condemned in the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), not only because the Coast Guard failed to protect human life but also because it used clearly forged statements by the survivors to absolve the Greek authorities of any responsibility.²⁵



Capsize boat from the Farmakonisi shipwreck (*Kathimerini*)

In July 2022, less than one year prior to the Pylos shipwreck, the ECtHR found that Greece had violated several Articles of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). Related to the Right to Life (Article 2 ECHR) the Court, first, found that the Greek authorities had not properly investigated the incident. Second, while the Court did not “make findings concerning details of the rescue effort”, or comment on the survivors’ allegations that the HCG had attempted to push the fishing boat back “towards the Turkish coast”, the ECtHR unanimously found that Greece had violated the Right to Life because “the authorities had not done all they could reasonably have been expected to do” to protect human lives.²⁶

The HCG has also shown that it is willing to try towing larger boats. In November 2022, a fishing boat with about 500 people on board near Crete was towed to port. Fortunately for those on board, the towing did not end in a shipwreck.²⁷

A boat like the *Adriana* carrying so many people cannot be towed without putting the passengers in grave danger. In a serious rescue operation, most – if not all – passengers would have been removed from the distressed vessel and taken onboard of a rescue ship. Everybody would have been equipped with life vests. A vessel can only be safely towed if there is a properly trained captain onboard and if there is constant contact between towing and towed vessels. None of this applies to the Pylos shipwreck.

Further, during towing harsh movements must be avoided, such as abrupt turns to the left or right. These would destabilise a boat and might cause it to capsize. According to the survivors, this is exactly what happened.²⁸ Towing a boat with such a high centre of gravity (due to the many people on the upper deck) is completely ruled out of any safety protocol.



Rescue operation by a civil SAR organization (VOA News)

Civil rescue organisations have rescued people from boats such as the *Adriana* many times, by carefully stabilising the distressed boat and taking the people onboard their ships. Those operations are never easy, but it is nevertheless possible to perform them in a safe manner. Assuming that the HCG is well trained, the only explanation for their conduct is that those in charge decided to do what they always do: to tow a boat with people on the move into foreign waters/SAR zones and leave them adrift. This is their main method of “migration management”, performing pushbacks. In this case, although it would not have been a pushback in the strict sense, the HCG would pull them to another SAR zone and “get rid of the problem.” To be clear, over the days following the Pylos shipwreck, between 15 and 20 June, the Hellenic Coast Guard carried out at least 14 Pushbacks, involving 283 people.²⁹



Pushback conducted by the HCG just 4 days after the massacre of Pylos (Turkish Coast Guard)

Alarm Phone’s activists were in contact with the distressed boat throughout the day. They report that the last words exchanged were: “My friend, the ship you send is...”.³⁰ Shortly afterwards, hundreds of people were dead. We can only guess what the next words might have been. Most probably “The ship you send is pulling us to Italy.” Obviously Alarm Phone didn’t send a ship. This is not in their power. But it is worth reminding ourselves that over the last few years civil Search and Rescue has become impossible in Greece. And we can safely say that if civil Search and Rescue organisations had been active, these deaths would have been more likely prevented.



"We did everything we could to rescue"

Survivors state that even after the boat sank, with hundreds in the water, the HCG did not intervene for a long time. Even after the ship sank, the rescue coordination led by the HCG with the other vessels on scene was totally inadequate.

At 2:12, the HCG issued a distress call: "Ship sinking. Large number of people. Vessels in the vicinity are requested to proceed with search and rescue operations." It seems that the *LS-920* did not do much more than this. In fact, a civil vessel, the *Rekon*, responded to the search and rescue operation and was on scene roughly one hour later. In the testimony of its Captain, one hour after the distress call, the presence of the HCG isn't even mentioned. The Captain describes the scene he found: 3 other civilian vessels were already on scene, searching for survivors, with coordination seemingly carried out elsewhere. The HCG arrived about one hour after the *Rekon* and took over the "on scene command", which it should have done from the beginning.



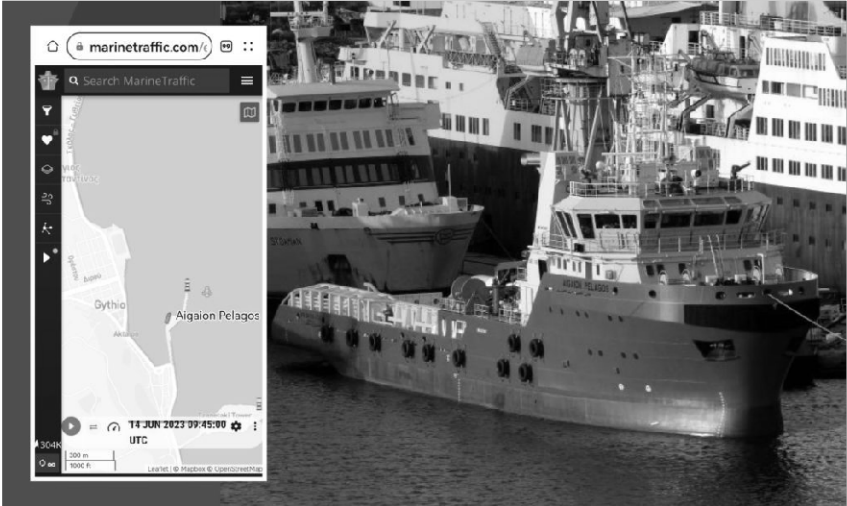
Survivors on the *Mayan Queen IV* (BOAT International)

The *Mayan Queen IV*, a luxury yacht owned by a multimillionaire Mexican family, reported that it had pulled a hundred or so survivors out of the water alive. Later, another ship, a Turkish cargo vessel, recovered one more survivor in a critical medical situation. The Captain requested medical help, supported by the Captain of the *Rekon*. The HCG replied that a helicopter would come, but it took way too long. Captain Bektasoglu, Master of the *Rekon*, remembers:

*I couldn't stand it, I suggested [to the Turkish cargo ship] to ask the cruiser for help, but he was ordered to wait. He kept asking for medical assistance for more than an hour and I recommended again that he approach the cruiser for help. They didn't listen to me, neither in Turkish nor in English.*³¹

The helicopter finally appeared at dawn and some rescued people, as well as the dead, were transferred to the Greek ship.³² A bigger Greek Naval vessel, the *YASA Canary*, only arrived at dawn, far too late.

The HCG failed to coordinate this rescue on multiple levels. We must mention again that during these critical hours, the *Aigaion Pelagos*, one of Europe's most modern rescue ships, was sitting idle not too far away in the port of Gytheio.³³



Aigaion Pelagos (Marine Traffic)

Clearly, at the moment the *Adriana* sank, it would have been too late to activate the *Aigaion Pelagos*, but it should have been deployed immediately upon receiving the first reports of a boat in distress, in order to conduct a rescue operation at that moment. The crew of the *LS-920* should have been much faster and more efficient. They should have been on scene from the beginning and should have coordinated the rescue from the moment the *Adriana* sank. They should have launched small rescue boats immediately to provide rescue equipment and get the people out of the water. Instead they apparently arrived at 02:55, almost an hour after the *Adriana* sank, leaving the crew of the *Mayan Queen* to recover most of the survivors. Meanwhile, the Captain of the *Rekon* mentions that he did not find any rescue equipment, aside from an unopened liferaft container. No rafts, no floating devices, no life vests.



Equipment to recover people from the water that one would expect to find on scene of a rescue operation (*State obligations relating to rescue at sea. Booklet aimed at the civil society 2020*)

This leaves us with some unanswered questions. Where did the HCG go after the *Adriana* sank? What happened before the civilian vessels arrived? Did the HCG even try to rescue them at all?

The cover up

It is clear that the HCG manipulated the testimonies of survivors, sometimes coercing them, sometimes getting rid of witnesses, sometimes silencing them. The task was to cover up any sign that they had been involved in sinking the boat, nevermind their direct responsibility for it.

Lighthouse Reports, in cooperation with many other journalists, interviewed 17 survivors. As we have documented above, 16 out of the 17 said the HCG attached a rope to the vessel and tried to tow it shortly before it capsized.³⁴ At least nine survivors gave interviews first under the interrogation of the HCG and later before a Greek court. *Lighthouse Reports* compared transcripts of these interviews.

Falsifying testimonies

Looking at the HCG's transcripts of the initial statements, it is striking that four of the testimonies describe the incident in almost identical wording. These transcripts explain that the boat capsized because it was "old" and also stated that "there were no life jackets".³⁵ The oddly identical wording cannot be explained by sloppy translation work, since three different interpreters were involved. Rather, it is evidence that the HCG amended the testimonies, writing what they wanted to hear, including the same specifically-worded paragraph in all of them. It seems none of them were available to double check whether their forgeries were convincing, but what can we expect? Their time is precious, they are so busy pushing people back all day.

Out of 9 survivors, 6 said before the court that the boat capsized due to the HCG's attempts to tow it. In the *Lighthouse Reports* interviews, 2 survivors testify that the HCG doctored their statements. According to one survivor:

*They asked me what happened to the boat and how it sank. I told them the Greek coast guard came and tied the rope to our boat and towed us and caused the capsizing of the boat. [...] They didn't type that in my testimony. When they presented it at the end I couldn't find this part.*³⁶

The other survivor also claims that he had said in the initial interrogation that the boat had capsized because of the towing, but ultimately signed a document which did not contain this, because he was “terrified”.

Efsyn also reports that survivors' testimonies changed drastically.³⁷ Just after the shipwreck, survivors describe it in identical ways:

*Sometime in the evening a Coast Guard boat came to help and suddenly the boat capsized and we were in the water. Then they rescued us with an inflatable boat. Two or three other boats came later in the night and helped. At dawn we were transferred to one of them and brought to the port where we are now. They also gave us water.*³⁸

Three days later, the same survivors described completely different events: this time in their own words, with reasonable differences between them, depending on their specific experiences. In their new statements survivors again report that the Coast Guard tied a rope to their boat, towed them and caused the overcrowded boat to sink.³⁹

This is not the first time the HCG has been accused of falsifying witness statements to cover up its actions. Again, in the case of the Farmakonisi shipwreck, 9 of the 16 applicants had provided initial witness statements in January 2014. They state that there had been interpretation problems while taking their statements, and that the records of their statements did not reflect their true content. Further, they successfully argued at the ECtHR that they had never said that the boat had sunk as a result of the sudden movement of those on board.⁴⁰

Silencing witnesses and obstructing evidence

In the aftermath, the State attempted to isolate and silence survivors of the shipwreck, effectively attempting to cut them off from the large media presence. Survivors were kept at the port of Kalamata in prison-like conditions, surrounded by police and OPKE (Crime Prevention and Suppression Team) officers, preventing them from speaking to journalists. This ban continued in Malakasa Camp, to which the survivors were then transferred. Here they reported that their phones had been confiscated by the police and were replaced with other devices. People claim to have pictures and videos on their phones with which one could reconstruct the whole journey, evidence which would condemn the actions of the HCG.⁴¹



Warehouse in Kalamata where the HCG kept the survivors (*South China Morning Post*)

There are signs that the HCG also attempted to control the press response of the captains of the other vessels involved in the search and rescue attempt. Journalists have stated that they tried to get interviews from these captains after the ship sank. Although none of them said clearly that they were *ordered* not to speak to the press,

most of them were reluctant to answer questions. A spokesperson of the shipping company that owns the Greek cargo ship *Faithful Warrior* told journalists at the *New York Times* that the HCG had told them not to comment and to direct any inquiries to them.⁴²

The HCG took great pains to eliminate witnesses from the crime scene. It ordered an oil tanker to move away to a distance of 6 nautical miles, from which point there was no visual contact, and then to continue its journey.⁴³ Ultimately, even FRONTEX, its usual partner in crime, was not welcome on scene. According to FRONTEX:

As a FRONTEX drone was to patrol the Aegean on the same day, the agency offered to provide additional assistance ahead of the planned and scheduled flight. The Greek authorities asked the agency to send the drone to another search and rescue incident south of Crete with 80 people in danger. The drone, after attending this incident, flew to the last known position of the fishing vessel. The drone arrived at the scene four hours later at 04:05 UTC (7:05 EEST) in the morning, when a large-scale search and rescue operation by Greek authorities was ongoing and there was no sign of the fishing boat. No FRONTEX plane or boat was present at the time of the tragedy.⁴⁴

FRONTEX has never had a problem collaborating with, covering up or ignoring the crimes of the HCG. But now it is starting to get nervous. To be clear, this is not because of the loss of hundreds of lives, but because this time the attempted cover up is so sloppy that it fears its own reputational damage more than any damage to its relationship with Greece. FRONTEX now doubts the earlier official statement of the HCG, and has circulated an internal report on the incident based on survivors' testimonies which state that the HCG was to blame for the drownings.⁴⁵ FRONTEX is even discussing a temporary suspension of operations in Greece.⁴⁶

Media misinformation campaigns

The HCG sent its spokesperson, Nikos Alexiou, to brief the media, who got lost in contradictions. Appearing on *ANT1 News*, Alexiou denied that the HCG had tied a rope to the vessel, and that the HCG had not attempted to tow the *Adriana*.⁴⁷ However, around the same time, a Port Authority official told *Kathimerini* newspaper that the HCG *did* in fact tie a rope to the *Adriana*.⁴⁸

Later, Alexiou answered questions from *ERT News* about the lack of video footage from the *LS-920*, making the absurd claim that no footage exists because this would have needed officers to go on deck and take videos with their mobile phones!⁴⁹ Yet the *LS-920*, a Cantiere Navale Vittoria P355 model, was built in 2021, and is worth 13.9 Million (and is 90% EU funded) and is equipped with two state-of-the-art electro-optical sensors (in other words, cameras), which can cover a radius of more than ten kilometres.⁵⁰ This equipment allowed the crew of the *LS-920* to see the *Adriana* overcrowded with hundreds of people hours before it sank.



Surveillance equipment on the bridge of the *LS-920* (justice4pylos.org)

This is proved by a video, obtained by journalist Vassilis Lampropoulos published on *MEGA*, filmed from the HCG vessel *LS-920*, which shows that the boat is rocking dangerously.⁵¹ It should be mentioned that Lampropoulos is known to receive “leaked” information from official sources on a regular basis. We might ask how and why he received this video and whose interests it might serve.

Although the video is missing a time stamp, we can deduce from the events shown in the video and data from the Marine Traffic application that it must have been at 19:00. This appears to prove that the cameras on the *LS-920* were turned on at this point and that, if they did not record the sinking of the *Adriana*, somebody must have switched them off. Why would you switch off cameras during a rescue operation unless there is something to hide?

A state of secrecy

It seems like a lot of effort is being taken to keep details of the shipwreck and its investigation classified. Isidoros Dogiakos, a Supreme Court Prosecutor, called for the investigation to be highly classified. Dogiakos, who has repeatedly been condemned by civil society organisations and opposition parties of the Greek parliament for his close relations with the New Democracy party, sent a circular urging absolute secrecy to the Head of the Prosecutor’s Office of the Kalamata Court of Appeal, the Head of the Prosecutor’s Office of the Kalamata Court of First Instance and the Harbour Master of the Kalamata Port Authority. This was perceived by many as a threat, ensuring crucial evidence proving the HCG’s involvement in the shipwreck would not leak to the press.⁵² Sensationally, it was one of his last acts in office as a prosecutor, as he retired a few days later.

The treatment of families of the missing and deceased

For those forced to cross to Europe through the most dangerous routes, there are many ways to die or disappear: shipwrecks, pushbacks, falling overboard in stormy weather, or because the boats are overcrowded. And afterwards, there are many ways to die in Europe's camps and hospitals due to medical neglect and awful living conditions.

Whenever families and friends try to seek information, to confirm a death, or to access the body, they face bureaucratic obstacles and racist attitudes. They are treated as lower, as if their loss counts less, as if they came to cause trouble, or simply to create more inconvenient work.

When it comes to a “natural death”, i.e. a death in a camp or hospital, a body doesn't need to be identified in order to take custody. Still, it takes a lot of effort for relatives to be able to have anything resembling a decent funeral. However, when it comes to bodies that wash up on the shore, either after a shipwreck or even without connection to known incidents at sea, the odyssey for relatives to identify, prove their relationship, and to bury their loved ones is more difficult.

Most of the institutions involved – the HCG, the public hospital, the Municipality – are unhelpful, to put it mildly, towards the families. First, the HCG would have to register the person as missing. In many cases, the HCG will simply dismiss the families unless they are accompanied by a lawyer, or at the very least by a Greek speaker. Once the disappearance is registered, the families have to go to the hospital to identify the dead. If they want to receive a death certificate, or relocate the body, then they need to perform an official identification. In order to do this, only a DNA

match is considered adequate. The samples must be sent to a laboratory in Athens to make a match, which can take up to 20 days depending on the laboratory's workload. In some cases bodies can be stored this long, but in others they cannot and the burial must happen before an official identification is made. In such cases, the person will be buried in an anonymous grave. Even with DNA verification (if the family and friends are willing and able to wait that long), the grave is usually unmarked unless the family buys a gravestone or puts a wooden marking in the ground.

In Lesvos, grieving families and friends are often shocked when they first see the "cemetery", Kato Tritos. Here is the burial place of Muslim migrants since 2015, when the Municipality-run cemetery became full. It is also the burial place of those assumed to be Muslim, the unidentified who die on their way to Europe. It is quite far from the town and is basically a field with very little infrastructure.⁵³ There are hundreds of graves: some marked, mostly not, and many are hard to identify among the growing vegetation in the field itself. The community members of the deceased are those who must prepare the body and dig the grave.



"Unknown" grave in the cemetery in Kato Tritos, Lesvos (CNN)

It is not necessary for things to happen this way, yet it is exactly what is wanted by those responsible for the deaths – the Government Minister, the Coast Guard Officer, the Camp Manager – to leave the deaths of migrants on the back pages of the newspaper, forgotten about as soon as possible. The missing are anyway forgotten by the people of Europe. They are barely mentioned, not even as numbers. For their friends and families there is no closure. Often nobody even gives them the respect of an explanation, to simply tell them how bodies can disappear in the sea, or why it might take so long until bodies are recovered. What remains is a hole in people's lives and communities.

We have heard exactly the same from the families searching for their loved ones after the Pylos massacre. A relative describes:

The Greek authorities should have given access to the relatives to let them recognize their loved ones by face. But the authorities preferred to stick to the formalities instead of humanity. They have been keeping the dead bodies for almost 5 days now and asking for DNAs.

First, the process of identification through DNA is very lengthy and second, only limited labs for taking DNA in the way that is required are available in the countries of origin. In Pakistan for example only 2 labs in the whole country have the capacity to perform the required DNA tests. So this is something already suffering families who are in pain have to deal with, which should concern the Red Cross.

Alarm Phone, also trying to support the families, states: “People who experienced a big loss are, again, mainly left alone by state institutions in their search for the missing. Also on the ground, there is not much support for relatives who travel to Greece to identify the bodies.”⁵⁴

The torture does not end with the disappearance or death. It is extended to their loved ones, and to their whole community. People are dehumanised even in death and mourning. They are made invisible, actively forgotten.

The men who serve as scapegoats

Just one day after the shipwreck, 9 Egyptian men were arrested and accused of the following charges: facilitating illegal entry, causing a shipwreck, building a criminal organisation, illegal entry, involuntary manslaughter and endangering the lives of passengers.

The level of involvement of the accused is debatable, to say the least. The basis of these accusations was that some testimonies claimed that, among the 9 men arrested, some were handing out food and water in the first days of the journey, or showed other indications of having clearly-defined roles in the operation of the boat. Yet at the same time, other passengers say the contrary, that none of these arrested men were involved in procedures onboard at all.⁵⁵ While some survivors say that the 9 Egyptian men were mistreating the passengers, others say that some of them actually tried to help. Authorities initially stated that one of them had confessed to being a facilitator of the journey, but other sources say that all of them denied guilt. Activists in contact with survivors claim that among the 9 at least some were not involved, while the Greek right-wing media did not hesitate to present them as those who had caused the disaster.⁵⁶

Again, the survivors' interviews with *Lighthouse Reports* point to interference from the HCG. One survivor interviewed "added that the coast guard pressured him to single out certain people as the smugglers in charge of the operation. This claim is supported by our analysis of the documents: two answers to the coast guard's questions about smugglers contain identical sentences".⁵⁷ Two survivors told the *BBC* that the Coast Guard had instructed all survivors to say that the 9 Egyptian men had trafficked them, with one of them stating that "They were imprisoned and were wrongly accused by the Greek authorities as an attempt to cover their crime".⁵⁸

The journalists also spoke to Farzin Khavand, who acted as an interpreter for the HCG in Kalamata during the investigation of another "smuggling" case. The accused men had testified that they were simply passengers just

as everybody else onboard, that they had never even seen the sea before and had taken turns to steer the boat as had all the other men. The other passengers confirmed their statements. Khavand translated their accounts accurately to the Coast Guard, but when he saw the transcripts he realised the testimonies had been changed. He believes that they altered their stories after pressure from the Greek authorities, saying that the accused Iranians told him that some of their fellow Afghan passengers had been leaned on, and that the Coast Guard told them to name the Iranians as the people smugglers in order to avoid being “treated unpleasantly”, the threat of prison, and ultimately being “returned to the Taliban”.⁵⁹ According to trial observers, among those “most likely to be arrested” in such cases are those “of a different nationality to the majority on board”.⁶⁰

It must be mentioned how problematic it is that the Coast Guard interrogates the survivors and the accused, since Coast Guard officers are exactly those regularly attacking people at sea. But it is especially concerning in the Pylos case, when so many signs point to the Coast Guard causing the shipwreck, that its officers conduct the investigation.⁶¹ This is letting the fox guard the henhouse!

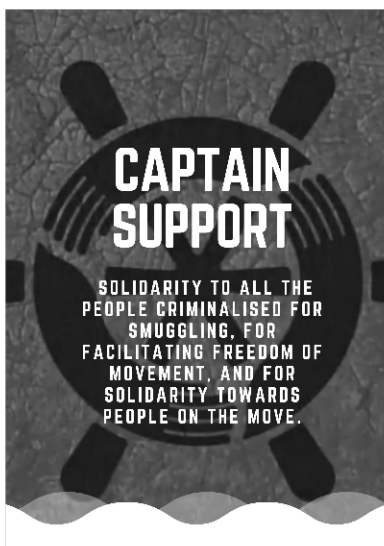
This is not an isolated incident. Almost every boat arriving on Greek shores carries at least one person arrested for “facilitation of illegal entry”. In those cases where a shipwreck occurred and/or people died, the hunt for the “facilitators” is almost guaranteed, since the HCG, the Greek State and the European Union must find a scapegoat to take the blame away from them.

So, what does “facilitation” actually mean? Somebody has to steer a boat. It could be that someone onboard has some knowledge of sailing. It could be that they happen to be sitting nearest the engine, that they seem the strongest or most brave. It could be that a person paid less for the journey in exchange for steering the boat. Or they could have been forced to do it in any number of ways. A bigger boat like the *Adriana* actually needs a small crew to take care of the engine, navigation and steering. It is clearly logical that those passengers with at least some experience

would take on these responsibilities to bring themselves and their co-passengers to safety. European legislation labels such people as “facilitators” as a deterrence measure to prevent people from taking on such roles. But when we consider that migration is unstoppable, the real question is what does this kind of policy create aside from more chaos onboard already-unseaworthy vessels?

Greece has one of the strictest anti-smuggling legislations within the European Union. In 2000, the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime was drafted, creating two different protocols and dividing the charges of human smuggling and human trafficking. Human smuggling is often defined as the facilitation, transportation, attempted transportation or illegal entry of a person(s) across an international border, where human trafficking is a set of activities where people are recruited, harboured, transported, bought or kidnapped to serve an exploitative purpose, such as sexual slavery or forced labour.⁶² On the EU level, in 2002 new legislation was established through the “Facilitators Package”⁶³. It marked a shift in the criminalisation of facilitation of border crossings. While in the 2000 UN “Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air”⁶⁴ the crime was the facilitation of entry over national borders in order to gain financial or material benefit,

with the Facilitators Package the word “smuggling” is not even defined, and neither are terms such as “financial gain” and “humanitarian assistance” clearly defined. This leads to a wide range of charges, based on the offence of “facilitating illegal entry”, being left to the member states to decide how the sanctions are to be integrated into national legislation. In Greece the national legislation targets all drivers of vehicles or vessels – financial gain is not seen as a precondition for criminal liability, but is merely considered as an aggravating circumstance.⁶⁵



https://twitter.com/CaptainSupport_

More than 2000 people have already been found guilty and given enormous prison sentences based on “smuggling related” charges.⁶⁶ Those convicted of “facilitation”, or those accused in pre-trial detention, are the second biggest prisoner group in Greek prisons right now. The arrests are often arbitrary and the trials are usually lacking even the most basic standards of fairness. According to Captain Support, a network of activists providing legal support for accused boat drivers, these trials usually take place with inadequate translation or no translation at all. The accused are given state-appointed lawyers who have not met their clients or reviewed the case until the morning of trials, which last an average of only 38 minutes despite delivering an average sentence of 44 years and fines over 370000 Euro.⁶⁷

Lighthouse Reports spoke to the families of the arrested, the survivors, as well as experts on smuggling networks in Libya. The families of 5 of the 9 accused Egyptian men say that their family member was also a passenger who had paid money to board the *Adriana*, with 3 of the 5 families even able to provide evidence of payment. After extensive interviews, *Lighthouse Reports* concluded that none of the “key smugglers involved in organising the trip” were on board the ship.⁶⁸

So who was behind the trip? Survivors, insiders and analysts explained that it was organised with wide-ranging support from powerful people reporting to Khalifa Haftar, a well-known Libyan warlord.⁶⁹ EU authorities are aware of the fact that militias in Eastern Libya under Haftar’s control carry out both illegal pullbacks and smuggling operations. Despite this, both Italy and Malta are attempting to make deals with Haftar to prevent migration in exchange for funds. It seems that EU States, in their bid to stop migration, are willing to support a man found liable by a US federal court for committing war crimes.⁷⁰



Libyan National Army Commander Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar meets Italian PM Giorgia Meloni in Rome, 4 May 2023 (*Libya Review*)

These dirty deals cause nothing but suffering, as people on the move are increasingly detained, tortured, pulled back, robbed and murdered. Clearly the EU does not care about this, but it is also clear that these deals are not even effective on their own terms. As we see from the Pylos massacre, those the EU deals with to stop migration are those that prove willing to facilitate it. And these promised funds will most likely fuel further conflicts in a region racked by intermittent civil conflict since 2011, enabling one side among a milieu of rival administrations, militias and criminal networks.

When states pretend to “fight smuggling” all they really do is fight migration and migrants themselves. And let’s remember, these are the same people actively killing migrants by forcing them on even more dangerous routes, leaving them to die through non-assistance, pushing them back and abandoning them on unseaworthy vessels. They claim they are worried about peoples’ lives being endangered by “evil smugglers”.⁷¹ Forgive us if we have some doubts.

The role of the media

As usual, the Greek media was very fast to jump on the narrative that the “evil smugglers” caused this “tragedy”, or – even more cruelly – the people brought it on themselves by entering such a boat. Of course, an analysis was missing of which (European) mechanisms force people to take such a dangerous route. Many were quick to defend their “boys in blue”, the heroic Coast Guard, with the leader of the Syriza party, Alexis Tsipras, stating he did not “want to put any blame on the men and women of the Coast Guard ... They are equally those who saved people, who made superhuman efforts.”⁷²

Only four days after the *Adriana* sank, Prime Minister Mitsotakis used the chance to once again defend the HCG and his “hard but fair” border policies. The HCG had, by this point, been asked critical questions by journalists, civil society, and even by others within the organisation itself. Responding to this, Mitsotakis stated:

*We are all shocked ... by the tragic shipwreck that took place off Pylos. But I believe we were also all outraged by the fact that the only concern of some today seems to be to blame our Coast Guard, instead of highlighting the role of the wretched traffickers.*⁷³

And he repeats once again what this has been, in the end, all about, what must be maintained at all costs – keeping migrants away: “For four years now, we have followed a strict but fair policy on the refugee issue. I told you in 2019 that I would drastically reduce the migratory flows affecting the East Aegean islands and we have put this commitment into practice.” And if this was not cynical enough, he adds: “This policy, apart from the national security dimension, is also a profoundly humanitarian policy ... The fewer boats that are sailing in the Aegean and the Mediterranean at the moment, the less chance there is of it happening.”

“Profoundly humanitarian”? The pushbacks, the torture, the murders? Sinking a boat with 750 people on board? Maybe Mitsotakis needs to buy a new dictionary, or we have to redefine “humanitarian”.

Pictures and even the names of the 9 accused passengers from Egypt were published a few days after the shipwreck. They were presented as guilty, with no questions about the circumstances of their arrests, while the clear doubts about their role were ignored.⁷⁴ This is not journalism, this is spreading state propaganda!



Picture of the 9 accused published by *Proto Thema* (censor bars added by us)

Some Greek and international media sources did a better job, but almost all journalists on scene in Kalamata behaved like vultures, harassing the survivors and the desperate families that were searching for their relatives. To write a “good story” is one thing, but to hound people in their most vulnerable moment armed with cameras and intrusive questions is another. This behaviour is commonplace when it comes to media attitudes to people on the move. Journalists have hindered rescue attempts by standing in the way of rescue workers, journalists have staged pictures to be even more “heartbreaking”, journalists have entered private spaces without even asking. Journalists have routinely shown they have no shame and no respect for their professional ethics. All this while talking about “press freedom” and claiming that “somebody has to give them a voice”.



Camarawoman kicking a person on the move in the Serbian border (BBC)

People already have a voice and many people want to tell their story. Some don't mind being in front of cameras at all. So when journalists behave like this it's not a matter of the urgency of the moment, it's a matter of not having the respect to wait and ask for consent. It's a demonstration of what they actually think about the people they subjectify: they are material, nothing more. As dehumanising as this approach is, as dehumanising are the words they often use: numbers, victims, waves and flows. Rarely are they represented as people that struggle, people with their own history and future, trying not to let them be stolen by racist borders.

It's on us!

A state applies its laws only when these come in handy to get rid of political opponents, such as Search and Rescue activists, or to lock up people on the move. But if they hinder state actors from doing what they want, the laws are bent or ignored.

International Maritime law, and its implementation in domestic legal frameworks, leaves no room for “yes, but...”. To rescue at sea is not a crime and not a decision to be made, it is a duty. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 November 1982 states:

*Every State shall require the master of a ship flying its flag, in so far as he can do so without serious danger to the ship, the crew or the passengers: (a) to render assistance to any person found at sea in danger of being lost. (Article 98 (1)).*⁷⁵

The duty to render assistance at sea is a long-standing maritime tradition and peremptory norm that has been translated into international law.

Why do we argue with laws if we don't believe in states, their laws, and those who pretend to protect and act according to them? We do it to expose their tactics.

This incident stands in a long line of state crimes, where through total neglect, or pure violence, people are killed. Not only through shipwrecks and pushbacks, the monstrous state apparatus manifests itself through police killing kids in the streets, the desolate infrastructure that produces “accidents” on a daily basis (including trains colliding), the insufficient health system and the death of workers. Although they concern different domains of social life, the outcome is identical.

The state attempts to present these as isolated, unintended, unfortunate events; in fact they are a series of murders, committed intentionally. Whenever there is an “error in the machine”, the authorities always try to interpret it as a slight deviation from the norm, in which some technical dysfunction led to a so-called accident. In this way they try to reduce its significance and impact on people’s lives. The next step for the state will be to conduct a legal investigation to clarify all the misconceptions and to reconstruct what they call “the truth” around the technical dysfunctions that provoked the “accident”.

And when the Pylos massacre is converted into a legal case, its framing will shift from a social and political issue of general concern to a legal issue of concern only to the specialists. Soon we will all need a law degree to be able to understand procedures of public interest. Justice will be served and an “absolute” truth will be delivered in the chamber of a court, then swept under the carpet.



We do not argue that the contribution of lawyers is not needed in this fight. But we do not believe that their interventions should replace our political struggle. This would only benefit the authorities who want to suppress society's political involvement full stop.

Let us not stop with the strong and loud demonstrations that were held in Athens, Thessaloniki, Lesvos, Kalamata, even in the small town of Pylos and many more places after the massacre. We need to keep pushing from every front possible. Pursuit of justice through the courts is important, but it is not enough alone, especially when we consider the history and tradition of the resistance of oppressed people. We must keep in mind that a response to the murderous border regime, as well as resisting racism as a tool of oppression, can only succeed on a political level. A political issue left to legal specialists is an insufficient substitute for a political struggle coming from the squares and streets to bloom into all aspects of social life.

A quote from historian Howard Zinn demonstrates a movement's power to uphold justice:

The rights of working people, of women, of Black people have not depended on decisions of the courts. Like the other branches of the political system, the courts have recognised these rights only after citizens have engaged in direct action powerful enough to win these rights. ... Those rights only come alive when citizens organise, protest, strike, boycott, rebel and violate the law ... to uphold justice.⁷⁶

It is time to take sides.

It is time to declare loud and clear that we will not accept any more killings, not at sea, not in our neighbourhoods.

It is time to fight back!

Footnotes

1. All times are in Eastern European Summer Time (EEST) unless otherwise stated.
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3. Giorgos Christides, Stavros Malichudis, Corina Petridi, “‘They are urgently asking for help’: the SOS that was ignored”, *Solomon* (15 June 2023),
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5. UNHCR - The UN Refugee Agency, ‘Legal Brief on International Law and Rescue at Sea’,
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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOzLIXa1cQ8>.

8. Imogen Piper, Joyce Sohyun Lee, Claire Parker, ‘Tracing a tragedy: how hundreds of migrants drowned on Greece’s watch’, *Washington Post* (5 July 2023), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/interactive/2023/greece-migrant-boat-coast-guard/>.

9. ‘International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue’, *International Maritime Organisation* (27 April 1979), [https://www.imo.org/en/About/Conventions/Pages/International-Convention-on-Maritime-Search-and-Rescue-\(SAR\).aspx](https://www.imo.org/en/About/Conventions/Pages/International-Convention-on-Maritime-Search-and-Rescue-(SAR).aspx).

10. Giorgos Christides, Stavros Malichudis, Corina Petridi, “‘They are urgently asking for help’”: the SOS that was ignored’, *Solomon* (15 June 2023), <https://wearesolomon.com/mag/focus-area/migration/they-are-urgently-asking-for-help-the-sos-that-was-ignored/>.

11. Nick Beake, Kostas Kallergis, ‘Greece boat disaster: BBC investigation casts doubt on coastguard’s claims’, *BBC News* (June 18 2023), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-65942426>.

12. ‘Ναυάγιο στην Πύλο: Βίντεο από την προσέγγιση του αλιευτικού για την παροχή βοήθειας’, *Kathimerini* (19 June 2023), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uSyMQQdzxmo>.

13. Nick Beake, Kostas Kallergis, ‘Greece boat disaster: BBC investigation casts doubt on coastguard’s claims’, *BBC News* (June 18 2023), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-65942426>.

14. Hellenic Coast Guard, ‘Συνέχεια ενημέρωσης αναφορικά με ευρεία επιχείρηση έρευνας και διάσωσης αλλοδαπών σε διεθνή ύδατα στη θαλάσσια περιοχή 47 ν.μ. νοτιοδυτικά Πύλου’, *Κεντρική Σελίδα ΛΣ-ΕΛΑΚΤ* (14 June 2023), https://www.hcg.gr/el/drasthriothtes/synexeia-enhmerwshs-anaforika-me-eyreia-epixeirhsh-ereynas-kai-diaswshs-allodapwn-se-die8nh-ydata-sth-8alassia-perioch-47-nm-notiodytika-pyloy_.

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