



# MOVING ON

One Year Alarmphone





**Berlin, 6.2.2015** Action in memory of the dead from 6.2.2014 in Ceuta, when swimming migrants were shot by guardia civil with rubber-bullets and drowned when trying to overcome the border from Morocco to the Spanish Enclave.



**Lampedusa, June 2013** »No fingerprints by force« Eritrean refugees refuse to give fingerprints and successfully resist against the Dublin-regulation after their arrival.



**Switzerland, October 2014** Father Mussie Zerai, an Eritrean priest who lives in Switzerland, accompanies boats and alerts in situations of distress already for more than 10 years. Due to his interventions, thousands were rescued and he inspired the Alarm Phone.



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# CONTENT

## **12 INTRODUCTION**

- 16 After one year Alarm Phone
- 22 Acts of Disobedient Listening
- 28 The telephone rings – Shift description
- 33 We don't see the emergency number in itself as the solution
- 37 Timeline

## **42 WE ARE NOT THE SOLUTION**

- 44 We use our memories to take decisions
- 50 People would always call me on my private phone asking for help
- 56 To come better through their lifes
- 59 We cannot call our project a success ...
- 63 I had to transform my trauma
- 67 A vision of transnational society in practice
- 71 WhatsApp Distress Messages

## **78 CONTESTED SPACES**

- 80 Western Med: Acts of Repression and Resistance
- 90 Central Med: Political developments in the Central Med
- 98 Aegean Sea: The transformation of a border region

## **112 SHAKE THE BORDER, SHAKE THE SYSTEM**

- 114 Beyond Borderlines
- 137 Network
- 138 Thanks & Donations
- 140 Image Credits
- 142 Glossar
- 144 Imprint

# Intro

**Everything is possible, everything can be transformed by strong social movements! Through our Alarm Phone project and during this incredible year of successful struggles for the freedom of movement, we learned this lesson once again.**

**OCTOBER 2014** Although we decided to operate the Alarm Phone throughout the entire Mediterranean Sea, during our preparation process we could hardly imagine how to make effectively use of our hotline in the Aegean area. Illegal **PUSH-BACKS** by Greek coastguards were daily practices at that time and while discussing this issue with refugees who had directly experienced such life-threatening situations, we thought it would be impossible to develop strategies for real-time interventions to prevent these practices.

14

15

**OCTOBER 2015** Up to 100 distress calls and messages reached our shift teams in one week alone and nearly all of them came from the Aegean Sea. Every day and night rescue operations were carried out with real-time support of the Alarm Phone – an unexpected U-turn! This changing dynamic was the consequence of several intersecting factors: Syriza had come into power and halted most of the illegal push-back practices and also dismantled some pillars of the Greek-European detention regime. More and more refugees and migrants were under pressure to leave and move towards Europe and they succeeded to open up a corridor to the north, heralding the long summer of migration. And between boat people, escorting groups of migrant communities and our Alarm Phone, an amazing communication process and network developed, able to support the (attempted) sea crossing of thousands.

This anniversary brochure provides information and an evaluation of these dynamics, not merely for the Aegean region but also concerning conditions and social struggles in the Central and Western Mediterranean Sea. The different contributions in this brochure reflect on many remarkable experiences made by Alarm Phone members in the project's first year of existence. Most of its articles were composed by working groups or individual members of our transnational network and are thus reflective of the decentralised character of the Alarm Phone and its collaborative approach. We have grown into a network of more than 100 activists who belong to various groups, have multiple backgrounds, and live in cities all over Europe, northern Africa and elsewhere. We hope you will enjoy our brochure and we always welcome your feedback.

**THE ALARM PHONE TEAM**

**CONTACT**

**WTM-ALARM-PHONE@ANTIRA.INFO**

**WWW.ALARMPHONE.ORG**



1

Change is  
possible

# After one year Alarm Phone

## The genesis and changing context of our hotline project

Helmut Dietrich & Hagen Kopp

We need to think back to October 2013 in order to fully understand the context in which the Alarm Phone emerged. On the 3rd of October 2013, 366 boat-refugees drowned close to the beaches of Lampedusa, yet another catastrophe that could have been easily prevented by means of adequate rescue provisions at sea. The deaths of ten thousands caused by Europe's policies of deterrence in the Mediterranean in the past two decades are, by now, known facts throughout the world.

Refugees and migrants who, following the Arab Uprisings, crossed the sea with a newly won sense of confidence, had been able to publicly denounce the refusal of **FRONTEX** and NATO vessels to offer assistance in situations of maritime distress. After the shipwreck of the 3rd of October 2013 close to the Italian island, the dead did not disappear in the waves of the sea as they so often do. The bodies had to be recovered and were laid out for everyone to see. Fortress Europe and its policies of deterrence that were already under pressure following reports of non-assistance in distress situations, were further eroded through the circulation of these images.

18

19

Merely eight days later, the next catastrophe followed: **ON THE 11TH OF OCTOBER, MORE THAN 250 PEOPLE DROWNED**, predominantly Syrian refugees after they had tried for hours to call for help. However, to no avail. Despite numerous SOS calls, as documented by the Italian journalist Fabrizio Gatti and based on accounts of survivors, assistance was knowingly withheld. Through the online monitoring platform **WATCHTHEMED** (see page 22) the situation of distress and non-assistance was re-constructed in detail. We were able to document precisely how rescue measures were delayed for more than five hours due to quarrels between Maltese and Italian authorities over who was responsible to conduct a rescue operation. In these hours of senseless inaction, an Italian frigate was merely 40 nautical miles away, fully equipped for situations of mass distress at sea, even carrying a helicopter. Nonetheless, the Italian and Maltese coastguards did not order the frigate to intervene. It was only when the refugee vessel capsized that they launched an operation.

For the activists of **WATCHTHEMED**, this case was a key moment, raising various questions: What would have happened if these people in distress and systematically ignored by coastguards had had the option to call **A SECOND, INDEPENDENT PHONE-HOTLINE?** Would it not be possible to document distress calls in real-time and to amplify them through immediate appeals to the public? Would this allow us to move beyond the reconstruction of maritime tragedies and towards real-time interventions? There were various technical and organisational challenges to overcome: Would we be able to create an emergency phone-line for boat-people, following existing 'call centre' structures and systems? Could we construct a network and collective structures to run a hotline 24/7, able to immediately generate public pressure in several European countries and in those around the Mediterranean Sea?

It took us nearly an entire year to prepare, test and start-up the Alarm Phone. In that year, Mediterranean Sea migration transformed tremendously, hardly anticipated by both migration research and our own political experiences. The unexpected Arab Uprisings in 2011 that had swept away dictators but then faltered in particular regions under the bombs and terror of militias, implicated a struggle over migration.

The number of boat-people in the Central Mediterranean Sea, between Libya and Italy grew dramatically during the year of 2014, despite catastrophic shipwrecks, prompting a historic transformation: boat-refugees and migrants contested Fortress Europe from the South. All those EU plans of containment, including the decade-long debate over the creation of EU detention camps in Libya, became obsolete.

**IN 2014**, and in light of the quickly rising number of boat-people in the Central Mediterranean Sea, **THE EU DECIDED TO REDUCE RESCUE MISSIONS AT SEA**, thereby setting the course for an ›international refugee crisis‹ (see page 90). Rescue operations would cease to operate in the death zone around the El-Bouri offshore oil rigs, in the international waters before the West-Libyan coast. The second half of 2014 became in absolute numbers and also in terms of the death rate – the proportion of the drowned in light of the total number of boat-refugees – the bloody culmination in the history of flight through the Central Med.

It was in this context that about 60 activists **BEGAN TO OPERATE THE ALARM PHONE ON THE 11TH OF OCTOBER 2014**. After one year of running the hotline we can certainly conceive our project as the result of the highly technological migration struggles within and beyond Europe. We emerged in the interwoven political struggles by refugees and anti-racist European networks and campaigns. Tools such as satellite- and smart-phones, online maps and digital hand-books were appropriated as crucial elements of flight support (see page 28). Our individual and collective multilinguality is not a sub-culture anymore but it is part and parcel of transnational transformations around the Mediterranean Sea.

**AFTER A YEAR, ABOUT 120 MEMBERS ACTIVELY RUN THE HOTLINE** who are situated between Amman and Marseille, Tangier and Amsterdam, Tunis and Berlin. We came together spontaneously, as those who are both, indignant and inventive. Daily we communicate with those who left war behind only to face the danger of drowning. We also speak to national rescue agencies, to activists of smaller or rather established private rescue initiatives, and to journalists of mass media on a daily basis.

20

21

Our voices are not shaped by party political rhetoric or discourses in the media – we speak the language of those who confront Fortress Europe at the risk of their lives. We discovered through our practices that we are not alone with our initiative and have connected with other groups from which we might differ in certain respects. As the Alarm Phone network, we reach ten thousands of refugees and migrants on the other side of the Mediterranean Sea and it may be thousands who were rescued through the Alarm Phone in the past year. **UP TO ONE HUNDRED EMERGENCY CALLS REACH US MEANWHILE PER WEEK**.

Further below in the introduction we will return to this interplay between the social dynamics of flight through the sea and the many transnational activists groups, but before we will turn to the chain reactions that occurred as of spring 2015. It was then that the main trajectories of flight were extended considerably into the Eastern Mediterranean Sea. The quadrupling of the number of people crossing the Central Mediterranean Sea between Libya and Italy, constituting all in all about 170.000 in 2014, was far from dramatic considering the general numbers.

Even if Fortress Europe was rapidly militarised along its southern front, the holes in its walls became bigger. In 2014 already, when refugees were sought to be kept within the peripheral countries of the EU, **THE DUBLIN SYSTEM BEGAN TO CRUMBLE**. The boat-people who had first reached Lampedusa moved on below radar level and arrived in Calais or Hamburg. In 2015, the number of arrivals through the Central Mediterranean Sea was similar to the previous year (140.000 between January and October 2015). However, the composition changed: Syrian refugees were deterred through visa regimes and criminalisation to find their way to Libya via other North African countries. Instead, African refugees and migrants took their place.

It is known how, **IN 2015 IN PARTICULAR**, Syrian refugees suffered from losing their livelihood in Syria but also in neighbouring countries, their prospect of extending their residence in these places diminished and their children were barred from visiting schools. Nonetheless, the barrel bombs unleashed by the Assad regime and the growing hardship

in neighbouring countries cannot account for the ways in which these Syrian refugees succeeded, since summer 2015, **TO CREATE A CORRIDOR OF ESCAPE** from Turkey via the sea to Germany and Scandinavia. Why was this route, frequented daily by 5.000 people, not closed down and why do some transit countries prefer to offer bus and train services to them? Not only the Dublin system broke in light of the persistence and recalcitrance of the refugees and migrants. If the refugee movements were to be stopped in Greece, on the Balkan route or in Italy, homeless refugees and migrants would strand in Europe's poor countries, prompting or aggravating social grievances on a scale not experienced before in the EU. Strikes, blockades and mass demonstrations that we witnessed over the past years, already caused an existential crisis for the authoritarian European Union. Struggles against the EU austerity diktat would have merged with the rebellion of refugees. Already today we see activists from the Occupy and Blockupy Movements at the beaches of Lesvos or along the Balkan route. Fortress Europe, which had created a protectionist quasi-enclave around Germany, Austria, the Netherlands and Scandinavia and prompted and accelerated the destabilisation, devaluation and mass impoverishment of Europe's periphery, simply does not function any more.

**ONE YEAR AFTER THE FOUNDATION OF THE ALARM PHONE**, we face a new situation. The EU was so far unable to implement the envisioned mass detention of hundreds of thousands in the stadiums of the Olympic village of Athens. And while those newly arriving on Lesvos and elsewhere have to face unbelievable hardship, they are now able to move on more quickly than ever. Even families, the elderly and the physically weak are able to travel in 10-20 days from the Greek islands to Frankfurt, Stockholm, or elsewhere in central and northern Europe. Only a few years ago, thousands were stuck for years in Athens, oftentimes chain deported from Western Europe in times in which Greece was still a Dublin-deportation destination. Today not only those who are young and physically strong are able to move on. The novel social movement of flight has found such unprecedented strength that even those bound to wheel-chairs are amongst people on the move, encountering along their

22

23

way various networks of solidarity: Alarm Phone activists and many others respond to emergency calls of those in distress at sea or stranded on uninhabited islands (*see page 105*). Off the shores of northern Lesvos, Spanish life-guards and the Sea-Watch conduct rescue operations. Along the entire route, stretching from the Aegean region to Scandinavia local and transnational activists create hundreds of support campaigns and projects: soup kitchens, clothes donations, information chains. Nobody anticipated these developments, but social justice movements are as ungovernable as the unruly migration movements.

The deterrence fanatics of EU member states proudly point to the highly militarised and dangerous triple EU fences between the Spanish enclaves of Melilla and Ceuta, the Spanish-Moroccan cooperation of illegal push-backs, the persistent brutality of Moroccan forces and the firing order of the Guardia Civil that caused the death of migrants in October 2005 and in February 2014. Alarm Phone activists struggle also there, between Morocco and Spain (*see page 80*), against these state-led practices of murdering refugees and have connected with refugee groups that have formed in light of these massacres.

Although still »deathly successful« in the Western Mediterranean area, the strategists of the EU border regime do not have an united Europe-wide plan anymore to prevent refugees from crossing their borderzones. We have to fear violent escalations of border guardians with knock-on effects to gain back their lost control, in the Mediterranean as well as in the Balkan area. But the omnipresence of activists might allow the documentation of new violent excesses of the European border regime. And it might allow for interventions in real-time to support the persistence migration movements. In cooperation with refugees and migrants we as Alarm Phone together with many others will struggle to maintain and **TO ENLARGE THE HOLES IN THIS FORTRESS, AT SEA BUT ALSO ON THE NEW LAND ROUTES.**

# Acts of Disobedient Listening

**How an activist hotline makes violence at the EU's maritime frontier audible and supports unauthorised mobilities**

**Charles Heller, Lorenzo Pezzani and Maurice Stierl**

Since the beginning of what has been called the »migration crisis« in the Mediterranean, the international media has been flooded by images of overcrowded boats crossing the EU's maritime frontier. Through their never-ending circulation, these images reinforce the sense of an invasion which researchers have long deconstructed as a myth.<sup>1</sup>

24

25

Images of migrants' interception at sea operate within an ambivalent regime of (in)visibility at play at the EU's maritime frontier, which occludes as much as it reveals.<sup>2</sup> What the spectacle of border »protection« seeks to hide, in fact, is the production of illegality through policies of exclusion without which migrants would not resort to clandestine means of crossing in the first place, as well as the violations of migrants' rights at sea that occur often hidden from any public gaze in a space of sovereign impunity. While migrants' acts of unauthorised border crossing are spectacularised, states seek to keep the violence of border control in the shadows.

**ACTIVISTS' STRUGGLES** against the European border regime have sought to reverse this regime of selective (in)visibility by claiming a right to look and a right to listen that challenge the borders of what can be seen and heard. While migrant rights organisations have protested the deaths of migrants at sea for many years and denounced them as a consequence of EU's policies of deterrence, exclusion and militarisation,<sup>3</sup> they were unable to actually document events within the maritime frontier, and even less able to actually intervene into ongoing struggles at sea. As a result, the sea remained a space of impunity and sovereign prerogative, seemingly beyond the reach of non-governmental politics.

**A FIRST BREACH** in the simultaneous spectacularisation and invisibilisation of the maritime frontier that was central in perpetuating this situation, came through our report on the 2011 left-to-die boat case, in which, at the height of the NATO led military intervention in Libya, 72 migrants fleeing Libya were left to drift in the Central Mediterranean for 15 days, despite distress signals sent out to all vessels navigating in this area, and despite several encounters with military aircrafts and a warship.<sup>4</sup> While the testimonies of the 9 survivors first forced this crime of non-assistance that cost the lives of 63 people into the spotlight, its perpetrators remained unidentified.

In conjunction with a coalition of NGOs and in collaboration with several parallel investigations, we reconstructed a composite image of events by corroborating the survivors' testimonies with information provided by vessel tracking technologies, distress signals which

contained georeferenced coordinates, wind and current data through which we reconstructed the drifting boat's trajectory and satellite imagery accounting for the presence of large vessels in vicinity to the migrants' boat. While these technologies are often used for the purpose of policing illegalized migration as well as other »threats«, they have been repurposed here as evidence of the crime of non-assistance. The reconstruction of events that they allowed us to produce has become the basis for several ongoing legal cases against states whose assets were in operation at the time of the events.<sup>5</sup> Our report then sought to put into practice a disobedient gaze that used some of the same sensing technologies as border controllers, but sought to redirect their »spotlight« from unauthorised acts of border crossing to state and non-state practices violating migrants' rights.

Through **WATCHTHEMED**, which we contributed to found in 2012 in collaboration with a wide network of NGOs, activists and researchers, we sought to collectivise and multiply this practice of **DISOBEDIENT OBSERVATION**. Our hope was on the one hand to be able to multiply the documentation of violations, and on the other to move towards real time interventions so as to actually prevent violations and death from occurring. Following the shipwreck of the 11th of October 2013 in which more than 200 people died as a result of Italy and Malta's conflicting responsibility to operate rescue which we contributed to document,<sup>6</sup> the need to find ways to intervene directly within maritime borders became ever more pressing.

Here the **WATCHTHEMED** platform which was initially conceived mainly as a tool in the service of the tradition of documenting, denouncing and seeking accountability for violations exemplified by the work of the GISTI and Migreurop networks, was seized by another important militant tradition that explicitly refers to the abolitionist network of secret routes and safe houses used by escaping slaves in the US, that of the »underground railroad«.<sup>7</sup> For several years, networks such as No Border and Welcome to Europe have directly supported unauthorised mobility across European borders by creating further »pillars« of this railroad, for example through an online guide for migrants and refugees

26

27

(<http://www.wzeu.info>) that provides practical information for their journeys towards and within Europe. Inspired by this tradition, the **WATCHTHEMED** network has also started to produce a series of leaflets that contain information as to risk, rights and safety measure at sea.<sup>8</sup>

All these interventions seek to contribute to already existing »**KNOWLEDGES OF CIRCULATION**« which emerge from the collective experience of transnational illegalised migration, and which constitutes an infrastructure of sorts, one that includes not only the footpaths, highways, train lines, airports and so forth through which migrants move but also all the shared information and connections (what has also been referred to as »mobile commons«<sup>9</sup>) that make of migration a veritable social movement.

The creation of the Alarm Phone was the next crucial step in the collectivisation of these activist and militant practices. Thanks to a management software, the Alarm Phone can re-route distress calls to a vast number of volunteers operating shifts, thus ensuring that every call is attended to. This wide network of activists and organisations can in turn exercise pressure when there is a risk that a violation may be perpetrated, such as cases of non-assistance or push-back. In its single year of existence, the phone project has gathered extraordinary momentum and has proven to be one of the most important political interventions against the EU border regime in recent years.

Crucial in this intervention is not so much high-tech remote sensing devices such as satellite imagery, but simple mobile and satellite phones and the interpersonal networks they connect. Mobile lines of communication have for long been crucial means of connection amongst migrant and diaspora communities. Especially for precarious and illegalised mobilities, mobile phones function as orientation devices and, in fact, as life lines. Several »private alarm hotlines« constituted by relatives and friends of people on the move as well as by activists exist in the world and have played a crucial role in uncountable cases of distress, including the »left-to-die boat« case recalled above, during which the initial information of distress was relayed by satellite phone to Father Zerai. The Alarm Phone has been able to tap into these networks

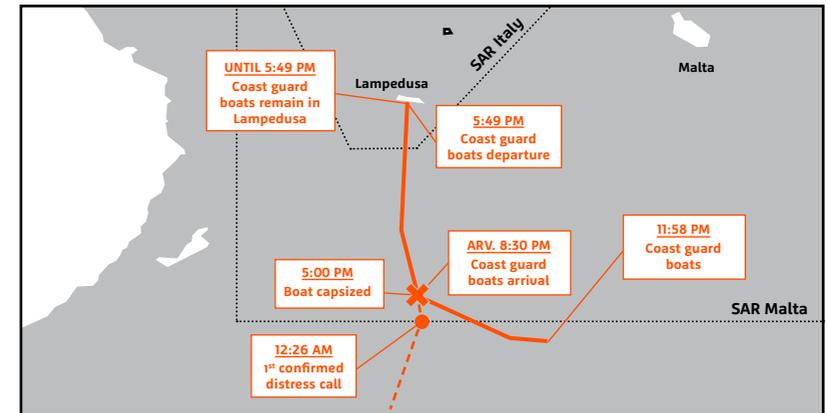
operating under the surface and beyond the gaze of sovereign control. Information pivotal for moments of border crossing and unauthorised journeys circulate in real-time and allow for direct exchange, intervention and assistance. Smartphones in particular function as a medium of immediate information transfer: snapshots of GPS locations can be forwarded via WhatsApp or Viber, distress situations are made public via Facebook, and borderguard violence can be recorded, filmed and swiftly passed on.

Of course, these mobile lines operate less through the sense of sight than the sense of listening. While it may seem paradoxical, the best instruments for the exercise **A CRITICAL RIGHT TO LOOK** at maritime borders are those that transfer sounds which is, in fact, consistent with many instruments required for oceanography such as sonars that use sound waves to »see« in the water and measure the sea's depth instead of technologies relying on light which does not travel far beneath the ocean's surface.

Through the assemblage that the Alarm Phone has come to constitute between technological networks of communication, the networks of migrants and activists, and the **WATCHTHEMED** mapping platform, it has contributed to the emergence of a form of citizenship of the sea, which is enacted beyond any national status and sovereign border, with the aim to contest the bordering of the sea and the creation of maritime death zones. Through its work, the phone line audibilises European border violence and supports hidden mobilities, seeking to support travellers in overcoming border obstacles and their often murderous effects.

28

29



Mapping of the case from October 11th 2014 on [watchthemed.net](http://watchthemed.net). The coastguards delayed the rescue due to shifting the responsibility between Malta and Italy.

- 1 HEIN DE HAAS, »The myth of invasion: The inconvenient realities of migration from Africa to the European Union.« *Third World Quarterly* 29, no.17, 2008.
- 2 NICOLAS DE GENOVA, »Spectacles of migrant ›illegality‹: the scene of exclusion, the obscene of inclusion.« *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36, no. 7, 2013.
- 3 See in particular the data base established by UNITED and the maps produced by Migreurop based upon them.
- 4 For our reconstruction of these events, see our report: [https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/final\\_draftfrench\\_public\\_light.pdf](https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/final_draftfrench_public_light.pdf). Our video animation Liquid Traces summarizes our findings: <https://vimeo.com/89790770>.
- 5 See <http://watchthemed.net/index.php/reports/view/33>.
- 6 See <http://watchthemed.net/index.php/reports/view/33>.
- 7 For a discussion of the connection with the underground railway of anti-slavery within migrant rights activists' discourse, see: WELCOME TO EUROPE NETWORK, »From Abolitionism to Freedom of Movement? History and Visions of Antiracist Struggles« (Noborder lasts forever, Frankfurt am Main, 2010), <http://conference.w2eu.net/files/2010/11/abolitionism.pdf>.
- 8 <http://watchthemed.net/index.php/page/index/10>.
- 9 DIMITRIS PAPADOPOULOS and VASSILIS S. TSIANOS, »After Citizenship: Autonomy of Migration, Organisational Ontology and Mobile Commons,« *Citizenship Studies* 17, no. 2, 2013)

# The telephone rings

## Shift description

**A QUICK COFFEE AND A DEEP BREATH.** In 15 minutes my old-fashioned cell phone will change miraculously into the Alarm Phone. I open up all information channels – Skype, Facebook, Twitter, Email, WhatsApp, Viber. I inform two migrant networks about the current WhatsApp number for the next eight hours and get in contact with my back-up, the second shift team member. As she is some 700 kilometers away, we stay in contact via Skype. Next I check the logbook in the Alarm Phone’s forum and start a new report.

30

31

**7:04 AM. THE PHONE RINGS.** The test call from the previous shift comes in. The phone works. No open cases to take over. They wish us a calm shift. 20 minutes later a WhatsApp message comes in. A member of a Syrian Facebook group forwards a Turkish cell phone number and a GPS position. **A BOAT WITH 45 PEOPLE IN THE AEGEAN SEA.** My back-up confirms that the coordinates point to a position north of Lesbos, unfortunately still in Turkish territorial waters, around 8 km off Lesbos Island. We map their position by using the **WATCHTHEMED** homepage or others such as [openstreetmap.org](http://openstreetmap.org) or [gpso.de/maps](http://gpso.de/maps). Our contact person has no further information. We call the given number. It’s busy. We wish to find out more about the situation before calling the coastguard. Did they call the coastguard already? Does the engine still work? Is water entering the boat? What is their current position? How many women and children are on board? We send them a WhatsApp message in English and Arabic.

The phone rings. A German number. Hopefully not a journalist. No, it’s another member of the Alarm Phone network who informs us about a new case. Details follow via email – a forwarded message from Father Mussie Zerai containing **A THURAYA SATELLITE PHONE NUMBER** and following information: 80 persons left Libya nine hours earlier and their rubber boat started to loose air. While my back-up keeps on trying to reach the Turkish number, I call the **THURAYA** number. It works straight away. The connection is surprisingly good. The **HARRAGA** speaks English but I hardly understand him due to loud voices in the background. He hastily inundates me with all kind of information. I try to calm down – both of us – and to sort things out. Eventually he passes the coordinates on to me. Before hanging up we agree that I would call him back ten minutes later.

They are some 120 km off the coast of Zuwara/Libya. As the Italian coastguard is not yet informed I call them. In between my back-up has charged their Thuraya phone with more credit. **THE MRCC ROME IS FRIENDLY BUT SHORT-SPOKEN.** I am redirected to another person who takes down all the information I can provide. He thanks and promises to take care of the boat. Subsequently, we write a mail to **MRCC Rome** and Malta, forwarding the same information. A copy is also sent to UNHCR

Italy. Unfortunately, according to Vesselfinder and Marine Traffic, there are no vessels near the people in distress. The private rescue vessels Phoenix, Bourbon Argos and Dignity I are on the way to their ports and Sea-Watch is already involved in a rescue operation. No military ships of **FRONTEX** or the **EUNAVFOR MED** mission are around. After exactly ten minutes I call the boat again.

I try to keep track with the report in the logbook. No news from the Turkish number. Hopefully they were not attacked by masked men. The logbook is still not fully updated as the phone rings again. A Moroccan number. A test call from a French-speaking person. He checks if the Alarm Phone is really working. I wish good luck and send him a link to the safety-at-sea flyer from the **WATCHTHEMED** website. Just a couple of minutes later another call from a Moroccan number. **A PERSON ON A ZODIAC, TIRED AND EXHAUSTED.** He does not know about their exact position, but they have left from Malabata at midnight. He expects to be close to Tarifa. It's about 30 km from Malabata to Tarifa or 5 hours in a zodiac – without any currents. The ferry needs one hour. Each day it crosses 12 times. He asks us to call the Spanish coastguard. They are eight persons and their boat started to drift as the engine had stopped working.

Just when the back-up calls the Spanish coastguard to alert them, the Thuraya number off Libya's coast calls back. They repeat their demand for help. **I GIVE MY BEST TO PREVENT THEM FROM PANICKING** and repeat several times to remain calm and seated, especially once another boat approaches them. Besides, I update their position. Short update from the back-up: the Spanish coastguard was friendly and stated they would start a **SAR** operation. We will see. Often they cooperate with the Moroccan Marine Royal. We agree on calling the Italian coastguard once again to forward the new coordinates but above all to **INSIST ON THE URGENCY** of the situation. I call them. Meanwhile my colleague writes an email to the Spanish coastguard and UNHCR Spain.

32

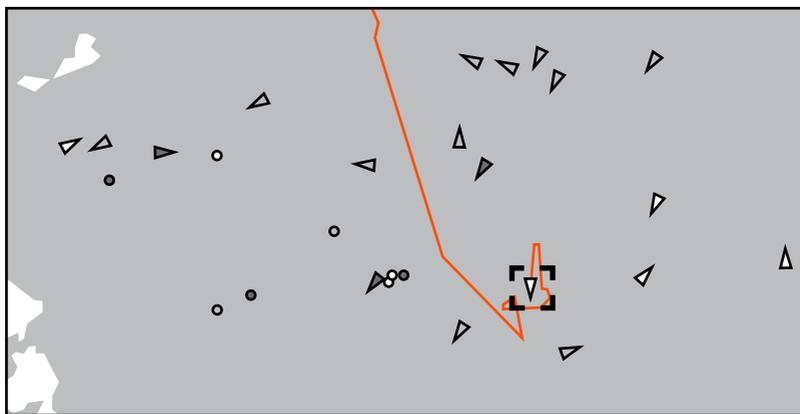
33

This time, **MRCC** Rome is less friendly. Before being able to give the new coordinates, the officer asks me for personal details: who am I, who do I work for, where am I calling from. Finally, he accepts the coordinates but categorically refuses to give any information about ongoing operations: »This is a one-way only information hotline.« I call the **THURAYA** number once again. An operation is ongoing but **IT MAY STILL TAKE HOURS.** My back-up reached the Turkish number. Finally! In a conference call, one of our Arabic translators tells us that the travellers had reached Lesvos on their own. Great! We send them a link to the updated brochure **»WELCOME TO GREECE!«** in Arabic on [wzeu.info](http://wzeu.info).

We call back the boat close to Tarifa. Slowly they are becoming more desperate as they are hungry, thirsty and freezing. Still, they wait. What else to do? A rescue operation, especially in these weather conditions might take some hours. We call the boat between Libya and Italy. Nobody did show up yet, no small exploring boat, no helicopter. The boat starts drifting, coordinates did not change substantially. We call the Maltese coastguard. Maybe they are more generous in giving information to us than **MRCC** Rome. They know the case, but claim the coordinates were wrong. We are puzzled. That's impossible. We consider **RAISING BIGGER ALARM,** to scandalise the coastguards' inactivity, to contact journalists and organisations, to spread the news. First, we look for other means of rescue. There is a cargo ship in vicinity. We call the ship-owner's company. They refuse to give us the crew's number and refuse even to tell us if their ship is involved in a rescue operation. Still, they promise to react to every SOS call, unlike other commercial ships that disconnect and hide away. We will keep track. Supposedly arbitrary tracks close to 'our' boat will point to a **SAR** operation.

We call the Moroccan number again. Voices in the background, the connection interrupts. We can't reach them again. Possibly they are being illegally ›pulled back‹ by the Marine Royale. If they are intercepted we will have to make sure that the migrants are released soon from Tanger Med and not brought to Oujda or to some place in the desert. **WE TRY TO REACH THEM REGULARLY.** In the meantime we see that the cargo ship changed its course. We call the Thuraya number. We can't reach

them anymore. Probably the batteries are flat. It's unpleasant to wait. It will take some more hours to get an unofficial confirmation that they have been rescued and are on their way to Augusta. With the other travellers we have more luck. We reach them finally. They are happy and thank us a million times. The Spanish coastguard rescued them. **BOZA!**



The circling track of a cargo ship on Vesselfinder indicates a search and rescue operation.

## We don't see the emergency number in itself as the solution

### Alarm Phone in the Dutch media

34

35

Over the past year, the Alarm Phone was referred to, addressed and discussed many times in the media in various countries in Europe and beyond. In the Netherlands, within merely 3 weeks in the second half of July and the beginning of August, our shift team reacted to 14 interview requests. This occurred in a period just before most of the attention shifted to the big migrant movements struggling to reach certain EU member states over land, through the Balkan routes. At the time, European politicians and the media were not yet speaking of a huge ›refugee crisis‹. Our media work included interviews on the radio, on TV and in newspapers, both local as well as national. We had some extensive articles in major and widely circulated newspapers and TV interviews in popular news programs.

It positively surprised us how willingly the media reported on our ideas concerning the **FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT** and the abolition of borders that stop people from going where they need or want to be. It was as if there was finally space to talk about this as actual possibilities to seriously consider, and journalists were interested to hear more about it. Besides us, there were also a few social scientists that promoted this idea in the media in the same period, which complemented our story in a nice way, and vice-versa.

Another key topic was on **HOW BORDER CONTROLS FORCE PEOPLE TO FIND OTHER ROUTES**, which will always be more lengthy, costly and dangerous than the shorter routes that are now blocked. We pointed out that by blocking the safer routes, European policies and practices are directly responsible for human suffering and death.

We came across many journalists who were mainly interested in sensationalist stories, rather than in serious political points of view. How an Alarm Phone shift works but also how we feel during and after shifts was often at the centre of the interviews rather than our political messages and ideas.

Live broadcasting gave us the opportunity to sharply bring across our demands and condemnation of the current situation. The print media, however, always tended to disappoint us as the discourses there were mostly formulated around the ›heroes working from the kitchen table‹ narrative, and offered just a few sentences at the end of the piece that covered our critical political angle. We preferred media coverage that discussed the foundation of this huge violation of human rights. But on the plus side, even if the media focussed merely on describing the work of the Alarm Phone, it did create a sense of action perspective, as it shows people that it is actually not that difficult to intervene and start doing something against the ugly reality we face now.

A topic that was nearly always discussed in the interviews was our ambiguous relation to coastguards. We need them to answer our calls, take our information, not to hang up on us and answer our questions regarding cases. Obviously they feel watched by us and would prefer not

36

to be called and monitored. The coastguards operate in a political and conflicting context; on the one hand they should rescue lives in distress but on the other hand they control the borders of the EU, seeking to block the entry of certain migrants as much as possible. For the moment we know that the more the practises of border authorities are watched, the greater the chances that necessary rescues are carried out and conform to international law and basic humane standards.

Another issue that was often raised revolved around the idea that our project might stimulate unwanted migration, often voiced in a slightly accusatory tone, suggesting that we might even be supporting the work of human smugglers. These questions actually made the interviews more interesting as we could then explain that migration is nothing new and there is nothing wrong with it. What is wrong is the fact that for some people in this world, migration, whether temporary like holidays or more long term, is as usual as waking up in the morning, while for others it is completely impossible or involves great risks. Even with the Alarm Phone and all the other solidarity initiatives that exist, it is still a nightmare to take a boat to Europe, full of dangers and including all the extreme difficulties that follow after arriving on European soil. Addressing this topic gave us the opportunity to explain that the fact that European politicians focus on smugglers as the criminals is a strategy of deception that we should not fall for. It is the European policies that create this situation in the first place and **SMUGGLERS WOULD NOT EXIST IF THERE WERE OPEN PASSAGES**. Politicians falsely flex their muscles by blaming the smugglers and distract the public by attacking would-be smuggler boats.

37

The question that would always follow in reaction to our answer was: ›What if the borders are open, and everybody comes to Europe, how are we supposed to handle that?‹ Here we would provide various arguments and explanations: Not everyone will come to Europe; history, research and simple common sense can show us that. Europe has enough space and plenty of wealth to share. And on top of that it would be very cynical to let people die because we are afraid about what would happen if we would not let them die. We will not deny that changing existing systems

and facing one's privileges is a challenging process. But we see it as the only option if we want to counter global inequality and stop the current misery that people on the move face.

When asked if the Alarm Phone appears to be effective, it was obvious to say that many people involve us in their difficult journeys. The Alarm Phone has proven to be functional in many cases. However we clearly did not present the emergency number in itself to be the solution. And, besides that, not everyone who needs support will be able to reach us and it will remain impossible to intervene in every situation of distress. We do this work to be out there and show and denounce what is going on.

With our media work we hope to help to change the current discourse in a positive and active direction towards one that focuses on international solidarity and criticises current migration policies. In this way we hope to encourage more people to start to think about and advocate the freedom of migration.

38

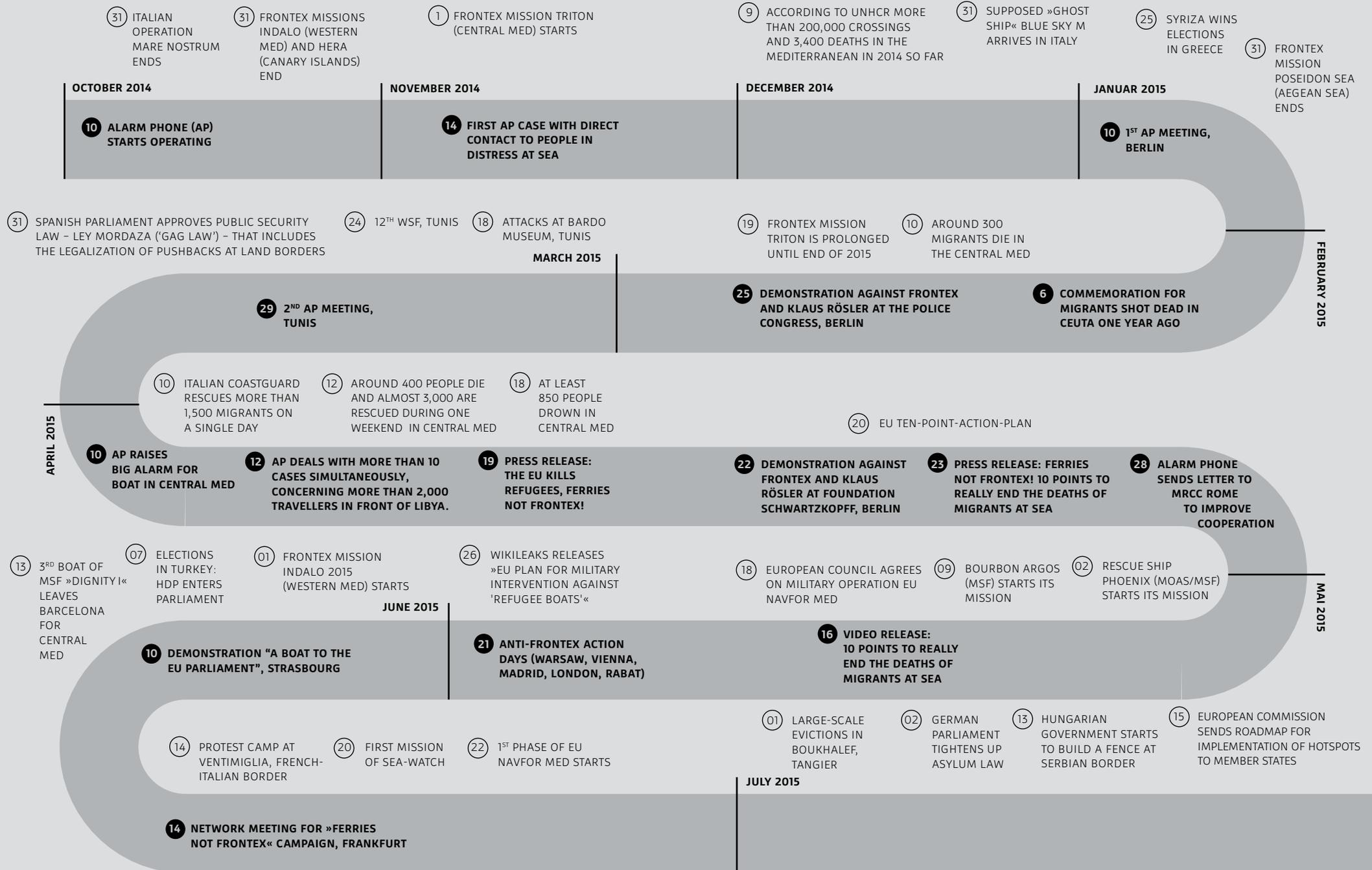
39

## Timeline

Since the Alarm Phone was launched on October the 10th 2014, not only the project itself developed rapidly, but also – evidently – the conditions of migration across the Mediterranean Sea and within Europe changed fundamentally. In order to keep track of this process and to slightly jog your memory a bit, we compiled a selection of events and developments, which were important for us.

Of course some important moments are missing. For instance, further catastrophes and mass rescue operations could be mentioned. In contrast, seemingly less important and more distant events were included. Still, they impacted on migration movements as well and influenced our work.

Concerning the Alarm Phone's development, it would be impossible to mention all the discussions and decisions, journeys and presentations, its spread and growth – in short: all the many small steps that made the project flourish.



04 ACCORDING TO IOM MORE THAN 2,000 DEATHS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN IN 2015 SO FAR

16 INTENSIFICATION OF WAR IN SOUTH-EAST TURKEY: TURKISH ARMY CAPTURES AUTONOMOUS TOWN

21 CUSTODIAL SENTENCE OF 2.5 YEARS FOR A SYRIAN ACCUSED OF TRAFFICKING, VERDEN/GERMANY

23 MIGRANTS FORCE MACEDONIA TO REOPEN ITS BORDER TO GREECE

24 GERMAN GOVERNMENT SUSPENDS DUBLIN REGULATION FOR SYRIANS

27 71 DEAD BODIES DISCOVERED IN A TRUCK IN AUSTRIA

AUGUST 2015

15 3<sup>RD</sup> JOURNEY BACK TO THE BORDERS, LESVOS, GREECE

28 RELEASE OF NEW AP WEB SITE

18 HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT STARTS TO BUILD A FENCE AT CROATIAN BORDER

17 FIRST ITALIAN HOTSPOT OPENED AT LAMPEDUSA

15 #CROSSINGNOMORE: DEMAND TO OPEN LAND BORDER IN EDIRNE, TURKEY

06 FIRST PRIVATE CAR CONVOY VIENNA-BUDAPEST: "RAIL REPLACEMENT SERVICE FOR REFUGEES"

06 "FERRY FOR FREEDOM" (LA TERRE POUR TOUS), HAMMAMET, TUNISIA

04 MARCH OF HOPE FROM BUDAPEST TO AUSTRIAN BORDER

02 3-YEAR-OLD SYRIAN BOY AYLAN KURDI FOUND DEAD ON TURKISH BEACH

SEPTEMBER 2015

04 COMMON SHIFT WITH A MEMBER OF THE GROUP "SYRIANS IN EUROPE"

20 SYRIZA REELECTED IN GREECE

23 PHOENIX ENDS MISSION IN MED

25 SEA-WATCH ENDS ITS MISSION

25 RAID AND MASS DETENTION BY THE FRENCH POLICE AROUND CALAIS

25 ACCORDING TO IOM MORE THAN 500,000 CROSSED THE MEDITERRANEAN IN 2015 SO FAR

26 "ILLEGAL" BORDER CROSSING ORGANIZED BY OFFICIALS AT BOTOVO, CROATIAN/HUNGARIAN BORDER

26 OPEN BORDER CARAVAN STARTS FROM LJUBLJANA

19 AP WINS TAZ PANTHER PRIZE (READERS' CHOICE)

30 FIRST RUSSIAN AIR STRIKE IN SYRIA

16 GERMAN PARLIAMENT TIGHTENS UP ASYLUM LAW THE SECOND TIME WITHIN 4 MONTHS

16 2<sup>ND</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SMUGGLING AND TRAFFICKING, MUNICH

11 AFTER NOT HAVING RENEWED THE MISSION THE US STARTS TO WITHDRAW ITS PATRIOT MISSILES FROM TURKEY

07 2<sup>ND</sup> PHASE OF EU NAVFOR MED STARTS OFFICIALLY

05 NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN ERDOĞAN AND EU IN BRUSSELS

30 GERMAN MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR PROPOSES INSTALLATION OF TRANSIT ZONES TO SPEED UP DEPORTATIONS

OCTOBER 2015

12 AP RELEASES 1 YEAR ANNIVERSARY STATEMENT

10 3<sup>RD</sup> ALARM PHONE MEETING, NIJMEGEN

16 FIRST GREEK HOTSPOT OPENED AT MORIA/LESVOS

30 WELCOME MANIFESTATION AT SPIELFELD, AUSTRIAN/SLOVENIAN BORDER

31 FRONTEX MISSION INDALO 2015 (WESTERN MED) ENDS OFFICIALLY

01 RE-ELECTIONS IN TURKEY: AKP GAINS ABSOLUTE MAJORITY IN PARLIAMENT

03 ACCORDING TO IOM MORE THAN 3,400 DEATHS AND MORE THAN 760,000 CROSSINGS IN THE MED IN 2015 SO FAR

06 SEA-WATCH LEAVES HAMBURG FOR LESVOS

11 EUROPEAN-AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT ON MIGRATION, MALTA

NOVEMBER 2015

18 AP RELEASES REPORT ABOUT GREEK ATTACKS ON MIGRANT BOATS

25 AP AND WELCOME TO EUROPE (W2EU) RELEASE STATEMENT ABOUT THE HOTSPOT MORIA/LESVOS

27 FIRST STATISTIC OF ONE YEAR AP: MORE THAN 1200 CASES IN TOTAL! 1000 FROM AEGEAN, 100 FROM WESTERN MED, 100 FROM CENTRAL MED.

DECEMBER 2015

2

We are not  
the solution

Blue Star Ferries

LIFE  
SAPARTY



# We use our memories to take decisions

Interview by Marion Bayer

**Newroz first entered Europe after crossing the Mediterranean Sea between Turkey and Italy in 2001. Eltaf took a small rubber dinghy in 2009 from Turkey and reached Greece. Marion was born in Hanau, Germany. She moved many times to the European outer border, for example for the nobordercamp 2009 on Lesbos. All three reside in Hanau and do Alarm Phone shifts together.**

46

47

**MARION** In one of our very first encounters you told me about your ›boat story‹. Do you still remember that?

**ELTAF** I remember where and how Marion and I got to know each other. It was in 2009 when I arrived with a small rubber dinghy on Lesbos. I was not yet 18 years old and was travelling alone. I was very lucky and arrived in my first attempt. After about two hours we were already in Greece. But what was in the middle was great fear. I had no experience with boats and the sea. We had water in the boat. We took it out with our shoes. Something remains, something that hurts inside, from these hours in which you were helpless. When I talked to you Newroz for the first time, then you suddenly started to speak as well; the entire movie of your own trip started in your mind.

**NEWROZ** You had just arrived in Germany. It happened I think, because you had not fully arrived. Somehow you were still on the run. It was actually the first time, after 9 years in Germany that I talked about the way of my escape from Turkey. I told my story for you, to make clear: »You are not alone.« I came in 2001 with the boat via the Mediterranean Sea. That was with a large cargo ship with hundreds of people, many children. We ended up in Italy after 8 days, fleeing across the sea, the last few days without food, without water. I was 12, still a child. We stranded on a tourist beach with this huge ship. We spent a month in a closed camp in southern Italy. Then they released us, gave some money, wished a safe journey and sent us with buses to the train station. We stayed in the park in the night on the way, we were several families with children and that was very tiring, but after only four or five days we arrived in Germany.

**E** We walked almost all the way from Molyvos in the north of the island of Lesbos on foot to Mytilene and ended up in the noborder camp<sup>1</sup>. It came from the heart when we promised in the last night that we spent together that, one day when we're ready, we would go into the first line of activism, we would be in the front row. All were happy and we continued to dance until farewell at the next morning.

**N** Now on our trips back to Lesbos, we often encounter people only for one single day. But we have often heard that the people never forget these

encounters and often this is accompanied by a promise: When I succeed to move toward where I need to go, I will do it like you and return to help the next newcomers. How can I participate? Even when we receive Alarm Phone calls, we are from time to time asked this question.

**M Why did you decide to be part of the Alarm Phone?**

**N** Because it was clear to me, when such an idea is created, it cannot be without us! The Alarm Phone is not the first project in which we are involved. I think the main reason why we're both here, is that we have previously done a lot of good experiences to be active together. We have very many common experiences so there was no question that we have the ability to contribute.

**E** That means now, I have done what I promised. This is the first line of activism, the front row. It was for me a project where I had to think for a few days, how is this going to be for me. How will all of this run, will I manage to do that? But when we started I understood also in the front row you are not alone, we are a team. We do many things, even here at home in Hanau. But to build the Alarm Phone, that was for me as the web-guide of Welcome to Europe then really the first row. Both projects belong together for me.

**M Have you considered whether to do shifts could be too much for you, also because it reminds you of your own experiences?**

**E** Of course, I feel with the people, but this is independent of my memories, that's because I am a human being. I would rather say, we use our memories to take decisions. I have from my own experience the special ability to have a clear image of the situation in the Aegean Sea. I can therefore, for example, better assess the degree of risk in which the people are. In the call the day before yesterday, for example, an image was right in front of my eyes. Linguistically, I have of course sometimes an advantage, because I speak Farsi. We're definitely a good team I can rely on. I can find someone to talk to. And I can also take a break and the others will continue.

48

49

**N** We are familiar with the situation and this is why we are maybe not so much afraid of taking responsibility. Of course, the calls and the contacts touch us emotionally, but it does not keep us from doing it. It is rather different from what takes me back right into the fear of the past. It is in other moments of my life, that sometimes there is for example the smell of wet gravel in the freighter and the stench still is in my nose. This type of memory, which comes more indirectly through the smell for example, or a shaking motion. At the beginning of this year, when there were again big boats going to Italy I started to remember my own story. Actually I found out in an Alarm Phone meeting where exactly I had arrived at that time. It was good to find out: that's me, my story. The beautiful thing is simply that we complement each other so well with all our experiences and we work with them.

**1** In the summer of 2009 a noborder camp with 400 activists from different European countries took place on the Greek Island of Lesbos. An infopoint was set up in the port of Mytilene, the island's capital, to welcome the newcomers: <http://w2eu.net/files/2010/03/Infopoint.pdf>



Over **120** people, in **13** countries, speaking more than **12** languages, are the Alarm Phone. In the first year of practice we had contact at least with **60.000** people in distress at sea.

People would always call me on my private phone asking for help

Interview by Gordian Best

**Kebe has lived in Morocco for the past seven years. After ending his career as a professional football player, he began to engage in social and humanitarian work. He runs a Senegalese restaurant which functions as a hub for travellers and refugees. In addition he is an important contact person and activist for the Alarm Phone for the region of Tangier.**

52

53

#### **ALARM PHONE What do you do in Tangier?**

**KEBE** I'm a social worker for migrants. We welcome migrants from 10am to midday. My job is called social worker for social and intercultural mediation. I'm also the owner of a Senegalese restaurant in Tangier. I would call myself an activist involved in antiracist and anti-xenophobic work and I'm part of the Alarm Phone network.

#### **AP How did you come into contact with the project?**

**K** I first heard about the project from two Alarm Phone activists. As I work as a social worker for the Caritas, they saw me assisting migrants, so they told me about this thing. They explained the project and proposed that I could become part of the network. People would always call me on my private phone asking for help. So the project struck me as very interesting, taking part in the rescue of people at sea. This is how I became part of the group.

#### **AP What do you think is the political and practical impact of the Alarm Phone project?**

**K** As I'm not so much involved in Moroccan politics, I'm not sure about the political impact here. As an activist group we are not free in Morocco. Even if we really have to change the overall situation, we cannot change Morocco. So people have to be reflexive and cautious in their actions. This is my opinion. I do not know what really happens in Moroccan politics.

#### **AP What is your experience with the transnational cooperation in the Alarm Phone network?**

**K** I know that the people who are doing shifts are a bit all over the world. People work with the network in Berlin, Austria, Barcelona. Every time there was a situation on the sea, people would contact me to facilitate the communication here in Morocco. As I'm always in Tangier it's really helpful to have information concerning the actions of the Moroccan police forces, the Gendarmerie Royale, the police. That way I know right away how many people were caught on the sea. Also if they arrested

children or minors, I can go and try to check on their condition, and see what is going to happen to them.

**AP What are the problems you are having during your shifts?**

**K** There are a lot of problems during the Alarm Phone shifts. When people call us, they are always in a stressful situation. Therefore sometimes it is not even possible to understand what they are saying. So you don't understand their condition. Sometimes they cannot tell you where they are situated. So my experience is that sometimes if I call them with my Moroccan phone, they do not answer. That is because they are fearful. They tell me: »Oh we thought that was the police calling.« So sometimes they don't pick up the phone. I have to call again and again. In the end they would answer. Sometimes, I text them indicating that I'm a member of the Alarm Phone. They see the message and answer. I think it would be good to have a European phone number, so that they pick up the phone.

**AP What do you think is essential to keep in mind during a shift?**

**K** I think it's very important not to forget that you are in a position which can help to save lives. Firstly it is essential to keep in mind the situation of the people who are calling. Respect their situation and anxieties. Secondly it is important to take your time to ask the right questions: What is it that you need? Where are you? When did you start the crossing? Do you have a friend we could contact, in case you do not have mobile phone coverage at sea? This is very important.

**AP What is the reaction of migrants when you tell them about the AP?**

**K** It depends. It is important to explain it well. There are some people who do not understand it right away. Most of the migrants react positively, though, if you explain to them that this is a number that could help to save their lives. So they take the cards with pleasure. And most of them take the number with them when they depart. My experience is that 90% of the people feel a bit safer. Some people have doubts. Who are the

people behind the card? It's important to see that too. But 90% are really happy to have the number.

**AP Who are the people who are trying to cross?**

**K** Sub-Saharan Africans and Moroccans, but mostly sub-Saharan Africans. There are still many Moroccans who go but, yes, mostly Sub-Saharan.

**AP What is most important for the people who are crossing?**

**K** The most important aspect is to have a well-charged mobile phone with sufficient credit. It is very dangerous if your credit runs out on the sea. If you call the Alarm Phone from a Moroccan number it is very expensive and drains the credit quickly. The other way round too. So perhaps people who cross should have European SIM-cards. Also because sometimes Moroccan numbers do not work in European waters. I keep telling that over and over again to the people I hand out the Alarm Phone cards to.

**AP Last question. What do you think should be changed to improve the efficiency of the AP?**

**K** First of all an utterly clear communication. What does this mean? Sometimes we get information about a boat and we immediately call the Spanish Salvamento Marítimo, or the Moroccan rescue forces, even though we are not completely sure if there is an emergency situation. Also we need the exact point of departure and the correct time of the departure. These are important questions. In addition it is necessary to know exactly who is in the boat. Give us either names (real ones or fake) or a password to identify the boat. To make sure that if the boat arrives in Spain, or is rescued we can close the case. Tell us there is Musa, Hussam, Thierno, Mohamed, on the boat (again these do not have to be the real names), so we avoid misunderstandings with the Salvamento Marítimo. This would really help. Thus we will not trigger the use of airplanes from the rescue forces for nothing for example. Clear communication is the most important factor.



# To come better through their lives

Interview by Carla Höppner

**Alioune is an activist who lives in Tangier for more than two years. As a passionate musician, he played a concert in remembrance of sub-Saharan migrants who died in their attempt to cross the Spanish-Moroccan border. There he met Alarm Phone activists. Now he works in an autonomous migrant collective.**

58

59

**AP You are active in the Alarm Phone network. How did you get in touch with the project?**

**ALIOUNE** I know it from here, from Tangier. About one year ago I got to know activists who told me a lot about the project.

**AP What motivated you to become involved?**

**A** I think the Alarm Phone is a very, very good and interesting project, which can be of help to many people who leave Morocco with **ZODIACS** [the French word and common expression for rubber boats in Morocco].

**AP What is the work you do in Tangier?**

**A** I am distributing the cards from the Alarm Phone to the people here in Tangier. I also tell everyone who leaves to the sea, that they should take a smartphone with them to be localised at sea. This is very important. This is important for security reasons and thus the people at sea are safer. I do not only hand out the cards but I also talk to the people about the possibility of smartphones, because they can facilitate the activists who are called on the Alarm Phone to localise the people at the sea. The people on the boats should not call the Alarm Phone number if they are still in the Moroccan zone, because the Alarm Phone teams may call the Spanish rescue organization Salvamento Maritimo and they directly transfer the information to the Moroccans who come and take the people back to Morocco.

**AP Who is leaving Morocco by boat?**

**A** The people who mostly go by boat are sub-Saharan. There are men, women and even babies going with the **ZODIACS**.

**AP How do the people react when you tell them about the number of the Alarm Phone?**

**A** The people react grateful, because all of them are really in need of support. Many people disappeared or died at sea, because they got no help to be rescued.

**AP What do you think can the Alarm Phone do to support people travelling from Morocco to Europe?**

**A** The Alarm Phone should produce a lot of flyers to distribute in Tangier, especially here in the quarter of Boukhalef, because many Clandestines, who are in need of support, live here. So the Europeans can support to open the doors, to open the borders. It is very difficult at the moment in Morocco. Every day people start with their zodiacs but the Moroccan marine catches them. It is complicated because there is no work and there is nothing for the sub-Saharan here in Morocco and the people only suffer. They have an urgent need to leave to Europe to make sure their dreams come true. Every day there are zodiacs in the Mediterranean. The Alarm Phone should continue to take care that people can leave this country and arrive safely in Spain. The Spanish authorities have to stop bringing people back to Morocco, if they are called. We have to make pressure that the Spanish authorities take the people who are at the sea and bring them to Spain.

**AP What is your demand to the European politics in order to change the situation of people who are in the transit country Morocco?**

**A** I want Europeans to know that the Clandestines who are here need to leave to Europe in order to work and to come better through their lives. The people who leave to the sea are very courageous. Many of them want to earn money for their families and go back to their countries. The European governments have to take responsibility for the migrants.

**AP Thanks a lot for this conversation!**

**A** It's a pleasure!

60

61

**We cannot call our project a success because it only shows how many people need help in the Mediterranean**

Interview and translation from French by Sophie Hinger

**Interview with Hatem Gheribi about forms of transnational cooperation in the Alarm Phone project, his shift experiences and his hopes for the future of the project. Hatem lives in Strasbourg and has been an active member of the Tunisian diaspora in France.**

**SOPHIE What motivates you to participate in this project?**

**HATEM** This project is interesting to me because it gives us the opportunity to be part of an international network, to work together with people with different visions from Europe and from the other side of the Mediterranean. In France we are often too much focused on what is happening here and we are not so much connected with initiatives elsewhere, but the coming together of movements is very important to become stronger and to better understand the European border regime.

**S You have participated in transnational initiatives before, like the March for Freedom in 2014 and you have, through your own biography, ties with Tunisia. So what makes the Alarm Phone special to you? How does it compare to other transnational networks?**

**H** I know Tunisia very well, but for example I did not know about Tunisian initiatives like »Article 13« which struggles for the freedom of movement. I have thus discovered through the project other people and I see another perspective, because the perspective from Europe is different from the perspectives on the other side of the Mediterranean. Only by working together we can understand how it works, for example only by exchanging information we learn about the repression that the EU imposes on the countries on the other side of the Mediterranean. We have to understand what happens there, the externalisation of borders. Also the activists there might not understand what happens in Europe, so in the Alarm Phone network we attempt to make the link.

**S What are your responsibilities in the Alarm Phone project and what would you say, after one year, what have been the most significant experiences for you?**

**H** Every shift is an experience. Every shift is emotional; every shift is different from the others. Every person I had on the phone touched me. Well, I talk a lot about this one case from the Central Mediterranean. The people who called us had lost people during the night. It had been a very stormy night. They had left in a convoy with another boat, but during the night the other boat, carrying about 300 persons, disappeared. I was so

62

shocked. I imagined what would happen if just two or three Europeans were lost at sea – one would do everything to save these people. But 300 migrants getting lost? Who knows? Who cares? Who asks where they have gone? Who does something about it? I just felt in that moment how little their lives mattered.

**S How do you cope with such situations?**

**H** We talk about it in the network. I talk with Maggie, Miriam or with friends in Strasbourg. Of course it is difficult. But it is not on us to cope with it. We have to make an even greater effort to make such tragedies known and to bring about a political change. For me the only solution lies in realising freedom of movement for all. Only this can stop the dying at sea.

**S When you think of the months or years ahead, what do you think will be the greatest challenges and how can the network of the Alarm Phone face up to these challenges?**

**H** The network is still very young. I see that we have advanced very fast, because there are a lot of people in the Mediterranean who are in need of help. So we cannot talk about a success of our project, because it is not a success when there are people in need and the project helps them. And yet, the Alarm Phone is certainly a historic project. It has provided us with the possibility to know what is happening in the Mediterranean. It was a mystery, but now with the Alarm Phone and other projects (*like Sea Watch*) we see more clearly what is happening. Of course I hope that the project will end soon because this would mean that there is no need for us anymore. I wish it would end next year, or even better: tomorrow. In the moment, in which migrants would have safe and legal ways to enter Europe, the project would end. Maybe some of us would continue to struggle in other domains. But to be honest, we are far from this. What are the reactions of the European Union to all of this? We only see increasing repression against migrants. The Alarm Phone initiative unfortunately has a lot left to do and a big responsibility towards the people in distress.

63



## I had to transform my trauma

Interview and translation from French by Sophie Hinger

- 65** **Trésor spent 10 years travelling on different migratory routes before gaining entry into Europe in 2013. He crossed many borders and suffered from repression in the camps in Morocco and elsewhere. He runs the blog and network «Voix des migrants», is part of the International Coalition of Sans-Papiers Migrants and Refugees (CISPM) and the Alarm Phone.**

**SOPHIE What is your role in the project?**

**TRESOR** We developed the idea of this project together. In fact, there were other persons who were running alarm hotlines before, but we wanted to do something on a bigger scale and to also make it more effective and more political. I see my role above all in the distribution of the number, in public relations and mobilisation, especially concerning the situation in the Western Mediterranean. The distribution of the number means a lot more than just giving out the number. It also means talking to people about safety at sea and about the political context and the aims of the project. And when I say awareness raising this not only concerns migrants, but also European citizens, because only together we can change the politics of criminalisation and illegalisation of migration.

**S What is the difference between running an alarm telephone as a collective and doing such work as an individual person?**

**T** I remember when I was in Morocco, wanting to cross to Spain. We called [the Spanish researcher and activist] Helena Maleno, because she was doing it at the time. She had two numbers, so if one was busy, you could still call the other. But even for her it was too much and she could not respond to everyone. So for me the idea of a collectively run phone line was amazing.

**S How do you cope with your own experience of crossing the Mediterranean and how does this experience influence your work with the Alarm Phone?**

**T** Everybody who has experienced this is profoundly traumatised. For me, it has been a long personal struggle to deal with this trauma. I went to see a lot of psychologists, but that never helped. And at one point I understood that I had to transform my trauma by doing something about the causes behind my suffering. With the Alarm Phone project I have even tried to expose my own traumatic experience in order to mobilise myself and others to do something against the war on migration. Also to share these experiences with people who don't know about what is

going on. They have to know. I feel really well in this project and for me it is like a therapy.

**S What experiences of mourning the dead have you made or seen and how to accompany persons who are missing or who have lost a loved-one?**

**T** In Morocco we buried many persons. And there were others we could not bury, because we never got hold of their bodies, because they were just buried anonymously in a ditch, without any witnesses. And even in those cases in which you knew that somebody had died, when you asked for the body, they would not give it to you. I remember this one horrible day, which I will never forget. I had lost a very close friend, we demanded that his body would be returned to his family and it was not possible. There are a lot of families, who still live in uncertainty about the destiny of their children. Just imagine their trauma, imagine their pain. Or maybe their children are buried somewhere and their families know that they will never see them again, never even see their graves.

If we have the capacity, it would be great to approach these families, who are missing their children. On the one hand, they still have hope that maybe their children are still alive. On the other hand, the uncertainty is a trauma. My idea is to politicise this topic, to make the families understand the context, why their children probably died. And this is not the work of one person. Here again it is important to work collectively.



69

## A vision of transnational society in practice

by Conni Gunsser und Mariarosa Ragonese

**Discussion between two Alarm Phone members in Palermo and Hamburg about what we can learn in transnational shift teams**

**What prompted you to take shifts and responsibility in trying to save people's lives, sometimes even sharing this task with someone you never met before and who might be thousands of miles away?**

**CONNIE** I have been active in transnational networks already for some years and met migrants and activists on the other side of the Mediterranean Sea, first in Morocco, then in Tunisia. In Tunisia, we met families of missing boat people and refugees in the Choucha camp at the Libyan border, with whom we were fighting for resettlement to Europe, but most of them had to take boats and some are now in Germany and we work together with them. I took part in the campaign »boats4people« in 2012. At that time, the project **WATCHTHEMED** had already started to document cases of distress at sea, in which rescue did not take place or came too late, and tried to bring such cases to court. People of our networks wanted to intervene already before people die and so we founded the Alarm Phone one year ago. I already knew some of the people I do shifts with before, but some – like you, Mariarosa – I only got to know through online communication during Alarm Phone shifts. We met afterwards in Palermo, together with your local group, and in Nijmegen at our international Alarm Phone meeting.

**MARIAROSA** I have been active in the local antiracist and antidiscrimination groups in the last ten years, and I'm a volunteer teacher of Italian as second language to migrants who just arrived in Palermo. I think it is necessary to connect our local movements to international activist networks, because I feel the need to overcome the limits of our insular and secluded position. I strongly think it is important, moreover, to give this movement against visa and border regimes a transnational breath, because the issues and causes and developments are common to all countries, and very much interconnected.

**What makes transnational cooperation easier during tandem shifts? What did you learn from mixed, transnational shift teams?**

**C** First of all, we can speak different languages and communicate with different people. We can share different experiences, contacts,

opinions and knowledge, about the general situation in our countries, the situation of migrants, migration policies and the behavior of the authorities, coastguards etc. So we can deal much better with »cases«, but also learn from each other how to fight against the EU migration regime. We get a feeling of not being alone in our countries and cities with our struggles. And we can try to connect the struggles and get stronger together.

**M** The common goal of doing our best is the main thing, I suppose, which makes it easier to find a common ground on the level of communication and strategy.

**How does it help to develop our transnational network and also personal relationships?**

**C** During our meeting in Nijmegen someone said: This transnational network we build is amazing, it is practical cooperation, also a vision of a transnational society in practice. This means the whole process is important, and it starts with common shifts, which is much more than only meeting at a transnational conference or a demonstration.

**M** I learned a lot and it was a great experience to meet many of the people of the Alarm Phone network also on a human and social level, during the shifts, you Conni here in Palermo, and all the others at the meeting in Nijmegen. Transnational exchange is basic for us in Sicily, as we are not in the middle of Europe, but in the outskirts.

**C** I just feel the other way round: I think, you in Sicily are just in the middle, right between Europe and Africa. We in the north of Europe do not have the problem what to do when so many migrants arrive – it started now a little bit in Germany, but compared to Italy or North Africa it is nothing and we should learn from you!

**M** We often feel that here there is a maximum level of weight on our shoulders, because of the disembarkations and the huge number of camps. It is important and basic for us to exchange knowledge and experience. What I felt during transnational shifts was exactly that, the possibility to start this process.

70

71



## WhatsApp Distress Messages

73

SOS calls via social media and messaging apps have become crucial instruments for those on the move, especially in order to share GPS positions which allow for the localisation of boats in distress. These text or voice messages can also have another strong meaning: they are the connection to the lives that were lived before the migration journey and to the future that awaits. They are evidence that one is not alone. The WhatsApp conversation below began on the 9th of September 2015 when we received a GPS-position. We shortened it but what you can read below are the original messages. The woman agreed to have this conversation printed. Her journey ended in Beberbek, a small village in Northern Hesse/Germany. The two women connected through this chat never met each other face to face, they still hope to be able to do so soon.

GPS-POSITION 1,  
02.09.2015

16:41 help  
16:41 Sos  
16:41 Aloooii  
16:42 Please help us  
16:42 We have childtrn  
16:43 Help us 🗣️ 🗣️ 🗣️  
16:43 We deit  
16:43 Heryup  
16:44 Okay, my friend.  
16:45 is your engine still working?  
16:45 Can you move?  
16:45 No  
16:46 Okay.  
16:46 How many people on board?  
16:46 45  
16:46 How many are children?  
16:47 15  
16:48 Have you called 112 for help?  
16:48 We will dei 🗣️  
16:49 Please come  
16:49 You are still on the turkish  
side. It can be that the turkish  
coastguard will come to rescue.  
16:49 We are only alarm phone  
we cannot come and rescue.  
16:49 We wont you  
16:49 Why  
16:51 Pleaseeeee 🗣️ 🗣️ 🗣️  
16:51 Please call 112.  
16:51 [...]  
16:52 Can you go forward?  
16:52 NO  
16:52 Wr cant swimming  
16:53 What happened with the engine?  
16:53 Can you restart it?  
16:53 No  
16:53 It is stoopet  
16:54 Children cray 🗣️ 🗣️  
16:54 Should I call the  
turkish coastguard?

16:55 Noo please  
16:55 We wont go to greek 🗣️  
16:55 Okay, you have 3 options:  
16:56 Plese help us  
16:56 1. Restart the engine  
and go forward.  
16:57 2. Call 112 and get rescued, but  
it can be the turkish coastguard  
who comes, because you  
are too close to turkey.  
16:57 Is it stoipet  
16:58 3. We call Greek coastguard. But  
most probably they will just  
send the turkish coastguard.  
16:58 Plese help us  
16:58 We have no boat,  
16:58 We can only call the coastguard.  
16:59 No please [help] us  
16:59 The children are crey 🗣️  
17:03 We are from syria  
17:03 We wont go to greek  
17:04 Are you moving?  
17:04 No no 🗣️  
17:10 Now we moved  
17:10 Wr come to greek  
17:10 Alooo  
17:10 The engine works again? 🗣️  
17:10 Yes 🗣️ 👍  
17:11 🗣️ 👍  
17:11 Great! 👍  
17:11 I wish you will arrive  
safe. Inshallah.  
17:13 Please tel me when  
you arrive, okay?  
17:13 Perhaps engine stoopet again  
17:15 No, engine needs only to  
work for 20 minutes half  
hour that's enough...  
17:15 Thank you  
17:16 No problem, I will be with  
you until you are there. ..

17:16 😊  
17:18 Still running?  
17:32 Alooo  
17:32 Ingine stoopet  
17:32 Again

GPS POSITION 2

17:34 I will call the Greek  
coastguard now.  
17:35 Hery up please  
17:37 🗣️ 🗣️ 🗣️  
17:40 The Greek coastguard are  
telling they can see you.  
17:40 Can you see a boat of the  
Greek coastguard?  
17:41 No  
17:42 Okay.  
17:54 Could you restart the engine?  
> PICTURE 1  
18:53 Are you rescued now?  
20:08 yes we arrived  
H20:09 Great!  
20:09 Are you okay? All of you?  
20:13 yes .. thank you dear  
20:13 🗣️  
20:14 Very very good!  
20:14 🗣️  
20:17 [http://w2eu.info/greece.ar/articles/  
greece-welcome-guide-aliunan-  
dlil-altrxhib-almylumat.html](http://w2eu.info/greece.ar/articles/greece-welcome-guide-aliunan-dlil-altrxhib-almylumat.html)  
20:18 There you can find useful  
information for Greece.  
20:19 And here is another  
one for the way:  
[http://w2eu.info/greece.ar/articles/  
greece-dublin2.ar.html](http://w2eu.info/greece.ar/articles/greece-dublin2.ar.html)

06.09.2015

15:13 Hello  
15:13 We are in mitilini  
15:14 In very miserable place

> PICTURE 2  
15:35 Yes. I know that place.  
15:35 When did you arrive at kara tepe?  
15:36 from 4 days  
15:37 No one take our names  
15:38 No one help us  
15:38 But you got a number?  
15:38 Nothing at all  
15:38 We just wait  
[...]  
15:50 Are they not giving registration  
number at the port.  
15:50 They gave a few person  
15:51 Yes. Go and get it.  
15:51 You have to be strong and  
get it. After a few days you  
will be out of Greece.  
15:51 What is your sickness?  
15:52 I feel apain in my leg  
15:52 I cant walking  
15:53 You check for the doctors?  
15:53 Here .. they give me medicine  
15:54 That's good.  
15:54 Are you with family?  
15:55 Yes  
15:57 Yes .. and all people here tierd ..  
we haven't enough mony to buy  
foods .. to charge our phones  
15:58 Yes, I can imagine, I have seen it.  
15:58 Your children are how old?  
15:59 12 years  
15:59 We cant wait here long time  
16:00 Boy or girl?  
16:00 Boy  
16:52 I paid 2€ to charge my phone.  
for speaking to you .. I hope  
you to interest our problem  
> PICTURE 3  
17:13 This is a photo of woman  
.. The police beat her  
17:19 The situation is getting worse  
17:20 The police used violence  
17:23 I spoke with friends in mitilini.

17:23 Today the police brought  
a container to kara tepe.  
17:24 This container will be the new  
place for registration soon.  
17:24 They are waiting for the  
machines and then they will start  
to register directly in kara tepe.

[...]

07.09.2015

08:54 **The people burned the office**  
08:54 **They are angry**  
09:36 **what we must to do know**  
09:37 Most important not to get crazy.  
09:38 I will try to get information  
where they will do the registration  
09:39 Try to stay calm and I will contact  
you as soon as I find something.  
15:29 Okay, listen  
15:29 There will be 4 ships today  
15:29 **Ok**  
15:30 Those who have passports  
might get a space even if they did  
not finish the registration  
[...]  
15:33 But don't tell anyone, before  
you know it really works  
15:34 **Ok dear**  
15:34 Promised?  
15:34 **Promise**  
15:36 And good luck  
15:36 And please let me  
know if it is possible

15:36 **Thank you very much**  
15:56 **Ok .. I am glad to know you**  
15:56 **Even the situation is bad**  
15:57 😊  
15:57 Yes, nice to meet you too  
15:57 😊  
18:15 **They came to here .. and they**  
**give the families numbers now**

[...]

19:04 I hope you will be  
soon free from this

19:04 **I hope too**

19:04 🙏  
19:05 Take care my dear  
19:05 It will soon be over

19:05 **Thanks my friend**

19:06 🙏  
19:07 🙏 🙏 🙏 🙏  
19:08 🙏

[...]

20:58 **we take a number and**  
**we wait the buses**  
20:59 😊👍  
21:00 Great! Have a good  
journey my dear!

21:01 **Thank you very much**

08.09.2015

17:27 **Finally we take papers ,**  
**after 17 hours of waiting .**  
17:28 **Can you imagine a person**  
**sleep while he is walking**  
17:29 **We were so**  
17:29 😊😊  
17:32 Yes. I think I can imagine,  
I saw it too many times now...  
17:32 The only good thing is, that  
you are a big step forward now!  
17:33 🙏

19.09.2015

11:23 **Good morning dear**  
11:28 **at the first , I want to thank you**  
**for your wonderful Psychological**  
**aid when I was in greec .**  
11:30 **Secondly, I am in Vienna and**  
**I will travel to Hamburg today**  
**.. I will arrive at 10 pm ..**

.....  
26.09.2015

09:20 Good morning, my dear.  
I am wondering where you are  
and hope you arrived safely!

27.09.2015

11:57 **I am good**  
11:58 **But along story happened**  
11:59 **In 19 septembre I take the train to**  
**Hamburg .. but the police catch us**  
12:00 Where are you now?  
12:00 **I will send my location**  
12:01 **It called beberbeck**  
12:02 **Hofgeismer**  
12:11 Good that you are now in germany.  
12:12 🙏

[...]

18:17 **There are many problems here**  
18:18 Yes, I can imagine.  
18:18 **irstly .. no network coverage**  
18:18 **I must walk for more 1 km**  
18:18 oh. That is really a problem!  
18:19 **Secondly .. the nearest**  
**village is far 8 km**  
18:20 **And their isn't transport**  
[...]  
18:25 **This place is suitable for horses**  
**.. cows .. not for human beings**

18:25 😊😊😊😊  
18:26 😊😊😊😊 at least you  
don't loose your humour.  
[...]  
18:27 The only good thing is really that  
it will slowly slowly get better.

18:29 **How long time I have**  
**to spend here?**  
18:29 **At maximum**  
18:30 To be honest : I don't know.  
18:33 🙏🙏🙏🙏  
18:33 🙏🙏🙏🙏

18:34 🙏 🙏 🙏 🙏

18:35 **These animals what I see**  
18:35 😊  
18:35 😊😊😊  
18:36 It is very important at  
least one time per day to laugh, you  
will not stand it otherwise...

18:37 **Yes .. sure**  
18:38 **Thank you dear .. I must come back**  
**before the wild animals eat me**  
18:39 🙏  
18:40 Good bye my dear!

12.10.2015

10:31 **good morning dear**  
10:32 **I begin to feel depressed**  
**in this place**  
10:35 **And I don't know to**  
**whom I can to talk**  
10:36 Yes, I can imagine  
that it is very difficult.  
10:36 **I know that you are busy**  
10:37 **I feel that I am in prison**  
[...]  
10:39 Do you have any book  
for learning language?  
[...]  
11:21 But maybe it is useful to  
think how to survive hour by  
hour until it is over and you  
will feel more free again.

11:52 **I just wanted to talk to someone**  
11:52 **I know that There is no solution**  
11:52 **Thank you dear**  
11:53 🙏🙏🙏  
11:53 You are always welcome!  
12:08 🙏🙏  
> PICTURE 4



- - - Territorial Waters

POSITION 1

..... Search and rescue zone



- - - Territorial Waters

POSITION 2

..... Search and rescue zone



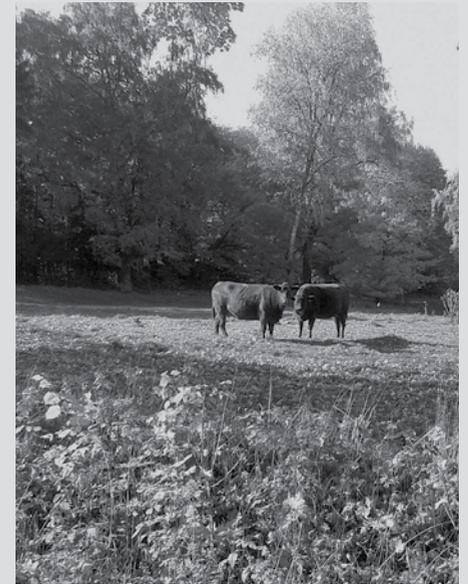
PICTURE 1



PICTURE 2



PICTURE 3



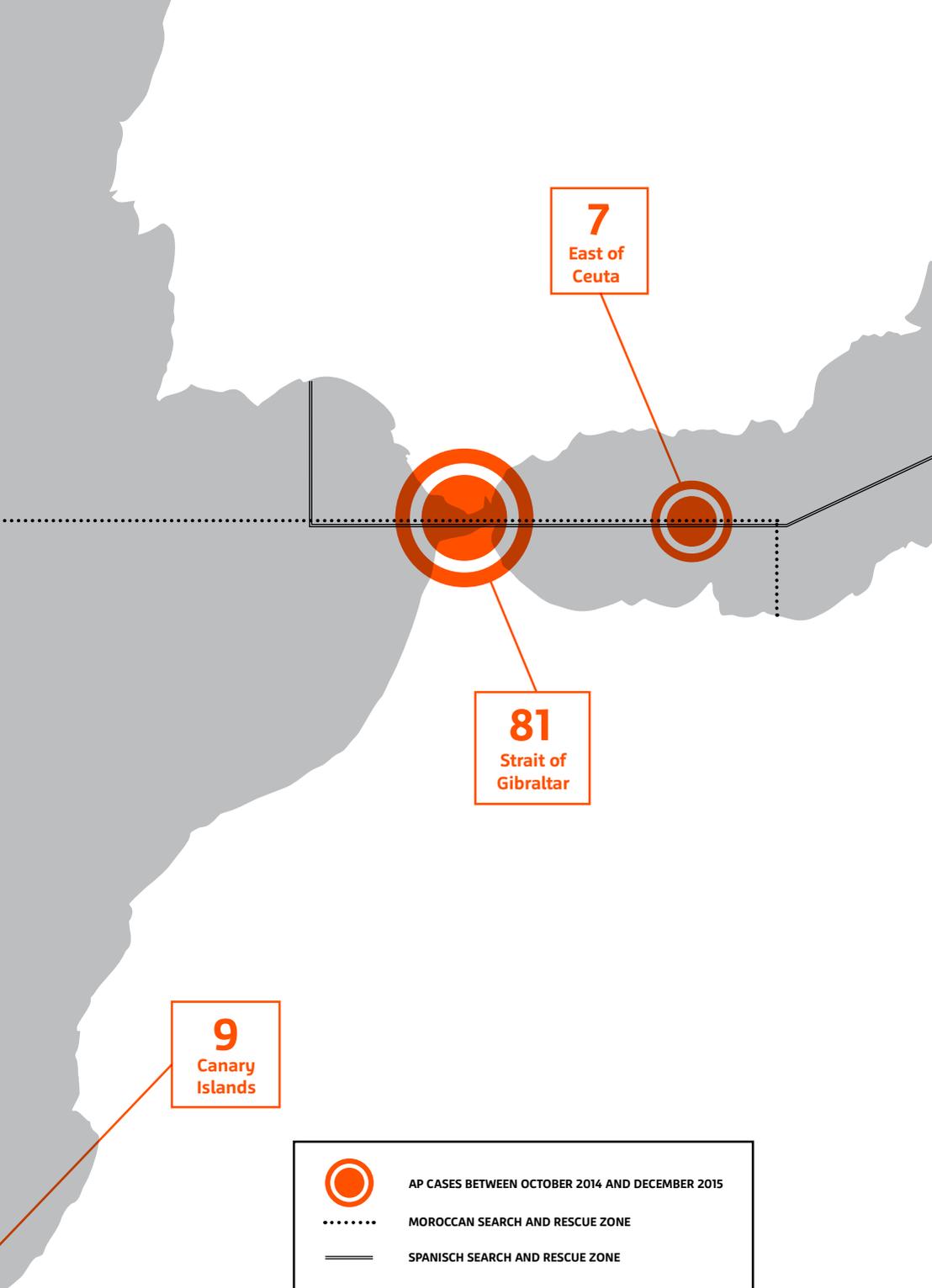
PICTURE 4

3

Contested  
Spaces



# 01 WESTERN MED



## Acts of repression and resistance

### The European-Moroccan border regime

by Carla Höppner

Morocco is a transit country – above all for people from Western African countries, but also for others, including many Syrians in the past year. Compared to the Aegean and Central Mediterranean regions, the Western Med migration route, especially the one via the sea, is at the moment less frequented, accounting for less than 0.5 percent of all maritime arrivals into the territory of the European Union.<sup>1</sup>

In the beginning of 2015 we witnessed significant political transformations in the region, which led to a dramatic decrease in attempts of migrants to overcome EU border fences to European enclaves in Morocco. This meant that as of February 2015, the sea route was the only possibility for sub-Saharan migrants to enter Europe.

### **A state as borderland: The EU financed militarisation of Morocco**

Many sub-Saharan migrants get stuck in Morocco for years before they can travel on. They face difficult economic situations, a society that excludes them and confronts them with racist attitudes, and a state that persecutes them, often very violently. However, the situation is ambivalent. Many Moroccans have migration histories in their own families, and feel compassion towards other migrants. There are people from southern African countries who were able to settle in Morocco and, through time, sub-Saharans and Moroccans have established groups and organisations to protest and scandalise the state's migration policies.

Within the framework of the latest EU-Morocco Action Plan from 2013, the EU approved a budget of more than 150 million Euros for Morocco in order to create closer ties between the EU and Morocco. The Moroccan government implemented a regularisation law in the beginning of 2014, in order to open a legal opportunity for migrants. However, for many people regularisation was not an option as they wanted to move on to Europe and many of those even holding papers in Morocco were still exposed to societal racism. After one year, the daily racism and repression against sub-Saharan migrants increased again and resulted in persecutions, arrests and deportations.

On the 9th of February 2015 the Moroccan government announced the end of the regularisation-campaign. The same night military started to evict the Gourougou, which is the mountain region migrants live in and where they prepare both their attempts to cross the border-fences to Melilla and the boat trips which start from the region around Nador. More than 1200 persons were arrested and deported. As the diplomatic relations between Morocco and Algeria are damaged, the authorities could not deport people via this eastern border. Instead, buses with

84

85

evicted migrants would drive up to the Mauritanian border where, however, their crossing was also denied. Finally, the people were detained in different southern Moroccan cities.

During the following months, more and more forest camps and even rented houses, where people had lived precariously, were violently destroyed and evicted by Moroccan police units and the »Forces Auxiliaires« in the whole area around Nador/Melilla, in Tangier, Cassiago/Ceuta and Oujda, thus in all border regions where people wait for the possibility to leave the country. Regularly deportations to different cities in Morocco far from the border also occur but as it is no solution for the Moroccan state to detain migrants for long time, most detainees get released after a while. After having organised means to travel for themselves, they would return to the borders and establish camps in the forests once again. People live in a constant state of anxiety. They do not know what will happen to them the day after, where they will sleep the following night or what they will eat.

The Moroccan police takes also part in the business of sea migration: the zodiacs, their motors and the equipment are often confiscated by the military and police who patrol the borders, and then re-sold to the migrants in the forests. Daily, migrants leave Morocco because of these forms of repression but, at the same time, every day migrants also arrive in Morocco. In this EU financed war against migrants, hidden behind a hypocritical discourse of a war against »smugglers« and the »mafia«, the Moroccan state proudly portrays its efforts as securing the EU border while many people are stuck in transit, struggling courageously for their right to freedom of movement. Yaya: »Now as we have been for years struggling in this country we won't give up, we won't go back! We will gain our power back and we will organise ourselves again for the Boza-Collective to Europe!«

### **Spain: the role of Salvamento Marítimo in push-back and interception practices**

In 2015, the conservative government under Rajoy as part of a high speed resolution implemented new legislation on the security of citizens, wide-

ly known as gag law (ley mordaza), which legalises **PUSH-BACKS** from the Spanish non-Schengen areas of Ceuta and Melilla. The law violates EU- and international law but Spain nevertheless tries to execute it.

Salvamento Marítimo (S.M.) is situated somewhere between the task of saving lives and the duty of following orders of the Spanish state. They are often friendly and cooperative when alerted by members of the Alarm Phone to people in distress. But, at the same time, they routinely contact the Moroccan Marine Royal which would then intercept migrant vessels. On the 13th of October of 2015, the Spanish Navy even blocked a vessel with 26 people for at least 2 hours close to Spanish waters so that the people could be picked up by the Marine Royal. Activists and Human Rights Organisations in Spain and Europe scandalise publicly and through juridical means the illegal deportation and **PUSH-BACK** practices by Spain, both along the fences and at sea.

On the 30th of July 2015, the European Court of Human Rights enquired into the human rights violations by Spain, committed during their **PUSH-BACK** practices, focusing especially on collective expulsions with no regard for individual processing. Moreover, the Alarm Phone witnessed and documented that especially in the Strait of Gibraltar nearly all people on their way towards Europe were intercepted and returned to Morocco, the country they sought to escape from.

### Boat journeys from the different Moroccan regions

As it is impossible for children to overcome the border fences, groups seeking to cross the sea towards Spain are often composed of families, children and women but also many men, mostly of sub-Saharan origin and French speaking. For the first time, on the 13th of October 2015, a boat carried 2 Syrian women, one of them wheel-chair bound, moving toward the Canary Islands.

The Alarm Phone received calls from the Strait of Gibraltar (Tangier to Tarifa), the Mediterranean (Al Hoceima or Nador to the Spanish coast between Malaga and Almeria), the path around the fences in the water around Fnideq to Ceuta and finally from the Atlantic sea route, from

the Western Sahara to the Canary Islands. Due to the demand of many travellers in South-Morocco/Western Sahara, our shift teams acquired in-depth knowledge about this route in order to be able to react to emergency calls from this area.

We faced a very dramatic case in mid-July when our shift team was informed about a vessel with 34 persons on board which could neither be contacted nor localized. Due to the precarious situation in Morocco, most migrants do not risk to carry on them expensive smart or satellite phones for their journeys, in particular as they are frequently robbed before reaching the sea. On the 4th day of their rescue operation, Salvamento Marítimo wanted to suspend their search due to difficult weather conditions and the loss of hope to find the travellers alive. Our shift teams communicated with the press service of S. M. as well as with NGOs on the Canary Islands. Additionally, we spread news via Twitter to convince the authorities to continue the search. Fortunately, this campaign was successful and S. M. decided to continue their rescue operation. However, they were not able to find the vessel even on the 5th day. When friends of the passengers and our shift teams had nearly lost all hope, finally, on the 6th day, Salvamento found the vessel and all 34 passengers were transferred to the Canary Islands.

We experienced a similarly dramatic situation on the Mediterranean route, when a boat with 28 persons, which had left Nador already 17 hours earlier could not be reached and was thus unable to inform us about their whereabouts. S.M. launched a search but could not localize the boat. Finally, the travellers could be contacted again and they told us that they saw a helicopter in vicinity. Our shift team found out that S.M. did not see the boat but the boat saw S.M. With that information the rescue team searched the area again – this time with success and the passengers were safely brought to Motril/Granada.

One of the biggest challenges for the Alarm Phone in the Western Med region is communication. As many people hardly reach the water without being robbed and arrested on their way to the sea, they often only carry cheap mobile phones with them, even though smart or satellite phones

would allow for a much safer journey. The whole Strait of Gibraltar has mobile phone coverage so that the GPS-tool on smart phones would be functional. Also on the longer routes it would already help to have communication devices such as WhatsApp or Viber since many lost boats were finally located very close to the Spanish or Moroccan coasts. Communicating exact positions would help saving lives as people could be easily located at sea and as we could also determine the precise Search and Rescue zone and document possible human rights violations.

### Alarm Phone in the Western Med

Throughout the year, we established good connections with activists in Morocco. Through nobordersmorocco, a collective of sub-Saharan and European activists, we established a close network of people who live in the different forests and central points of migration. We also work with several Moroccan and West-African projects and associations such as Radio Mboa, AMDH, Conseil des Migrants, Centre Culturel Africain and Chabaka. On a practical level we are collectively discussing and circulating information material, distributing the number and debating changes and difficulties. On a political level we built up a network that organises conferences, demonstrations, workshops and commemorations.

### 6th of february mobilisation

The 6th of February 2014, the day when the Guardia Civil killed at least 15 persons who swam to Ceuta, has been established as a day of protest, organised on a transnational level by networks in Morocco, Spain and other countries. The Alarm Phone will support the activities which are planned in several cities for February 2016 and combine the common slogan of »Stop the war against migrants« with the campaign of »Ferries, not Frontex!«, in order to make visible and spread our demand to create safe paths toward Europe.

### BOZA! People find their ways and cannot be discouraged

Despite persecution, deaths and a highly militarised border, people break through borders and arrive in Europe. On the 3rd of October 2015, 200 migrants launched a new period of attacks on the fences in Ceuta and 87 of them managed to reach Spain. Additionally, on the 2nd and 3rd of October, more than 400 migrants reached the Spanish coast on approximately 20 inflatable boats. We wish all travellers strength in their ongoing struggle; we will strengthen transnational voices against the current border regime and fight for the freedom of movement and global justice.

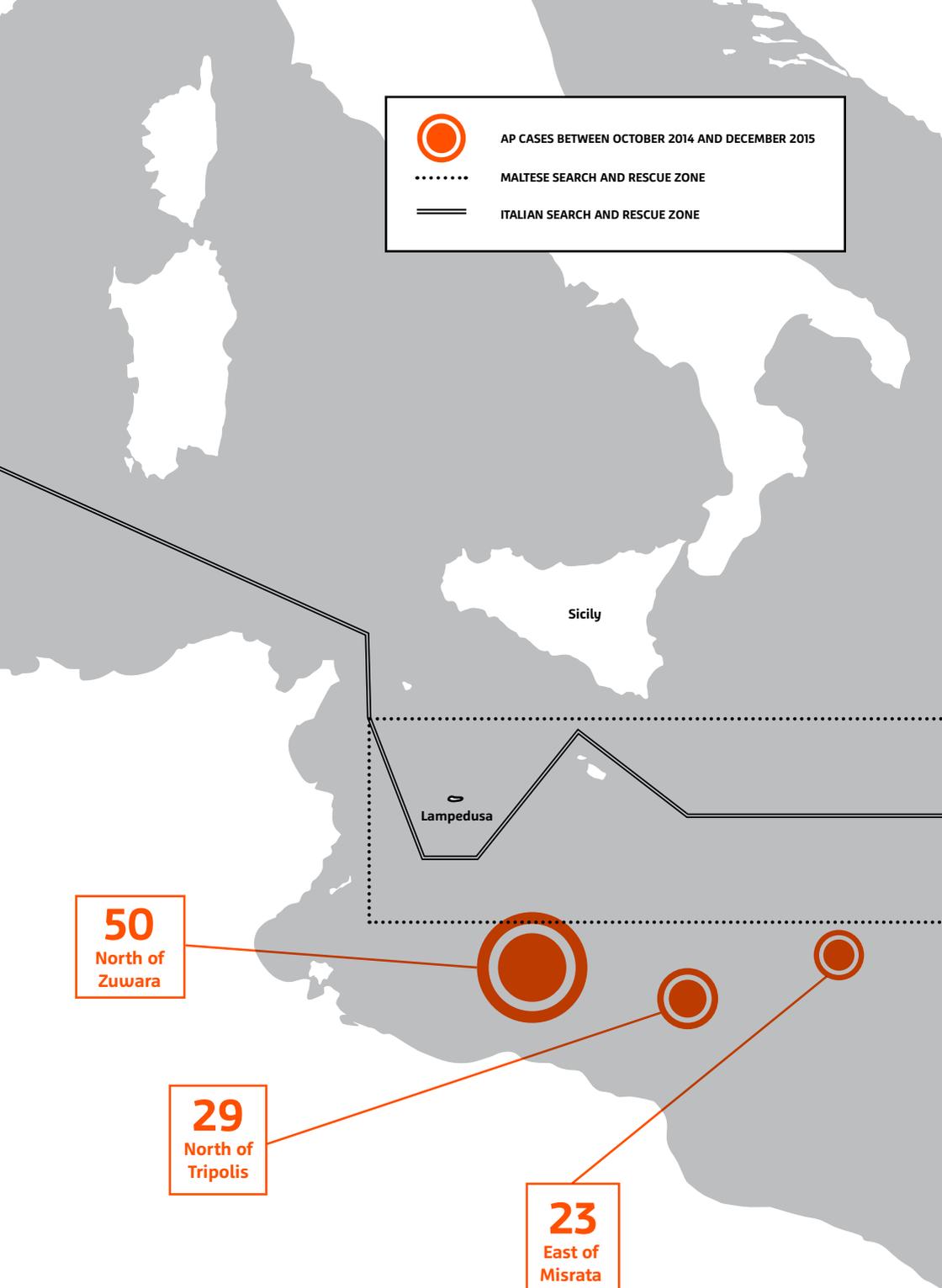
- 1 [http://missingmigrants.iom.int/sites/default/files/Mediterranean\\_Update\\_20\\_November\\_0.pdf](http://missingmigrants.iom.int/sites/default/files/Mediterranean_Update_20_November_0.pdf)
- 2 EU-Morocco-Action-Plan: [http://www.enpi-info.eu/mainmed.php?id=35105&id\\_type=1&lang\\_id=450](http://www.enpi-info.eu/mainmed.php?id=35105&id_type=1&lang_id=450)

#### FURTHER READING MATERIAL

- NOBORDERSMOROCCO: <https://beatingborders.wordpress.com/category/english>
- RADIO MBOA: <https://www.youtube.com/user/airdumboa/search?query=alarmphone>
- FFM: <http://ffm-online.org/category/mittelmeerraum/westliches-mittelmeer/marokko>
- VOIX DES MIGRANTS: <http://www.voixdesmigrants.com/395045873>
- DESALHAMBRE: [http://www.eldiario.es/desalambre/pequena-gestion-fronteriza-transito-Europa\\_0\\_390211840.html](http://www.eldiario.es/desalambre/pequena-gestion-fronteriza-transito-Europa_0_390211840.html)



Berlin 22.04.2015 Protest Action against Klaus Rösler (Director of Operations Division of Frontex)



# 02 CENTRAL MED

## Political developments in the Central Med

From »Mare Nostrum« via »Triton« to »Sophia« – or open borders? *by Conni Gunsser*

The Alarm Phone started its work some weeks before an important mission in the Central Mediterranean Sea officially ended: **MARE NOSTRUM**, an operation, which begun on the 18th of October 2013, was established and financed by the Italian government after the two shipwrecks of October (3rd and 11th) 2013 in which more than 600 people lost their lives in the Mediterranean Sea.

It involved five navy vessels, two helicopters, two airplanes, radar systems and 920 marines. Originally, it was a military operation to protect the Italian sea frontier, to fight against traffickers and to register arriving migrants. In fact, **MARE NOSTRUM** rescued at least 150.000 people, most of them in boats coming from Libya, and some EU governments even criticized the operation as »a bridge to Europe«. Despite these many people rescued, more than 3.400 migrants died during this period. Because other EU governments did not want to contribute to the financing of **MARE NOSTRUM**, it ended officially on the 31st of October 2014.

Instead, the **FRONTEX** operation **TRITON** was launched in November 2014. In a letter at the 9th of December 2014, Klaus Rösler, director of Operations Division of **FRONTEX**, called upon the Italian Ministry of Interior, the navy and the coastguards to stop the current practice of rescuing boat-people in distress at sea. The 25 vessels and 9 airplanes of operation **TRITON** should be employed only within the 30-mile-zone off the Italian coast – which meant leaving migrants near Libyan waters to die. There were a lot of protests against this policy, also by members of the Alarm Phone: during the World Social Forum in March 2015 in Tunis and actions in April in Berlin, in May in Warsaw and in June in Strasbourg. Even the Italian coastguard did not follow these orders, but continued to rescue close to the Libyan coast.

But in spring, when more boats started again to depart from Libya and other North African countries, it turned out that the capacities of the Italian and Maltese coastguards were far too small to rescue all migrants in distress. Increasingly, they had to rely on merchant ships for help. Between November 2014 and April 2015, commercial vessels took part in rescue operations of 18.963 people. Organisations of shipowners and trade unions of seafarers rang the alarm bell and wrote letters to the German government and the other heads of states of EU countries<sup>1</sup>: »In short, we believe it is unacceptable that the international community is increasingly relying on merchant ships and seafarers to undertake more and more large-scale rescues, with single ships having to rescue as many 500 people at a time. Commercial ships are not equipped to undertake

94

95

such large-scale rescues, which also create serious risks to the safety, health and welfare of ships' crews who should not be expected to deal with such situations. (...) We respectfully urge the Government to treat the development of solutions to this serious problem as an absolute priority. It is literally a matter of life and death.«

On the 10th of February 2015, 300 migrants died in the Central Mediterranean, five days later more than 1.000 people were saved. Between the 10th and the 19th of April 2015, over 5.000 migrants were rescued by the Italian coastguard, but at least 1250 people drowned near the Libyan coast. One day later, the EU adopted a Ten-Point Action Plan, especially in order to fight against so-called smugglers, which we answered with our press release entitled »Ferries not Frontex! 10 points to really end the deaths of migrants at sea«<sup>2</sup> (see also page 96).

In May 2015, several boats of private initiatives and/or humanitarian organisations started to operate in the Central Med: Phoenix of MOAS and Bourbon Argos of MSF, later also Dignity I and Sea-Watch, and the Alarm Phone co-operated quite often with them. Sometimes these boats were the only ones present close to the Libyan coast and migrants in distress had to wait for hours until bigger ships would come that could take them on board. At the end of September, the boats Phoenix and Sea-Watch had to end their missions.

Also in May 2015, the German government sent two military vessels to the Central Med, »Berlin« and »Hessen«, which were in June replaced by »Werra« and »Schleswig-Holstein«. In the beginning, they were involved in quite a lot of rescue operations and saved the lives of 5.673 migrants until the end of June. But since the first phase of the military operation against »smugglers«, **EUNAVFOR MED** (now called »Sophia« after a refugee child born on a navy ship) was launched on the 22nd of June, they only rescued 2.357 migrants in distress at sea until the end of September. Also other EU governments sent navy ships, and on the 7th of October 2015, the second phase of the operation began, which allows EU forces to attack and enter boats suspected to have »smugglers« on board.

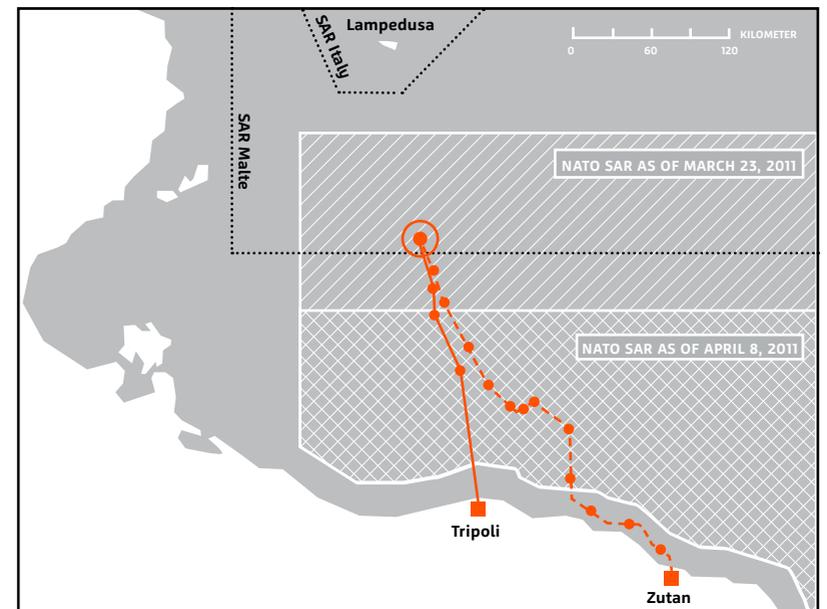
The Alarm Phone received a lot of calls from boats (or from people who are connected to migrants taking boats) during the summer, and on the 22nd of August, the highest number of people (about 4.400) was rescued in one day. Since the beginning of October, calls and reports concerning migrant boats on the Central Med decreased. We do not know if the main reasons are connected to the presence of the navy ships, to the weather, and/or to the opening of the borders on the Balkan route by thousands of migrants. Nonetheless, it is clear that sea-migration continued as the gruesome discovery of dozens of migrant bodies along Libyan shores in October showed.

Until now, the latest project of the EU and **FRONTEX**, the so-called **HOT-SPOTS** at the borders of the EU, especially in Italy and Greece, camps in which they »swiftly identify, register and fingerprint incoming migrants«<sup>3</sup> to be able to deport those who are not wanted in Europe, are not yet working, except on Lampedusa. The situation in Libya is still so horrible that migrants (from East and West Africa as well as from Syria and elsewhere) prefer risking their lives on boats, even in winter. Also from Tunisia people depart, those referred to as **HARRAGAS** (Tunisians ›burning the border‹) – although the EU is increasingly collaborating with governments on the other side of the Mediterranean Sea to deter people from escaping.

- 1 [http://www.ecsa.eu/images/NEW\\_Position\\_Papers/2015-03-31%20shipping%20industry%20general%20letter%20eu%20heads%20of%20state.pdf](http://www.ecsa.eu/images/NEW_Position_Papers/2015-03-31%20shipping%20industry%20general%20letter%20eu%20heads%20of%20state.pdf)
- 2 <http://www.watchthemed.net/media/uploads/page/12/Ferries%20not%20Frontex.pdf>
- 3 [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/background-information/docs/2\\_hotspots\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/background-information/docs/2_hotspots_en.pdf)

96

97



Testimony by Daniel, survivor of a shipwreck in 2011

Driftmodel of Watch the Med, left-to-die-case 2011

# Ferries not Frontex

April 23rd, 2015

**On April 20, the Joint Foreign and Home Affairs Council of the EU released a ten-point action plan outlining their response to the recent deaths of migrants in the Mediterranean Sea. Many other proposals have also been made over the last few days. We are activists who have been involved in the struggles against the European border regime for several years and who have been in touch on a daily basis with hundreds of people who have crossed the Mediterranean through Watch The Med and the Alarm Phone project. Faced with the hypocrisy of the »solutions« that have been proposed so far, we feel compelled to undermine their falsity and attempt to open up an alternative space for reflection and action.**

## 10 POINTS TO REALLY END THE DEATHS OF MIGRANTS AT SEA

1

We are shocked and angered at the recent tragedies that have claimed at least 1200 lives in the Mediterranean Sea in the last week. We are shocked, although not surprised, by the unprecedented number of deaths in merely a few days. We are angered because we know that without a radical change these are just the first of many more deaths to come in 2015.

2

We are also angered because we know that what is proposed to us as a »solution« to this unbearable situation only amounts to more of the same: violence and death. The EU has called for the reinforcement of

Frontex' Triton mission. Frontex is a migration deterrence agency and Triton has been created with the clear mandate to protect borders, not to save lives.

3

However, even if saving lives was to be its core task, as it was the case for the military-humanitarian operation Mare Nostrum in 2014, it is clear that this would not bring dying at sea to an end. Those who suggest a European Mare Nostrum should be reminded that even during its mission, the most grandiose rescue operation in the Mediterranean to date, more than 3,400 people died. Is this figure acceptable to the European public?

4

Others have called for an international military operation in Libya, a naval blockade or the further enlisting of African countries for the policing of their own land borders. The history of the last 20 years in the Mediterranean shows that stepping up the militarization of migration routes is only cause to more death. Each and every time a route into the Europe has been blocked by new surveillance technologies and increasing policing, migrants have not stopped arriving. They have simply been forced to take longer and more dangerous routes. The recent deaths in the Central and Eastern Mediterranean are the result of the militarization of the Gibraltar Strait, of the Canary Islands, of the land border between Greece and Turkey, and of several land borders in the Sahara. The »successes« of Frontex mean death to thousands of people.

5

International organisations as well politicians from across the whole political spectrum have denounced smugglers as the main cause of death in the Mediterranean Sea. Several prominent politicians have compared the smuggling of migrants to the

transatlantic slave trade. There seems no limit to hypocrisy: those who uphold the slave regime condemning the slave traders! We know very well that smugglers operating in the context of the Libyan civil war are often ruthless criminals. But we also know that the only reason why migrants have to resort to them is the European border regime. Smuggling networks would be history in no time if those who now die at sea could instead reach Europe legally. The visa regime that prevents them from doing so was introduced only 25 years ago.

6

Those who have called, once again, for the creation of asylum processing centres in Northern Africa should be reminded of two examples that are the most accurate examples of what these centres would actually mean. First, the Tunisian Choucha camp managed by the UNHCR, which abandoned those who sought refuge there from the Libyan conflict. Even those who were recognized as needing international protections were left behind in the Tunisian desert, often without any other choice than trying to cross the sea. Second, the creation by Australia of offshore processing centres on remote »prison-islands«, which is now hailed by many as a role model for Europe, only shows how hideous the forceful confinement of asylum seekers can be. These »solutions« serve only to displace the violence of the European border regime away from the eyes of Western publics.

7

Faced with this situation, what is to be done? Comrades and friends with whom we have shared common struggles in the past years have been calling for freedom of movement as the only viable response to this situation. We too make this demand ours, as it is the only one that has managed to open up a space of political imagination in an otherwise suffocating debate. Only unconditional legal access to the EU can end the death of migrants at sea. And yet

we think that a general call for the freedom of movement is not enough in the current context. We want to consider the freedom of movement not as a distant utopia but as a practice – enacted by migrants on a daily basis often at the cost of their lives – that should guide our political struggles here and now.

8

These are the reasons why we call for the institution of a humanitarian ferry, that should travel to Libya and evacuate as many people as possible. These people should be brought to Europe and granted unconditional protection in Europe, without undergoing an asylum process which has lost its original purpose to protect and has de facto become yet another tool of exclusion.

9

Is the idea of a ferry unrealistic? In 2011, at the height of the Libyan civil war, humanitarian ferries evacuated thousands of stranded migrants from Misrata to Bengasi, overcoming obstacles such as shelling, constant fire and sea mines. This shows that even in the current volatile situation of Libya, considering such an action is possible. Moreover, ferries would certainly be immensely cheaper than the prospect of a massive rescue mission at sea and of any military solution.

10

The only reality we know is that any solution short of this will continue to lead to more deaths at sea. We know that no process of externalisation of asylum procedures and border control, no amount of compliance with the legal obligations to rescue, no increase in surveillance and militarization will stop the mass dying at sea. In the immediate terms, all we need is legal access and ferries. Will the EU and international agencies be ready to take these steps, or will civil society have to do it for them?



AP CASES BETWEEN OCTOBER 2014 AND DECEMBER 2015



BORDER BETWEEN GREECE AND TURKEY

590

Lesvos  
and Chios

364

Samos,  
Farmakonisi,  
Agathonisi

122

Kos,  
Kastellorizo,  
Strongyli, Ro

2

Crete

## 03 AEGEAN SEA

### The transformation of a border region

On the Alarm Phone's close cooperation  
with other networks **by Marion Bayer**

When the Alarm Phone came into existence in October 2014, nobody could have foreseen the rapid transformation the Aegean region would undergo with regards to the unprecedented migration movements in 2015: on the day with the most numerous arrivals so far, towards the end of October, more than 7.000 people reached the Greek island of Lesvos in 24 hours, and within the last week of October, 56.000 people arrived on the Greek islands.

Standing on the beaches in the North of Lesbos and seeing one boat after the other arriving, one could think that this border has already been over-run and broken down. But at the same time we have also witnessed the biggest loss of lives in the Aegean Sea this year, with more than 400 people dying in the Aegean Sea. Even the mayor of Mytilene called for ferries to pick up refugees in Turkey and transfer them to Greece as long as no safe ways towards Europe are available. Let's take a look at what lies behind the calls that reached the Alarm Phone from the Aegean region:

### Decrease in push-backs and violence at sea in spring 2015

When we launched the Alarm Phone in October 2014, our main question for this region was how the Alarm Phone could intervene and prevent cases of **PUSH-BACKS**. In the last years, the Greek coastguard had systematically pushed boats back into Turkish waters. These **PUSH-BACKS** had been a daily practice, clearly violating refugee rights. These attacks were always accompanied by brutal violence: people were threatened by masked men who pointed guns at them, shot in the air and sometimes also at the boats; they stole money, passports and mobile phones; people were beaten up and some badly injured; sometimes we even heard reports about torture (water-boarding, pointing a weapon at someone's head and threatening to shoot).

In these violent situations at sea it was difficult for us to imagine how the Alarm Phone could intervene to support those threatened by **PUSH-BACKS**. However, when Syriza came into power in January 2015 as a result of people standing up against imposed austerity measures, some important changes occurred also in the Greek migration policy. The two main consequences were a significant decrease in **PUSH-BACKS** and attacks at sea and, more slowly, also a reduction of detention-durations. Nonetheless, since June 2015, the Alarm Phone began to witness once again cases of attack at sea, committed by coastguards. Several times we were called by people who had been attacked only minutes or hours earlier, by masked men, who had taken away the engine, often stabbing the boat and leaving travellers drifting in a damaged boat. These practices – less systematic than before, concerning the percentage of boats

affected – were documented by the Alarm Phone. All cases that we directly witnessed were collected and included in our public statements, also in order to directly inform the Greek ministries and ask for an investigation against these unacceptable violations of human rights. We know very well that while the Greek coastguard carries out large-scale rescue operations, the same people who are responsible for the death of women and children in the distress case off Farmakonisi Island in early 2014 and for all these violent attacks, continue to work within the coastguards.

### Trans-border communication to make sea journeys safer

In August 2015, the situation changed once again. Since then we have been involved daily in distress cases in the Aegean Sea. In one week in late October, we were alerted to 100 distress cases, 99 of them occurring in the Aegean Sea. One of the main reasons for this incredibly high number of calls to us is the immense level of communication within the communities of travellers. Especially Syrian activists built a strong communication-net to make sea-trips safer. The distances from the Turkish mainland to the Greek islands are relatively short, so that mobile phone coverage is given in nearly the entire area. Smartphones became one of the most important life-saving instruments for these journeys, as they allow users to quickly pass on GPS positions. Very rapidly, the different networks of people on the move and activist groups found each other, forming novel ties and collaborations. Within the last year, a lot of new Facebook groups came into existence that give their best to support refugees crossing the Aegean Sea. We are particularly happy to have created close ties with friends from Syrian networks with whom we established mutual support structures.

These new cooperations are highly important, especially with regards to distress calls that inform us about people who stranded on the many Greek islands. Some find themselves on uninhabited islands, at times on beaches along the coastlines from which it is extremely difficult to move on, especially for the many vulnerable people who are nowadays among the travellers. The lack of support people receive

through official (state) structures makes their survival dependent on the support and solidarity of civil society, especially in the winter time with deteriorating weather conditions. Travellers often strand in their completely soaked clothes and require immediate support to protect them from the low temperatures.

Besides local supporters, solidarity groups and also fishermen, others have come to the Aegean Sea to help: Spanish life-guards launched a rescue campaign several months ago and were able to save uncountable lives by pulling people out of the water with their own hands, also on the 28th of October when the largest ship-wreck occurred. Sea-Watch also sent a speed boat to the region in November 2015 to conduct rescue operations in northern Lesvos. All these initiatives demonstrate the extent to which rescue operations are carried out by an incredibly engaged civil society.

### On »Hot Spots« and the situation after arrival on the Greek islands

In some distress cases we were able to stay in contact with the travellers after their arrival on the Greek islands, mainly through the network Welcome to Europe ([www.w2eu.info](http://www.w2eu.info)), but also personally in several cases. In this brochure we documented one such case where we stayed in touch with a group of Afghans that had stranded on Lesvos Island in October 2015 (see page 105). Another re-narrated story highlights the psychological support that can be given via WhatsApp communications. We show in excerpts our conversations with a Syrian woman who reached Lesvos in the beginning of September 2015 and who was able to move on to Germany (see page 71).

The close connection to Welcome to Europe made it possible for us to document and protest in a common statement the developments surrounding the newly announced ›hot spots‹ on the Greek islands in mid-October. In our statement we said: »Refugees who survive the journey and succeed to cross the maritime border between Turkey and Greece in small and overcrowded plastic boats are subjected to the so-called EU ›hotspot approach‹ since its launch on Friday 16th of October 2015. As part of the European Agenda on Migration, hotspots are now

being deployed by Frontex to support so-called ›frontline EU states‹ in systematically identifying and screening travellers who ›illegally‹ entered EU territory. (...) The official opening of this hotspot on Lesvos coincided with increased numbers of new arrivals and deteriorating weather conditions. In the absence of any functioning queuing system and any form of crowd management by the authorities, and without access to shelter (protecting people from the harsh weather conditions), sanitary infrastructures such as toilets, as well as to food, water, dry clothing, medication and doctors, hundreds of desperate refugees are left to survive in between mud and piles of garbage outside of Moria's fences.«

### Turkey's role as Europe's new »watch dog«?

When in September 2015 thousands of mainly Syrian refugees started to march towards the Turkish-Greek land border close to Edirne under the slogan »We don't want to drown no more«,<sup>2</sup> the European governments started negotiations with president Erdogan with the sole purpose to convince Turkey to halt refugee movements towards the EU. However, looking back at the past years during which various similar attempts were made, it remains questionable whether these new initiatives will really make a remarkable difference regarding the number of successful border-crossings. The march towards Edirne was another example of collective resistance against the border regime that causes death at sea. The answer of the Turkish government was strict: they blocked the protestors and finally forced them back to Istanbul. In the following months, negotiations with Turkey continued during the EU-African summit on migration in Malta and afterwards, finally concluding a deal by the end of November. The EU promised to invest 3 billion Euros to support Turkey's practices of deterring irregular migration movements towards EU territories. While the rewards for doing Europe's dirty work are of financial nature and also include the promise to facilitate access to visas for Turkish citizens, most importantly, Europe agreed to stay silent about the systematic human rights violations perpetrated by the Turkish government against the Kurdish population in Turkey and Syria.

104

105

## In high speed through the Balkans

Through our hotline, we witnessed a lot of suffering as we are mainly in contact with those who face difficulties and distress at sea. Nevertheless, we also saw important and encouraging transformations in the Aegean region in 2015: People crossing that region are now able to move towards their countries of desired destination much more quickly than before, oftentimes in merely 10 to 20 days. That is a huge difference compared to previous years, when people got stuck in Greece and also along the route for many months, sometimes even years.

Struggling for the freedom of movement, people opened up a corridor through the Balkans. The Alarm Phone is one cornerstone of support in this struggle, for one part of the route. There are many others (and also a lot of us), who support these struggles throughout the many stages of this long journey: in the border regions in-between, such as in Idomeini, Sid or Spielfeld; in the struggles that follow afterwards, struggles for a Europe formed from below in which all those who live here will finally have the same social rights; or in struggles on the other side of the Mediterranean Sea that contest border militarisation and Europe's war on migration.

- 1 A report from Pro Asyl documented these push backs already in November 2013: [http://www.proasyl.de/en/press/press/news/pro\\_asyl\\_releases\\_new\\_report\\_pushed\\_back](http://www.proasyl.de/en/press/press/news/pro_asyl_releases_new_report_pushed_back)
- 2 See: <http://bordermonitoring.eu/tuerkei/2015/09/busofhope-from-istanbul>

### PUBLICATIONS

- October 2015: ALARM PHONE AND WELCOME TO EUROPE, Frontex slows down registration procedures in »Hot Spot« Moria, leaving refugees for days in life-threatening conditions, Link: <http://infomobile.wzeu.net/2015/10/24/frontex-slows-down-registration-procedures-in-hot-spot-moria-leaving-refugees-for-days-in-life-threatening-conditions>
- August 2015: ALARM PHONE STATEMENT, Distress at sea and endangered lives due to coastguard actions?, Link: [http://alarmphone.org/en/2015/08/05/alarm-phone-press-release-distress-at-sea-and-endangered-lives-due-to-coastguard-actions/?post\\_type\\_release\\_type=post](http://alarmphone.org/en/2015/08/05/alarm-phone-press-release-distress-at-sea-and-endangered-lives-due-to-coastguard-actions/?post_type_release_type=post)

106

# Rescued by Fishermen

25th of October 2015, Lesvos

In the afternoon we received a Viber call on our shift phone, while we were in Mytilene/Lesvos. A boat had stranded on, or rather crashed against, a very small and uninhabited island near Lesvos and close to Palios. The group of travellers included 9 children and most of them were totally wet. After a while, we were able to locate them and our Alarm Phone shift team alerted the Greek coastguards. The people stayed in contact with us, communicating with the help of one of our Afghan friends and we finally understood that a boat had come to rescue them from the island.

We were nearby as we had spent some days outside the registration and detention centre of Moria, where people had to wait for many hours or even days, freezing in the mud, under completely degrading conditions. We decided to go to the coastguards in the port of Mytilene in order to wait and bring dry clothes for the rescued. Finally the group we were in contact with arrived: fishermen had rescued them and brought them to the port. The Greek coastguards request frequently fishing vessels to intervene and rescue at sea. The fishermen had been able to remove all people from this small island, but during the rescue operation and due to high waves, their small dinghy had also crashed against rocks and was damaged. Fortunately, everyone had survived and nobody was injured, all were carried safely to the main island of Lesvos by the fishing vessel.

107

The moment of their arrival was a big relief, especially after observing a helicopter of the Greek authorities which had been searching for more than 10 missing travellers, following the detection of the bodies of two children and one woman already in the morning. We welcomed the group at the port and helped to provide them with dry clothes. We met one of the local supporters, who was very happy that we helped her.

When the fishing boat arrived, we encountered one of the children who was more than happy. This 12-year old boy had rescued a cat from the uninhabited island, which he proudly held in his arms when he left the fishing vessel: »It was good luck for her that we stranded there and I could rescue her.« Afterwards we managed to bring the families with children to Pikpa, a self-organised Welcome Centre that offers shelter for the most vulnerable people, where they can take a rest. The following day they went to Moria in order to get registered and continue their journey.

We met with the fishermen again one day later and donated 400 Euro (*out of the Alarm Phone Aegean Sea budget*) to buy a new dinghy and we gave them also a picture of the boy with the cat for their memory. They said that it was not the first time they had rescued people at sea and they promised to continue to do so with their new boat. Local media attended our meeting as well and interviewed the captain and the Egyptian fisherman who had carried out the rescue operation with the little dinghy, going back and forth between the fishing vessel and the island to pick up the people.

**A local newspaper reported with pictures from the arrival in the port:  
Tragedy on the same day: <http://www.ekathimerini.com/202834/article/ekathimerini/news/three-drown-as-new-migrant-boat-sinks-off-island-of-lesvos>**

108

109



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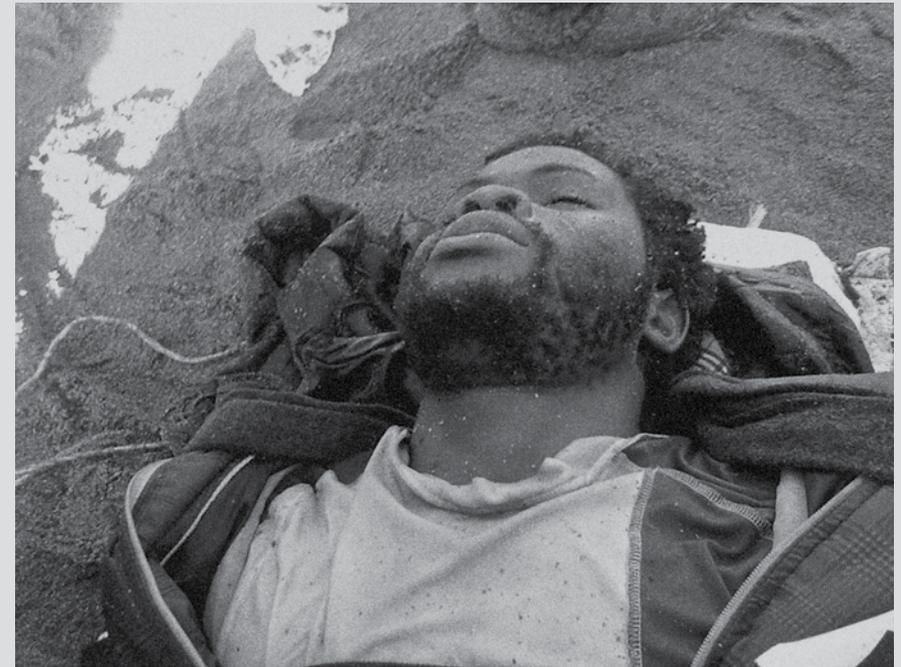
# Drowning, ladies and gentlemen, is a silent process.

In contrast to panic, to crying or shouting, or to lashing out when facing impending death, the last moment of one's life at sea is so silent that nothing can be heard but the waves. A human being drowns in most cases horizontally, the head bent back.

Drowning, as the result of falling overboard or of being dragged down into the depth of the sea by one's clothes soaked in salt water, is a long struggle against the process of going under. It is the struggle to escape the water, the attempt to remain at the water's surface. One rises, briefly takes in air at the waters' surface, before submerging again. At first one breathes in a lot of oxygen and a little bit of water. At some point the proportion switches. Little oxygen, a lot of water. Body parts cease to move after a while. In this phase one occasionally breathes out small amounts of air but regularly swallows large amounts of liquid. Either the lungs fill with water, or the stomach. There is the process of dry drowning. And there is the process of wet drowning. Before the body finally gives up, it twitches intensely one last time, as oxygen deficiency provokes cramps. What follows is death. Slowly bending, the body sinks into the hollow. (...)

When we talk about sea rescue of refugees, honoured guests, we talk about this process, about the abjectness of the circumstances of death. About the mercilessness of all accessories who take note of the number of casualties, year after year. Only this year, nearly 3000 people died in this way at sea. And we have reached only the middle of September. (...)

Excerpt from the laudation given by Mely Kiyak to the initiative »Watch The Med Alarm Phone« when it received the Taz Panter award on the 19th of September 2015.



## Michel

The 6th of february will always stay in our memories, many migrants were trying to cross the border to arrive in Spain (Ceuta) and they were shot by Spanish Police »Guardia Civil«. More than 50 people were killed and I – Tresor – lost my close friends (Michel, Daniel, and more).

Today the EU Politics continue to militarise the borders (Hangary, Morroco, Autrichia etc.). They always open borders for the capitalism system (Colatan, Oil, Uranium, Cafe,Cacao, Diamont etc..) and create conflicts and war by selling weapons but they close the borders for human beings.

**Tresor (voix des migrants)**

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## 12th of October 2013

We came together in the harbour of Thermi for remembering the dead of the European border regime. Since the Lampedusa tragedy with more than 300 dead all over Europe there is an outcry: this death at the border has to be stopped! There should be safe ways for refugees to reach Europe!

All of these deaths have a face, a name. All of them leave behind relatives and friends. Besides the bodies also their hopes and dreams are lost. We want to give back a piece of dignity, to those whose death disappeared – right here – into the senselessness of the European borders – and we want to thank those who risk their lives to rescue. We all feel ashamed in the moment of these deaths because we failed in our attempt to stop this murderous regime and

to create a welcoming Europe. Remembering here means to save the stories of the uncounted, who died at the borders of Europe. They had been on the way to change their lives on their own. Their death is the death in search for freedom. And that concerns all of us. There would be many more names and many more stories. We will never forget the others but in this moment we will remind those who died in March 2013 here in front of Thermi. So let us speak out their names.

**Lujain Hashash (3 years old) – he lives!**

**Abdullah Hashash (6 years old) – he lives!**

**Jinan Hashash (7 years old) – she lives!**

**Kadri Tarkmani (14 years old) – he lives!**

**Kamar Seni (17 years old) – he lives!**

**Muhamad Seni (21 years old) – he lives!**



## Missing Harragas from Tunisia

As visas from EU countries were most often denied to them, some thousand people took the opportunity, due to the collapse of the border police after the Tunisian revolution in 2011, to reach Italy on small boats. In several incidents, boats capsized and rescue operations were launched too late ...

»Where are our children?« Mothers and fathers of missing harragas got organised 4 years ago to ask for information and the truth about the disappeared. »La Terre pour Tous«, a group of relatives based in Tunis, continuously protests publicly the death at sea as a consequence of a rigid EU border- and visa regime.

The photo shows a part of the group during a street theatre action on the 6th of September 2015, the third anniversary of a tragedy with more than 70 dead and missing young Tunisians near Lampione/Lampedusa.



4

Shake the Border  
Shake the System

# Beyond Borderlines

For the Freedom of Movement in the frame of  
Global Social Rights for all by Hagen Kopp

**»IN THIS WAY WE WANT TO CONTRIBUTE  
TO KEEP OPEN A PATH INTO A NEW  
EUROPE – FOR THOSE WHO ARE ARRIVING  
AS WELL AS FOR OURSELVES.«**

116

117

1

## **KEEP FLIGHT ROUTES OPEN SUPPORT THE RIGHT TO GO**

Struggling for open routes requires a stabilisation and widening of the daily solidarity structures that facilitate movement and which emerged around the whole Mediterranean, at sea, at the coasts and along the Balkan route. The Alarm Phone is one element in this amazing chain of support activities emanating from civil society and community networks: self-organised escort and rescue initiatives, rest houses for migrants and their children, concrete travel help and web-guides, the construction of info-points, kitchen groups and health stations.

We like this notion of »a path into a new Europe«, as expressed in a recent statement of one of our sister projects – »moving europe« –, which was created to support refugees and migrants along the Balkan route. Freedom of movement is the central goal of the Alarm Phone as we are convinced that this would end the death and suffering at the external and internal borders of the European Union. But, of course, it is not a single or detached demand. Rather, it forms a crucial element in the intersectional struggle towards global social justice and towards equal rights for all on this planet.

Our visions for change go beyond both shores of the Mediterranean borderzone in which our hotline-project is active every day and every night. We see both the need for transnational cooperations with actors in the global south and with countries of origin of migration as well as the need of common wider social struggles within European countries of destination. Accordingly, our vision for change is characterised by three central dimensions and demands:

At the same time we need more politically visible mobilisations, like the open borders and flight-help-caravans in the Balkans, but also like campaigns such as the one initiated by the Alarm Phone last April: Ferries not Frontex! This demand symbolises safe routes to Europe, which could be established today, if the murderous EU-visa-regime were to be suspended. The slogan applies to all maritime areas and can help to further deconstruct the cynical and hypocritical discourse blaming ›smugglers‹ for the mass death at sea. With free access to ferries, smuggling activities would cease to exist and no one would have to die at sea anymore.

2

## TRANSNATIONAL SOLIDARITY STRUCTURES SUPPORT THE RIGHT TO STAY

Bridges need to be built to create social and political exchanges with those countries migrants and refugees are coming from. In fact, the EU likes to conceive of itself as the »successful fireman« although it is often actually the one setting fires in the first place. This holds true especially in cases when the EU pushes its own neoliberal agenda at the expense of other countries, less able to assert their position or defend their own values, economies and social infrastructures.

Whether through resource wars and weapon exports, through the creation and support of corrupt elites, or via land-grabbing, over-fishing and brutal trade barriers, many reasons for migration stem from the fact that Europe and the global economy are profiting from the exploitation of countries migrants are fleeing from. Hence the proclamations of politicians become more and more hypocritical when they suggest to address the root causes of migration through their superficial policies.

118

What they clearly want is a continuation of the exploitation of these countries, with no regard for the miserable consequences of their actions. Self-organised initiatives and struggles cooperating for social justice in the global south oppose these aims. It must be clear: neo-colonial dependency relationships will only be deconstructed and abolished when social movements from Africa and Europe work together as equals, with direct cooperation and collaborative work. And the common experiences and increasing contacts and relationships which evolved through the struggles of migration might be a crucial catalyst to push this process further.

3

## CONNECTING STRUGGLES TO FORM A SOCIAL OFFENSIVE

How will the future of Europe look like? Will the governments and their agencies manage to counter the successful refugee and migrant struggles? Will they, if necessary, increase their power by making agreements with right wing populist and racist parties and organisations? Will they attempt to divide societies further, for example by playing off social groups in precarious conditions against each other? Or can the impulse for autonomy and the momentum of migration struggles spill over and transform other social issues? Can the »March of Hope«, the self-organisation and the self-confidence of refugees and migrants encourage a new dynamic that sparks social struggles across Europe?

Freedom, dignity, democracy, social security for their families: these are the aims the fleeing people struggle for with all their energy; fences and borders will not prevent them from accomplishing these goals. They want to reach the places of their choice, often where family and friends

119

already reside. They want to learn the language, live in a respectable and humane way, work and live normal lives. »Solidarity for All«, the slogan of justice movements in Greece and elsewhere should be followed to actively avoid divisions but also in order to attack the »new normality of austerity«, the politics of precarity and cuts to social spending. Affordable homes for all through new social housing construction programmes, access to all for health care and education, basic income for all and raised minimum wages: these social demands can and must be filled with new life, via social appropriation and social strikes, locally and transnationally.

In short, the struggle of migrants and refugees has given new impulses to this agenda and also to our visions. Who could have imagined only one year ago, that the European border regime would be overrun and collapse? Of course, this was not the case for the entire regime and the collapse may only be of temporary nature. Nonetheless, the amazing developments of 2015 demonstrate again what is possible: social movements can create unforeseen and unexpected dynamics, and Europe can be challenged and changed.

## **WE MUST CONTINUE AND STRUGGLE ONWARDS**

**LET US TEAR THE BORDERS DOWN,  
THE PHYSICAL, THE SOCIAL  
AND THE IMAGINED ONES,  
IN ALL COUNTRIES,  
AND IN ALL OF OUR MINDS**

120



**26.09.2015 Botovo** During the »long summer of migration« European borders were overrun. While fences were reinforced in winter 2015, we will see what will happen in spring 2016 when even more travellers can be expected to march again...



**Efthalou, Lesvos in September 2015**

Relief after the risky sea crossing: on the beach the travellers meet local and international volunteers welcoming them. Joining hands for an open Europe!



**October 2015 »Hotspot« Moria, Lesvos**

The composition of those who are on their way to Europe changed: more and more women are travelling. They challenge all attempts of the authorities to gain back control.



**October 2015 Rigonce at the Slovenian border to Croatia** While state structures and big NGOs and international organisations failed to assist, independent volunteers quickly set up kitchens and other structures of support.



**September 2015 Keleti, Budapest** More and more people got stuck in Budapest because they were not allowed to board trains. But soon they would start the march of hope, forcing EU authorities to open up a corridor toward the north.



**September 2015, Vienna Trainstation**

Welcome. All along the route people solidarize to welcome those arriving. Standing ovations for those who succeeded to overrun a harsh border regime.



**October 2015 Röszke, Hungary** Re-fencing at the Hungarian-Serbian border. Europe is at a turning point. Will the creation of more and more fences spell the end of the 'European promise' of freedom? Will we move further toward the 'Orbanisation' of the EU.



**August 2015, Eidomeni, Greek-Macedonian border** De-fencing in late summer. Barbed wire and lines of military cannot stop the strong movement of flight and migration.



**1.12.2015 Eidomeni, Greek-Macedonian border**

When the Macedonian military started to filter and let only pass Syrians, Afghans and Iraqis, more and more people from various nationalities gathered against this selection process. Three weeks of strong protests followed.



**3.10.2015, Vienna**

Freedom of movement and social struggles.

The new challenge is how to create new struggles for social rights for everyone who is here.

# NETWORK

## **AFRIQUE EUROPE INTERACT**

Afrique-Europe-Interact is a small, transnationally organised network that was founded in early 2010.

<http://afrique-europe-interact.net>

## **BOATS 4 PEOPLE**

Boats 4 People is a coalition of 14 organisations in 7 countries created to defend the rights of migrants at sea.

[www.facebook.com/boats4people](http://www.facebook.com/boats4people)

## **BORDERLINE EUROPE**

borderline-europe is a non-profit association, independent from political parties or governments.

[www.borderline-europe.de](http://www.borderline-europe.de)

## **FORSCHUNGSGESELLSCHAFT FLUCHT UND MIGRATION**

FFM has been in existence since 1994 and is a non-profit association of research and documentation.

<http://ffm-online.org>

## **NOBORDERS MAROCCO**

No Borders Morocco – Morocco Migrant Solidarity is a loose network of activists-migrants-people, based in/between Morocco and Europe.

<https://beatingborders.wordpress.com>

## **VOIX DES MIGRANTS**

Voix des Migrants is an initiative organised by and for migrants to show the situation of migrants and refugees and to sensibilities and mobilise them to fight for their rights.

[www.voixdesmigrants.com](http://www.voixdesmigrants.com)

## **WATCHTHEMED**

Watch The Mediterranean Sea is an online mapping platform to monitor the deaths and violations of migrants' rights at the maritime borders of the EU. Initiated in December 2013 as a part of the Boats4-People campaign by various networks.

[www.watchthemed.net](http://www.watchthemed.net)

## **WELCOME 2 EUROPE**

provides information to refugees and migrants that might be useful on their journey to and through Europe.

[www.w2eu.info](http://www.w2eu.info)

# THANKS

## THE ALARM PHONE WOULD LIKE TO THANK...

... **ALL THE THOUSANDS OF REFUGEES** who called us when they faced situations of distress: your confidence and courage were gifts to us. It is your determination that animates us and allows us to struggle on.

... **FATHER MUSSIE ZERAI;** all the networks of Syrian activists; Nawal Soufi and her whole team; the Macedonian collective and all others who do a similar job like ours and who inspired us with their knowledge and commitment.

... **ALL THE BRAVE FISHERMAN** who saved hundreds of people in distress in Turkish and Greek waters; our friends from Sea-Watch; the crews of Médecins Sans Frontières and MOAS.

... **ALL THE CREWS** of cargo vessels who did not hesitate to quickly react to SOS calls and helped, even if they were not equipped or trained to conduct rescue operations.

... **ALL THOSE COASTGUARD** members in rescue operation centres and those who went out to sea and gave their best to rescue migrants and refugees in distress and who, unlike some of their colleagues, were not involved in violent and inhumane practices, including non-rescue, push-backs, attacks and interceptions.

... **ALL OUR FRIENDS** who shared their own experiences of crossing the sea on boats with us: Exchanging with you gave us a much better understanding of the whole situation.

... **ALL OF THE UNCOUNTABLE** friends who listen to our shift-team members when they need someone to speak to.

... **ALL OF YOU WHO STRUGGLE** every day for the freedom of movement.

... **ALL OF YOU WHO DONATED**

140

141

# DONATIONS

**Last but not least, we are always happy to receive donations for our project. In order to continue with our work, the Alarm Phone project requires further support in order to:**

- Run the hotline, to reach out to the satellite phones of boat-people and to charge these phones online with credit
- Spread the emergency number via visiting cards in various languages in migrant communities
- Distribute leaflets with information about risks at sea
- Create materials for campaigns against Frontex and the border regime
- Undertake networking and research trips to the different transit regions

## ACCOUNT FOR DONATIONS

**Forschungsgesellschaft Flucht & Migration**

**Sparkasse der Stadt Berlin**

**IBAN:** DE68 10050000 0610024264

**BIC:** BELADEBEXX

**Catchword:** WatchTheMed-Alarmphone



**Tunis 2013** Where are our beloved? Relatives get self-organized to search for the missing LEONA GOLDSTEIN



**Berlin, 6.2.2015** Action in memory of the dead from 6.2.2014 in Ceuta. © B.SAUER-DIETE/ BSD-PHOTO-ARCHIV



**Lampedusa, June 013** Eritrean refugees successfully resist against the Dublin-regulation. HAGEN KOPP



**Switzerland, October 2014** Father Mussie Zerai alarms in case of distress already since 10 years. CHARLES HELLER



**Aegean Sea November 2015** Photo sent by Viber from a boat near Kos



**Dobova (Slovenia), October 2015** Syrian family moving through the Balkan-corridor. HAGEN KOPP



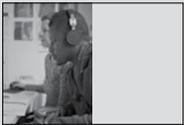
**Greece, October 2015** Women waiting to board the ferry to Athens to continue their journey. SALINIA STROUX



**Hanau, November 2015** Alarmphoneteam WELCOME2EUROPE



**Berlin, November 2015** Alarmphoneteam LEONA GOLDSTEIN



**Berlin, November 2015** Alarmphoneteam LEONA GOLDSTEIN



**Berlin, Oktober 2015** Alarmphoneteam GUSTAV PURSCHE



**Berlin, November 2015** Alarmphoneteam LEONA GOLDSTEIN



**Turkey-Greece-Germany, September 2015** Photos send via Whats App to Alarmphoneteam Hanau: 1. Distress near Lesvos, 2. Kara Tepe, tentstation of Syrians, 3. Beaten woman, 4. Cows near Hofgeismar. SYRIAN WOMAN



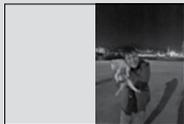
**Melilla, Marocco 2014** Border of Melilla JOSÉ PALAZÓN



**Berlin, 22. April 2015** Protest against Chief of Frontex: Klaus Röslér. OLIVER FELDHAUS/HEBA/UMBRUCH BILDARCHIV



**22.12.2011** Testimony by Dan Heile Gebre, survivor of a shipwreck in 2011 CHARLES HELLER



**Lesvos 25.10.2015** The rescue of the cat. MARILY STROUX



**Ceuta, Marocco 6.2.2014** One of the Dead shot by Guardia Civil PRIVATE



**Lesvos, 8.9.2013** Thermi Memorial, Journey »back to the border« organised by the W2EU and YOG. MARILY STROUX

142

143



**Tunis 6.9.2015** A group of relatives of missing haragas at streettheater action for the anniversary of the Lampione tragedy



**Lesvos, October 2013** A newly arrived Afghan minor is dancing during the journey »back to the border«. MARILY STROUX



**Botovo 26.9.2015** People walk in big groups on the motorways, heading for northern europe HAGEN KOPP



**Lesvos September 2015** Volunteers are welcoming the arriving FISHING WATERS



**Moria, Lesvos September 2015** Long Lines of waiting people at »Hot-spot« detention center Moria SALINIA STROUX



**Rigonce at the slove-nian border to Croatia, October 2015** Independent support HAGEN KOPP



**Budapest, Keleti trainstation 2.9.2015** People got stuck, not allowed to board trains. CHRISTOPHER GLANZL



**Wien Westbahnhof 31.8.2015** People solidarize to welcome those arriving. CHRISTOPHER GLANZL



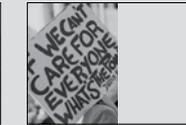
**Rözke, Hungary 15.9.2015** Refencing at the hungarian-serbian border CHRISTOPHER GLANZL



**Eidomeni, August 2015** Barbed wire and lines of military cannot stop the strong movement.



**Eidomeni, Greek-Macedonian border August 2015** Three weeks of strong protests MOVING EUROPE



**Wien, 3.10.2015** Manifestation »voices for refugees« CHRISTOPHER GLANZL



**Central Mediterranean, Summer 2015** The project »Sea Watch« RUBEN NEUGEBAUER



**Moria, Lesvos October 2015** Lining up in front of Moria for getting registered SALINIA STROUX



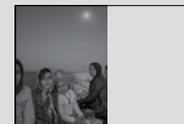
**Schengen, June 2014** Action during the march for freedom from Strasbourg to brussels HAGEN KOPP



**Kos, 2.12.2015** Photo send by Viber from a boat in front of Kos



**Mytilene, Lesvos August 2015** Ferries not Frontex WELCOME2EUROPE



**Lesvos, October 2015** Families waiting in the port to continue their journey. SALINIA STROUX

# GLOSSARY

**AIS** Automatic Identification System. Automatic vessel tracking system. Vessels are localized by satellite or base stations on land.

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**BOZA** (Bambara language) Victory. Shout of Westafrican migrants when they reach Europe.

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**EU DIRECTIVE 2001/51/EC** Directive of the European Union from June 2001 that obliges carriers to pay the return journey of an asylum applicant in case asylum has been denied. As a consequence, transport companies generally do not accept migrants without valid papers.

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**EU NAVFOR MED** European Union Naval Force Mediterranean. EU military operation launched in June 2015 to fight ›traffickers‹ in the Mediterranean Sea. It entered phase 2 in October 2015 and was renamed to Sophia after the name of a child born on a naval vessel during a rescue operation in August 2015.

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**FRONTEx** Border agency of the European Union, founded in 2004 and based in Warsaw. Main tasks are the coordination of national border polices and the protection of EU borders against ›irregular‹ immigration. Symbol and main actor of Fortress Europe.

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**HARRAGA** (Arabic) those who burn [the border]. Self-description of North African migrants who cross the Mediterranean by boat without visa.

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**HOTSPOT** Registration centres deployed by mobile → Frontex teams at particular sites of the European border to assist screening and speed up deportation. The first Hotspot was opened on the 17th of September 2015 in Lampedusa.

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**IMO NUMBER** International Maritime Organization number. Seven-digit number to uniquely identify a ship or a ship owner's company. See also → MSII.

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**INTERCEPTION** Stop of migrants at sea within the territory of the state they left and forced to turn back to the state of departure by the corresponding border police. This must not be confused with a rescue or → SAR operation.

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**IOM** International Organization for Migration. Intergovernmental organization for migration management founded in 1951. Cooperates closely with governments.

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144

145

**MARE NOSTRUM** Air and naval operation of the Italian navy to conduct large-scale → SAR operations in the Mediterranean, carried out for one year from October 2013 to October 2014, able to rescue around 150,000 migrants.

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**MRCC** Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre. Primary search and rescue agency for coordination and control of → SAR operations.

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**MSII** Maritime Mobile Service Identity. Nine-digit number to uniquely identify ship or coast stations. See also → IMO number.

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**PULL-BACK** Same illegal removal of migrants at sea from the destination state's territory as described for → Push-back, but carried out by forces of the state of departure – usually with knowledge and consent of the destination state's authorities.

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**PUSH-BACK** Illegal removal of migrants at sea from the destination state's territory to international waters or the origin state's territory by forces of the destination state. The migrants are deprived of their right to apply for asylum. See also → Pull-back.

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**SCHENGEN AREA** Area of 26 European countries with a common visa policy and no general controls at their common borders. Still, spot checks are carried out and lately, wider border controls were reintroduced. Slovenia, Bulgaria, Romania and Cyprus do not belong to the Schengen area.

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**SAR ZONE/OPERATION** Search and Rescue zone/operation. The Mediterranean is divided into national SAR zones. In case of a boat in distress, the corresponding → MRCC is obliged to launch a SAR operation in order to rescue that boat.

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**THURAYA** Satellite phone provider from the United Arab Emirates. Also short for the satellite phone itself. The coverage extends throughout the entire Mediterranean Sea.

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**TRITON** Border security operation by → Frontex. Started on November 1, 2014 following → Mare Nostrum. But in difference Triton's budget is smaller and its mission is border control, not rescue.

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**WATCH THE MED** Online documentation and mapping platform to monitor the deaths and violations of migrants' rights at the maritime borders of the EU. Initiated December 5, 2013 as part of the Boats4people campaign. <http://watchthemed.net>

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**ZODIAC** Familiar term for an inflatable rubber boat. The French company Zodiac is the main producer of that type of boat that is often used to cross the Mediterranean. Equivalent expressions are rubber dinghy or just dinghy.

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# IMPRINT

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## EDITORS

Marion Bayer, Hagen Kopp,  
Laura Maikowski, Maurice Stierl

## LECTORING

Maurice Stierl  
Simon Sontowski

## TRANSLATIONS

Maurice Stierl

## DESIGN

[www.bildargumente.de](http://www.bildargumente.de)  
in cooperation with ça ira!

## VISDP

FFM  
Mehring-Hof  
Gneisenastr. 2a  
10961 Berlin

## KONTAKT

If you know about an emergency  
case of people in distress in the  
Mediterranean you can call our

**Alarm Phone Number: +334 86 51 71 61**

If you want to contact us for an  
interview or a report, or if you want to  
support our work:

**[wtm-alarm-phone@antira.info](mailto:wtm-alarm-phone@antira.info)**

Many of our regional teams can be  
contacted directly for media requests.  
Please find further information here:  
<http://alarmphone.org/en/media>.

**[www.alarmphone.org](http://www.alarmphone.org)**

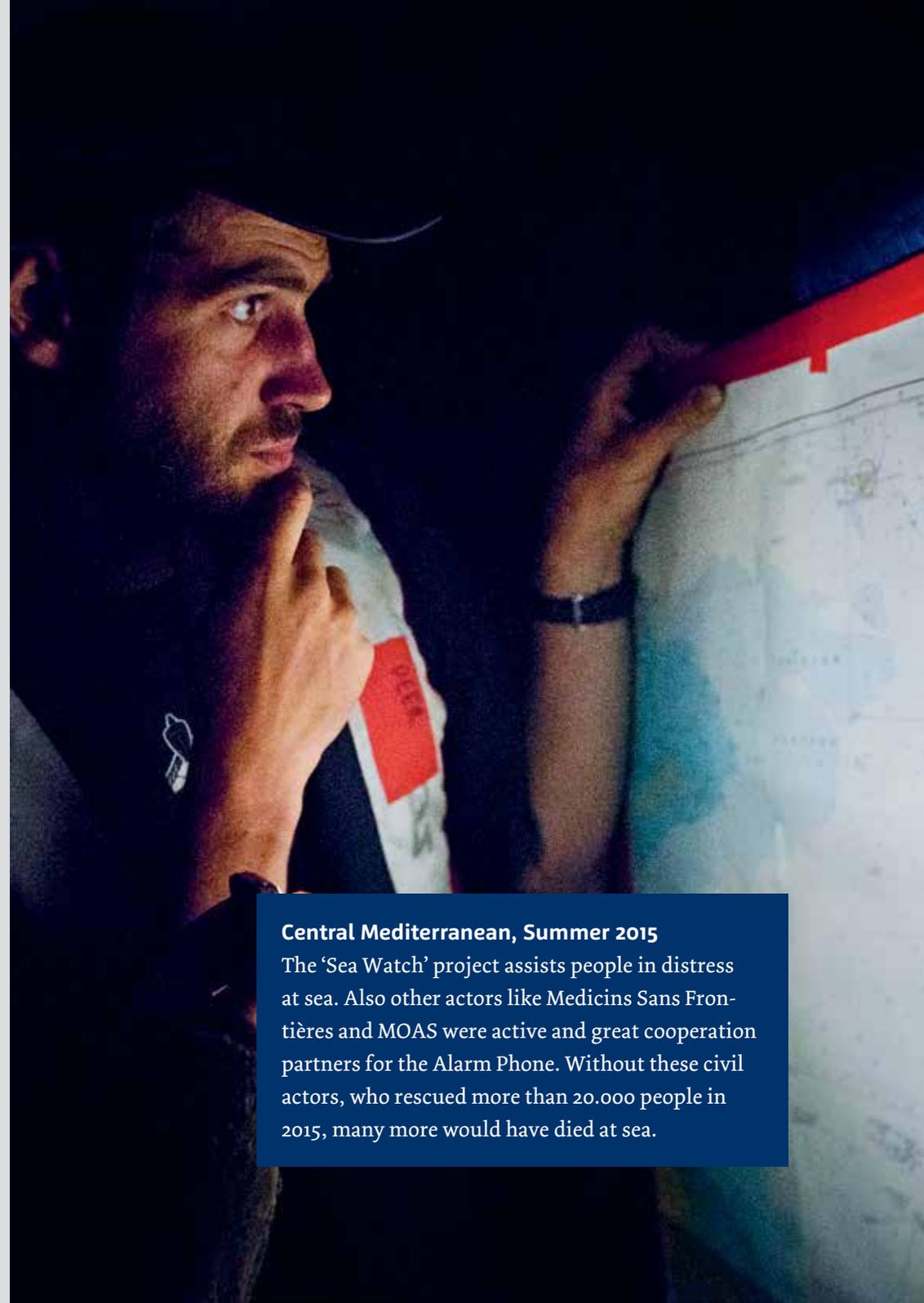
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**[www.facebook.com/watchthemed](https://www.facebook.com/watchthemed)**.

**[alarmphone](https://www.instagram.com/alarmphone)**

**[https://twitter.com/alarm\\_phone](https://twitter.com/alarm_phone)**

146



## Central Mediterranean, Summer 2015

The 'Sea Watch' project assists people in distress at sea. Also other actors like Mediciens Sans Frontières and MOAS were active and great cooperation partners for the Alarm Phone. Without these civil actors, who rescued more than 20.000 people in 2015, many more would have died at sea.

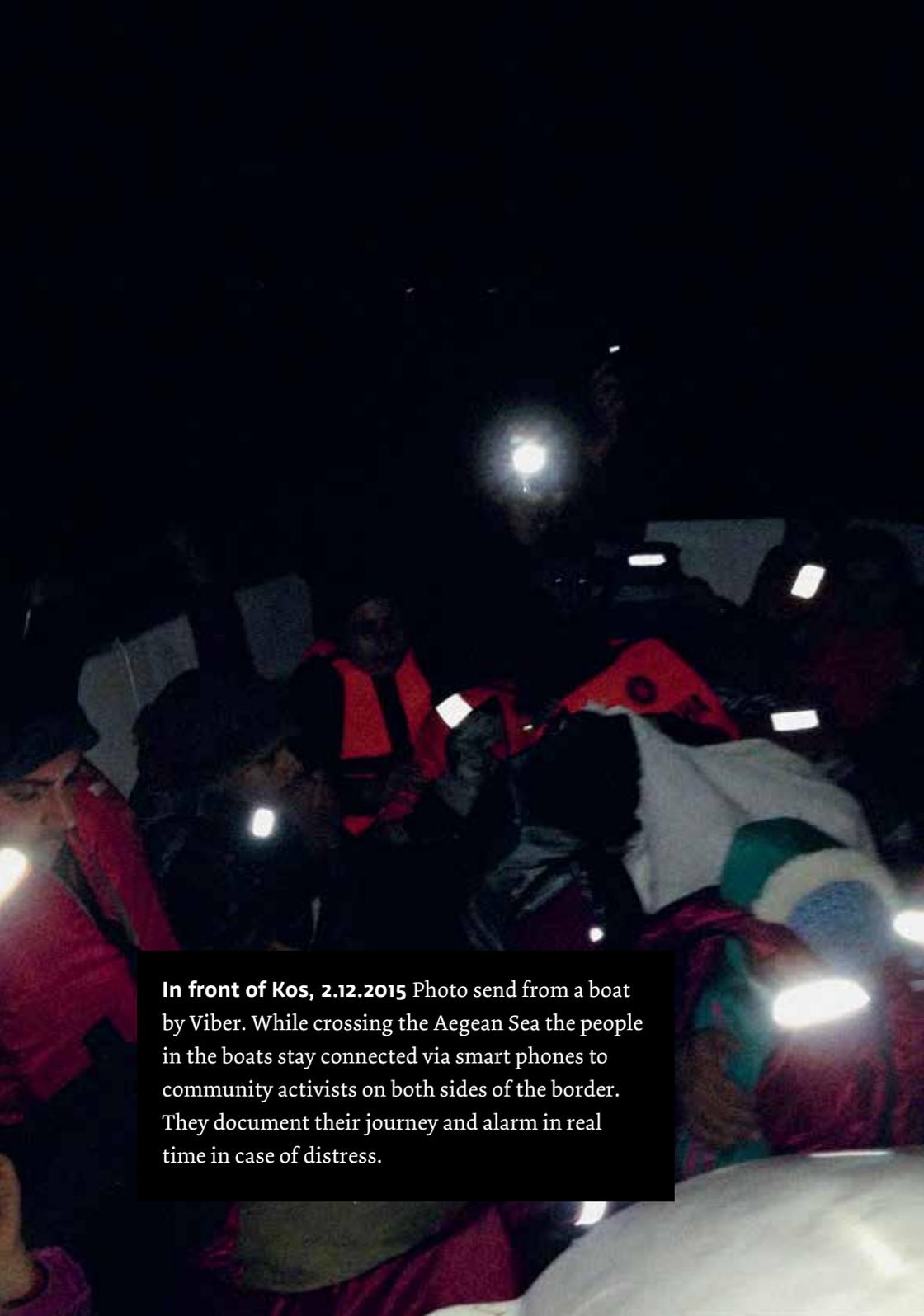


**Moria, Lesbos, Summer and Autumn 2015** The number of vulnerable people is incredible high. Whole families arrive, the youngest a few weeks, the oldest more than 90 years. There are wheelchair-drivers, people without legs and they are in the first lines when overcoming the next borders.

**River crossing in Schengen, June 2014**

While challenging the inner European borders with the march for freedom from Strasbourg to Brussels the selforganized networks of refugees and migrants also claim freedom of movement for the external borders.

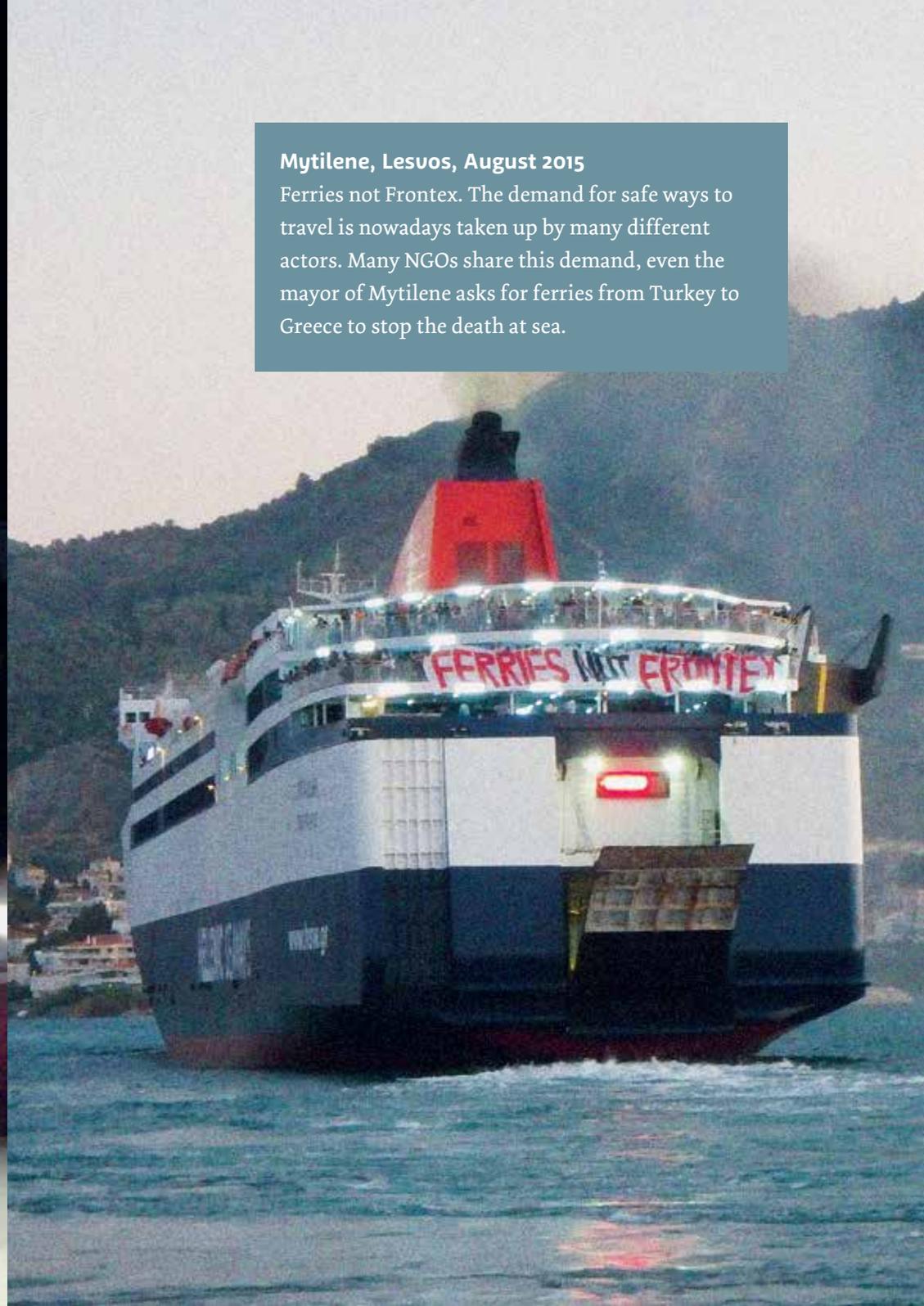




**In front of Kos, 2.12.2015** Photo send from a boat by Viber. While crossing the Aegean Sea the people in the boats stay connected via smart phones to community activists on both sides of the border. They document their journey and alarm in real time in case of distress.

### **Mytilene, Lesvos, August 2015**

Ferries not Frontex. The demand for safe ways to travel is nowadays taken up by many different actors. Many NGOs share this demand, even the mayor of Mytilene asks for ferries from Turkey to Greece to stop the death at sea.





This anniversary brochure of the Alarm Phone offers insights, analyses and commentaries on the first twelve months of the hotline project. We witnessed a lot of suffering and despair but also how the cruel European border regime became challenged and subverted time and again by the disobedient movements of hundred thousands, who decided to not be deterred by border walls, fences and guards any longer. We were in the midst of this historic year of transformation and our experiences and actions clearly demonstrate that it is possible to create change and to find direct forms of intervention to support illegalised human mobility.