

27.5.2016

Stellungnahme von WatchTheMed Alarm Phone zur aktuellen Situation im Mittelmeer und den Ereignissen gestern

Die EU und der Tod auf See - Vom kalkulierten und überwachten Sterben im zentralen Mittelmeer

Über vier Stunden hat es am gestrigen Donnerstag Vormittag gedauert, bis Rettungsschiffe eintrafen. Vier Stunden Bangen und die Bemühung, die Menschen an Bord eines überfüllten Holzbootes zu beruhigen. Um 6.21 Uhr hat das Schichtteam des WatchTheMed Alarm Phone die GPS-Daten als SOS an die Rettungsleitstelle der italienischen Küstenwache in Rom (MRCC) durchgegeben. Zuvor kam der Notruf via Satelliten-Telefon, der Anrufer berichtete von zwei Booten mit jeweils 500 Menschen an Bord, darunter viele syrische und irakische Flüchtlinge. Um 10.31 Uhr kam endlich Rettung in Sicht, doch eine Stunde zuvor war das zweite Boot in Sichtweite bereits gesunken. Wie viele Menschen dabei ertrunken und verschwunden sind, ist bislang unbekannt. Die Küstenwache aus Rom berichtet in ihrer Tagesbilanz u.a. vom Kentern eines Bootes sowie von 96 Geretteten. Todesopfer werden keine erwähnt. Doch das private Rettungsschiff Sea-Watch, das am frühen Nachmittag die Unglücksstelle erreichte, musste Ertrunkene bergen.

Kalkuliertes Sterben

In den vergangenen drei Tagen sind erneut Tausende von Flüchtlingen und MigrantInnen auf überfüllten Booten von der libyschen Küste Richtung Sizilien gestartet: 2600 Menschen am Dienstag, 3000 am Mittwoch, über 4000 am gestrigen Donnerstag. Niemand kann mehr überrascht sein, schon gar nicht die Verantwortlichen der EU-Migrationspolitik. Doch sie weigern sich, das tödliche Visumregime abzuschaffen und legale sichere Einreisewege zu eröffnen. Im Gegenteil: die im Sommer letzten Jahres erkämpfte offene Balkanroute wurde in den letzten Wochen mit aller Gewalt wieder verschlossen. Unter den Opfern des gestrigen Tages im zentralen Mittelmeer befinden sich erstmals wieder syrische und irakische Flüchtlinge. Sie wären über die Ägäis und die Balkanroute sehr viel sicherer gereist, doch deren Schließung zwang sie auf die viel gefährlichere Route über Libyen. Als Resultat der Schließung der Balkanroute and des inhumanen EU-Türkei-Deals, droht in Griechenland ankommenden Flüchtlingen die Abschiebung in die Türkei, während diejenigen, die sich bereits auf dem griechischen Festland befinden, ohne jegliche Perspektive der baldigen Weiterreise bleiben. Diese politische Veränderung zwingt Flüchtlinge auf die gefährlichere Route über Libyen.

Überwachtes Sterben

Seit fast einem Jahr läuft die Militär-Operation EUNAVFOR MED/Sophia zur Überwachung des zentralen Mittelmeeres zwischen Libyen und Italien. Ihr zentraler Auftrag ist die Bekämpfung der sogenannten Schleusernetzwerke. Die „Schlepperjäger“ sind mit allem High-Tech ausgerüstet, die Meereszone vor der Küste Libyens gehört zu den Bestüberwachten der Welt. Und was wäre einfacher als im Stundentakt mit einem kleinen Aufklärungsflugzeug entlang der allseits bekannten Routen die Boote der Geflüchteten auf See zu orten und diese sofort zu retten? Stattdessen sind es immer wieder die italienische Küstenwache, private Initiativen und NGOs, die mit ihren Rettungsbooten Schlimmeres verhindern. Und wenn sie dann mit den Geretteten unterwegs sind nach Sizilien, fehlen die Kapazitäten und es geschieht, was gestern erneut passiert und offensichtlich von den Verantwortlichen beabsichtigt ist: Das Sterben auf See geht weiter. Und solange möglich, wird es verschwiegen oder vertuscht oder kleingeredet, um neue öffentliche Aufschreie zu vermeiden.

Wir schreien auf, einmal mehr und immer wieder. Über die Toten der letzten 20 Jahre, über die Toten gestern.

Niemand müsste auf See sterben, wenn es legale sichere Zugangswege gebe. Das Sterben auf See ist keine Naturkatastrophe und kein Unfall. Es ist vielmehr das kalkulierte Produkt eines EU-Grenz- und Visa-Regime. Das Sterben auf See ist menschengemacht und könnte morgen als dunkles Kapitel der Geschichte beendet werden: mit der Öffnung der Grenzen und dem freien Zugang zu Fähren.

Der lange Sommer der Migration auf dem Balkan hat es gezeigt: sind die Grenzen geöffnet, gibt es keine „Schlepper“ mehr. Teuer und gefährlich reist nur, wer dazu von Frontex und Co gezwungen wird. Eine Welt ohne Grenzen ist möglich: sowohl Frontex wie auch die „Schlepper“ werden dann verschwunden sein.

In diesem Sinne: Fähren statt Frontex

WatchTheMed Alarm Phone (27.05.2016)

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Anhang:

Dokumentation des Logbooks des WTM-AP:

2016_05_25-CM-two boats in distress, direct call

Number of the boat: 0088216...376

5:25am, we received a direct call from a Thuraya number. The person speaks Arabic so we cannot understand. All we can hear is "Libya" and "Italy". It sounds like they might be on a boat as there are engine sounds in the back.

5:34am, Our translator gets back to us and says that the man was talking about 2 big boats that had left from Libya. Apparently they called the Italian coastguards but they were not responding. And apparently he spoke of 1000 people on the boats!

5:40-5:50: We try to call the Thuraya number in different ways but cannot reach them. In between we checked their Thuraya credit and it was good, over 70. We checked again a few minutes later and it had gone down to 69.71.

6:10am: We call the Italian coastguards and we pass on the Thuraya number. He checks and then says that they have the same number. Apparently they were called by the boat but had the same problem that we had: they could not establish their position.

6:16am: their credit has minimally decreased, 69.22 now.

6:17am: We reached the man on the boat. We try to give him instructions on how to find the GPS position on Thuraya but the call was cut off. In the meantime, credit has gone down to 62.77

6:20-6:40: We receive more information from the boatpeople:

6:21am: We received their coordinates: N033 Deg 018'014.242 E012 Deg 029'037.940. The man is in panic and says they are about to sink. There are two boats, one boat is in a bad condition. The boats are metal boats (but later it became clear that they were wooden boats).

6:29-6:35am: We call MRCC Rome again and pass on the new details and the coordinates which they take.

6:51am: Credit has gone down to 56.32

6:58: We send an Email to MRCC and others with all details.

7:56am: the people on the boat called us again and we asked them to send us an update of their position. we receive the new position at 7:58: N33 23'57,062; E12 29'45.553

8:00am: we called MRCC Rome again, we provided them with the new coordinates.

8:12am: we sent an email to MRCC Rome and all the contacts we have, asking for urgent help and providing them with the new coordinates

8:19am: we received new GPS coordinates: N033 Deg 025'024.298 E012 Deg 029'052.131

8:21am: Credit on the phone of the migrants on the boats is 41

8:23am: the people on the boats called and told us, one of the big wooden boats is cracking and water started to fill the boat in the under level (the boat has obviously two levels), the people are trying desperately to empty the boat from water. in total there are around 1030 people on the three boats, the boats are made of wood. one of the big boats is dragging the other, on the small boat are 30 people. NEW: there are now three boats, because the two big boats, which were our case already the whole morning, we're crossing a third, small boat with migrant persons, and they continued to go on together, one big boat towing the two other boats!!!!

08:30am: we called the Italian Augusta Offshore company because their commercial boat ASSO VENTQUATTRO IMO 9235294 is really close to the boats in distress. They provided us with their operations department number which could give us the number of the ship Asso Ventiquattro, but the operation center opens not before 9am, so we have to wait...

8:35am: Credit from the Thuraya-phone on the boat is 39.5

8.35am: we tried calling another boat that is close called Minerva Zen (there main center is in Ukraine), but the call didn't go through

8.40am: we called the Malta coastguard. they already know about the boats and are working on the case. we updated them. they have another 17 cases or so they are working on. they said they are doing their best. the operator was very stressed on the phone.

8:45am: the people on the boat are calling, they told us one of the boats just sank, 500 people are in the water and many already died ...

8:47am: the boat people confirmed that we should call Libyan coast guard, we tried to reach the Libyan Coast Guard. We also decided to call the Tunisian Coast Guard and explained them the distress situation, gave them all the infos we have.

09:00am: we call the operational center of the Augusta Offshore Company and explain the situation. They say that their ship ASSO VENTQUATTRO already knows about the case (they were contacted by MRCC rom) and that it is on his way there now, going to help rescuing the people on the sinking boat

9.18am: obviously a lot of different "players" are informed about the case (MRCC Italy in Rome, Malta, Sea-Eye, Sea-Watch, private ships...) and going to help, but until now the migrants didn't see any ships close to them.

9.20am: contact to the people on the boat: a lot of people already dead, our contact on the boat saw people drowning. They asked us where they should heading to, they're 100 km away from Sabratah on the Libyan

Coast and try to head in direction of Lampedusa. One big boat is broken, the second big Boat is now leaking too, the small boat is fine, but already full of people

9:28am: credit of the Thuraya-phone on the boat: 33

9.29am: we informed everybody, staying in touch with the people on the boat, but for the rest we're helpless

9.48am: we sent an SOS email with updates on the sinking boat:

Hello,

Thanks to everyone who is involved, we are aware that there are morethan 10 boats, so thank you for your efforts. We have received unfortunate information that one of the boats sank already around the position N033 Deg 023'057.062 E012 Deg 029'045.553. A lot of people died. But for sure, there are people who know how to swim and most probably they can be saved and pulled from the water.

Thank you, xy

Watch the Med Alarm Phone

09:56am: We called the Libyan coast guard, they were friendly, maybe because we were talking in Arabic with them, they got all the info and will help as soon as possible

10:00am: no answer from the people on the boats

10:03am: the people on the boats saw a ship, they estimate the distance 15 minutes away from them, but then the ship disappeared. we asked for new coordinates and urged them to use whatever objects they have that can reflect the light of the sun and use it in all direction to help ships spot them

10:05am: Since a long time we're watching the "Minerva Zen", the Ship from the ukrainian company, on Vesselfinder.com cruising around specific coordinates: N33 12 E12 42, looking like searching for something. This zone is close to the boat-people, but not exactly their latest coordinates we have. "Asso Ventiquattro", the italian Ship, is obviously also cruising more or less around the same area like the Minerva Zen

10:06am: credit of Thuraya phone on the boat is 22.6;

10.15am: the people on the boat do not answer

10.18am: The ship CP 324 SAR (search and rescue) is heading down to the area, now at N 33 deg 32' E 12 deg 30'

10.31am: at last, we receive a positive Info: we spoke to the boat people, they just informed us that the small boat was rescued (corresponding to our contact on the boats by an Italian commercial ship)!!!!!!!

10.37am: more ships on their way to the latest gps-position of the boats in distress: ooc tiger, Asso Venticinque, Ringho

11.00am: no answer from the people on the boat; we wrote them an sms asking for newer position and informing them that they have more credit now - no answer so far

11.20am: no news from nowhere at the moment - we hope that in this case no news are also good news, which means the people on the boats are save at last. Vesselfinder still shows ships roaming around the place of the boats of our case.