



## Greece Ordered to Rescue 34 Syrians from Evros River

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5th April, 2022

Thirty-four Syrian nationals have been taken to the Greek mainland after surviving for three days on a deserted islet in the Evros/Meriç border river. The European Court of Human Rights obliged Greece to provide the group with shelter, food, medical care and shelter after an urgent appeal was submitted by the Border Violence Monitoring Network (BVMN).

The group, which included six children and a pregnant woman, ran out of food and water before Greek authorities finally came to their aid, despite having been notified of their situation and location days earlier. According to the group, the authorities had been flying drones over the islet but never interacted with the group.

The Evros river, which forms the border between Greece and Turkey, is now the main entry point to Greece for people on the move. BVMN has frequently recorded testimonies of pushbacks from Greece to Turkey which involved the entrapment and abandonment of people on islets in the Evros river by Greek authorities.

Thanks to the successful intervention, an illegal expulsion was avoided and more deaths, such as that of a four year old child just weeks prior, were averted.

As grateful as the network is for the outcome for these 34 people, it is with grave concern that we acknowledge the reality that by now, only the intervention of the European Court of Human Rights can prevent the systematic, illegal pushbacks of people seeking protection in Greece and elsewhere in Europe.

Tuesday, BVMN said:

“Whilst we are happy with the court’s decision, intervention by the European Court of Human Rights should not be needed to ensure the safety of men, women and children seeking protection in Europe.

Access to asylum procedures, including an individualised assessment, right to appeal and effective legal remedy should be granted to all persons regardless of status, country of origin, age or gender.

We stand in solidarity with people on the move and advocate for the unquestioning fulfilment of their fundamental rights in line with national, European and international law.”