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YUNAN SAHİL GÜVENLİK



Border Violence Monitoring Network

PUSHBACK FROM GREECE TO TURKEY

[VISUAL ANALYSIS]

March 2023



PUSHBACK FROM GREECE: VISUAL ANALYSIS



The following report analyzes drone footage published by the Turkish Ministry of Defence (TMD) showing what they claim to be a pushback by Greek authorities south of Bozburun. In January 2023, the Turkish Coast Guard (TCG) updated their database of pushbacks in the Aegean. In the database, the TCG documented a pushback with two liferafts on 4 December 2022. In combining the drone footage, the visual data from the TCG and information released in statements, this report seeks to investigate if both cases refer to the same incident, and whether a Greek vessel was indeed involved in the pushback.

DRONE FOOTAGE

The TMD published drone footage with a statement on the 7th December 2022 stating:

"On 04 December 2022, in the south of Bozburun in the Aegean Sea, it was detected by the UAV of our Naval Forces that irregular migrants were transferred to rubber boats by Greek Coast Guard boats and pushed into Turkish territorial waters."

The drone footage shared by TMD is edited and important information is redacted or cropped out. In the left top-corner, we see the date 4 December 2022 and part of the time at x1.14.21 (red), and the letter N representing North, with an arrow pointing to the right corner of the video screen (green).

The video shows a vessel moving away from two liferafts and leaving the area in the opposite direction to where the arrow is pointing. Later in the video another vessel is seen approaching the two liferafts.



Figure 1 Still of the video showing the vessel moving away from the liferaft

The video shows a vessel moving away from two liferafts and leaving the area in the opposite direction. The time that the vessel moved away from the liferaft is stamped **x1.14.21** (red). When the other vessel approaches the liferaft, the video is stamped to **x2.04:59** (purple). This suggests that the interception could have taken place **54 minutes** later.

DRONE TRAJECTORY

Historical flight data on **Flightradar24** shows the trajectory of an aerial device flying in a pattern similar as UAV or other surveillance aerial vehicles on the 4th December 2022, around the same time as described in the statements from the TCG and TMD. The drone trajectory from **Flightradar24** shows a drone starting to flying in circular motions around 21:45, and again at 22:45.



Figure 2 Drone trajectory, Flightradar24

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TURKISH COAST GUARD CASE: 1837

Case 1837 in the database of the TCG states the following:

“On 04 December 2022 at 22.25, it was reported that there was a group of irregular migrants on lifeboats off the coast of Muğla’s Marmaris district. They were pushed back to Turkish territorial waters by Greek assets. A total of 37 irregular migrants on 2 lifeboats were rescued by CG ship (TCSG-65)”

Time: The time visible in the TMD video shows x2:04 which corresponds with 22:25 mentioned in the statement by the TCG.

Location: The Statement of the Turkish Armed Forces mentions an area south of Bozburun and the statement of the Turkish Coast Guard mentions Marmaris as the location of the interception. As seen in the image below, both statements refer to the same geographical area.

Figure 3 Google Earth, pinned locations from TCG and TMD statements



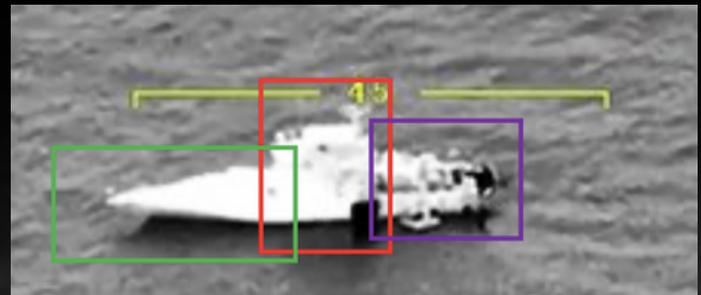
VESSEL APPROACHING LIFERAFT

The statement released by the TCG mentions that the TCSG-65 vessel was involved in the interception. Below, a picture of the vessel SAR 33 Class CG Boats is presented alongside the similarities drawn from the vessel in the drone footage.

Furthermore, the 45 metre scale on the drone footage corresponds with the dimensions of the SAR 33 Class boats like the TCSG-65, roughly corresponds with the 34,6 dimensions mentioned on the website of the TC.



Figure 4 Comparison of vessels approaching liferaft



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In the video published by the Turkish coastguard, we see a RIB boat. A similar structure can be detected in the drone footage published by the TMD.



Figure 5 Still from the video of the back of the TCG vessel that reportedly picked up the people from the liferaft

This suggests that the TCG vessel, that intercepted a group of people with liferafts as seen in the drone footage is most likely the TCSG-65 vessel.



Figure 6 Closeup vessel that approached the liferaft

VESSEL INVOLVED IN PUSHBACK

Calculations demonstrate that the vessel moving away from the liferafts is approximately 19.9 meters. The Turkish Coast Guard does not have vessels of this size in its fleet. However, the Hellenic Coast Guard (HCG) has three types of vessels that are around 19 meters:

- Javelin-74: 19.2 meter vessels $\Lambda\Sigma$ -601 to $\Lambda\Sigma$ -616.
- LCS-57 (Lambro-57) Mk.II 19.2 meters
- Vessels $\Lambda\Sigma$ -601 to $\Lambda\Sigma$ -616. • LCS-57 (Lambro-57) Mk.I 18.2 meters

Similar calculations suggest that the distance from the front of the boat to the cabin is around 6.4 meters and from the back to the cabin is 4.7 meters.

The drone footage also shows a distinct shape at the back of the vessel (yellow) with a cabin that is not rectangular, but angled.



Figure 7 Vessel moving away from liferaft from drone footage

Further parallels can be drawn between the vessel moving away from the liferafts and a LCS-57 (Lambro-57) used by the HCG, including the distinct shape, cabin and the platform at the back.

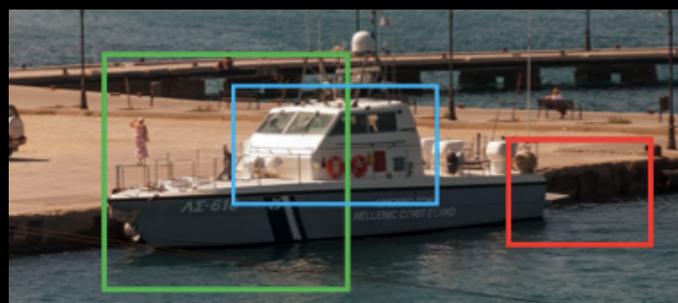
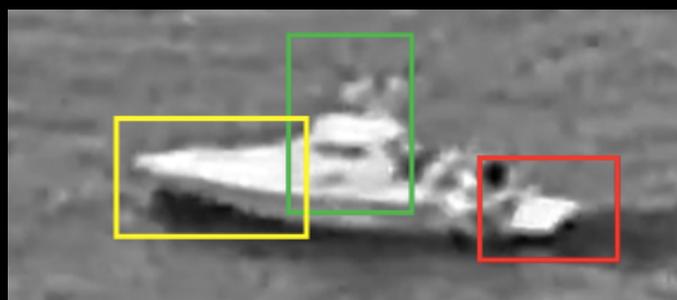


Figure 8 Colour coded distinctive elements of the vessel in drone footage and Lambro-57

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Figure 9 Lambro-57 vessel indicating distinct shape of cabin

The yellow line highlighting the angle of the vessel's cabin corresponds with the shape of the end of the cabin of a Lambro-57 patrol boat as seen in Figure 7.

The cut out of the vessel from the drone footage outlines the shape as well as variations in colour on the boat. Specifically, the side of the boat appears much darker than the top, even with consideration of shadows. This is similar to HCG vessels which are grey sided, but lies in contrast to TCG vessels which are white all over with an orange stripe on the side.

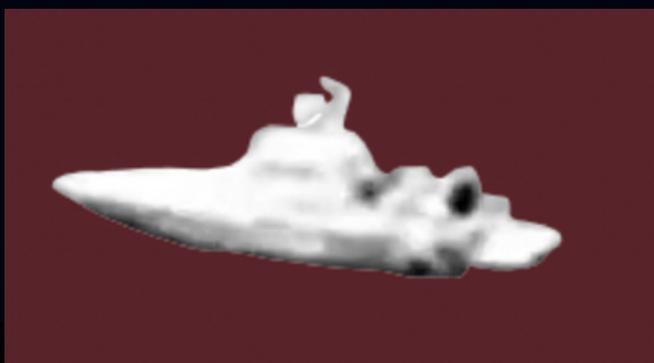


Figure 10 Drone footage of vessel on plain background

CONCLUSION

On the grounds of the evidence presented in this walkthrough of a visual investigation, the pushback recorded by the drone appears to be the same case published by the TCG on the 4th December. The vessel that approaches the liferafts is similar to a SAR33 type vessel that the TCG operate in the Marmaris region. Finally, the boat leaving the liferafts appears similar to a Lambert-57 vessel that operates in the Aegean.

