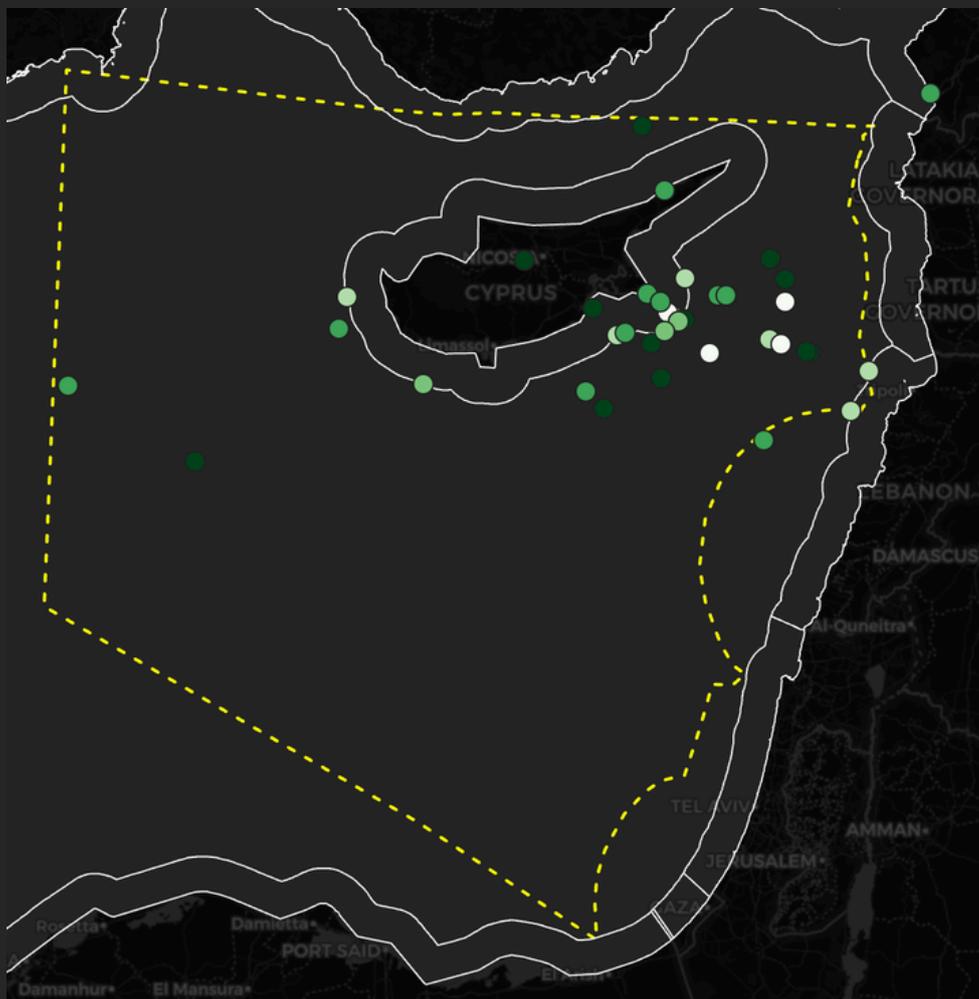




Border Violence
Monitoring Network

Cyprus continues its pushbacks in spite of M.A. & Z.R. v Cyprus



January 2026

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1. Abbreviations

ABM	Automated Behaviour Monitoring
AIS	Automatic Identification System
BVMN	Border Violence Monitoring Network
CRG	Consolidated Rescue Group
CUT	Cyprus University of Technology
ECtHR	European Court of Human Rights
GFW	Global Fishing Watch
MMSI	Maritime Mobile Service Identity
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

2. Introduction

On 8 October 2024, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) found¹ that the Republic of Cyprus had violated the principle of non-refoulement and the prohibition of collective expulsion in the case of M.A. and Z.R. v. Cyprus, concerning the pushback of two Syrian individuals intercepted at sea - inside Cyprus' territorial waters - and returned to Lebanon. Despite this landmark ruling, activist networks and international organisations, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), have reported² continued maritime pushbacks by Cypriot authorities. To contribute to the documentation of these ongoing violations and provide further evidence, BVMN correlated openly available reports of pushbacks carried out by Cypriot authorities with automatically transmitted vessel tracking data from vessels identified as belonging to Cypriot authorities. BVMN's research suggests that Cypriot authorities have continued their practice of unlawful pushbacks, including in an instance of a boat intercepted at the boundary of Cyprus' territorial waters.

3. Methodology

3.1 Publicly reported incidents

We compiled a dataset of potential incidents based on publicly reported incidents of maritime pushbacks attributed to Cypriot authorities between October 2024 and October 2025. The dataset contained information on the date of the incident, the reported number of individuals pushed back, and last known latitudinal and longitudinal positions, based on information shared

¹ <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/?i=001-236141>

² https://x.com/alarm_phone/status/1901181219267621228,
<https://www.unhcr.org/europe/news/press-releases/unhcr-concerned-about-reports-pushbacks-syrians>

by Alarmphone³ and Consolidated Rescue Group (CRG)⁴, two emergency hotlines that regularly publish accounts of emergency situations and pushbacks in the Mediterranean Sea.

The dataset is therefore limited to boats departing from Syria or Lebanon, which are usually able to cross the 160km distance to Cyprus in as little as one day, given favorable sailing conditions.

In one instance where the last known position had been shared, the position, vessel tracking data, and the territorial water boundary was imported into QGIS, a free geographic information system similar to GoogleEarth. This was done in order to calculate the distance between the position, tracks of authority vessels and the territorial water boundary.

All incidents were classified as pushbacks since individuals were reportedly denied the opportunity to request asylum, were not transferred to the territory under the effective control of the Republic of Cyprus, nor were they given access to protection procedures by Cypriot authorities. According to reports, individuals were instead taken by vessels acting on behalf of Cypriot authorities back to Lebanese or Syrian territorial waters.

This dataset was complemented with information obtained from reports from the following sources:

- News articles published by Cypriot news outlets Dialogos⁵ and Politis⁶
- A statement⁷ issued by the Lebanese Army on the 12th of October 2024
- A statement⁸ by the UNHCR on the 18th of March 2025
- A joint statement⁹ released by the Cypriot Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Justice and Public Order, the Deputy Ministry of Migration on the 19th of March 2025

Through this process, a final set of seven incidents of reported pushbacks of Syrian nationals attributed to Cypriot authorities between October 2024 and October 2025 was created. Table 1 below shows a breakdown of the seven incidents under consideration in reverse chronological order.

³ <https://alarmphone.org/en/about/>

⁴ <https://crg-news.com/>

⁵ <https://dialogos.com.cy/>

⁶ <https://www.politis.com.cy/>

⁷

<https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/ar/content/%D8%A5%D9%86%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%B0-99-%D8%B4%D8%AE%D8%B5%D9%8B%D8%A7-%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%89-%D9%85%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%87%D9%85-%D9%85%D8%BA%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A8%D8%B7%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%82%D8%A9-%D8%BA%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%B4%D8%B1%D8%B9%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%AD%D8%B1>

⁸ <https://www.unhcr.org/europe/news/press-releases/unhcr-concerned-about-reports-pushbacks-syrians>

⁹

<https://www.gov.cy/en/defence/joint-statement-by-the-ministry-of-justice-and-public-order-the-ministry-of-defence-and-the-deputy-ministry-of-migration-and-international-protection-about-the-three-search-and-rescue-incidents/>

Table 1: set of pushback incidents by Cypriot authorities between October 2024 and October 2025.

Description	Date	Number of passengers	Last known location
Pushback from Cyprus back to Tartous	2025/08/09		35°17'54.1"N 34°35'44.7"E
Alleged pushback from Cyprus back to Syria	2025/06/09		Unknown
Pushback from Cyprus back to Tartous	2025/05/10	37	34°28'49.2"N 35°09'01.3"E
Alleged pushback from Cyprus back to Syria	2025/03/13-14		34°46'25.7"N 34°30'04.7"E
Alleged pushback from Cyprus back to Syria	2025/03/03	18	Unknown
Alleged pushback from Cyprus back to Lebanon	2024/11/14	26	Unknown
Chain refoulement to Lebanon then Syria	2024/10/11	99 (two boats)	Unknown. Cypriot authorities reported the location: 34°37'54.7"N 35°57'15.7"E

3.2 Vessel identification

To identify vessels acting on behalf of Cypriot authorities, we used news articles, such as announcements of the delivery or planned delivery of ships for the Cypriot National Guard¹⁰ and the Cyprus Police Border Marine¹¹ (such as this one¹² or this one¹³), and published catalogues of said vessels by ship enthusiasts (such as this one¹⁴).

Using a set of vessels known¹⁵ to have participated in previous pushbacks by Cypriot authorities, including two vessels¹⁶ that were used for the pushback of M.A. & Z.R. in September 2020, this research was able to identify a larger number of vessels operated by Cypriot authorities and used in pushbacks between October 2024 and October 2025.

3.3 Vessel tracking

Multiple data sources were used to confirm and corroborate the involvement of vessels acting on behalf of Cypriot authorities in the identified incidents.

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.cy/army/en/>

¹¹

<https://www.police.gov.cy/police/police.nsf/All/457A568A24C50F45C22585290040D758?OpenDocument>

¹²

<https://web.archive.org/web/20160628213046/https://www.vittoria.biz/military-paramilitary/c-382-fast-patrol-boat-pv24/>

¹³ <https://cyprus-mail.com/2023/12/11/new-vessels-boost-coast-guard-powers/>

¹⁴ https://x.com/Def_Redefined/status/1447660409842962437

¹⁵ https://borderviolence.eu/uploads/document/file/471/Submission_OHCHR_Cyprus.pdf

¹⁶ The Onisillos and the Salone, <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-236141>

Databases of Automatic Identification System (AIS)¹⁷ data and Maritime Mobile Service Identity (MMSI)¹⁸ numbers were used to identify vessels present in the near vicinity of or at the location of reported pushbacks.

AIS is a vessel tracking system used to determine the position of ships at sea at all times. It allows vessels to broadcast their position to other ships and coastal stations in the vicinity. Ships operating in the European Union can turn off their AIS systems¹⁹ in situations of legitimate security concerns. However, this rule is regularly violated by vessels that attempt to hide their position, such as those engaged in illegal fishing or the transport of sanctioned goods²⁰.

AIS data includes static information, such as vessel name, identification number, and type, as well as information related to a vessel's movement, such as its real-time position, speed, and direction.

MMSI numbers are unique 9-digit identifiers that act as a fingerprint for vessels. They are usually linked to the Automatic Identification System of the vessel.

Online marine vessel tracking databases provided by commercial provider Marine Traffic²¹ and nonprofit organisation Global Fishing Watch (GFW)²² were used, along with information published the Cyprus University of Technology (CUT)'s Ship Tracking Intelligence Platform²³. All the vessel tracking information used in this research is freely available on the internet, including through MarineTraffic's freely accessible version. Exact times obtained through AIS were converted into local time, and reported as such in the rest of this report.

3.4 Vessel behaviour identification

By analysing vessel tracking data, we attempt to infer the behavior of the vessels of the Cypriot authorities before, during and after reported pushback incidents.

When referring to the behavior of vessels, we used terminology inspired by the terms defined by the European Maritime Safety Agency for behaviours identifiable through its Automatic Behaviour Monitoring (ABM) system²⁴. Specifically, we are mostly interested in the following types of behaviours:

- At sea encounter: the encounters of two vessels or more at sea

¹⁷ <https://www.navcen.uscg.gov/automatic-identification-system-overview>

¹⁸ <https://www.navcen.uscg.gov/maritime-mobile-service-identity>

¹⁹

<https://oceana.org/press-releases/spain-sanctions-vessels-for-disabling-tracking-devices-following-eye-opening-oceana-report/>

²⁰ [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2024/766242/EPRS_BRI\(2024\)766242_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2024/766242/EPRS_BRI(2024)766242_EN.pdf)

²¹ <https://www.marinetraffic.com/>

²² <https://globalfishingwatch.org/>

²³ <https://ais.cut.ac.cy/site/about>

²⁴ <https://www.emsa.europa.eu/tags/download/7888/5267/23.html>

- Entering the area
- Leaving the area
- Drifting: moving at a low speed, due to wind, currents or waves
- Sudden change of heading: a sudden change in the direction of movement of a vessel
- Sudden change of speed: a sudden change in the speed of a vessel

3.5 Limitations

This research focuses on three out of the seven identified pushback incidents. This is a self-imposed limitation. These three incidents were selected because of the prevalence of AIS tracking data for the ships involved, the quality of the findings that could be developed based on this information, and the strength of the evidence that could be provided for these findings.

This research is limited by its reliance on AIS data. AIS transponders can be turned off at will by the crew. Additionally, during the period of study, electromagnetic jamming²⁵ used by warring parties involved in conflicts²⁶ in the region could affect the precision and accuracy of some of this data.

Additionally, vessel ships carrying potential pushback victims may choose not to enable their AIS transponder, therefore limiting the ability to track their movement.

Very little information is made available by Cypriot authorities about the vessels they operate. Requests for access to information under the country's Freedom of Information law²⁷ were denied using exceptions of protection of national security, therefore preventing any attempt to obtain official answers on the extent of involvement of national authorities in pushbacks.

Cypriot authorities are also not required to register their ships in the national ship registry. Ships "belonging to the armed forces of a state" are immune from this requirement set by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea²⁸. Instead, the ships only need to display a number on their hull, which can be used to identify them with the naked eye.

Finally, the research was also limited by the absence of AIS data for vessels operating on behalf of Lebanese or Syrian authorities, which prevented us from determining the aftermath of a pushback once victims were returned to Lebanese or Syrian waters.

4. Identified Cypriot vessels

According to its website,²⁹ the Cypriot Coast Guard has a fleet of 16 vessels. To this number another twelve ships belonging to Cyprus' Naval Command³⁰, i.e. its Navy, can be added.

²⁵ <https://www.army-technology.com/buyers-guide/electronic-warfare-jamming-systems/>

²⁶ Israel's war on Gaza, the Israel-Hezbollah war, and the Israel-Iran war

²⁷ https://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/enop/non-ind/2017_1_184/index.html

²⁸ <https://www.imo.org/en/ourwork/legal/pages/unitednationsconventiononthelawofthesea.aspx>

²⁹

<https://www.police.gov.cy/police/police.nsf/All/06E06FCD592701E3C22585290040C66A?OpenDocument>

³⁰ <https://www.globalmilitary.net/navies/cyp/>

The following six vessels were identified for their involvement in the three incidents highlighted in this research.

4.1 The Georgiou

The Georgiou is a patrol boat, part of Cyprus' Naval Command. The ship has a hull number P04, and MMSI number 210820000. Marine Traffic states³¹ that its purpose is "Military Ops", which is a category usually assigned to vessels used by national naval forces³².



An image³³ of the Georgiou showing its hull number P04.

4.2 Evagoras Pallikaride

³¹

https://www.marinetraffic.com/en/ais/details/ships/shipid:7582008/mmsi:210820000/imo:0/vessel:CNS_GEORGIU

³² <https://www.offshoreshipadvisor.com/military-ops/>

³³ <https://cdn.sigmalive.com/thumbnails/534724/4e96c940c1d0ffdd110b1ccbd195a318.JPG>

The Evagoras Pallikaride is a patrol vessel acquired³⁴ by Cyprus in 1991, and operated by the Cypriot Coast Guard. The ship has a hull number P21, and MMSI number 210433000³⁵. According to CUT's AIS database, it is registered³⁶ under the flag of the Republic of Cyprus for the purpose of "Law Enforcement".



An image³⁷ of the Evagoras Pallikaride showing its hull number P21.

4.3 Poseidon

The Poseidon is a patrol vessel³⁸ belonging to the Cypriot Port & Maritime Police³⁹. Public AIS data does not refer to the vessel by name, referring to it instead as "Unknown Vessel". However, the MMSI of the vessel (212331000) is an exact match of the MMSI of a previously registered vessel under the name Poseidon⁴⁰. The presence of a vessel of the same exact hull number (PV 20) was also confirmed by a pushback victim as we will explain below.

³⁴ <https://www.navalanalyses.com/2017/12/naval-forces-12-and-coast-guard-vessels.html>

³⁵

https://www.marinetraffic.com/en/ais/details/ships/shipid:7149449/mmsi:210433000/imo:0/vessel:EVAGORAS_PALLIKARIDE

³⁶ <https://ais.cut.ac.cy/static-voyage/view?id=32804577>

³⁷ https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Police_boat_Cyprus_01.JPG

³⁸ <https://www.navalanalyses.com/2017/12/naval-forces-12-and-coast-guard-vessels.html>

³⁹ https://myownonpmirror.com/ships/cyprus/cyp_cg_poseidon.html

⁴⁰ <https://tinyurl.com/5xf3y36m>



An image⁴¹ of the Poseidon. Parts of its hull number (PV 20) are visible.

4.4 Karavas

The Karavas is a vessel registered⁴² for the purpose of “Law Enforcement” by the Republic of Cyprus. It has MMSI number 212481000⁴³.

4.5 Unnamed vessel

In the course of this research, we identified the MMSI number of a vessel used in pushbacks by Cypriot authorities, but which was never registered under the flag of the Republic of Cyprus. We highly suspect this vessel to be the Kantara, one of three fast patrol vessels developed in Croatia and delivered to Cyprus in 2023⁴⁴, which explains why the vessel is still registered⁴⁵ under the flag of Croatia. In November 2025, Kantara was deployed to Greece to participate⁴⁶ in patrol missions south of the island of Crete.

⁴¹ <https://www.navalanalyses.com/2017/12/naval-forces-12-and-coast-guard-vessels.html>

⁴² <https://ais.cut.ac.cy/static-voyage/view?id=65176395>

⁴³

https://www.marinetraffic.com/en/ais/details/ships/shipid:9221293/mmsi:212481000/imo:0/vessel:KARAVA_S#overview

⁴⁴ <https://www.navalanalyses.com/2023/09/three-new-tehnomont-fast-patrol-vessels.html>

⁴⁵ <https://ais.cut.ac.cy/static-voyage/view?id=85742476>

⁴⁶ <https://www.cypruspolice.com/archives/49383>

We refer to this vessel as UV in the rest of this report. Its MMSI number is 238767340⁴⁷.

5. Pushback Incidents

We chose to analyse pushback incidents in a non-chronological order for one main reason: it allows us to draw clearer patterns of behaviour by the vessels operating on behalf of Cypriot authorities. Once a pattern has been identified, it can then inform analysis for other incidents where information is much more limited.

Therefore, we chose to start with the pushback incident of 14 March 2025, as the amount of publicly available information on the incident is much larger.

5.1 Pushback of 14 March 2025

Public reports

According to a 14 March 2025 post⁴⁸ by the emergency hotline Consolidated Rescue Group (CRG), an unspecified number of boats left Syria for Cyprus at dawn on 13 March 2025. On 18 March 2025, the UNHCR published a statement⁴⁹ expressing its concern over what it called a pushback incident involving three boats, carrying approximately 80 people, that had departed from Syria. The statement added that the pushback victims had since been returned to Syria.

On 11 April 2025, emergency hotline Alarmphone published⁵⁰ a testimony it collected from a pushback victim. According to Alarmphone, the boats had been intercepted by vessels of the Cypriot authorities at sea, towed back towards Lebanese waters and abandoned at sea.

Analysis of AIS data

According to vessel tracking data, three vessels operating on behalf of Cypriot authorities, namely the Evagoras Pallikaride, Karavas and Poseidon, were present at the scene of the pushback.

According to Alarmphone, the last known location of one of the boats was 34°46'25.7"N 34°30'04.7"E. Using AIS data from the Global Fishing Watch (GFW) platform, we mapped out the movements of the three Cypriot vessels near that location between 09:00 on 13 March and

⁴⁷ <https://www.myshiptracking.com/da/vessels/238767340-mmsi-238767340-imo-0>

⁴⁸

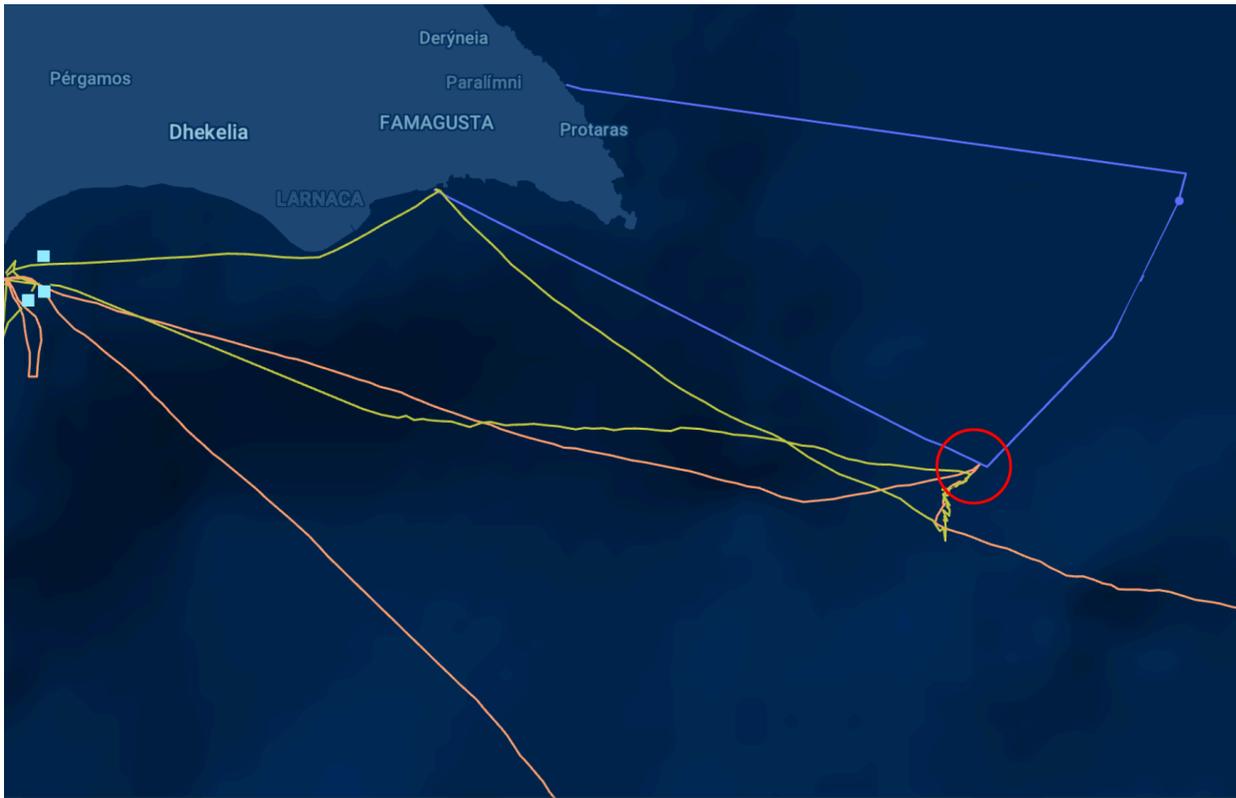
[https://www.facebook.com/unifiedrescue/posts/pfbid08jxaWPYwK7QEzxFzhTagCgn1qBmdfy78KPtTGe6hCd8Jof9UeX2iUSPtU7FqNe1VI?__cft__\[0\]=AZVPUwcY8XTG2SDSlyiHV8uXxxtFPIX_D8ZGQXd0WAruHkQyKVKPyVTheeXkddMlhNbnndL3GiEGBNyNS_R-oFHMqCothibz4R76lDDR4tYJgJCFYQHf4CJhfkp330JGM97qIVLxTE4CVUWDgODvNxqNj1wicnsURTxlTYgVTg&__tn__=%2C0%2CP-R](https://www.facebook.com/unifiedrescue/posts/pfbid08jxaWPYwK7QEzxFzhTagCgn1qBmdfy78KPtTGe6hCd8Jof9UeX2iUSPtU7FqNe1VI?__cft__[0]=AZVPUwcY8XTG2SDSlyiHV8uXxxtFPIX_D8ZGQXd0WAruHkQyKVKPyVTheeXkddMlhNbnndL3GiEGBNyNS_R-oFHMqCothibz4R76lDDR4tYJgJCFYQHf4CJhfkp330JGM97qIVLxTE4CVUWDgODvNxqNj1wicnsURTxlTYgVTg&__tn__=%2C0%2CP-R)

⁴⁹ <https://www.unhcr.org/europe/news/press-releases/unhcr-concerned-about-reports-pushbacks-syrians>

⁵⁰

<https://alarmphone.org/en/2025/04/11/forced-return-to-syria-cypriot-coast-guard-pushes-people-back-into-the-open-sea/>

24:00 on 14 March 2025. This mapping showed that the three vessels conducted an at sea encounter starting from 16:00 on 13 March.



A view from GFW, showing the tracks of the Evagoras Pallikaride (in purple), Karavas (in yellow) and Poseidon in orange between 09:00 on 13 March and midnight on 14 March 2025. The red circle marks the location where an at sea encounter occurred.

According to Alarmphone, one of the boats that departed from Syria travelled⁵¹ for another hour after communicating with the hotline before being intercepted. We added its last known location on the same mapping⁵² to be able to calculate the distance the boat might have travelled in that hour.

⁵¹

<https://alarmphone.org/en/2025/04/11/forced-return-to-syria-cypriot-coast-guard-pushes-people-back-into-the-open-sea/>

⁵² using QGIS

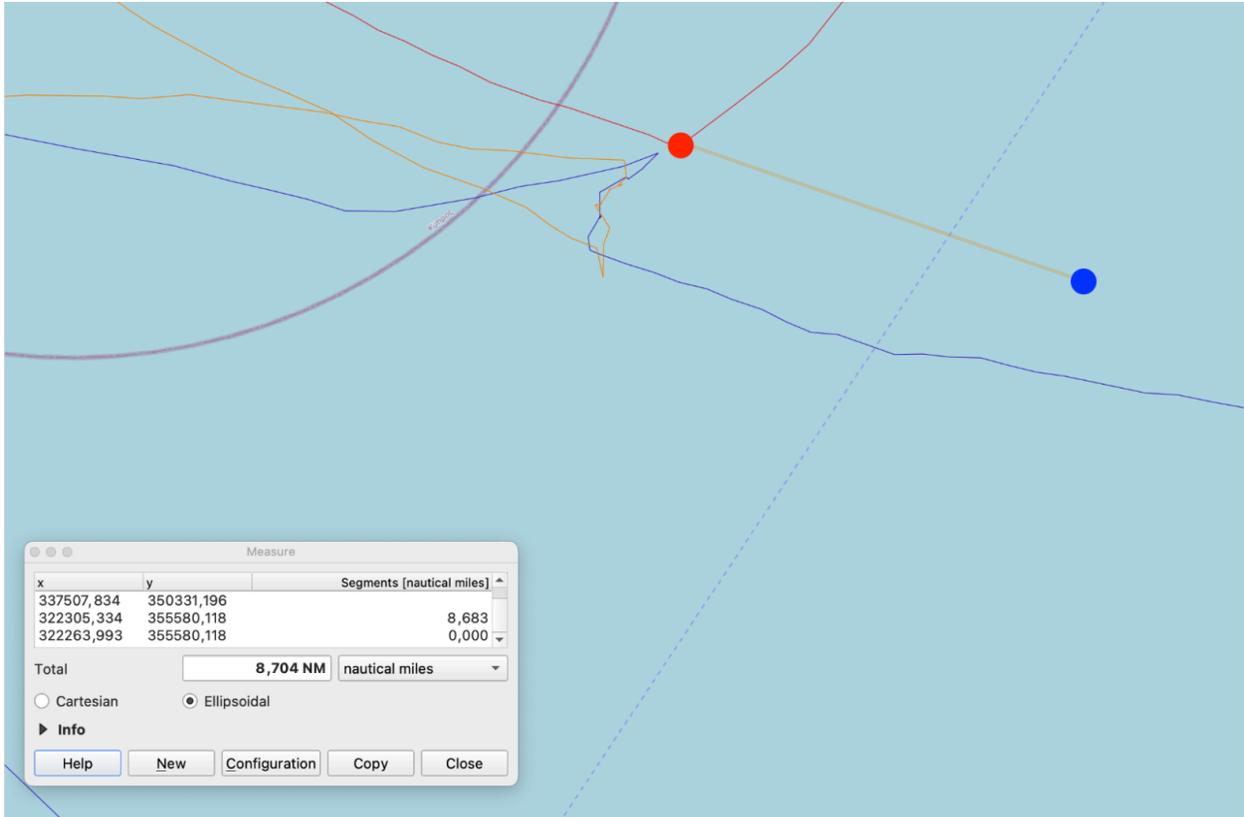


Image showing the distance between the last recorded location of one of the boats departing from Syria (shown with a blue dot), and the location where an at sea encounter likely occurred (shown with a red dot).

The measured distance between the two positions was 8.7 nm (about 16 km). This is a realistic distance to traverse in an hour for most boats carrying people on the move.

To confirm that a potential at sea encounter did occur, we analysed the speeds of the vessels in question as they approached that location. AIS data shows that the vessels were going at very high speeds of up to 25 knots (46 km/h), and came to an almost complete stop when they got closer to the location.

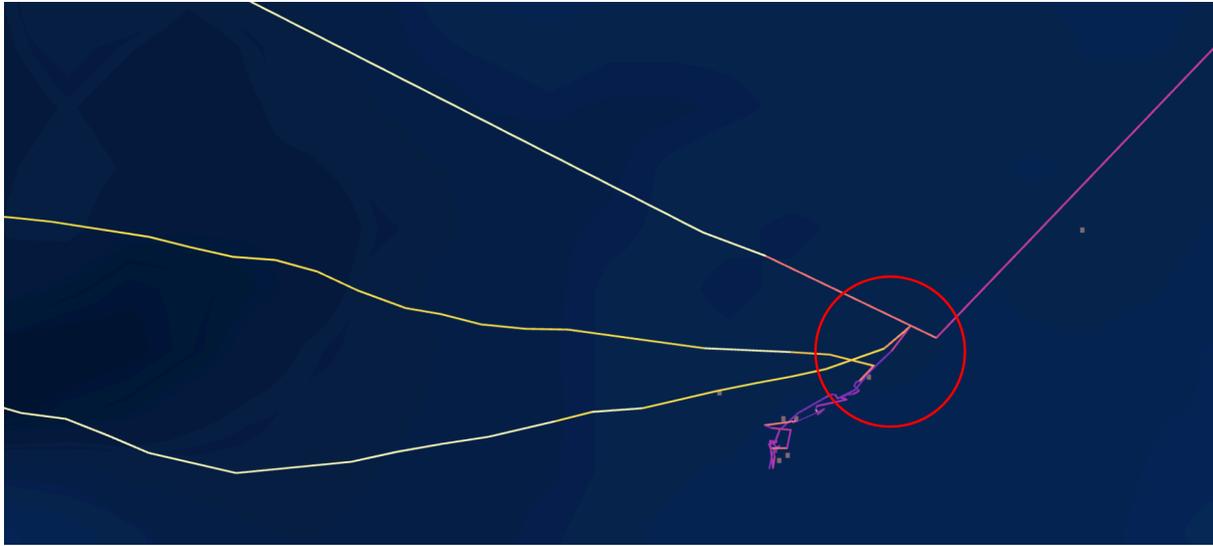


Image showing how all three vessels slowed down when approaching the location of interception, as shown inside the red circle.

Based on these vessel behaviours we believe that the interceptions occurred at around $34^{\circ}49'18.72''\text{N}$ $34^{\circ}19'35.43''\text{E}$. This position is some 2.4 nm (4.4 km) outside Cypriot territorial waters.



Image showing the distance between the position of interception and the boundary of Cypriot territorial waters (in red). The tracks of the Evagoras Pallikaride, Karavas and Poseidon in orange are shown in purple, yellow and orange respectively.

The emergency hotline Alarmphone reported⁵³ that one of the pushback victims identified the hull number of the three vessels - PV 20, for Poseidon.

Following the interception, Karavas and Poseidon drifted slowly until around 22:00. This information again matches the description from Alarmphone that after an initial verbal exchange the boats stayed in the area for several hours.

At around 22:00, Karavas left the area, while Poseidon started moving eastwards towards Lebanon at around 8 knots (14.8 km/h). On 14 March 2025, Poseidon came as close as 31.4 nm (58.1 km) from Lebanese shores at 17:15. It then started moving back towards Cyprus.

53

<https://alarmphone.org/en/2025/04/11/forced-return-to-syria-cypriot-coast-guard-pushes-people-back-into-the-open-sea/>



Image showing the closest distance between Poseidon's track (in orange) and Lebanon's coast, reached at around 17:15. Poseidon never entered Lebanese territorial waters.

Poseidon's behaviour again matches details shared by the pushback survivors with Alarmphone. They reported being towed towards Lebanese waters and left at open seas. The Poseidon maintained a slow speed of around 5 knots (~9 km/h) from the point of interception until its sudden change of direction; the low speed could be explained by the towing process.

Synthesis

Our analysis shows that AIS data can be used to corroborate second-hand accounts from victims of pushbacks to the circumstances of their removal, and provide additional information about the exact locations where pushbacks exactly occurred.

The vessels involved in the pushback of 14 March 2025 showed a coordinated and prolonged presence approximately 2.4 nm outside Cypriot territorial waters, consistent with an interception. Subsequent vessel movements, including Poseidon's sustained low-speed course toward Lebanon consistent with towing, further align with testimonies from pushback victims

5.2 Pushback of 11 October 2024

Public reports

The emergency hotline Consolidated Rescue Group (CRG)⁵⁴ reported that two boats had set off from Lebanon to Cyprus some time before 11 October 2024⁵⁵. CRG later reported that the two vessels had been intercepted by Cypriot authorities, and pushed back to Lebanon on 12 October 2024. Upon their return in Lebanese waters, the two vessels were reportedly pushed back further into Syrian waters by the Lebanese army.

The Lebanese army confirmed its involvement in what it called a “rescue operation”. In a post published on 12 October 2024, it stated⁵⁶ that two boats heading to Cyprus were in the process of sinking when they were intercepted by its Navy. The army’s statement did not make mention of any involvement of Cypriot authorities.

Analysis of AIS data

According to vessel tracking data, two vessels operating on behalf of Cypriot authorities, namely the Georgiou and Evagoras Pallikaride, were present at the scene of the pushback.

While a location for the intercepted boats is not known, it can be similarly inferred from the behavior of the two Cypriot vessels.

In the night of 10 October 2024, the Evagoras Pallikaride departed from its harbour, charging at a high-speed (between 29 and 41.2 knots, or 53.7 and 76.3 km/h) towards a point some 14.5nm (26.8 km) from Cyprus’ shore.

At around midnight on 11 October 2024, the vessel slowed down, then came to an almost complete stop.

Over the next six hours, the Evagoras Pallikaride drifted slowly over a distance of 5 km. It was finally joined by a second vessel, the Georgiou, at around 6:00.

⁵⁴ https://x.com/CRG_2015/status/1844822950043890096

⁵⁵

<https://crg-news.com/2024/10/12/%d8%a5%d8%b7%d9%84%d8%a7%d9%82-%d9%86%d8%a7%d8%b1-%d9%88%d8%aa%d8%b1%d8%ad%d9%8a%d9%84-%d9%82%d8%b3%d8%b1%d9%8a-%d9%85%d8%a3%d8%b3%d8%a7%d8%a9-%d8%a7%d9%84%d9%85%d9%87%d8%a7%d8%ac%d8%b1%d9%8a%d9%86/>

⁵⁶

<https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/ar/content/%D8%A5%D9%86%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%B0-99-%D8%B4%D8%AF%D8%B5%D9%8B%D8%A7-%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%89-%D9%85%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%87%D9%85-%D9%85%D8%BA%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A8%D8%B7%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%82%D8%A9-%D8%BA%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%B4%D8%B1%D8%B9%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%AD%D8%B1>

Some 15 minutes later, the interception ended. The Georgiou headed eastward, towards Lebanon, while the Evagoras Pallikaride started heading towards the Cypriot coast.



The trajectory taken by the Evagoras (in orange) and the Georgiou (in red) in 10-11 October 2024

The Evagoras Pallikaride, which had been at sea for more than seven hours, returned to shore. Meanwhile, the Georgiou continued towards Lebanon, arriving at a point within 20 nm (37.4 km) of its shore at 17:17 on 11 October 2025.

Synthesis

According to testimonies collected by CRG⁵⁷, the pushback victims were reportedly met with physical violence by the Cypriot authorities. This joins similar claims⁵⁸ made by previous victims of pushbacks from Cyprus.

While the public reports do not mention the use of Cypriot vessels to tow the boat carrying the people on the move, the movement of the Georgiou after the interception suggests that it was tasked with this role during the pushback incident.

⁵⁷

<https://crg-news.com/2024/10/12/%d8%a5%d8%b7%d9%84%d8%a7%d9%82-%d9%86%d8%a7%d8%b1-%d9%88%d8%aa%d8%b1%d8%ad%d9%8a%d9%84-%d9%82%d8%b3%d8%b1%d9%8a-%d9%85%d8%a3%d8%b3%d8%a7%d8%a9-%d8%a7%d9%84%d9%85%d9%87%d8%a7%d8%ac%d8%b1%d9%8a%d9%86/>

⁵⁸ <https://rm.coe.int/letter-to-mr-nicos-nouris-minister-of-interior-of-cyprus-by-ms-dunja-m/1680a1c09b>

5.3 Pushback of 14 November 2024

Public reports

On 14 November 2024, the emergency hotlines Consolidated Rescue Group (CRG)⁵⁹ and Alarmphone⁶⁰ shared that some 26 people from Syria were in distress in a boat on their way to Cyprus. The authorities on the island were reportedly alerted.

The next day, on 15 November, Alarmphone reported the Lebanese Navy saying that the boat “was sent back by Cyprus” to Lebanese waters. This was corroborated by CRG on 17 November 2024⁶¹.

It is not known at what time the boat departed from Lebanon, nor when it was forced to head back to Lebanon.

Analysis of AIS data

Using vessel tracking data from the Global Fishing Watch (GFW) platform, we mapped out the movements of vessels known to be operating on behalf of Cypriot authorities on 14 November 2024 to identify potential encounters at sea.

According to AIS data, three Cypriot vessels, the Evagoras Pallikaride, Karavas and Unnamed Vessel (UV), were active during the day of the pushback. All three converged onto the same area in the morning of 14 November 2024. The area in question was in the southeast of the island, where boats carrying people on the move from Lebanon are most frequently reported to arrive.

⁵⁹

<https://www.facebook.com/unifiedrescue/posts/pfbid02FR7ADALdGhE9Bon5dz4mXfWP3U24eWjnMrDa8X6eBNZ72jQS7pDLbxzrxqfriZp8l>

⁶⁰ https://x.com/alarm_phone/status/1857065483968643368

⁶¹ See comment to KISA -

<https://www.facebook.com/unifiedrescue/posts/pfbid02FR7ADALdGhE9Bon5dz4mXfWP3U24eWjnMrDa8X6eBNZ72jQS7pDLbxzrxqfriZp8l>

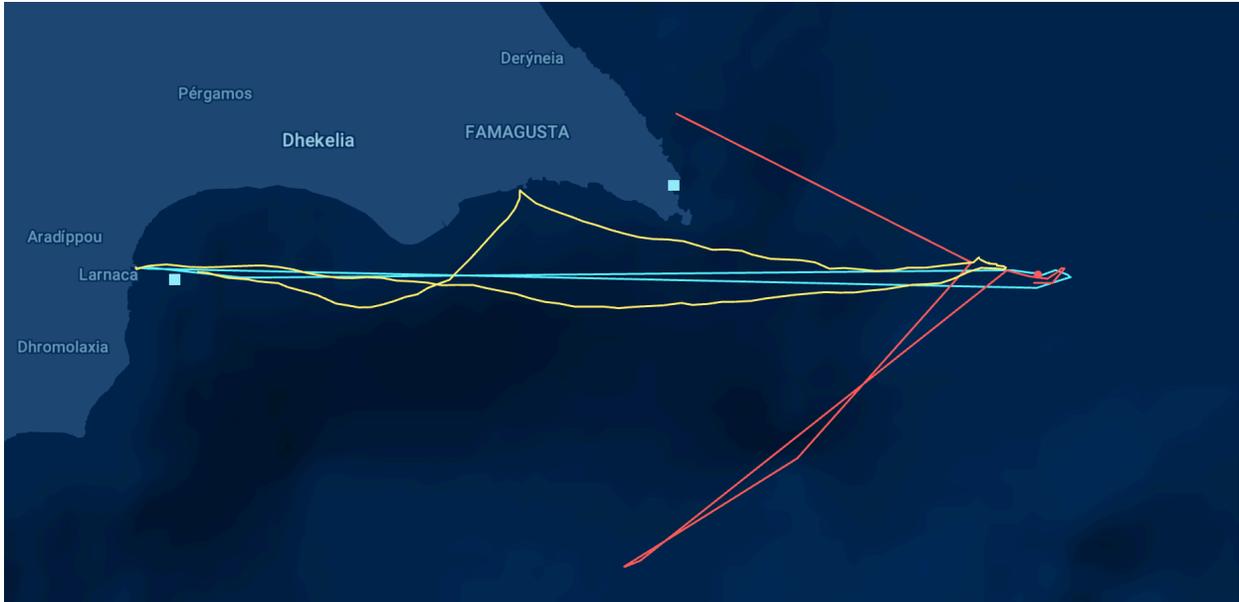


Image from GFW showing the tracks of the Evagoras Pallikaride (in red), the Karavas (in light blue) and the UV (in yellow) on 14 November 2024 between 9:00 and 17:00

AIS data shows that the Evagoras Pallikaride first arrived in the area in question at around 9:30. At 10:00, a second vessel, the UV, arrived. Based on behaviour analysed from previous pushback incidents, this would be the location where a potential interception of the boat could have occurred. At that point, the two vessels were still within Cypriot territorial waters, some 11 nm (~20.5 km) from the shore.

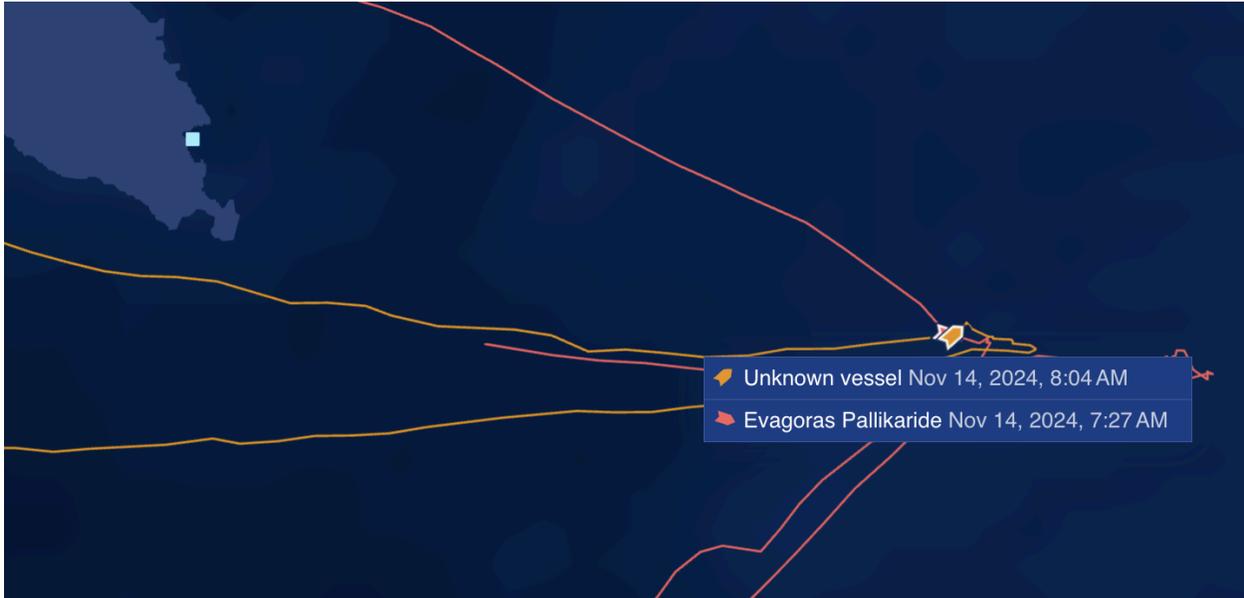


Image from GFW platform showing the moment when the Evagoras Pallikaride (in red) and UV (in orange) arrived to the area where a potential interception was initiated on 14 November 2024 (times shown in UTC time)

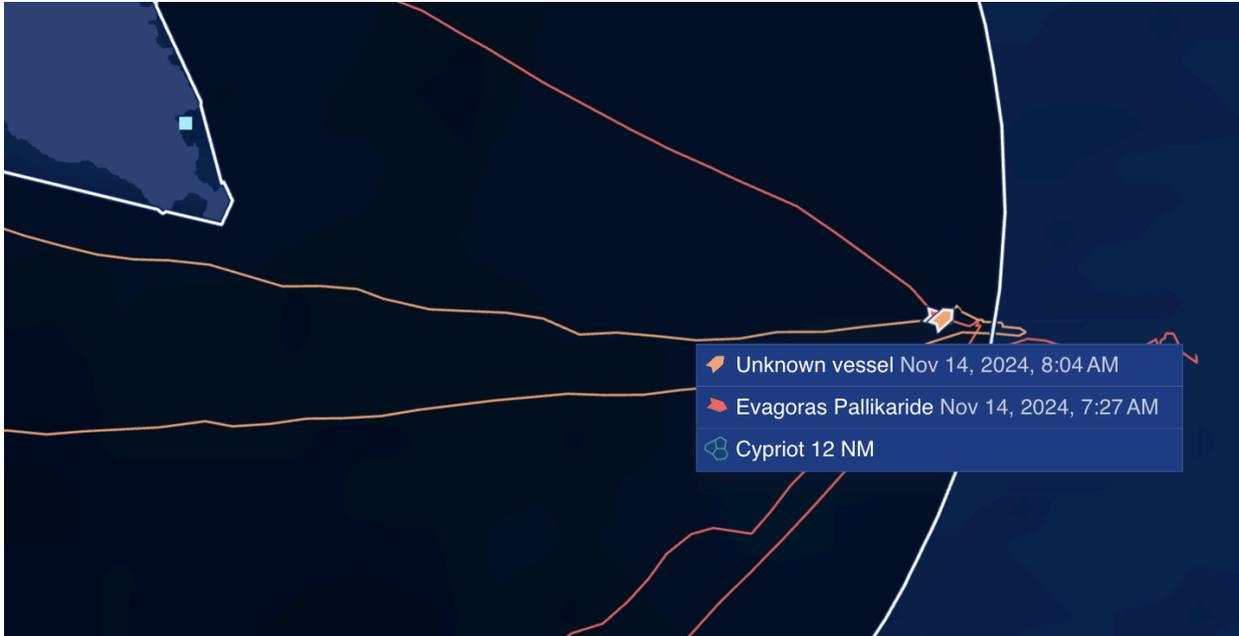


Image from GFW showing the position of the Evagoras Pallikaride and UV vis-a-vis the boundary of Cyprus' territorial waters (line in white) at the time a potential interception was initiated on 14 November 2024 (times shown in UTC time)



Image from GFW showing the distance from the shore to the physical point where the interception was initiated on 14 November 2024.

The presence of the two vessels at that location was confirmed using the Ship Tracking Intelligence Platform of the Cyprus University of Technology (CUT). The platform shows that the two vessels were at that location at 10:05 on the morning of 14 November 2024.

According to AIS data, the Evagoras Pallikaride stayed in the area for the next seven hours, except for a 90 minute-period. It continued to slowly drift eastwards, until it left Cypriot waters. At around 12:30, the UV left the area, to be replaced by the Karavas instead.. The Karavas and Evagoras Pallikaride continued to drift eastwards until around 17:00. At that point, they were about 3.9 nm (7.2 km) from the initial point of encounter, fully outside Cyprus' territorial waters.

Synthesis

Our analysis shows that, for the incident of 14 November 2024, AIS data lines up with public reports of a potential pushback that occurred at the boundary demarcating Cypriot territorial waters. Three vessels operating on behalf of Cypriot authorities displayed coordinated movements, and prolonged presence in a high-arrival area southeast of Cyprus. The observed behaviour lines up with the events reported by Alarmphone and CRG.

6. Conclusion

This research attempted to provide supporting evidence on the Cypriot authorities' continued practice of pushbacks of individuals arriving from Lebanon or Syria by boats between October 2024 and October 2025. In one case, vessel tracking data showed that Cypriot vessels might have intercepted a boat departing from Lebanon at the boundary demarcating Cypriot territorial waters, on a day where a pushback was reported. In two other cases, vessel tracking data was used to show a continuation of movement of Cypriot vessels from locations where interceptions at sea likely occurred, to locations close to Lebanese territorial waters, where pushback victims would have been abandoned at sea.