

Submission to the Office of the High Commissioner for
Human Rights for the upcoming country visit of the
Working Group on the use of mercenaries to Cyprus



Border Violence Monitoring Network

Submission on the use of mercenaries and mercenary-related activities to
Cyprus

Report for the Working Group on their country visit to Cyprus to be presented at
the 60th session of the Human Rights Council.

Submitted by:
Border Violence Monitoring Network

(12/01/2025)

I. Reporting Organisation

1. The Border Violence Monitoring Network (BVMN) is a coalition of organisations working to document illegal pushbacks, collective expulsions and police violence along the EU's external borders in the Western Balkans, Greece and Cyprus. The collection of data on illegal pushbacks and police violence is done, depending on the location, by a consortium of independent voluntary field experts who are part of or cooperate with humanitarian support groups united through BVMN, or researchers collecting data through secondary sources. Since 2021, BVMN has been conducting research and investigations on the occurrence and financing of illegal pushbacks and the use of border technologies in Cyprus through on-site and remote researchers.

II. Executive Summary

2. Since 2020, civil society organisations and international monitoring bodies including the UN Special Procedures, Treaty Bodies and the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), have consistently affirmed the use of pushbacks from Cyprus, to forcibly and in most cases collectively return individuals seeking protection to another country, including with the support of private civilian vessels.

3. BVMN is gravely concerned that non-state actors, including private military and security companies, with the support or acquiescence of the State, are perpetrating or facilitating pushbacks as investigations carried out by civil society groups, as well as communications submitted by the UN Special Procedures, have clearly demonstrated how private civilian vessels are being used in pushbacks.

4. Furthermore, BVMN is also concerned with evidence of newly acquired surveillance technologies, provided by Israeli defense manufacturer Elbit, being used by Cypriot authorities just outside the UN-demilitarised zone (more colloquially known as the Buffer Zone), and how such systems or information may be used in the context of pushbacks.

5. Lastly, BVMN recognises the continued effort by the Cypriot government to obscure the involvement, participation or facilitation of pushbacks of migrants by Private Military and Security Companies (PMSC), including through rejecting Freedom of Information requests on acquired surveillance technologies, and by obscuring procurement procedures of private vessels for police activities.

6. BVMN calls onto the Working Group to engage Cypriot authorities on these practices, and to challenge the environment of secrecy put in place by the authorities to cover up the involvement of all these non-state actors in pushbacks. Secrecy breeds unaccountability and amplifies the plight of victims of pushbacks who are then denied any access to justice or legal remedy as a consequence.

III. Known Involvement of Private Security Companies in Refoulements, Pushbacks, and Collective Expulsions of Migrants in Cyprus

7. ‘Pushback’ is a common term to denote the action of State representatives forcibly and in most cases collectively returning individuals seeking protection to another country in an irregular/informal manner and subsequently preventing or restricting them access to protection mechanisms. Forced and collective pushbacks are illegal¹ under international law.

8. Pushbacks have been recognised in the *General Comment No. 1 on Enforced Disappearances in the Context of Migration*² as a “restrictive and dehumanising border governance *directly* contributes to the disappearance of migrants” that when involves “the deprivation of liberty of migrants and the concealment of their fate or whereabouts, amount to enforced disappearances within the meaning of article 2 of the Convention, regardless of the duration of the deprivation of liberty”. Further to this, the UN Special Rapporteur on Migrants³ has recognised that the use of pushbacks is so widespread that it exists along most migration routes and represents “an entrenched prejudice against migrants”.

Evidence of pushbacks:

9. To date, pushbacks in Cyprus, including the involvement of civilian passenger vessels, have been documented by civil society and international monitoring bodies, including UN Special Procedures and United Nations Treaty Bodies.

9.1. In 2021⁴, five UN Special Procedures⁵ submitted a joint communication to the Government of Cyprus regarding “allegations of pushbacks of migrants from Cyprus to Lebanon and Turkey carried out at Sea”. The communication transmitted evidence of 502 pushbacks and stated that “while still at sea, the coast guard of the Republic of Cyprus allegedly transferred people to civilian passenger vessels guarded by the marine police and directly returned them to Lebanon”.

9.2. Further to this, in 2024⁶ six UN Special Procedures submitted another joint communication to the Government of Cyprus regarding “allegations of pushbacks of at least 52 asylum-seekers by the Republic of Cyprus to the Buffer Zone, in violation

¹ Gruber, N. (2021) Pushbacks are illegal. josoor Blog [online]. Available from: <https://www.josoor.net/post/pushbacks-are-illegal>.

² OHCHR (2023) General Comments. [online]. Available from: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/ced/general-comments>.

³ OHCHR. (2021). Report on Means to Address the Human Rights Impact of Pushbacks of Migrants on Land and at Sea: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants. *A/HRC/47/30*.

⁴ González Morales, F. et al. (2021) *Joint Communication to the Government of Cyprus regarding “allegations of pushbacks of migrants from Cyprus to Lebanon and Turkey carried out at Sea”*. [online]. Available from: <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=26498>.

⁵ Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants; the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances; the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; and the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

⁶ Madi, G. et al. (2024) *Joint Communication to the Government of Cyprus regarding allegations of pushbacks by the Republic of Cyprus to the Buffer Zone*. [online]. Available from: <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=29206>.

of the principle of non-refoulement, and causing a serious negative impact on their physical and mental health by remaining stranded in the Buffer Zone”.

9.3. Furthermore, to date, the concluding observations of the UN Human Rights Committee (CCPR/C/CYP/CO/5) and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC/C/CYP/CO/5-6) have both raised concern with the evidence of pushbacks within Cyprus.

10. An investigation carried out by BVMN in 2024 utilising tactics that have since been recognised by the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances⁷ as an exemplary tactic to clarify the fate and whereabouts of missing migrants, identified 33 pushbacks at sea - affecting some 2205 people on the move - and another eight attempted pushbacks from within the Cypriot Search and Rescue (SAR) zone.⁸

10.1. The investigation covered pushbacks committed from March 2020 until May 2024. While pushbacks did occur before 2020, the investigation focused on the period from March 2020 onwards as many observers reported a change in the tactics used by the authorities to conduct pushbacks, including using violence, ramming of boats and delayed provision of assistance.

10.2. Combining sources of information obtained from civil society organisations on the ground, video material shared by people on the move, as well as media reports, the investigation was able to identify - sometimes to a high degree of accuracy - the location of many reported pushbacks conducted by Cypriot authorities. All the pushbacks included in the investigation happened within the Cypriot Search and Rescue (SAR) zone.

10.3 In some instances, BVMN was able to track the movement of the Cypriot Coast Guard vessels in real-time as they were conducting a pushback. This was the case for a pushback⁹ conducted on 11-13 February 2024, involving a boat from Lebanon carrying a total of 116 individuals.

10.4 In this instance, BVMN tracked the movement of four different Cyprus Police vessels which took turns watching over the boat for more than 24 hours. One of these Police vessels was the patrol boat APOSTOLOS (AP) ANDREAS, which was acquired using EU funding as part of a cross-border cooperation program with Greece in 2013.

11. An analysis of these cases shows how, in some cases, boats departing from Türkiye, Syria or Lebanon were intercepted by in waters under the effective control of the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) and were redirected into Northern Cyprus, where there are no asylum

⁷ See: A/HRC/54/22/Add.5:

⁸ BVMN (2024) Raw Data - Cyprus Borderscape [online]. Available from: <https://cyprusborderscape.com/raw-data>.

⁹ Border Violence Monitoring Network [@Border_Violence] (2024) 1/7 Between February 11-13, #Cyprus attempted to perform a #pushback of a boat carrying 116 passengers back to #Lebanon. Our Research team looked at the incident, showing that the authorities have needlessly put human lives in danger. <https://t.co/45ZaIPmipk>. Twitter [online]. Available from: https://x.com/Border_Violence/status/1778003365122707774.

procedures in place, therefore preventing people on the move from applying for asylum. In other cases, the boats were turned back even after they had made landfall when they arrived from Lebanon. In some of these cases, Lebanese authorities were involved: vessels were towed back and left in Lebanese waters by the Cypriot Coast Guard, from where the Lebanese Navy collected them¹⁰.

12. Survivors of pushbacks report Cypriot police threatening them with guns, throwing their mobile devices into the sea, refusing to provide assistance, handcuffing them, as well as administering electric shocks and beatings. A decision by the ECtHR in 2024 has ruled that pushbacks from Cyprus to Lebanon are a violation of asylum seekers' human rights¹¹.

13. In addition to the aforementioned 33 pushbacks at sea or from within the Cypriot SAR zone, BVMN confirms a continued and widespread reporting of pushbacks taking place at the Buffer Zone:

13.1. From mid-May until November 2024, people on the move were more systematically pushed back and trapped in several locations of the Buffer Zone. In August 2024, 70 people were reported to be pushed back.

13.2. An Iranian woman requested asylum from the RoC authorities at the Ledra Palace, Nicosia crossing, in November 2023, was pushed back and left in the Buffer Zone until she returned back to Northern Cyprus. Her whereabouts are unknown.

13.3. In December 2022, two Kurdish men were pushed back at Ledra Palace. One of the two men remained stranded in the Buffer Zone for nine months until September 2023.

13.4. Two pushbacks occurred in 2021. The first concerned three Cameroonian nationals who were pushed back at the Ledra Palace crossing into the Buffer Zone, where they remained for six months. One of these individuals later entered the RoC-controlled areas irregularly, while the other was relocated to Italy following a visit by Pope Francis. The second documented pushback in 2021 at the Buffer Zone affected a Nigerian woman who was pushed back at the Ledra Palace crossing point and consequently returned to Northern Cyprus, not controlled by the RoC.

13.5. In 2020 an Iranian asylum seeker was pushed back and got stuck in the Buffer Zone for three weeks. In May 2020 another 27 people on the move got stuck in the Buffer Zone as they were refused entry into the RoC-controlled area in Nicosia, this time close to the campus of the University of Cyprus. The people on the move were from Afghanistan, Sudan, Cameroon, and Iran, including unaccompanied minors.

¹⁰ At the time of writing, BVMN could not independently verify what happened following their collection.

¹¹ ECHR (2024) M.A. AND Z.R. v. CYPRUS. [online]. Available from: [https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/#{%22fulltext%22:\[%22M.A.%20and%20Z.R.%20v.%20Cyprus%20\(no.%2039090/20\)%22\],%22documentcollectionid%22:\[%22GRANDCHAMBER%22,%22CHAMBER%22\],%22itemid%22:\[%22001-236141%22\]}.](https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/#{%22fulltext%22:[%22M.A.%20and%20Z.R.%20v.%20Cyprus%20(no.%2039090/20)%22],%22documentcollectionid%22:[%22GRANDCHAMBER%22,%22CHAMBER%22],%22itemid%22:[%22001-236141%22]})

IV: The Use of Technologies by Private Security Companies in Refoulements, Pushbacks, and Collective Expulsions

14. BVMN notes with alarm the growing use of new and emerging technologies, including the use of drones, thermal cameras and laser rangefinders as measures of border security. BVMN is concerned that, despite clear evidence that current border practices are in direct variance with core international standards, these new technologies may be used by both state and non-state actors, including private security companies who act with the support or acquiescence of the state, to help facilitate human rights abuses including the pushback of migrants.

15. In November 2021, the Cypriot government announced the implementation of control and surveillance technologies at the Buffer Zone by installing a fence and purchasing a camera surveillance system. On 4 November 2021, Bloomberg reported that Cyprus' Defense Ministry had purchased a "land surveillance system [...] to stem the flow of asylum seekers and illegal goods from the Turkish-controlled north of the island" for €27.5 million.¹² The system, developed by the Israeli defence manufacturer Elbit, was intended to be operational "within three years". Different information on the elements of the system is reported: Greek newspaper Proto Thema mentioned the inclusion of cameras and drones capable of transmitting live footage and audio 24/7.¹³ A defence magazine reported that it included "the installation of [...] electrical systems - including thermal cameras and laser rangefinders".¹⁴ A central command centre shall guarantee that several different authorities can benefit from the system. The live image is reportedly primarily controlled by the National Guard, which then relays information to the police, fire department or the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP).¹⁵ Speaking to SigmaLive on 7 April 2023 about the purchased system, the Cypriot Defense Minister Michalis Giorgallas explained that "about 179 cameras would be installed along the entire length of the Buffer Zone", adding that "the installation of the cameras has begun and we have [received] the first images".¹⁶

16. As the technologies are operated by the National Guard, which is in direct communication with the police that has been carrying out the pushbacks along the Buffer Zone, there is a risk

¹²Avis, D. (2021) Israel to Build Surveillance System for Cyprus Green Line. Bloomberg. 4 November. [online]. Available from:

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-11-04/israel-s-elbit-to-develop-land-surveillance-system-for-cyprus>.

¹³ Proto Thema (2021) Ισραηλινό σύστημα επιτήρησης με κάμερες και drones στην Πράσινη Γραμμή στην Κύπρο. Proto Thema. 4 November. [online]. Available from:

<https://www.protothema.gr/world/article/1178210/israilino-sustima-epitirisis-stin-prasini-grammi-stin-kupro/AMP/>.

¹⁴ Λοΐζου, X. (2021) Σύστημα Επιτήρησης της ELBIT για την Εθνική Φρουρά - Το ιστορικό του προγράμματος. DEFENCE ReDEFINED [online]. Available from:

<https://defenceredefined.com.cy/σύστημα-επιτήρησης-της-elbit-για-την-εθνικ/>.

¹⁵ Theodoulou, N. (2022) 'All seeing' monitoring system of Green Line set to be operational by September | Cyprus Mail. Cyprus Mail Online. 10 May. [online]. Available from:

<https://cyprus-mail.com/2022/05/10/all-seeing-monitoring-system-of-green-line-set-to-be-operational-by-september>.

¹⁶ SigmaLive (2023) Στην Κύπρο Ουκρανοί εμπειρογνώμονες- Μπαίνουν 179 κάμερες στην πράσινη γραμμή | News. SigmaLive. 7 April. [online]. Available from:

<https://www.sigmalive.com/news/politics/1087772/stin-kypro-oukranoi-empeirognomones-mpainoun-179-kame-res-stin-prasini-grammi>.

that these technologies could be used in ways that could contribute to human rights violations, as they provide the authorities with increased detection capabilities in an area that is very difficult to monitor and control due to its very large size and varied terrain.

17. BVMN is also concerned that the state is taking active steps to obscure how new technologies are being used in so-called border management, as well as conceal who has access to these technologies, with the state consistently restricting access to information that may be used to ensure that use of such technologies is in line with international human rights standards. To date, we have not been able to confirm if the cameras were deployed or operational, as claimed. The Ministry of Defense refused to share any information about the surveillance system, stating, in response to Freedom of Information requests, that “the information in question [...] is considered information related to the Security of the Republic, therefore it has been marked with a security level of ‘CONFIDENTIAL’”.¹⁷

V. The Involvement of Vessels by Private Companies in Maritime Refoulements, Pushbacks, and Collective Expulsions

18. Several reports allege of private boats being leased to illegally return people on the move arriving on Cypriot shores back to Lebanon, regardless of the country from which they departed. We were able to identify three named vessels: SALONE (MMSI: 212983088), ANAMNISIS (MMSI: 209561000), and LEDRA PRIDE (MMSI: 210588000).

19. Of the three, only the ownership information of the LEDRA PRIDE can be found through open sources of information. The vessel is owned by Cyprus-based company Ledra ENA Shipping CY LTD¹⁸.

The SALONE

¹⁷ Zakos, N. (2023) Personal Communication.

¹⁸ Ledra Ena Shipping (n.d.) Our Fleet [online]. Available from: <https://www.ledraena.com/fleet/>.



Image 1: Marine Traffic, 2016, Image of the Vessel SALONE, accessed 21/12/2024¹⁹

The ANAMNISIS



Image 2: Cyprus Boat Booking, n.d., Image of the vessel ANAMNISIS, accessed 21/12/2024²⁰

The LEDRA PRIDE

¹⁹ Available from: <https://www.marinetraffic.com/en/photos/of/ships/shipid:3526607/shipname:SALONE>

²⁰ Cyprus Boat Booking (n.d.) Anamnis [online]. Available from: https://cyprus-boat-booking.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/anamnis_2-1080x720.jpg.



Image 3: Marine Traffic, 2016, Image of the vessel LEDRA PRIDE, accessed 21/12/2024²¹

20. By cross-referencing vessel tracking data by NGO Global Fishing Watch²² with pushback reports, BVMN was able to collect additional evidence corroborating the use of the SALONE, ANAMNISIS and LEDRA PRIDE in seven pushback operations from Cyprus to Lebanon from 2020 until 2023.

Pushback on 7 September 2020

21. BVMN identified one trip of the vessel ANAMNISIS from Cyprus to Lebanon on 7 September 2020, on the same day a pushback was reported by the Facebook group “Consolidated Rescue Group”²³.

²¹ Available from:

https://www.marinetraffic.com/en/photos/of/ships/shipid:184508/shipname:LEDRA%20PRIDE?order=date_uploaded

²² <https://globalfishingwatch.org/>

²³ <https://www.facebook.com/unifiedrescue>

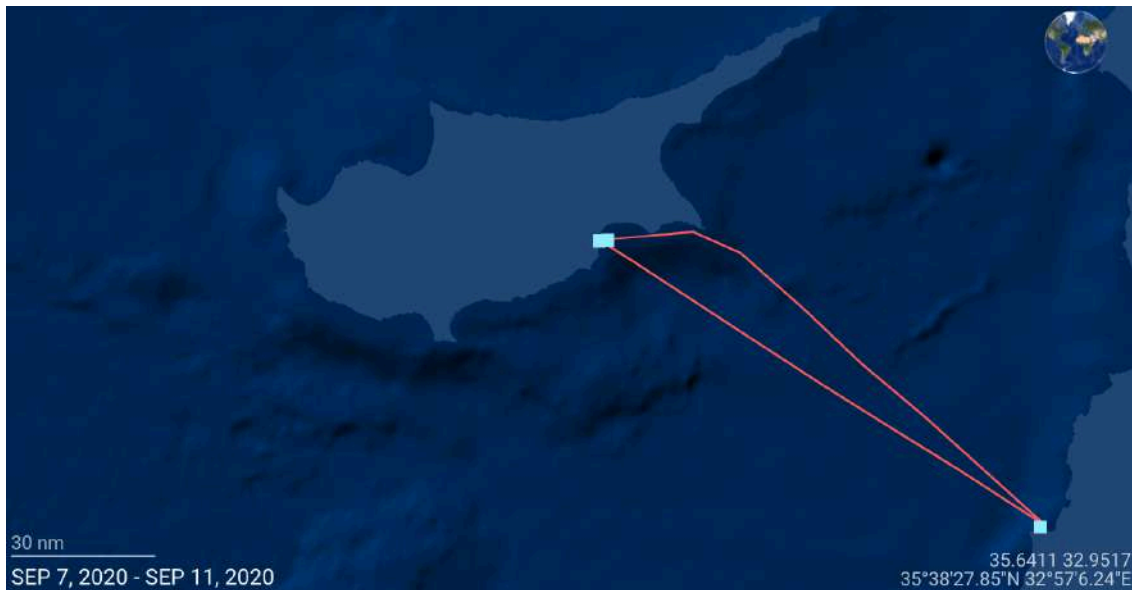


Image 4: Global Fishing Watch, 2024, Itinerary taken by the vessel SALONE between 7-11 September 2020

22. Maritime tracking data shows that the vessel travelled from the port of Larnaca to the port of Beirut, where it arrived in the evening on the 7 September, travelling back after a three-hour stay.



Image 5: Global Fishing Watch, 2024, time spent at the port of Beirut by the vessel ANAMNISIS between 7-8 September 2020

23. Cross-referencing the still frames from the footage²⁴ of the pushback shared by “Consolidated Rescue Group”, shows that the vessel’s features match those of the ANAMNISIS.

²⁴ Consolidated Rescue Group (2020) Video of the return of migrants from Cyprus to Lebanon on a private yacht chartered by the Cypriot authorities. [online]. Available from: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=386367252352068>.



Image 6: Matching the features of the ANAMNISIS from the footage of the pushback with a picture of the vessel

24. According to research conducted by University of Nicosia [Professor Nicos Trimikliniotis](#),²⁵ the vessel ANAMNISIS is regularly hired to send people on the move back to Lebanon.

Pushback on 8 September 2020

25. The SALONE was used in the pushback from Cyprus of some 30 individuals from Syria and Lebanon, including unaccompanied minors on 8 September 2020.

26. This pushback was the subject of a decision by the ECtHR (the case of M.A. and Z.R. v. Cyprus)²⁶. According to the testimonies given as part of the case, individuals were tricked into boarding the SALONE, after being told by the Cypriot authorities they would be taken ashore. Instead, they were taken to Lebanon and handed to the Lebanese authorities, who arrested them.

27. Maritime tracking data shows that the ship travelled from Larnaca in Cyprus to Beirut in Lebanon.

²⁵ Trimikliniotis, N. et al. (2023) Mobile Citizenship, States of Exception and (non)Border Regimes in the Pandemic and Post-Covid19 Cyprus. Hellenic Observatory Papers on Greece and Southeast Europe, GreeSE working paper series, GreeSE Paper. 183 (183), 1–99..

²⁶ ECHR (2024) M.A. AND Z.R. v. CYPRUS. [online]. Available from: [https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/#{%22fulltext%22:\[%22M.A.%20and%20Z.R.%20v.%20Cyprus%20\(no.%2039090/20\)%22\],%22documentcollectionid%22:\[%22GRANDCHAMBER%22,%22CHAMBER%22\],%22itemid%22:\[%22001-236141%22\]}.](https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/#{%22fulltext%22:[%22M.A.%20and%20Z.R.%20v.%20Cyprus%20(no.%2039090/20)%22],%22documentcollectionid%22:[%22GRANDCHAMBER%22,%22CHAMBER%22],%22itemid%22:[%22001-236141%22]})



Image 7: Global Fishing Watch, 2024, Itinerary taken by the vessel SALONE between 8-9 September 2020

28. The vessel docked in Beirut for about three hours to hand over some thirty Syrian and Lebanese individuals, including unaccompanied minors, to the Lebanese authorities²⁷.

	9/9/2020, 10:20 AM UTC - 1H 12M Visited port Larnaca, Cyprus	
	9/8/2020, 8:15 PM UTC - 3H 5M Visited port Beirut, Lebanon	
<div> <div>PORT ENTRY</div> <div>September 8, 2020 at 8:15 PM UTC</div> </div> <div> <div>PORT EXIT</div> <div>September 8, 2020 at 11:20 PM UTC</div> </div>		
	9/7/2020, 11:39 PM UTC - 9H 10M Visited port Larnaca, Cyprus	

Image 8: Global Fishing Watch, 2024, Time spent by vessel SALONE at the port of Beirut on 9 September 2020

Pushback on 16 May 2021

29. The SALONE was used in a pushback from Cyprus of 58 individuals, including eight women and 18 children, back to Lebanon on 16 May 2021²⁸.

²⁷ *ibid.*

²⁸ EuroMed Rights et al. (2021) Policy Brief: Pushbacks from Cyprus to Lebanon lead to chain refoulement to Syria. [online]. Available from: <https://web.archive.org/web/20240515103504/https://kisa.org.cy/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/POLICY-BRIEF-pushback-Cyprus-Lebanon-16.07.21.pdf>.

30. According to maritime tracking data, the vessel left the port of Limassol and arrived at the port of Beirut at 10:11 PM UTC. The vessel stayed there for around two hours before returning to Cyprus.



Image 9: Global Fishing Watch, 2024, Itinerary taken by the vessel SALONE between 24-26 June 2021

	6/25/2021, 10:11 PM UTC - 2H 20M	i	
	Visited port Beirut, Lebanon		
	PORT ENTRY	PORT EXIT	
	June 25, 2021 at 10:11 PM UTC	June 26, 2021 at 12:31 AM UTC	
	6/23/2021, 7:15 AM UTC - 1D 14H 59M	i	
	Visited port Akrotiri, Cyprus		

Image 10: Global Fishing Watch, 2024, Time spent by vessel SALONE at the port of Beirut on 25 - 26 June 2020

31. Of the 58 individuals who were pushed back, 25 were initially detained. As of July 2021, the status of six of them was unknown. As a consequence, a woman with two children was at high risk of deportation to Syria.

Pushback on 23 August 2021

32. The LEDRA PRIDE was used in the pushback of Hasan Khaled al-Ali and his two children²⁹, along with dozens of other Syrian individuals³⁰ from Cyprus back to Lebanon on

²⁹ EuroMed Rights (n.d.) On the Move - Latest Migration News: 2022 [online]. Available from: <https://euromedrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/On-the-Move-Cyprus-2022.pdf>.

³⁰ Info Migrants (2021) Cyprus: Migrant families separated at sea. InfoMigrants. 4 October. [online]. Available from: <https://www.infomigrants.net/fr/post/35487/cyprus-migrant-families-separated-at-sea>.

23 August 2021. As a consequence, al-Ali was separated from his pregnant wife, Kawthar Raslan³¹, who was allowed to disembark in Cyprus due to the advanced stage of her pregnancy.



Image 11: Global Fishing Watch, 2024, Itinerary taken by the vessel LEDRA PRIDE between 23-24 August 2021

Maritime tracking data shows that the vessel travelled from the port of Larnaca to the port of Beirut, where it arrived in the evening on 23 August 2021, travelling back after a 3.5-hour stay.

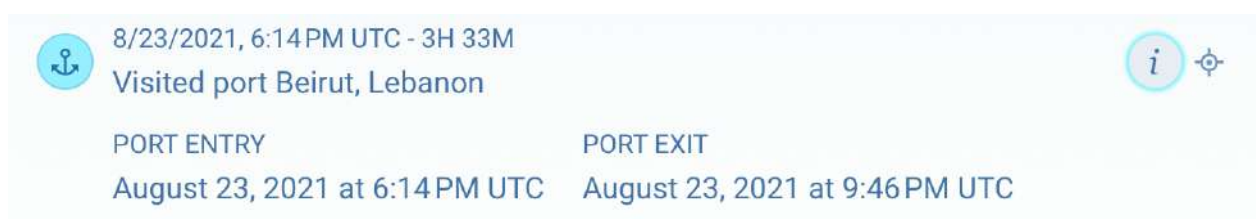


Image 12: Global Fishing Watch, 2024, time spent at the port of Beirut by the vessel LEDRA PRIDE between 23-24 August 2021

³¹ Connolly, A. (2021) Cyprus takes a hard line against immigration, trapping migrants in limbo. The World from PRX. 12 November. [online]. Available from: <https://theworld.org/stories/2021/11/12/cyprus-takes-hard-line-against-asylum-trapping-migrants-limbo> .

Pushback on 8 July 2022

The LEDRA PRIDE was used in the pushback of some 49 individuals on 8 July 2022, who were intercepted off the coast near Paphos, in Cyprus³².



Image 13: Global Fishing Watch, 2024, Itinerary taken by the vessel LEDRA PRIDE between 8-9 July 2022

Maritime tracking data confirms that the vessel moved from Limassol to Paphos on 8 July 2022, then headed to Beirut, arriving there on 9 July 2022 at 10:43 AM UTC.

³² SigmaLive (2022) Πίσω στον Λίβανο οι 49 μετανάστες που είχαν προσεγγίσει την Πάφο. 8 July. [online]. Available from: <https://web.archive.org/web/20220711223839/https://www.sigmalive.com/news/local/979355/piso-ston-livano-o-i-49-metanastes-pou-eixan-proseggisei-tin-pafo>.










	7/9/2022, 10:43 AM UTC - 1H 29M		
	Visited port Beirut, Lebanon		
	PORT ENTRY	PORT EXIT	
	July 9, 2022 at 10:43 AM UTC	July 9, 2022 at 12:12 PM UTC	
	7/8/2022, 1:33 PM UTC - 2H 31M		
	Visited port Paphos, Cyprus		
	7/7/2022, 11:55 AM UTC - 20H 29M		
	Visited port Limassol, Cyprus		

Image 14: Global Fishing Watch, 2024, time spent at the port of Beirut by the vessel LEDRA PRIDE on 9 July 2022 and previous port visits to Paphos and Limassol

Pushback on 23 August 2022

The LEDRA PRIDE was used in the pushback of 120 people on 23 August 2022, who were intercepted off the coast near Paphos, in Cyprus.³³

Maritime tracking data confirms that the LEDRA PRIDE left the port of Larnaca on 23 August 2021, heading to Beirut.



³³ Data of the pushback is seen in photo of the following article and was confirmed by Professor Nicos Trimikliniotis
<https://www.alphanews.live/cyprus/foto-nea-ntokoumenta-apo-taxidia-astynomikon-kai-metanaston-ston-livano/>

Image 15: Global Fishing Watch, 2024, Itinerary taken by the vessel LEDRA PRIDE between 22-25 August 2022

The vessel arrived at 9:15 PM UTC and stayed for 4.5 hours before returning to Cyprus.










	8/23/2022, 9:15 PM UTC - 4H 31M Visited port Beirut, Lebanon	 
	<div>PORT ENTRY</div> <div>August 23, 2022 at 9:15 PM UTC</div>	<div>PORT EXIT</div> <div>August 24, 2022 at 1:46 AM UTC</div>
	8/23/2022, 2:54 AM UTC - 4H 31M Visited port Larnaca, Cyprus	 
	8/11/2022, 11:35 PM UTC - 10D 23H 38M Visited port Limassol, Cyprus	 

Image 16: Global Fishing Watch, 2024, time spent at the port of Beirut by the vessel LEDRA PRIDE on 23 August 2022 and previous port visits to Larnaca and Limassol

Pushback on 30 July 2023

The LEDRA PRIDE was used to push 73 people on the move on 30 July 2023 back to Lebanon³⁴. The group was accompanied by some 80 police officers³⁵, according to statements by a representative of the police union. All 73 individuals were then subsequently forcibly deported to Syria³⁶.

³⁴ 11.11.11 et al. (2023) Cyprus must stop its chain-refoulement to Syria | KISA. [online]. Available from: <https://web.archive.org/web/20240721133917/https://kisa.org.cy/cyprus-must-stop-its-chain-refoulement-to-syria/>.

³⁵ AlphaNewsLive (2023) «Αναγνωρίζει δυσκολίες και νοιάζεται για ασφάλεια μελών» η ηγεσία της Αστυνομίας. AlphaNews [online]. Available from: <https://www.alphanews.live/cyprus/anagnorizei-dyskolies-kai-noiazetai-gia-asfaleia-melon-i-igesia-tis-astynomias/>.

³⁶ Access Center for Human Rights (ACHR) [@ACHRights] (2023) لبنان يعيد 73 لاجئاً سورياً إلى بلادهم قسراً. #معاً_من_أجل_حقوق_الإنسان_#النشرة_الاسبوعية_#انتهاكات_#حقوق_الإنسان_#حقوق_اللاجئ <https://t.co/WM3TiTfSFj>. Twitter [online]. Available from: <https://x.com/ACHRights/status/1687101012530880513>.



Image 17: Global Fishing Watch, 2024, Itinerary taken by the vessel LEDRA PRIDE between 29-31 July 2023

The vessel arrived at 10:43 AM UTC and stayed for about 4.5 hours before returning to Cyprus.



Image 18: Global Fishing Watch, 2024, time spent at the port of Beirut by the vessel LEDRA PRIDE on 30 July 2023

According to the ship's safety certificate³⁷, the LEDRA PRIDE is fit to carry up to 50 people, besides a minimal crew of four. Despite this, it was used to transport more than 150 individuals in this pushback, which a representative of the police union decried as unsafe³⁸.

³⁷ Republic of Cyprus Shipping Deputy Ministry (2024) Coastal Passenger Vessel Safety Certificate: LEDRA PRIDE. [online]. Available from: <https://www.gov.cy/media/sites/25/2024/05/LEDRA-PRIDE.pdf>.

³⁸ AlphaNewsLive (2023) «Αναγνωρίζει δυσκολίες και νοιάζεται για ασφάλεια μελών» η ηγεσία της Αστυνομίας. AlphaNews [online]. Available from: <https://www.alphanews.live/cyprus/anagnorizei-dyskolies-kai-noiazetai-gia-asfaleia-melon-i-igesia-tis-astynomi-as/>