# Tragedy at Sea: The Adriana Migrant Boat Capsizing and Allegations of Greek Coast Guard's Role



On June 14, 2023, the Adriana, a vessel carrying around 750 migrants, capsized off the coast of Messenia, Greece. The incident, which resulted in the estimated deaths of 500 individuals attempting to reach Italy, was one of the worst migrant boat disasters in recent history. In contrast, the disappearance of the OceanGate submersible around the same time overshadowed media coverage of the Adriana tragedy.

A BBC documentary, "Dead Calm: Killing in the Med?", revisits the incident with a thorough investigation. Survivors Mohamed and Abdelrahman, Syrian asylum seekers, recount the dire conditions aboard the overcrowded and unseaworthy vessel. They allege that the Greek Coast Guard's intervention contributed to the capsizing by attempting to tow the ship out of Greek waters and providing delayed rescue responses. The Greek authorities, meanwhile, deny these claims, stating the boat overturned due to “commotion” on deck.

The documentary also explores broader allegations of systematic abuse of asylum seekers at Greece’s borders. Fayad Mulla, an activist, captured footage of migrants reportedly being forced back into the sea, consistent with claims of illegal pushbacks by Greek officials. A notable segment features Dimitris Baltakos, former head of special operations with the Greek Coast Guard, inadvertently acknowledging during an off-camera conversation that such actions are "clearly illegal" and constitute “an international crime.”

The Greek Coast Guard asserts its personnel act lawfully and have rescued over 250,000 migrants in the past decade, denying all allegations of illegal activities. This documentary underscores the perilous nature of cross-sea migrations and the challenges faced by those fleeing conflict and hardship.