

Greek court delays trial of humanitarians facing charges for helping refugees

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Athens, November 23 (RHC)-- In Greece, a court on the island of Lesbos has postponed the trial of two dozen humanitarian aid workers who faced sentences of up to 25 years in prison if found guilty of espionage and other charges.

The volunteers were arrested for helping asylum-seekers who arrived on Lesbos by boat between 2016 and 2018. Human rights groups say the charges are trumped up and aimed at deterring others from helping refugees in need.

Pieter Wittenberg, one of the 25 whose trial was delayed last week, told reporters: “I am disappointed that we have not been able to speak and demonstrate once and for all today that humanitarian work is not a crime. That will have to wait.”

Meanwhile, the International Organization for Migration says 75 migrants drowned in the Mediterranean off the coast of Libya last week as they attempted to reach Italy by boat. They were among the more than 1,300 asylum-seekers the United Nations says have died trying to cross the central Mediterranean this year.

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