

Frontex Confirms Bulgarian Police Responsible for Deaths of Three Minors — NGOs Demand Immediate Suspension of Cooperation

Frontex's [latest report](#) has confirmed that Bulgarian authorities directly caused the deaths of three Egyptian minors — validating [long-standing warnings](#) from humanitarian groups, No Name Kitchen and Collettivo Rotte Balcaniche, clearly laying out the Bulgarian Border Police's direct responsibility for these deaths.

In December 2024, Ahmed Samra, Ahmed Elawdan and Seifalla Elbeltagy, three Egyptian minors, found themselves in distress close to Gabar forest, in southeast Bulgaria, after they crossed the Bulgarian-Turkish border. Alerted with several calls to 112, the Bulgarian Border Police not only failed to respond but also actively blocked attempts by rescue teams of the aforementioned humanitarian groups to reach the three boys, who - as a result - died from hypothermia.

Almost one year later, Frontex's Fundamental Rights Office (FRO) fully endorses the facts described in the report [Frozen Lives](#): *"the Bulgarian authorities were under obligation to assist and rescue migrants, as they had sufficient information to reasonably infer there was a life-threatening situation, they were aware of the migrants' location and while having the capacity to act, failed to implement adequate measures in time that resulted in loss of lives"*.

Frontex' report also rejects the Ministry of Interior's defamation campaign that followed the release of that report, and how the Border Police increased their criminalization campaign, multiplying investigations and arrests in an effort to silence the watchdog efforts of solidarity groups, people on the move and their families.

"These minors could have been saved. Frontex's own findings confirm a system designed to let people die at the border — and anyone supporting that system is responsible," said Ric Fernandez, representative of No Name Kitchen.

The FRO acknowledges that, beyond this specific event, the so-called "failure" to rescue is a routine practice of Bulgarian authorities, and has [repeatedly documented](#) that "pushbacks, often involving high levels of violence and other inhuman or degrading treatment, are a regular practice by Bulgarian border police", expressing to be "deeply concerned about the repeated allegations of the Bulgarian authorities not responding properly to distress calls".

Frontex absolves itself, placing responsibility for the incident solely on the Bulgarian authorities, instrumentalizing these deaths to call for an increase in Frontex' deployment in Bulgaria. Moreover, the FRO acknowledged that migrants intercepted by Frontex officers have been illegally and violently expelled from Bulgaria, which raises doubts about how reinforcing Frontex presence in Bulgaria would decrease border violence practices.

Despite the FRO stating that rescue efforts are "genuine", and denouncing their obstruction by the Bulgarian Border Police, since March 2025, Frontex officers have blocked and tailed rescue teams for hours, eventually preventing them from reaching people in life-threatening distress.

We call on Frontex to:

- 1. Immediately suspend all operational cooperation with Bulgarian Border Police.**
- 2. Publish the full FRO findings and all internal communications related to the incident.**
- 3. Ensure accountability mechanisms for any officer involved in obstruction of rescue.**

This case is not an isolated tragedy. It exposes systemic failures in EU border enforcement, where Frontex operations and national authorities jointly carry out illegal pushbacks, violent practices, and obstruction of rescue. If Frontex continues cooperating with Bulgarian authorities despite these findings, it will confirm that these deaths are not isolated incidents but the predictable result of EU policy — a policy that will continue to kill unless fundamentally changed.

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For more info:

[Frontex Report](#)

[Frozen Lives Report](#)