

Coast Guard arrests a man trying to run a giant hamster wheel across the Atlantic



By Laurel Wamsley, NPR, 7th September 2023 (adapted)

Reza Baluchi, a Florida resident granted asylum from Iran, was taken in by the Coast Guard while aboard his homemade hamster wheel made of buoys and wire.

Baluchi told officers his destination: London, England — more than 4,000 miles away.

When asked for his vessel's registration, Baluchi said it was registered in Florida but that he couldn't find the registration.

The Coast Guard assessed Baluchi's hydro-pod and deemed the voyage unsafe.

Officers in a small boat approached Baluchi, instructing him to join them, Baluchi threatened to hurt himself with a 12-inch knife if they attempted to remove him. The officers returned to their vessel and stayed nearby.

In subsequent attempts, Baluchi displayed two knives and threatened to hurt himself, and claimed to have an explosive device with wires in his hand. explode

The following day, a second Coast Guard arrived, delivering food, water and word that the hurricane was expected. Baluchi refused to leave, and told the officers that the bomb wasn't real.

On August 29, the Coast Guard finally removed Baluchi from his floating hamster wheel. He was released on \$250,000 bond in Miami Beach.