



Joint statement on inadequate conditions and inhumane treatment inside Pre-Removal Detention Centres in Greece and the ongoing hunger strike

[On 16th March](#), five detainees being held in Paranesti Pre-Removal Detention Centre (PRDC) in Northern Greece initiated a hunger strike to protest the [conditions](#) in which they are being held. By yesterday (22nd March) another six detainees have joined, bringing the total to 11.

This news comes in conjunction with alarming research published by the [Border Violence Monitoring Network](#) and [Mobile Info Team](#) regarding the arbitrary and systematic use of detention of people on the move throughout all stages of the asylum procedure in Greece. The two reports are based on 50 testimonies from people detained in six PRDCs between 2020 and 2022. In line with the [statements](#) made by the detainees on strike, they found that 80% of respondents could not obtain sufficient access to medical care in PRDCs, leading to severe deterioration of mental health including incidents of suicide and self-harm. This is amplified by the appalling hygiene conditions in PRDCs, whereby over 60% of their respondents similarly described that centres are extremely dirty and harbour mould as well as infestations of rodents and insects. The severely limited access to detention sites by civil society and lack of legal support puts detainees at high risk of being deprived of their rights and effective remedy.

As per the statement by detainees currently on hunger strike in Paranesti, the use of violence has been extensively reported as a form of alleged punishment in PRDCs. The Border Violence Monitoring Network's research found that 65% of respondents indicated that they had been subjected to violence or witnessed violence by authorities in detention, while 80% of respondents reported violent practices in Paranesti. Of particular concern, are the reported use of "dark rooms" that detainees are taken to before being physically abused.

The ongoing hunger strike is only the latest in Paranesti PRDC, not the first. Incidents were recorded [in April 2015](#), in [April 2020](#) - whereby reports emerged that 500-600 detainees went on hunger strike - and in [January 2021](#), all of which the authorities responded to by isolating detainees, subjecting them to prolonged violence or in several cases, carrying out [pushback operations](#) resulting in detainees being forcibly removed to Turkey.

The history of violent repression of hunger strikes in Paranesti PRDC, coupled with testimonies of illegal pushbacks from the site,¹ is of great concern.

We, the undersigned, demand for the **immediate release of detainees whose detention is over the legal limit**, and for the **prohibition of violence as a means to repress these protest actions**. We urge for the **immediate amelioration of detention conditions including** access to legal counsellors, access to physical and psychological medical care, to sufficient material conditions, to food with adequate nutritional value, to visits from family members.

We call for the **immediate cessation of the practice of detaining minors**, and the **immediate release of all minors**, as OSCE and many others have found that [detention is never in the best interest of the child](#). Finally, we call for an **independent investigation into the conditions** inside Greek PRDC's that adequately assesses the provision of material reception conditions, of translation and information about the rights of detainees, and considers the arbitrary use of violence against them. This would be aided by access granted to human rights watchdogs, CSOs and the possibility for unannounced visits. It is imperative that Greece, as a Member State of the EU, aligns itself with international and Union human rights law with regard to the use of detention as a last resort and the need to ensure adequate living conditions for detainees.

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¹ See: <https://www.borderviolence.eu/violence-reports/april-23-2020-0000-near-to-uzunkopru/>;
<https://www.borderviolence.eu/violence-reports/april-23-2020-1400-drama-detention-center-greece/>;
<https://www.borderviolence.eu/violence-reports/april-23-2020-2000-greek-turkish-border-near-meric/>;
<https://www.borderviolence.eu/violence-reports/july-5-2020-2200-meric-river-near-meric-ipsala-turkey/>;
<https://www.borderviolence.eu/violence-reports/april-23-2020-0000-greek-turkish-border-near-ipsala/>;
<https://www.borderviolence.eu/violence-reports/september-10-2020-1030-feres-greece/>.