

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

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Greece: Amnesty International welcomes Greece's commitment to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and urges increased protection of refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants

Human Rights Council adopts Universal Periodic Review outcome on Greece

Amnesty International welcomes Greece's commitment to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture,¹ and calls on the government to swiftly set up or designate a national mechanism to conduct periodic visits to places of deprivation of liberty in order to prevent torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Amnesty International also welcomes Greece's support of recommendations to establish an asylum system consistent with international and regional standards on the protection and reception of asylum-seekers² and urges the government to ensure its early and effective establishment.

The organization has noted a dramatic rise in racially motivated crimes against third-country nationals, including refugees and asylum-seekers. It calls on Greece to act swiftly on accepted recommendations to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance,³ in order to eliminate this scourge.

Amnesty International is deeply concerned at the treatment of unaccompanied minors. It has consistently documented their prolonged detention in very poor detention conditions in immigration detention facilities, including instances where they have been detained among adults. Amnesty International welcomes the focus on this in the review⁴ and highlights the need for an effective framework to abolish, in law and in practice, the detention of unaccompanied asylum-seeking and migrant children. All unaccompanied children should be given a guardian and a safe residence when they arrive in Greece.

Over the past years, Amnesty International has expressed concern about the failure of the authorities to ensure that the police respect and protect human rights. It reiterates its concerns at the lack of independence and effectiveness of the Bureau on Incidents of Arbitrariness by Law Enforcement Officials and encourages the government to establish a fully independent and effective police complaints mechanism.

Amnesty International welcomes Greece's support of a recommendation to recognize same sex couples⁵ and encourages it to proceed with the recognition of same sex partnerships and marriage in domestic legislation.

Background

¹ Paragraphs 84.3 (Palestine), 84.4 (Cyprus), 84.5 (Armenia, Brazil), 84.6 (Slovenia).

² Paragraphs 83.11 (Australia), 83.12 (Netherlands), 83.65 (Switzerland), 83.66 (Lebanon), 83.67 (Poland).

³ Paragraph 83.24 (Algeria), 83.27 (Egypt), 83.39 (Turkey), 84.14 (Egypt).

⁴ Paragraphs 83.76 (Chile), 83.77 (Argentina), 83.78 (Slovenia), 83.79 (Norway), 83.80 (Denmark), 83.81 (Netherlands), 83.91 (Ecuador).

⁵ Paragraph 84.11 (Brazil).

The UN Human Rights Council adopted the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of Greece on 22 September 2011 at its 18th session. Prior to the adoption of the report of the review Amnesty International delivered the oral statement above. Amnesty International also contributed to the information basis of the review through its submission on Greece: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR25/008/2010/en>

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