

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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Amnesty International welcomes Greece's recognition of same-sex relationships, but regrets its inadequate response to the refugee crisis

Human Rights Council adopts Universal Periodic Review outcome on Greece

Amnesty International welcomes Greece's acceptance of recommendations to respond to high levels of irregular migration in a manner that is consistent with international human rights and refugee law;¹ to improve reception conditions for refugees and migrants;² and to prohibit the detention of unaccompanied children.³

The organization noted with regret, however, that Greece's current response to the refugee crisis, including the European Union (EU) -Turkey Agreement of 18 March 2016, is not consistent with international human rights and refugee law, including the principle of *non-refoulement*. Amnesty International urges Greece to refrain from returning asylum-seekers to Turkey under this deal.

Amnesty International has documented appalling conditions in refugee camps and "hotspots" on the islands and in mainland Greece, including incidents of violence and lack of security. The organization calls on the Greek authorities to urgently provide asylum-seekers with suitable accommodation, with the support of the EU, including alternatives to camps. Greece should also ensure safety and security for asylum-seekers in the camps and elsewhere and their effective access to justice.

Amnesty International is pleased to note Greece's support of a recommendation to fully recognize same-sex relationships and adoption by same-sex couples.⁴ Amnesty International urges Greece to promptly implement these reforms and to proceed with legal recognition of gender identity.

Amnesty International regrets that Greece rejected recommendations to establish an alternative to military service that is not punitive or discriminatory and to ensure that conscientious objectors do not face harassment or prosecution.⁵ Amnesty International calls on Greece to cease the practice of arresting, prosecuting, fining or imprisoning conscientious objectors for refusing to serve in the military or to carry out alternative service which is punitive or discriminatory.

Background

The UN Human Rights Council adopted the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of Greece on 21 September 2016 during its 33rd session. Prior to the adoption of the report of the review Amnesty International delivered the oral statement above. Amnesty International

¹ Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review – Greece*, A/HRC/33/7, 8 July 2016, recommendation 134.132 (Canada).

² A/HRC/33/7, recommendations 134. 131 (Norway); 134.139 (Ireland); 134.142 (Canada); and 134.144 (Costa Rica).

³ Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review – Greece (Addendum)* A/HRC/33/7/Add.1, 2 September 2016, recommendations 136.26 (Belgium).

⁴ A/HRC/33/7/Add.1, 2 September 2016, recommendation 136.11 (Netherlands).

⁵ A/HRC/33/7/Add.1, 2 September 2016, recommendations 136.15 (Uruguay) and 136.16 (Slovenia).

also contributed to the information basis of the review through its submission on Greece:
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur25/3538/2016/en/>

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