

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## Public Statement

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## Greece: Joint statement

### **47 Rights groups from 22 Euro-Mediterranean countries decry frequent and grave violations of foreign detainees' rights in Greece**

(Athens, 15 June 2002) The undersigned NGOs, meeting in Athens between 13-15 June, 2002 in the framework of the General Assembly of the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN), and after having been informed on the situation of migrants and refugees in Greece, would like to express their great concern about the frequent and grave violations of the rights of thousands of foreigners who arrive or live in Greece as (potential) asylum seekers or (un)documented migrants and are detained pending judicial or administrative deportation.

Greek NGOs have documented an almost systematic absence of competent translators during examination by law enforcement officials or in court. Moreover, the Greek authorities frequently fail to inform foreigners of their rights, refuse them asylum application forms or even provide misleading information. Undocumented migrants or asylum seekers have often been tried without benefit of legal counsel, and sentenced to imprisonment or deportation after trials lasting only a few minutes. Detention conditions are in many cases degrading and inhumane, and access to lawyers and NGOs has been severely and arbitrarily limited. When authorized representatives of detainees have requested the full documentation for their cases, this has been denied by the authorities, on the grounds that this might hinder efforts to deport them.

We welcome last week's statement by the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights, Alvaro Gil-Robles, that "Greece should not forget that deportees are human beings, too"; and we appeal to the Greek authorities to radically revise their treatment of foreigners under arrest, detention, trial or deportation. We also call upon all inter-governmental organizations (UN, OSCE, CoE, EU) to use all of their mechanisms (expert committees, special rapporteurs, commissioners, etc.) to review this situation regularly and to urge Greece to honor its human rights commitments, in this as well as in many other areas. They should review Greece's record and judge it according to universal international standards which protect the rights of detainees, the right to fair trial and the rights of refugees.

#### **International NGOs**

Amnesty International (AI)

Article 19

Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN)

Federation Internationale des Ligues de Droits de l' Homme (FIDH)

Human Rights Watch (HRW)

International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF)

Organization Mondiale Contre la Torture (OMCT)

**Greek NGOs**

Greek Committee for International Democratic Solidarity (EEDDA)  
Greek Helsinki Monitor (GHM)

**Other National NGOs**

Al Urdun Al jaded Research Center (Jordan)  
Arab Association for Human Rights (Palestine)  
Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK  
Association Démocratique des Femmes de Maroc  
B' Tselem (Israel)  
Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (Egypt)  
Center for Media Freedom, Middle East and North Africa (UK)  
Collectif 95 Magreb Egalite (Algeria)  
Comite pour le Respect des Libertes et des Droits de l' Homme en Tunisie  
Committee for defense of Human Rights (Syria)  
Conseil National pour les Libertes en Tunisie  
Danish Center for Human Rights  
80:20 Education and Acting for a Better World (Ireland)  
Espace Associatif (Morocco)  
Federation des Tunisiens pour une Citoyennete des Deux Rives  
Foundation for Human and Humanitarian Rights (Lebanon)  
Foundation Réne Moawad (Lebanon)  
Human Rights Association (Turkey)  
Institut des Droits de l'Homme (Tunis)  
Intercenter Messine (Italy)  
International Association for Human Rights in Cyprus  
Italian Council for Refugees  
Italian Helsinki Committee  
LAW Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment  
Libyan League for Human Rights  
Ligue Algérienne des Droits de l'Homme  
Ligue Algerienne pour la Defense des Droits de l' Homme  
Ligue des Droits de l' Homme (France)  
Ligue Tunisienne des Droits de l'Homme  
Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies (Malta)  
Norwegian Council for the Rights of Kurdish People  
Norwegian Helsinki Committee  
Organisation Marocaine des Droits Humains  
Palestinian Human Rights Organization  
Rights and Freedoms Association (Cyprus)  
Soutien aux Libanais Détenus Arbitrairement (France)  
Swedish Refugee Council  
Tampere Peace Research Institute (Finland)

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