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## **PUBLIC STATEMENT**

### **GREECE**

#### **Inhuman prison conditions in Drapetsona, Athens**

Amnesty International wrote today to the Greek authorities condemning the conditions at the detention centre of Drapetsona, Athens, as cruel, inhuman and degrading.

The organization has been informed that in some instances prisoners are so densely packed into cells that they have difficulty even in finding a place to lie down. The centre is reported to be used only for non-EU foreigners.

Poor conditions at this centre include lack of adequate exercise; lack of natural daylight; insufficient toilet and bath facilities; restriction on visits; severely limited access to a doctor or medical treatment; and no access to social services.

Amnesty International also raised its concern that 12 persons, all non-EU citizens, have been detained for long periods in Drapetsona Detention Centre, in conditions which are inhuman, pending deportation to their country of origin.

These 12 persons were either never charged with any offence, or have completed their sentences. In its letter, Amnesty International requested from the authorities detailed information concerning the legal grounds for their continued detention.

The organization is also urging the Greek authorities to take all necessary steps to ensure that prisoners in Drapetsona are not subjected to conditions which may constitute cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

#### **BACKGROUND**

The conditions of detention at Drapetsona are very similar to those found by a delegation of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (ECPT) when, in March 1993, it visited the premises of the Piraeus Transfer Centre, which is administratively responsible for the Detention Centre of Drapetsona. At the time of the visit, the ECPT recorded that the detention facilities were grossly inadequate. Detainees also complained to the ECPT that they were not provided with sufficient food and drink -- a complaint which Amnesty International also received about Drapetsona -- and that no specific separate facilities had been built to accommodate women detainees.

In its report to the Greek authorities, the ECPT recommended "*that the detention facilities of the Piraeus Transfer Centre be extensively renovated without delay (.). If such a renovation were not to prove feasible, the existing premises should be taken out of service and the Transfer Centre relocated elsewhere, in a place capable of offering better detention facilities*".

Amnesty International understands that detainees were then transferred from the Piraeus Transfer Centre to the Drapetsona detention centre, a larger building. The organization is seriously concerned that despite this measure the conditions of detention continue to amount to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

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