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Greek authorities must urgently investigate allegations of ill-treatment at the Korinth detention facility

Following a series of allegations received by Amnesty International and other organizations and groups regarding police ill-treatment of detained migrants and asylum-seekers at the Korinth immigration detention facility since October 2012, the organization urges the Greek authorities to conduct a thorough, prompt and impartial investigation into the allegations and ensure that all identified perpetrators are being brought to justice.

The most recent example, exposed two days ago in the national media concerns K.M., a twenty one year old Syrian national who was allegedly beaten by police on 10 March 2013 when he started filming with his mobile phone riot police intervening and beating violently and randomly detainees at the centre after a disagreement erupted between some detainees on either side of a fence at the Korinth detention facility.

K. recounted his beating to Amnesty International. K. said that three police officers came to his side of the fence, took his mobile phone dragged him out of the yard and tied his arms behind his back with handcuffs. Then the police officers allegedly started to beat him and asked him why he was recording. One of the police officers checked K.'s mobile and, on finding the video recording, allegedly ran towards K, punched him in the chest resulting in his falling to the ground. K. went on: *"...The same policeman began to kick me, ..., I tried to stand and the policeman hit me again... then he asked two police officers to take me to a room where I could not be seen by other detainees... (In the room), the policemen started kicking my chest..., then a policeman slapped me and started beating me with his fists on my face"*.

The pictures viewed by Amnesty International and published in the national media show bruising around K.M.'s eye and on the left side of his upper body. K.M. reported that he had not seen a doctor after his beating.

In November 2012 when Amnesty International delegates visited the Korinth detention facility, conditions at the centre were very poor. There was lack of heating and hot water while bedding was dirty and not sufficient for the cold weather. There was no soap or toilet paper and detainees said that the authorities did not provide them with hygiene products. Several detainees alleged that police guards frequently ill-treated them.

In the beginning of February 2013, Amnesty International received further reports about very poor detention conditions including lack of bedding for the cold and further allegations that police ill-treated detainees at the facility.

In addition, allegations have been received about ill-treatment of migrants and asylum-seekers held in other police stations in Greece. A Syrian national described an incident of ill-treatment that occurred on 9 January 2013 as follows at a police station close to Tripoli : *"There was a disturbance in the crowded compartment and the police raided our roomthey beat three Afghan people very badly.....then they took all of us to the bus. On the way the highest ranked police officer beat us and said bad words to us and other police*

officers beat us by hands and sticks ...”.

In view of the persistence of the allegations regarding ill-treatment by police in various immigration facilities and police stations in Greece, Amnesty International wishes to reiterate its call to the Greek authorities to take measures that will enhance safeguards in custody and immigration detention. Such measures include the ratification as soon as possible of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT) and establish or designate a National Preventative Mechanism mandated to visit places of actual or possible detention in order to prevent torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and regularly examine the treatment and condition of persons deprived of their liberty. In March 2012, the Greek authorities had presented as draft law for public consultation proposing the ratification of OPCAT and designating the Greek Ombudsman as a National Preventative mechanism but the proposed legislation has yet to be presented to the Greek Parliament for ratification.

For further information see:

Police Violence in Greece: Not just ‘Isolated Incidents’, EUR 25/005/2012, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR25/005/2012/en>.

Greek authorities must send a strong message against cases of police abuse, EUR 25/010/2012, at <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR25/010/2012/en>.

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