

UA 70/22

AI Index EUR 25/5891/2022 of 25 July 2022

## **GREECE RESCUE 50 STRANDED REFUGEES**

Since 14 July, 50 people seeking safety, including 12 children, three pregnant women and a 70-year-old woman with diabetes, have been stranded in dangerous and dire conditions on one of the Evros islets. The individuals, who are Syrian and Palestinian refugees, have no food or safe drinking water and report that two of the children are sick and the woman with diabetes is in need of urgent medical care. Despite interim measures issued by the European Court of Human Rights last week, the group has not yet been rescued. The Greek authorities must urgently rescue them and provide support, health care, access to asylum procedures in Greece and protection from non-refoulement.

The refugees told the Greek Council and HumanRights360 – the two organizations representing them - that they have no access to food, safe drinking water, medical attention and means to keep warm during the night. Two of the pregnant women are in advanced stages of pregnancy. In recent days, they reported in desperation their hunger and thirst and that two of the children are sick and the woman with diabetes is in need of urgent medical care.

On 20 July 2022, the European Court of Human Rights issued interim measures requesting the Greek authorities not to remove the group of refugees from Greece and to provide them with “ food, water and adequate medical care as needed until further notice”. However, until now the refugees have not yet been rescued.

### **Write to the Minister of Citizen Protection urging him to:**

- comply urgently with the European Court of Human Rights interim measures and fulfil the country’s obligations under Rule 39 of the Rules of the Court
- ensure that the 50 refugees are rescued, provided with support and health care, access to asylum procedures in Greece and protection from non-refoulement
- ensure that their human rights to life, physical integrity, health are protected

### **Write to:**

Panagiotis Theodorikakos  
Minister of Citizen Protection  
Ministry of Citizen Protection  
P. Kanellopoulou 4  
10177 Athens  
Greece

Email: [pressoffice@yptp.gr](mailto:pressoffice@yptp.gr)

Twitter: @theodorikakosp

Salutation: Dear Minister:

**And Copy:**

Her Excellency Konstantina Athanassiadou  
Ambassador  
Embassy of the Hellenic Republic  
80 MacLaren Street  
Ottawa, ON K2P 0K6  
Fax: 613 238 5676  
Email: gremb.otv@mfa.gr

**Additional information**

According to information received from the Greek Council for Refugees and HumanRights360 who represented the 50 refugees before the European Court of Human Rights, the Orestiada Police Directorate informed them that they could not trace the group. The organization has been informed that the authorities have been provided with the group's coordinates.

The people stranded also reported to the two organizations that yesterday Arab-speaking individuals appeared and threatened them and told them to return to Turkey. Additionally, in the past few days, the group told the two organizations that the 70-year-old woman with diabetes requires urgent medical assistance, one of the children has a fever and suffered from nose bleeds, and a second child fainted from the heat and hunger.

Currently, violent pushbacks remain rampant at Greece's borders and go unpunished while the criminalization of aid groups that try to help victims of pushbacks continues. In June 2021, through the testimonies of 16 victims, Amnesty International [reported](#) 21 incidents of group pushbacks to Turkey in 2020, conducted by individuals appearing to belong to law enforcement and individuals in civilian or unmarked clothing. The incidents were estimated to have affected around 1,000 people. Many victims experienced arbitrary detention and ill-treatment, in some cases amounting to torture. None of those interviewed had the opportunity to seek asylum or to challenge their return. The research, consistent with evidence from other reputable actors, showed that pushbacks were Greece's de facto policy of border management.