UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW OF GREECE

Pre-Session Statement

A joint submission on pushbacks, intersectional violence, and detention

Border Violence Monitoring Network (BVMN),
I Have Rights & Mobile Info Team

Who We Are

Border Violence Monitoring Network (BVMN)

Border Violence Monitoring Network (BVMN) is a coalition of organisations working to document illegal pushbacks, collective expulsions, detention, and violence along the EU's external borders.

I Have Rights

I Have Rights (IHR) is a non-profit legal organisation providing individualised legal information to people on the move on Samos while advocating for the change of policies and practices responsible for human rights violations.

Mobile Info Team

Mobile Info Team (MIT) is a non-profit organisation that provides accessible information and tailored case and legal support to people on the move in Greece, and advocates for change at national and EU levels.

Themes

1. Pushbacks

2. Intersectional Violence

3. Detention

The Scale of Violence in Pushbacks

Part 1 of 2

151

BVMN pushback testimonies (2021–2025)

10,000+

documented people affected

595

pushback operations by the HCG in 2024-2025 (Collective Aid)

- Pushbacks can cause deaths - examples:
  - 600+ in Pylos shipwreck (June 2023)
  - 15+ in Chios shipwreck (February 2026)
- Our documentation on Samos (2023-2025):
  - 61+ people pushed back
  - 22+ incidents of enforced disappearance

These figures are likely an undercount: the sensitive nature of gender-based violence, barriers to accessing services, and stigma persist as reporting barriers.

Pushbacks: Recommendations

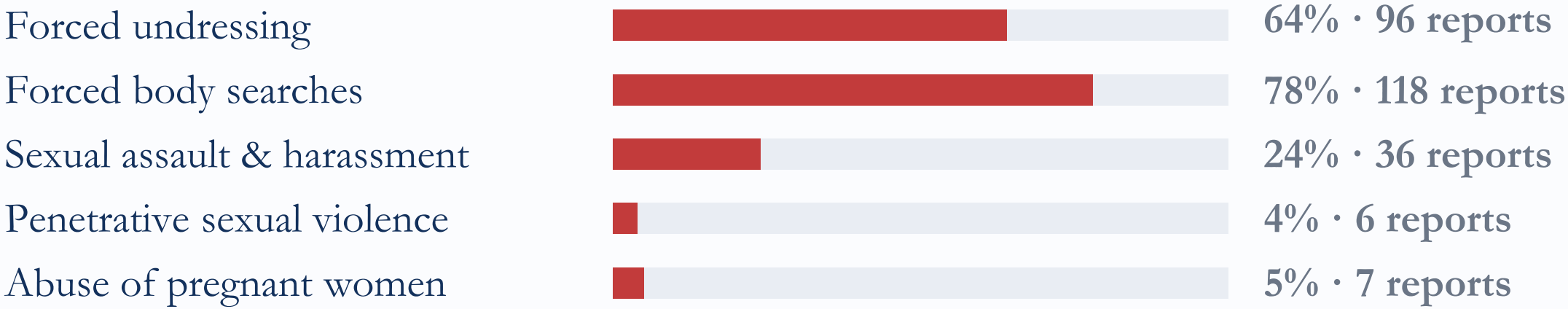
Part 2 of 2

- immediately accept the **individual complaints procedure** under Article 31 of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.
- sign and **ratify Protocol 4 to the European Convention on Human Rights** within 12 months, prohibiting collective expulsion of aliens under Article 4.
- immediately ensure that **all individuals apprehended** at its land and sea borders are **provided with individual assessment.**

Intersectional Violence within Pushbacks

Reports of gender-based violence present in testimonies

Documented forms of violence in pushback testimonies



"We'll kill you, you Africans"

- HCG officer, reported by a 24-year-old Liberian man — pushback, March 2023

"Go back, you Arabs." -

HCG officer, reported by a 39-year-old Yemeni man beaten and kicked in the face — pushback, summer 2025

16 incidents of violence affecting 242 people documented on Samos in 2022-2023, including **anti-muslim racist violence** in the camp

GBV reporting is known to be widely underreported, these represent only known cases.

Intersectional Violence: Recommendations

Part 2 of 2

- within 12 months, **adopt and implement a protocol for the documentation and investigation of all allegations of sexual and gender-based violence** committed during border operations.
- within six months, **establish an independent border monitoring mechanism** with a mandate to access all land and maritime border zones.
- within 12 months, **establish an independent complaints body** with jurisdiction to receive and **investigate allegations of pushbacks, torture, and enforced disappearance** at the border, with the authority to **refer cases for prosecution**, and must **publish annual data** on complaints received, investigations initiated, and outcomes.

Detention: Sub-standard conditions

Part 1 of 2

- **Conditions in police stations:**
  - 88% experienced **verbal or physical violence**; 100% reported **degrading conditions** and lack of basic safeguards; 53% **lacked adequate legal support**
- **Conditions in the context of the asylum suspension:** extreme "**psychological pressure**", *de facto* detention, overcrowding, inadequate food, water, sanitation and healthcare
- **Conditions on the islands**: automatic and unlawful detention upon arrival without procedural safeguards, and **systematic non-consideration of less coercive alternatives**

"When I stood up, all the police started attacking me."
"You can drink water from the toilets".

- Man detained in Crete in 2024

"House of insects"

- Man detained on the mainland in 2025

"If they don't see you fainting on the floor [...], they will not take you to the hospital."

- Man detained in Crete in 2025

Detention: Recommendations

Part 2 of 2

- Immediately cease the practice of child immigration detention, as well as the use of police stations as places of prolonged immigration detention.
- Within 6 months, ensure that all sites of detention comply with the Nelson Mandela Rules and can guarantee detainees' fundamental rights.
- Within 6 months, establish and publish a standardised legal basis for all immigration detention decisions, ensuring individualised necessity and proportionality assessments.