GREECE UPR – BRIEFING NOTE

UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW OF GREECE — 4TH CYCLE (2026)

The Evidence, First-Hand

Testimonies collected directly by our Network across three areas of documented abuse.

ILLEGAL PUSHBACKS

- 151 testimonies, from 2021 & 2025 impacting least 10,000 people
- 5,841+ people pushed back in 2025 alone
- 72% of cases meet the legal threshold for enforced disappearance

VIOLENCE

- 98% of testimonies meet the threshold for torture (Art. 1 CAT) or CID (Art. 16 CAT)
- Forced undressing 64% · body/intimate searches 78% · sexual assault 24%
- Racist and Islamophobic violence by Coast Guard and police, with impunity

HARMFUL DETENTION

- Sintiki CCAC: 15 people per <20m² container in bad conditions
- Families and children still held in de facto detention
- ECtHR condemned Greece's treatment of minors, Oct. 2024 and Nov. 2025

A PATTERN IGNORED FOR TWO DECADES — NOW A DECLARATION OF INTENT

Greece accepted a significant cluster of 3rd-cycle recommendations (2021–2022) on non-refoulement, asylum assessment, and detention, and in five years has taken NO SUBSTANTIVE ACTION. In December 2025, Health Minister Adonis Georgiadis called for pushbacks to be legalised, describing people on the move as *"downtrodden people from Africa"* and accusing Amnesty International of opposing *"the basic interests of European peoples."* This is not a failure of implementation, but rather a declaration of intent to abandon commitments made to the Human Rights Council.

Documented Pattern of Violations

UN treaty bodies and Special Procedures have independently reached the same conclusions.

Human Rights Committee, Oct. 2024
Found that allegations of excessive force including live ammunition during pushbacks are not investigated in a timely, effective or impartial manner, citing unresolved Evros border incidents years after the events, and questioned whether the Ombudsman can exercise effective oversight in practice.

UN Special Rapporteur on Migrants, Mar. 2020
Stated that pushbacks of asylum seekers and migrants "*constitute a violation of the prohibition of collective expulsions and the principle of non-refoulement*."

UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances, Apr. 2022
Concluded that Greek pushback practices raise serious concern under the ICPPED, corroborating the patterns in BVMN's testimonies.

UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, 2025
Drew on BVMN's evidence in its global report on trends and developments in torture, which references pushbacks in Greece.

European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT)
Reported similar findings on Greece: widespread violence and the practice of holding pushback victims in arbitrary detention.

CEDAW Committee, Feb. 2024
Raised concern that women and girls are pushed back to Türkiye without effective access to asylum, and called on Greece to address intersecting discrimination, end SGBV practices, and ensure gender-sensitive asylum procedures.

Suggested Recommendations to Address Violations

1. End, immediately, the practice of pushbacks, and the violence carried out within them, at Greece's borders.
2. Establish an independent border monitoring mechanism with access to all land and maritime border zones.
3. End, immediately, the use of police stations as immigration detention facilities.
4. End, immediately, the detention of children on immigration grounds.
5. Sign and ratify Protocol 4 ECHR prohibiting the collective expulsion of third country nationals.
6. Establish an independent complaints body empowered to investigate pushbacks, torture, and enforced disappearance, and refer cases for prosecution

Full joint submission and supporting testimonies: **borderviolence.eu** · unadvocacy@borderviolence.eu | **ihaverights.eu** · advocacy@ihaverights.eu | **mobileinfoteam.org** · advocacy@mobileinfoteam.org