



HAUT-COMMISSARIAT AUX DROITS DE L'HOMME • OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
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REFERENCE: CAT/Follow-up

15 October 2020

Excellency,

In my capacity as Rapporteur a.i. for Follow-up to Concluding Observations of the Committee against Torture, I have the honour to refer to the follow-up to the examination of the seventh periodic report of Greece, in accordance with the Guidelines for follow-up to concluding observations (CAT/C/55/3).

At the end of its 67th session, the Committee transmitted its concluding observations to your Permanent Mission. The Committee's concluding observations (CAT/C/GRC/CO/7, para. 52) requested the State party to provide within one year further information on the specific areas of concern identified in paragraphs 17 (c), 23 (b), 25 (d) and 49 (a) of the concluding observations.

On behalf of the Committee, allow me to express appreciation for your letter of 19 August 2020 providing your Government's response to the above-mentioned paragraphs (CAT/C/GRC/FCO/7) and to make the following comments:

Non-refoulement (para. 17 (c) of the Committee's concluding observations)

The Committee takes note of the State party's assertions that "allegations that law enforcement agents of the existing border services have misbehaved (...) do not correspond at all to reality and the operational activities carried out". However, it remains deeply concerned about additional recent reports of systematic and coordinated pushbacks of migrants and asylum seekers by Greek border guards at land and sea borders (see 'UNHCR's Assistant High Commissioner visit to Greece', United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 4 September 2020). Moreover, the Committee regrets not having received detailed information on the outcome of the investigations, if any, into such alleged abuses. In this regard, the Committee reiterates its recommendation to the State party that it guarantee that all asylum seekers have the opportunity of an individual review, with automatic suspensive effect against expulsion decisions, and are protected from refoulement and collective return (2/D).

.../...

H. E. Mr. Panayotis Stournaras
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Unaccompanied migrant and asylum-seeking children (para. 23 (b) of the Committee's concluding observations)

The Committee remains concerned at the fact that unaccompanied migrant and asylum-seeking children continue to be placed in police custody, pre-removal centres, and in identification centres as “a temporary precautionary measure”, while acknowledging that the State party has taken initial steps towards the gradual abolition of this practice (2/B2).

Sexual and gender-based violence against refugee and asylum-seeking women (para. 25 (d) of the Committee's concluding observations)

The Committee appreciates the information provided by the State party regarding the measures taken to address sexual and gender-based violence against refugee and asylum-seeking women, and in particular the coordination role of the General Secretariat for Family Policy and Gender Equality in the event of an incident of this type in reception and identification centres located at “hot spots”. However, it regrets that the State party's follow-up replies do not include information on specific protective measures taken in such cases, nor on the results of these interventions (2/D).

Human rights defenders and humanitarian workers and volunteers (para. 49 (a) of the Committee's concluding observations)

The Committee also regrets that the information submitted by the State party in its follow-up replies does not address the specific concerns mentioned in its concluding observations, mainly regarding the alleged intimidation and harassment of human rights defenders and humanitarian workers and volunteers (1/D).

Implementation plans (para. 52 of the Committee's concluding observations)

Lastly, the Committee regrets that the State party has not provided information about its plans for implementing, within the coming reporting period, the recommendations included in its concluding observations (C).

The Government of Greece is encouraged to provide additional information, if there is any, which would further contribute to the Committee's analysis of the progress made regarding the specific issues of concern cited above. This additional information may be provided in any subsequent report by the State party pursuant to the Committee's request in its concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Greece or other future periodic reports.

The Committee looks forward to a continued constructive dialogue with the authorities of Greece on the implementation of the Convention.

Accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

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Bakhtiyar Tuzmukhamedov
Rapporteur a.i. for follow-up to concluding observations
Committee against Torture