

MONTHLY REPORT | JUNE 2025

ILLEGAL PUSHBACKS AND BORDER VIOLENCE REPORTS

BVMN is a network of watchdog organisations active in the Balkans, Greece, Turkey, Poland and France including Rigardu, Mobile Info Team, Collective Aid, Blindspots, Pushback Alarm Austria, I Have Rights, Center for Legal Aid, Mission Wings, InfoPark, Legal Centre Lesvos, We Are Monitoring and Human Rights Observers.

Source: Philippine Masson Quai de la Gironde



**Border Violence
Monitoring Network**



MONTHLY REPORT | JUNE 2025

ILLEGAL PUSHBACKS AND BORDER VIOLENCE REPORTS



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Table of contents

6 Executive Summary

8 Update on the situation

9 Human Rights violations in the deportation process: testimonies from the margins

13 SERBIA

- Relocations and rising uncertainty around Krnjača closure
- EU policy and rising smuggling violence in Serbia and border areas
- Legal uncertainties and shifting migration patterns

16 BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

- Pushbacks from Croatia to Bosnia-Herzegovina
- Canine weaponisation
- Destruction of belongings
- Increased violence amongst people on the move
- State violence within state borders
- Camp closures
- Frontex

23 Greece

- Geopolitical tension in the Aegean and increase of arrivals in Crete
- Delays, challenges and lack of support in the asylum system continue
- Supervision of asylum procedures under M.S.S case suspended
- New far-right Minister for Migration and Asylum to maintain Greece's migration policy

26 Kos

- Living conditions in the Kos CCAC: ongoing violations of rights and dignity

27 Samos

- Degrading detention conditions in the Samos CCAC
- Delays in the asylum procedure and ongoing inconsistencies
- De facto detention in the isolation zone of the CCAC
- No access to critical medical care in the isolation zone



31 Turkey

- Eid al-Adha holiday marked by increased migration checkpoints nationwide
- Presidency of Migration Management apprehension statistics
- Rights groups call for closure of Turkey's removal centres
- Uzbek national dies while held under administrative detention in Muğla
- Uzbek mother of four facing deportation in Bursa GGM
- Turkmen activist faced with deportation order
- Istanbul Pride faces repression again
- Turkish court sentences four Turkish border guards to life imprisonment for torturing two Syrian nationals to death in 2023
- Real and fake news of migration to Turkey during Israeli-US attacks on Iran; plus Tehran crackdown and increased mass deportations of Afghans
 - *Fearmongering of a new "mass influx" during Israeli and US attacks on Iran*
 - *Crackdown and mass deportations of Afghans in Iran*

43 FRANCE

- Evictions of informal living sites in Calais and Dunkirk
- Obstacles to monitoring work
- State's response to shooting breeding even more vulnerability
- Segregation and racial profiling in public transportation



Methodology and Terminology

REPORTING NETWORK

BVMN [1] is a collaborative project between multiple grassroots organisations and NGOs working along the Western Balkan Route and Greece, documenting violations at borders directed towards people on the move. The partners have a common website database, used as a platform to collate testimonies of illegal pushbacks which are gathered through interviews.

METHODOLOGY

The methodological process for these interviews leverages the close social contact that we have as independent volunteers with refugees and migrants to monitor pushbacks at multiple borders. When individuals return with significant injuries or stories of abuse, one of our violence reporting volunteers will sit down with them to collect their testimony. Although the testimony collection itself is typically with a group no larger than five persons, the pushback groups which they represent can exceed 50 persons. We have a standardised framework for our interview structure which blends the collection of hard data (dates, geo-locations, officer descriptions, photos of injuries/medical reports, etc.) with open narratives of the abuse.

TERMINOLOGY

The term pushback is a key component of the situation that unfolded along the EU borders (Hungary and Croatia) with Serbia in 2016, after the closure of the Balkan Route. Pushback describes the informal expulsion (without due process) of an individual or group to another country. This lies in contrast to the term “deportation”, which is conducted in a legal framework. Pushbacks have become an important, if unofficial, part of the migration regime of EU countries and elsewhere.

ABBREVIATIONS

BiH – Bosnia and Herzegovina
HRV – Croatia
SRB – Serbia
SLO – Slovenia
ROM – Romania
HUN – Hungary

AUT – Austria
MNK – North Macedonia
GRC – Greece
BGR – Bulgaria
TUR – Turkey
EU – European Union

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Executive summary

This report gathers updates from the month of June and brings together first-hand testimonies and observations from a range of countries in the Balkans, Turkey, and France to look at the way European Union states and other actors are affecting systemic violence towards people crossing borders. Updates come from the different Member Organisations of BVMN, as well as Glocal Roots (Kos, Greece).

This month, we share an analysis of testimonies from people who experienced deportation procedures across multiple countries in Europe. Several recurrent violent practices emerge from these first-hand accounts, including neglect of medical needs –e.g. on pregnant women–, family separation during deportation, disproportionate and excessive restraint measures, and procedural violations. The analysis sheds light on a transnational scheme that systematically neglects the fundamental rights and dignity of people on the move.

Some of the effects of the violent and restrictive EU migration policies framing these deportation procedures become easily visible in several other sections of this report. In particular, the push for the externalisation of EU borders into the Balkans in the form of further securitisation –a process spanning many years– has taken a further step with the signing of the agreement between Bosnia-Herzegovina and the EU allowing Frontex to deploy officers in the Western Balkan country, one of the last ones in the region to welcome the EU agency within its territory. Moreover, in both Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, we report on an increase in the violence experienced by people on the move in the hands of non-state actors –particularly by certain groups involved in smuggling–, a direct consequence of the complete lack of safe pathways for migration imposed by the EU and its individual member states. One of the most concerning and violent of these practices has been kidnapping by armed smuggling groups. Notably, testimonies from people on the move who have experienced pushbacks to Bosnia-Herzegovina by Croatian authorities describe a clear link between the violent pushbacks and the risk of kidnapping, some pointing to an awareness and deliberate neglect by the Croatian police of the potential severe dangers awaiting after the forced return. Again this month, we have to report on the systematic violation of rights perpetrated by these authorities during the pushbacks, including the use of dogs without leash and muzzles to attack people on the move, and the theft and destruction of essential belongings, including phones and life-saving medication.



Executive summary

Meanwhile, in Greece an increase in arrivals in Crete has been met with calls for further militarisation of the Aegean, in the context of growing geopolitical tensions between Greece, Libya and Turkey, and the appointment of a new Minister of Migration and Asylum known for his far-right ideas. For those who manage to arrive in the country and apply for asylum, the obstacles continue in delayed appointments and decisions, postponed interviews, lack of adequate interpretation services and, increasingly, evictions from official facilities and challenges to find alternative accommodation. In the Closed-Controlled Access Centres (CCACs) on the islands, conditions remain extremely harsh and worsened by the summer rising heat, with people reporting inedible food, a lack of beds and mattresses or access to critical medical care. Especially concerning is the situation in the so-called Safe Areas of several of these facilities, where unaccompanied minors are often accommodated, which have been the target of multiple interim measures due to the degrading conditions and severe lack of protection for the children residing inside.

In June, we also report on some of the effects of the Israel and US attacks on Iran for people on the move, migrants and ethnic minorities. In Iran, the bombings were followed by a major government crackdown on opposition figures, especially affecting journalists and activists from ethnic minorities. Furthermore, in Turkey, images and videos –some of them taken from completely unrelated contexts– flooded the internet as part of a new fearmongering campaign warning about a supposed new “mass influx” of people on the move to the country. Additionally, this month has seen a new year of repression during Istanbul Pride –with the arrest and unlawful detention of 53 people, many reporting ill-treatment–, as well as new calls from rights groups and politicians against Turkey’s Removal Centres (GMM). As the evidence of inhumane conditions and torture reported from the inside of these facilities –this month a man detained in the Muğla GGM died in custody even after medical reports confirmed his critical health condition– continues to grow, it remains essential to point at the role of the EU in building and supporting Turkey’s (and many others) detention and deportation system in the form of hundreds of millions of euros, thus turning a blind eye to the violence and death they contribute to.

The report finishes with a look at the situation in Northern France, where evictions continue every 48 hours in Calais. In Dunkirk, where evictions used to happen less often, the frequency of the operations has increased –with at least 2246 people affected, including 118 minors–, leading to the first six months of 2025 exceeding the number of evictions in the area recorded in all of 2024. Moreover, the authorities keep complicating monitoring work, as at least 22 evictions were made unobservable through the building of extremely large police perimeters. This constitutes a blatant example of the systematic attempt to protect police impunity in the face of violence and discrimination.

UPDATE ON THE SITUATION



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Human Rights violations in the deportation process: testimonies from the margins

This section is built on the evidence of a series of testimonies describing first-hand experiences of deportation, collected by BVMN member organisation Mission Wings. The multiple testimonies gathered offer a harrowing glimpse into the lived realities of asylum seekers and migrants navigating the labyrinthine deportation procedures across Europe. These accounts, spanning multiple nationalities and countries, reveal a consistent pattern of human rights violations –ranging from procedural injustices and medical neglect to degrading treatment and psychological trauma.

One of the legal cornerstones of the deportation procedures can be found in the Dublin III Regulation, an essential part of the EU's asylum system, determining which member state is responsible for examining an asylum application. While supposedly intended to streamline asylum procedures, the regulation has been widely criticized for its impact on vulnerable individuals, as evidenced by several of the testimonies collected. One of the respondents, a woman from Iran, described her journey through Serbia, Hungary Austria, Switzerland and Sweden, highlighting the Kafkaesque nature of the asylum process. After claiming asylum in Sweden and undergoing biometric and eye scans, her application was rejected under the Dublin procedure, which mandates that asylum seekers be returned to the first EU country where they were registered. While awaiting deportation, she was detained in a facility she described as “very restricted, like jail,” with central control even over cell doors. Despite suffering from claustrophobia and asthma –conditions that were officially recognized by Swedish doctors–, during her detention, she was forgotten in a closed area for 14 hours without her asthma spray, following a visit to her sister. This neglect placed her health and life at risk and constitutes a clear violation of the right to health and humane treatment as enshrined in Article 3 of the ECHR, which prohibits inhumane or degrading treatment.

“They forgot to take me back after visiting my sister and I was in a closed area for 14 hours without my spray.”



Human Rights violations in the deportation process: testimonies from the margins

The deportation process itself was marked by further violence: no female officer was present, and three male officers escorted her.

Upon arrival in Germany, she was subjected to a humiliating body search by German police, even after having already been checked at the Swedish airport. While the behavior was described as “humiliating but still legal,” the cumulative effect of these procedures –especially for someone with documented medical and psychological vulnerabilities– raises serious concerns about the proportionality and necessity of such measures.

The systematic neglect of medical needs during the deportation process was further highlighted in other testimonies, perhaps most strikingly in the case of pregnant women. One of the respondents, a 26-year-old woman from Tajikistan, described her journey from Bulgaria to Austria –marked by violence, including a pushback from Hungary to Serbia. After being deported from Austria, while four months pregnant, she was separated from her husband for three days and kept in solitary confinement with the lights on 24h a day. She was only allowed out once to see a doctor, and when she did, two female officers held her hands tightly. While there was no physical violence, the psychological impact of isolation and the lack of timely medical care were profound. Upon arrival in Bulgaria, it took a month and a half before she was seen by a doctor.

Another respondent, a woman who was six months pregnant when she was deported from Germany, described a journey from Bulgaria to Germany on foot, with pushbacks from Croatia to Bosnia and the confiscation of personal belongings. In Slovenia, the individual was required to provide biometric data and sign documents without a translator. In Germany, the deportation process lasted six months –during which she was pregnant–, and never received a court hearing for her asylum case or deportation. Documents were explained to her only via Google Translate, and she was not given copies of what she had signed. During the deportation, she and her husband were separated, and no doctor checked if she was fit to fly. In Bulgaria, she was held again in a locked room and asked to sign documents she could not understand. Notably, a doctor only saw her a month after her arrival.

The practices reported in these testimonies violate several international standards, including the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners (the Bangkok Rules), which emphasize the need for prompt and



Human Rights violations in the deportation process: testimonies from the margins

adequate medical care for pregnant women in detention. The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) has repeatedly stated that holding vulnerable individuals in solitary confinement, especially pregnant women, without access to medical care, can amount to inhuman or degrading treatment.

Moreover, the second testimony highlights the multiple procedural injustices that often characterise the deportation procedures, including the lack of due process and informed consent, a recurring theme in the testimonies collected –multiple individuals reported being required to sign documents in languages they did not understand, often without the presence of a translator or legal representative. These procedural failures violate the right to an effective remedy (Article 13 ECHR) and the right to be informed in a language one understands (Article 5 ECHR). The absence of legal counsel and translators undermines the fairness of the process and increases the risk of refoulement –returning individuals to countries where they may face harm, in violation of the principle of non-refoulement under international law.

Lastly, several of the testimonies also shed light on the overall degrading treatment and psychological harm perpetrated by the authorities during the deportation procedures. Particularly, the use of excessive restraints, documented in both testimonies and deportation flight protocols, underscores the dehumanizing nature of these procedures. One of the respondents reported being subjected to extreme restraint measures during the deportation process. Before the flight, the individual was chained –their hands and feet were restrained– and their head was covered. These actions were carried out by officers as part of the deportation protocol. The experience was deeply humiliating and distressing, causing significant psychological trauma. As mentioned in several testimonies, broader practices reveal that detainees are often "fully restrained by handcuffs, waist chains, and leg irons" during flights, with some placed in devices like the "Wrap"—a restraint blanket resembling a straitjacket. In one U.S.-Brazil deportation flight, shackled deportees reported being left vulnerable during emergencies, with no protocol for removing restraints in crises. Such measures, while framed as security necessities, often serve no proportional purpose and exacerbate trauma, particularly for individuals with preexisting medical or psychological conditions.

Moreover, another respondent, a man from Yemen, described being subjected to a strip search –after he was surprised by his deportation– and



Human Rights violations in the deportation process: testimonies from the margins

held in a secure room with surveillance cameras in the toilet for a week. Such treatment is not only humiliating but also raises serious concerns about the right to privacy and dignity (Article 8 ECHR) and the prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment (Article 3 ECHR).

The testimonies presented here are not isolated incidents but part of a broader pattern of systemic abuse and neglect in the European deportation system. They reveal a process that prioritizes administrative efficiency and security over the fundamental rights and dignity of individuals. Across the testimonies gathered, several specific patterns emerge:

- Separation of families: Multiple cases involved the separation of spouses, sometimes for days, without clear justification. Such actions can have severe psychological effects, particularly on pregnant women and families with children.
- Lack of medical care: Delays in medical attention, especially for pregnant women and those with chronic illnesses, were common. In some cases, individuals were held in solitary confinement or locked rooms for extended periods without medical assessment.
- Excessive security measures: The presence of more police officers than deportees, physical restraint, and the use of locked rooms suggest an approach more akin to criminal detention than administrative immigration procedures.
- Lack of transparency: The consistent failure to provide information in a language understood by the deportees, and the absence of legal representation, were also widespread.

The ECtHR has repeatedly found that the detention and deportation of vulnerable individuals, especially without adequate safeguards, can amount to violations of several fundamental rights and conventions, as outlined in the text. The lack of medical care, failure to provide translators, and the use of excessive security measures are all factors that have been found to contribute to inhuman or degrading treatment.



BVMN member organisation Info Park identified 261 new arrivals in June, including 37 unaccompanied minors, a notable rise from previous months. The majority entered Serbia via Bulgaria, continuing a trend observed in the spring. While Syria (75) and Afghanistan (74) remain the most common countries of origin, a 35% increase in arrivals from North African countries (including Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, and Libya) underscores a shifting demographic. Many of these individuals are repatriates and returnees from EU countries who, in the absence of durable reintegration, are once again resorting to irregular routes in hopes of reaching destinations like Germany and Sweden.

Belgrade was hit by multiple heatwaves in June, so many people (173) found daily shelter at Info Park. Over 50 individuals received vulnerability support. 29 SOS calls were responded to, many originating from individuals en route via Turkey or Greece.

In June, Belgrade saw a significant rise in police presence, particularly around Nemanjina Street and major public parks, following road blockades and mass protests sparked by the tragic deaths of 16 people in a canopy collapse. These nationwide anti-corruption demonstrations led to increased surveillance and control of public spaces, causing a sharp decline in the visibility of people on the move in central areas as police focused their efforts there. However, after June 28th, visibility of people on the move increased in Obrenovac and along border zones, coinciding with the redeployment of police and gendarmerie units away from the city center to these areas.

Relocations and rising uncertainty around Krnjača closure

Meanwhile, concern is growing over the announced closure of the Krnjača Asylum Centre, which has triggered confusion and anxiety among residents, especially single women, facing uncertainty over future accommodation and financial support from UNHCR. According to Collective Aid's June Monthly Report, at the end of June families were relocated from Krnjača to Obrenovac. In the lead-up to their relocation, families faced ongoing uncertainty about the timing and what belongings they could take. The move happened earlier than announced, leaving little time to prepare. Each family was allowed only two bags, reportedly to prevent the spread of bed bugs. Their belongings were, reportedly, returned at the beginning of July. Significant shifts occurred at the Obrenovac Asylum Center in recent weeks, which now primarily hosts families, a notable change from its previous profile that mainly accommodated single men. Most single men have since been relocated to the Sjenica Asylum Center; however, those who have entered the asylum procedure and hold legal employment in Serbia were permitted to remain in Obrenovac.



EU policy and rising smuggling violence in Serbia and border areas

Info Park's mobile team continued daily outreach in Belgrade's parks, transit hubs, and informal settlements. Field observations point to almost exclusive dependency of people on the move on smuggling networks, due to the lack of accessible and safe legal pathways. This dependency on smuggling routes is a direct result of restrictive EU migration policies, which continue to close off formal channels of movement.

Protection concerns persist, including recurrent violence by local Roma gangs against people on the move. These attacks, often reported to the police with the beneficiaries' consent, emphasize the chronic insecurity faced by refugees and migrants in urban spaces. In a more severe incident near the Croatian border at Batrovci, a group of Syrian men was reportedly kidnapped by an armed smuggling group. One man who escaped and reported the incident to the police was dismissed, underscoring both the impunity of smuggling networks and the systemic failure to protect people on the move. Info Park specifically counseled unaccompanied minors and single women on the dangers of smuggler-arranged accommodations, and offered support in accessing safer shelter options when available.

These cases highlight the urgent need for structural accountability in border areas and expose the violent landscape that EU migration policies have helped create, one in which people are left unprotected by state institutions.

EU policy and rising smuggling violence in Serbia and border areas

June also revealed complex legal challenges faced by people on the move caught in bureaucratic limbos. One Syrian asylum seeker, abandoned by his lawyer after 1.5 years in the procedure, sought support from Info Park. After intervention and referral to IDEAS, communication was re-established, and the individual returned to Sjenica to pursue the process. However, like many others, he also inquired about voluntary return, only to find that IOM did not facilitate returns to Syria at the time – IOM started voluntary returns to Syria in July.

Sombor, 35 people were affected by a loud shrill noise while trying to escape through a field. This follows an all-too-familiar pattern of migrants and refugees being used as test subjects for new and experimental technologies. There are no formal international safeguards on the use of technology in migration management and as such the use of this device against people on



the move falls through the cracks of public awareness - leading to a dangerous lack of accountability.

As mentioned in BVMN's February 2025 [report](#), the protests have witnessed the intensifying criminalisation of NGOs and activists. The Serbian government has sought to clamp down on civil society organisations using intimidation tactics against activists, students and public figures including harassment, deportation and entry bans. Authorities are intent on silencing dissenting voices as they face the most intense challenge to their authority since coming to power.



Pushbacks from Croatia to Bosnia-Herzegovina

Violent pushbacks to Bosnia-Herzegovina remain a systemic practice of the Croatian border police. From May-June, BVMN member organisation Collective Aid has recorded testimonies detailing widespread patterns of physical abuse, intimidation, theft, and destruction of personal belongings. Many respondents report experiencing multiple pushbacks, describing the same routine of beatings, theft, and expulsion, without any assessment of their asylum requests or protection needs.

Speaking to a BVMN reporter, one Afghan man detailed that amidst the violence:

'the police did not even know where they were beating'.

Hit so many times, he sustained injuries to his leg, and another member of his transit group was injured in the eye. A separate respondent testified,

'I was going to die when I tried to go seven times [...] the Croatians beat me and took my phone and money'.

Multiple other accounts have also detailed the use of batons, metallic bars, and belts as weapons, with injuries such as bruises and broken bones being direct consequences of this brutality.

The use of violence is a practice that has, ostensibly, been deployed routinely against people on the move with little to no regard for individual circumstances. However, two Turkish respondents reported not being subjected to beatings, with one quoting their interaction with the police:

'You are Turkish, we are not going to hit you. We just hit people from Afghanistan, Pakistan, India' (and other places the respondent could not recall).



The Croatian police's apparent openness in acknowledging the use of violence against people on the move, including statements suggesting an escalation of force towards certain nationalities, is notable. These admissions raise serious concerns about the role of racial and ethnic bias in shaping institutional practices and may suggest a degree of normalisation or systemic tolerance of such conduct within law enforcement structures.

In addition to these testimonies, BVMN reporters have heard multiple cases of people being forced into rivers during pushbacks. One Afghan man recalled that at around 02:00 AM, the police forced him and his transit group into the river, despite them verbally expressing that they did not want to enter the water. They reported that the river was around 1.5 meters in depth, flowing, and 'very cold'. A second respondent from Turkey shared a similar account:

'When they left me at the first border, I had to swim across 3 streams in the middle of the night, and it was cold'.

Canine weaponisation

The deployment of dogs as a means to both intimidate and inflict harm is an additional violent tool that has been repeatedly mentioned within Croatian pushback testimonies. One respondent from Afghanistan reported that when his group was spotted by a drone, unleashed dogs were released into the forest. Only once everyone surrendered on the floor did the police arrive and tether the dogs. When the group was subsequently beaten, the police continued to deploy the dogs as weapons, intentionally relaxing their leads over and over so that they could attack.

Similar incidents have also been documented by Medical Volunteers International (MVI), a non-governmental organization working in northern Bosnia-Herzegovina. Their team regularly receives testimonies from people who report being chased by police dogs without muzzles, with some sustaining visible injuries from bites. These accounts were shared with Collective Aid through ongoing coordination efforts with other actors in the region.



As part of this collaboration, organisations regularly exchange and validate information on field conditions, helping ensure consistent and reliable monitoring of the treatment of people on the move.

This weaponisation of animals is not a practice exclusive to Croatia. Collective Aid has had multiple conversations with people on the move who have been attacked by dogs on the borders of Bulgaria, Turkey, Greece and Albania, with respondents bearing visible scars as a result of these confrontations.

Destruction of belongings

Theft and destruction of belongings such as phones, money, identification documents (including passports), and other belongings continues to be regularly conducted by border police. Most alarmingly, in May, was a report from an Algerian respondent whose insulin pen was destroyed during a pushback. Describing his interaction with Croatian authorities as a 'catastrophe', he detailed that the destruction of his medical device led to a dangerous spike in his blood sugar levels, and he was later admitted to hospital for treatment.

This destruction of medical equipment is not an isolated case. In February this year, MVI recorded and shared with Collective Aid a case in which Croatian police destroyed a respondent's blood sugar device and took all of his insulin away. When he was later treated by MVI staff, his blood sugar was '*un-recordable due to being so high*'.

The intentional deprivation of a life-saving medical device, where consequences are potentially fatal, together with the use of physical violence and theft of other vital belongings, is clear evidence that the Croatian police continue to carry out pushbacks with an intentional disregard for people's right to safety, dignity, and life.

Increased violence amongst people on the move

As brutal border practices persist, not only by Croatian authorities but as part of broader Fortress Europe policies, access to safe and legal routes remains largely nonexistent.



These systemic deterrence measures continue to expose people on the move to violence, exploitation, and repeated cycles of displacement. Rather than discouraging movement, these violent policies instead push individuals into more dangerous, clandestine routes. Many are forced to rely on facilitators, while others fall victim to criminal gangs.

From May-June, testimonies from people on the move indicated a growing presence of gangs operating along the border between Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia. Their accounts suggest that following pushbacks, they are left vulnerable to kidnapping and extortion by armed groups that patrol these border zones. One respondent further believes that there is a deliberate intention by the Croatian police to push people back into areas where gangs are known to operate:

'When the police catch us, they leave us in the forests where the gangs are located, and if we come across a gang there, they take everything we have and call our families and demand ransom.'

While there is currently insufficient evidence to suggest that this is an intentional practice by border police, the connection between pushbacks and hostage-taking is becoming harder to ignore. In April, [Balkan Insight](#) published a report by BIRN journalists detailing how these criminal groups have adapted their strategies in response to the tightening of European external borders. The groups that previously focused solely on facilitation now rely on kidnapping and ransom payments as an alternative source of income –often targeting victims of recent pushbacks.

However, the threat of gang violence is not confined to border regions. Over the past several months, multiple shootings have been reported between rival gangs near Blažuj Temporary Reception Centre (TRC), leaving numerous people severely injured. This violence has fostered a climate of fear and insecurity among camp residents, with some individuals reporting that they are too afraid to leave the camp alone. Instead, many now choose to move in groups of five or more for protection.



Reports of kidnappings from areas surrounding the camp have also been recorded by the team, including one case in which a respondent's family was forced to pay around €3,000 for his release.

'I was told that they were kidnapping people here. I was told that there were gang members inside.'

As violence from criminal groups increases both at the borders and beyond, the repercussions of pushbacks from Croatia become even more apparent. The destruction of mobile phones and personal belongings not only cuts people off from navigation and communication, but also deprives people of their ability to call for help in emergencies. Furthermore, for family and friends awaiting news of a safe crossing, the absence of contact creates deep anxiety, leaving them unsure whether their loved ones have been intercepted by police, targeted by gangs, or disappeared altogether.

As kidnapping becomes a more constant fear for people on the move in Bosnia-Herzegovina, it is critical to acknowledge the full scale of harm caused by violent pushbacks from Croatia. Far from serving as a form of deterrence or protection, current border enforcement strategies are not only putting lives at risk, but fuelling a system of exploitation and fear.

State violence within state borders

Accounts from people on the move often portray Bosnian police in a relatively positive light, with officers described as "good," "kind," or "better" than their Croatian counterparts. While these narratives stand in contrast to the more widely documented brutality elsewhere, it is important to note that BVMN has recorded several testimonies describing violence and misconduct by Bosnian authorities as well. This suggests that in some cases, the perception of leniency may reflect a normalization of violence across the region, where the absence of abuse is seen as exceptional rather than standard.



Additionally, testimonies gathered this month suggest that the Bosnian authorities are not entirely exempt from participating in forms of institutionalised violence against people on the move. Recounting his experience in Bihac, one respondent reported:

'the police tried to beat me because I didn't have any papers'

explaining that his documents had been stolen by the Croatian police just days earlier. He went on to describe how a female officer struck his friend on the head with the tips of her fingers. When the group later went to the police station to file a complaint, he said,

'They did nothing, they just laughed'.

MVI shared a report with Collective Aid of violence within state borders in which a Syrian man was beaten by Bihać police with *'no provocation'*. Their report noted that he sustained *'a likely broken nose, swollen hands, multiple contusions, and head trauma'*.

Camp closures

In response to the recent rise in violence involving people on the move, there have been calls for the imminent closure or relocation of Blažuj TRC. Within his reasoning, the Mayor of Ilidža cited serious safety concerns for local residents, inadequate security within the camp, and the potential negative impact on the canton's image as a tourist destination –particularly as the tourist season approaches.



At present, the camp is expected to remain operational until a viable alternative for accommodation is identified, with the Deputy Minister of Security of BiH stating that: 'the closure of the temporary reception centre in Blažuj would pose a high security risk for both the local population and migrants'. To prevent individuals from seeking accommodation in parks and other public and private places, the centre is likely to continue functioning in the near term. Nevertheless, the situation still appears uncertain and should be monitored closely.

Frontex

On June 11th, the EU and BiH signed an agreement 'to strengthen border security and combat irregular migration along the Western Balkans route'. This deal allows Frontex to deploy officers with executive powers to assist Bosnia-Herzegovina in managing its borders. Whilst the agreement still needs to be ratified, it can already be implemented. Indeed, some other organisations reported seeing a handful of Frontex officers in civilian areas like restaurants, suggesting that their presence on the borders is imminent.



Geopolitical tension in the Aegean and increase of arrivals in Crete

This year, there has been an increase of 174% in the number of people arriving in Crete from Libya –with 7,300 people landing on Crete and Gavdos since the beginning of 2025–, in the context of rising tensions between Greek, Libyan and Turkish authorities, stemming from a combination of maritime sovereign disputes and energy exploration interests. The Greek government has argued that people on the move are being instrumentalised by Libyan authorities, and is deploying military ships off the Libyan coast in response, mirroring the “Evros Model” of “successful” deterrence based on pullbacks by Turkish authorities. In the past weeks, the Greek Prime Minister emphasized the aim to cooperate with Libyan authorities to “not only reduce but, if possible, eliminate these flows”, while a Greek MEP called for stronger Frontex presence in the island of Crete and EU support to halt arrivals and increase deportations. After the NATO summit taking place on June 23rd in the Hague, the Prime Minister also stated that “Greece will use all the means at its disposal to make life extremely difficult for traffickers who want to transport persecuted people to Crete”, painting an even more hostile and securitised landscape for people on the move.

Delays, challenges and lack of support in the asylum system continue

In mainland Greece, people in the asylum system continue to face challenges accessing rights and services. Among other obstacles, recent reports attest to persistent procedural delays in receiving dates for asylum interviews, as well as excessive waiting times for both interviews and status decisions. This situation continues to leave many asylum applicants in a state of prolonged limbo, increasing precariousness in all areas of life, especially for people in particularly vulnerable conditions, including those with disabilities and severe medical problems. BVMN member organization Mobile Info Team (MIT) has recently received an increasing number of requests for assistance from people in those groups, who report receiving limited assistance from camp authorities to navigate facilities that are not adapted to their needs, as well as challenges accessing specialised medical care in camps. These challenges are often exacerbated by a systemic lack of adequate interpretation services, and limited and costly transportation options to hospitals.



Moreover, with regards to other types of procedural obstacles, reports have pointed at an increase in the delays and challenges affecting family reunification requests, in particular for relatives from Gaza, as well as a reticence from Greek authorities to support in facilitating travel to Greece in cases of positive reunification decisions. At the same time, both beneficiaries of international protection and people with negative asylum decisions have been affected by evictions from camps, carried out with a renewed sense of urgency, and using increasingly intimidatory techniques. This practice has placed many into extremely precarious situations, risking destitution and homelessness. As a result, MIT has been receiving an increasing number of requests for information regarding assistance and alternative accommodation. Further information on this will be provided in the next BVMN report.

Supervision of asylum procedures under M.S.S case suspended

Ongoing issues within the Greek asylum procedure have been taking place against the backdrop of a recent decision by the European Court of Human Rights's (ECtHR) Committee of Ministers to suspend supervision of Greece's compliance with the M.S.S v. Belgium and Greece ruling. The decision is based on the Committee's positive assessment of progress regarding the improvement of access to asylum in Greece, even though multiple NGO submissions made in the lead up to the decision provide evidence to the contrary. The submissions raised concerns about the ongoing challenges to apply for asylum due to technical difficulties, procedural delays, limited interpretation services as well as inadequate safeguards for persons in vulnerable situations, among other issues.

The decision by the ECtHR marks the loss of a crucial mechanism of oversight concerning the practices of the Greek state and its (lack of) respect for procedural safeguards inherent in the right to seek asylum. Other than asylum procedures, the Committee also examined evidence on conditions in detention – including in police stations–, and living conditions of asylum seekers, as well as on their effective ability to complain about these. Positively, the Committee will continue supervision on these topics. Concerning conditions in detention, the Committee relied on a submission made by BVMN, MIT and Border Criminologies



on detention in police stations. In line with recommendations contained in the submission, the Committee requested that the Greek state provide accurate data on the number of persons held in police stations as well as the length of their detention, and that it assess the need for further measures to ensure the practice complies with the standards in the European Convention of Human Rights.

New far-right Minister for Migration and Asylum to maintain Greece's migration policy

In March, the BVMN Monthly Report included an update on the appointment of the then new Minister of Migration and Asylum, Makis Voridis. In early June, Voridis tendered his resignation from the post following allegations of his involvement in a scheme in previous years, defrauding EU agricultural funds. Any prospect of his resignation offering even slight reprieve from Greece's hostile migration policy was quickly snuffed out by the appointment of Thanos Plevris as his replacement. Plevris, previously part of Greece's Orthodox Christian nationalist 'LAOS' party and most recently a far-right Member of Parliament for New Democracy, is known as a hardliner, and for his anti-migration stance. In the past, he has openly stated that "there is no way to guard borders without having [...] dead people" and that those who make it through must experience Greece as "hell" through deprivation of food, water and access to healthcare. Parties on the left of the political spectrum in Greece have expressed their dismay at his appointment, calling it a "message of hatred, racism and authoritarianism". Since his appointment, Plevris has made clear his intention to continue Voridis' policies, stating that "whoever comes to the country and is not a beneficiary of asylum, has two options – either return or prison". He identified strengthening return and "suppressing illegal immigration" as priority areas during his mandate. Responding to the increase in arrivals to Crete, Plevris' approach has been confirmed: not only has the government suspended processing of asylum applications from North African sea arrivals, but also ordered their summary arrest, detention and return.



The government has proposed further limitations on the right to seek asylum in a new migration bill, published in July. Among other things, it seeks to increase the length of immigration detention as well as penal measures against undocumented people, strengthen and streamline return processes, and remove remaining opportunities for regularisation. It also widens the definition of “assisting illegal stay”, thus increasing criminalization risks for solidarity actors. Further updates on the law will be provided in future reports, as it progresses through the legislative procedure.

Kos

Living conditions in the Kos CCAC: ongoing violations of rights and dignity

The population in the Kos Closed Controlled Access Centre (CCAC) dropped from 858 individuals on June 1st to 764 individuals on June 30th. Despite this decrease, living conditions in the facility remain extremely harsh, marked by continuous violations of the rights and dignity of people on the move. This is particularly the case in the so-called “Safe Area” of the camp, where unaccompanied minors are de facto detained for months on end, without adequate access to medical or psychological care.

In June, the legal organization Equal Rights Beyond Borders denounced the deteriorating conditions faced by unaccompanied minors in the facility. The organization submitted an application for interim measures with the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) on behalf of ten unaccompanied children. The application highlighted the “overcrowded, unsanitary, and unsafe conditions, including roach infestations, insufficient food and water” in the “Safe Area”.

In response, the ECHR issued a new decision instructing Greece to take urgent protective measures for these children, specifically to:



- Provide the applicants with appropriate reception conditions, including adequate food and water, new and clean clothing and bed linen, cleaning and hygiene products;
- Ensure that the children are provided with appropriate medical and psychological care;
- Ensure their speedy relocation to shelters or other suitable accommodation, in accordance with Greek law.

For more detailed information, read the [full article](#) by Equal Rights Beyond Border.

This is not an isolated case. Similar interim measures were granted in recent months concerning the “Safe Areas” in the CCACs on [Leros](#) and [Samos](#), indicating systemic issues across multiple facilities. These inhumane conditions sometimes lead to desperate acts. On [June 3rd](#), two 15-year-olds boys from Afghanistan attempted to escape the camp in Kos before being intercepted and returned by the authorities.

Notably, this situation affects all residents of the CCAC, severely impacting both adults and children. On [June 25th](#), a 32-year-old man from Afghanistan attempted suicide inside the camp. Fortunately, he was rescued and survived. This is sadly not the first time something like this happens in the facility –a clear indicator of the consequences of the lack of mental health support and the overall psychological toll of the living conditions.

Samos

In June 2025, rising heat levels worsened the general reception conditions at the Samos CCAC. One of the clients of BVMN member organisation I Have Rights (IHR) reported long queues of 1-2 hours for food distribution, under the heat and without access to water. Several people also reported skipping their meals because it was too hot to stand in line. Delays and ongoing inconsistencies in the asylum procedure persisted and phones continued to be confiscated upon arrival and during registration periods. IHR case workers also registered five accounts of unlawful de facto detention in temporary isolation zones, three of whom reported being held in the isolation zone without access to critical medical assistance.



Thanks to the dedicated work of Human Rights Legal Project, between June 12th and 18th, 10 out of 16 boat drivers represented by the organisation's lawyers were acquitted in the Samos Court. They faced smuggling charges for allegedly steering the boats that brought them and others to Greece. The court declared them innocent on the grounds of their asylum-seeker status. This ruling set a precedent against the backdrop of increasing criminalisation of asylum applicants and broader political efforts to target people on the move.

Degrading reception conditions in the Samos CCAC

This past month, a pregnant client of IHR reported that her family of five was held in one small container, and the only bed for the five family members was infested with insects, forcing them to sleep on the floor. Two more clients found maggots in their food, and one of them reported that they could not eat more food at the CCAC after getting diarrhea from it. In terms of water accessibility, section B3 of the CCAC had running water only in the afternoons. With the scorching heat, the water ran only from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., and clients reported that they filled up a jar in the morning and used this water to clean themselves in the evening. Other clients reported that in their sections water was available from around 9-12 and from 6-9pm.

Delays in the asylum procedure and ongoing inconsistencies

This month –since, at least, April 2025–, authorities in the CCAC have continued to misidentify Eritreans as Ethiopians in the early identification phase of the asylum procedure. In June, two clients of IHR reportedly signed the police note declaring their nationality without an interpreter present and they weren't given time to read the paper and/or an informed explanation of what it said. Asylum interviews are being delayed because there is no Amharic interpreter. Additionally, clients were subject to blatant arbitrary practices in the issuance of consent forms. One of the clients from Eritrea said that he had to sign the nationality declaration form without his consent. Moreover, seven clients had their asylum interviews delayed, five of whom were Eritrean. In one of these five cases the interview was postponed twice, while for the rest, the interviews were postponed for the third or fourth time.



Further inconsistencies and negligent practices in the asylum procedure have been reported, especially concerning delays in the identification of survivors of human trafficking and serious gaps in guaranteeing first-level integration and protection schemes. In June, IHR supported a client who was not recognized as a trafficking survivor during registration and was consequently excluded from appropriate and timely protection guarantees under Article 6 (3) of the Palermo Protocol.

Alarming, another client, also a survivor of human trafficking, was evicted from the CCAC a day after receiving their passport. They received refugee status on May 22nd, their passport was issued on June 16th, and the Greek authorities informed them they had to leave the facility the following day, despite them still being within the 30-day post-recognition period. IHR immediately sent an email requesting an extension of their stay due to medical issues. There was no response to this request but the client was referred to and transferred by the NGO A21 to Thessaloniki and assisted with well-being and integration services. This incident raises broader concerns about increasingly strict eviction orders, which risk undermining applicants' rights to appeal and the safeguards meant to protect vulnerable individuals.

De facto detention in the isolation zone of the CCAC

In June, five clients of IHR shared their experiences of *de facto* detention in the isolation zone of the CCAC. Two clients reported having to share a space with 33 people. They described that they did not have a mattress or a bed, and that they only had a blanket for five days. One of these clients stressed that they did not feel safe during isolation, and they did not have access to hygiene products, a shower or a sink, 'not even a place to wash their hands'. Another client had to wash their kids with bottled water, during the day this water got very warm from the sun. The client and their family, including a 3-month-old baby, were forced to sleep on the floor.

Lastly, another person described an incident that took place in the fall of 2024. They reported having been held in *de facto* detention for over a month, not allowed to leave the CCAC for 42 days -from the day they arrived until they received their identity card. During this period, the client also spent 20 days in the isolation zone.

**No access to critical medical care in the isolation zone**

A client reported sharing the isolation container with 20 other people. They arrived at 2am and only received a blanket and food on the evening of the same day. In the overcrowded container, they had a sink and a very dirty toilet, so the client did not use the bathroom for 27 hours. When he did, he had blood in his urine, but he did not receive any medical attention while in isolation. Additionally, to date, there is no permanent psychologist in the Samos CCAC. Ever since the last one resigned in March 2025, there have only been missions conducted by Doctors of the World Greece.



Eid al-Adha holiday marked by increased migration checkpoints nationwide

During the Eid al-Adha holiday from June 6th to 9th, a national public holiday in Turkey, authorities intensified nationwide controls through the deployment of 270 Mobile Migration Point vehicles across all provinces. According to official statements, identity checks were conducted on more than 28,000 foreign nationals, leading to the apprehension of at least 745 individuals identified as irregular migrants. These individuals were subsequently transferred to Provincial Directorates of Migration Management to begin deportation procedures. Parallel to those measures, further operations targeting suspected smuggling networks were carried out in 51 provinces. The Ministry of Interior reported the arrest of 273 individuals accused of organizing human smuggling operations, and 1,022 people labelled as irregular migrants. Authorities underline that these operations are part of a broader, “rights-respecting and security-oriented” migration governance model, regularly described by officials as exemplary at the international level.



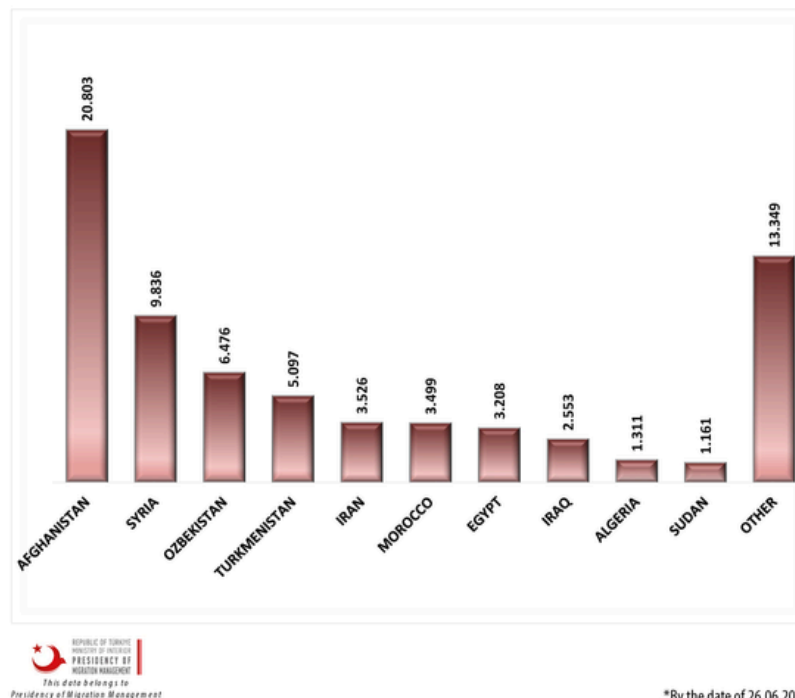
Directorate of Migration Management staff in a Mobile Migration Point vehicle conducting an identification check with biometric data. Source: [İzmir Göç İdaresi Müdürlüğü](#)



Presidency of Migration Management apprehension statistics

According to [statistics](#) published by the Presidency of Migration Management, 13,354 “irregular migrants” were apprehended in May 2025, and 10,681 in June, with a total of 73,491 apprehensions so far this year through that period. The groups of nationals most affected by apprehensions (see Table below) were: Afghans (21,455); Syrians (10,388); Uzbeks (6,744); Turkmen (5,340); and Moroccans (3,722). In 2025, authorities have also apprehended 5,424 so-called “organizers”, or those accused of facilitating irregular transit.

IRREGULAR MIGRANTS WHO HAVE BEEN CAPTURED



Statistics from the Directorate of Migration Management show the number of irregular migrants apprehended through June 2025. Source: [Directorate of Migration Management](#)

Rights groups call for closure of Turkey’s removal centers

Two important initiatives were taken in June by human rights defenders and politicians in Turkey denouncing the structural rights violations, discrimination and inter-state agreements that oppress migrants and refugees in Turkey and around the world.



On World Refugee Day on June 20th, DEM Party Istanbul MP Özgül Saki and Izmir MP Burcugül Çubuk, issued a joint statement calling for internationalist struggle for justice and freedom of movement. The number of migrants in Turkey is approaching 5 million, according to the statement, and they face multiple problems such as labor exploitation, racism and violence. The lawmakers criticized unlawful deportations and forced "voluntary returns". They emphasized that women and LGBTQ+ migrants and refugees are subjected to multiple levels of discrimination, while children are excluded from education and forced into labor and early marriage. The lawmakers also said the conflicts in the Middle East may cause new increases of migration and that the "temporary guest" approach Turkey has taken to refugees is unsustainable. They criticized the growing efforts by the EU and the UK to establish removal centers in third countries, but also cited the resistance of migrants as an example of international solidarity.

On June 26th, the International Day for the Elimination of Torture, the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (TİHV) and the Human Rights Association (İHD) made a statement in front of Istanbul's Arnavutköy Removal Center (Arnavutköy Geri Gönderme Merkezi - GGM). The groups had formally requested to inspect the GGM, but this had been denied. The only rights body permitted to conduct visits to Turkey's removal centres is TİHEK (Human Rights and Equality Institution of Turkey), but it has been severely criticised for its lack of independence. Thus, Bilal Yıldız from İHD's Istanbul office emphasized the inaccessibility of GGMs both in terms of their often extremely remote locations and the fact that they are effectively closed to independent monitoring. Those detained at these centers cannot access their basic rights, and women, children and LGBTQ+ individuals especially are subjected to discrimination, violence and torture in these centers. He said that 148 individual applications submitted to İHD since the beginning of 2024 included claims of torture, demonstrating the widespread and structural nature of such violations. Despite the €213 million in support for Turkey's removal centers provided by the European Union, oversight mechanisms are sorely lacking.

The joint statement concluded with several demands, including that all GGMs be closed and replaced with a new rights-based practice, that audits be conducted around EU funds, and for a repeal of Turkey's geographical limitation of the 1951 Refugee Convention, whereby only those coming from a "European country of origin" are eligible for refugee status.



Uzbek national dies while held under administrative detention in Muğla

On June 18th, Khasan Umarov, a 55-year-old Uzbek national and documented resident of Turkey, died while being held in prolonged administrative detention. Before Umarov's death, courts ordered his release on multiple occasions, and medical reports confirmed his critical health condition.

Umarov was initially detained in 2022 under a deportation order that was later annulled by the court. He was re-detained in 2024, following a new decision, and was being held in Muğla Removal Centre (Muğla GGM). On May 28th, 2025, the Istanbul 18th Administrative Court again ruled his detention unlawful. Nevertheless, he remained in custody. Umarov had severe cardiac illness and collapsed in detention on June 8th. He underwent surgery on June 16th, reportedly fell ill during treatment and died two days later in intensive care. Umarov remained in state custody throughout his hospitalization. Lawyers had repeatedly appealed for his release, but their petitions were denied or ignored.

DEM Party MP Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu raised the case in parliament, questioning the legality of the 2024 decision to deport Umarov, the failure to implement judicial rulings, and the general lack of appropriate medical protocols for detainees in poor health. Human rights groups called for a full investigation into potential negligence and misuse of administrative detention powers. The Directorate General of Migration Management released a public statement following Umarov's death, saying Umarov's health was "monitored from the beginning" and that "all necessary medical care was provided." However, no explanation was offered as to why a chronically ill person, with court protection, remained detained in violation of multiple legal safeguards.

Uzbek mother of four facing deportation in Bursa GGM

On June 13th 2025, Zebo Kadirova, an Uzbek national and mother of four, was detained at her home in Bursa and placed in administrative detention at the Bursa Removal Center. Her apprehension was reportedly based on a deportation request issued by the government of Uzbekistan. Despite having lived in Turkey for 11 years, Kadirova now faces the risk of forced return to a country where, according to her family, she would likely be imprisoned.



Her husband confirmed that she is being held under the G-87 code, an administrative label broadly used to identify individuals as security threats, often without concrete legal justification. He stated that the family had applied for asylum and been accepted and that he wanted this acceptance of their asylum to continue. He also emphasised that they have lived in the same neighbourhood for nearly a decade, run a small tailoring business, and have had no legal issues, criminal record or complaints against them. He expressed deep concern over the psychological toll the detention has taken on his family, particularly on the children.

Kadirova's family appealed for her deportation to be suspended and for her to be released. The family's neighbours and friends have also spoken out against the ongoing threat of deportation, urging authorities to stop what they describe as an unjust process.

Turkmen activist faced with deportation order

On May 29th, Umidajan Bekchanova, a Turkmen activist who has been living in Turkey since 2017, was detained by Turkish authorities and was reportedly facing deportation to Turkmenistan, according to a June 3rd petition from Human Rights Watch. Known for her outspoken criticism of the Turkmen government, Bekchanova was first held at Arnavutköy Removal Center and then transferred to the Çatalca Removal Center for women, both in Istanbul. Turkish authorities said she posed a threat to public order due to her "provocative" activities, yet they had provided no evidence of the claim. According to a June 5th article from The Times of Central Asia, there were claims of her having already been brought to an Istanbul airport for deportation by June 1st, which her lawyers were working to halt. No further details could be found regarding her situation after the date of this article, however.

Bekchanova's Turkish residency was revoked in 2024, leaving her undocumented and at heightened risk; her Turkmen passport also expired in April 2025. As in the case of two Turkmen activists detained in April and facing deportation, the Turkmen consulate often refuses to renew the passports of opposition figures, violating their right to freedom of movement and obstructing their chances to establish residency abroad.



If deported, Bekchanova would face a serious risk of persecution, torture, or disappearance. Her children have already suffered retaliation by Turkmen authorities, underscoring the danger she would face. Turkey is obligated under domestic and international law to respect the principle of non-refoulement and allow Bekchanova to seek international protection.

Istanbul Pride faces repression again

During the 23rd Istanbul Pride March on June 29th 2025, a total 53 people – including foreign nationals, lawyers, and journalists – were unlawfully detained and reportedly subjected to torture and ill-treatment. According to a public statement by Pride Istanbul, those detained were kept handcuffed behind their backs for up to 24 hours, denied access to essential medication, verbally abused, prevented from meeting their lawyers for hours, and held overnight under escort.

Prosecutors requested judicial control measures (travel bans) for 50 individuals and arrest warrants for three people, who are now in prison. Travel bans were also imposed on the foreign nationals; however, no one was deported. It is significant that the foreign nationals detained were not sent to removal centers and then issued deportation orders. This has been the general trend regarding the treatment of foreign nationals taking part in – or being accused of having taken part in – Pride or feminist marches over the past number of years. Travel bans are periodically reviewed and – in most cases – lifted after several review periods, but are increasingly used as a repressive tool against LGBTQ+ and other human rights activists and critical journalists.

Turkish court sentences four Turkish border guards to life imprisonment for torturing two Syrian nationals to death in 2023

Four Turkish border guards were sentenced to life imprisonment in June for the torture and killing of two Syrian nationals on March 11th, 2023. Seven additional officers received prison sentences of up to seven and a half years for charges including intentional injury and destruction of evidence.



The victims, Abdul Razzaq al-Qastal and Abdul Sattar al-Hajjar, were among a group of eight Syrians apprehended while attempting to cross into Turkey through Hatay province. Both men reportedly died after being severely beaten with iron rods and forced to swallow diesel. Others from the group were pushed back to Syria and hospitalized for injuries sustained in custody. Two days later, on March 13th, 2023, a 59-year-old Syrian man was shot and killed by a Turkish border guard while working on his farmland near the border.

Numerous international watchdogs, including Human Rights Watch and the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), have reported consistent use of excessive force and torture by Turkish authorities against individuals attempting to cross the Syrian-Turkish border, as well as numerous other killings that were treated with impunity.

Given that the above-mentioned violations come from a period prior to the Assad regime's fall in December 2024, it should be stated that the situation has obviously changed dramatically in Syria and in terms of Syrian-Turkish dynamics, with Ankara deeply invested in the new regime. Syria, however, remains highly unstable and unpredictable. As for the more recent post-Assad period, BVMN is not aware of reports of similar verified rights violations on the part of Turkish border guards, and the move towards justice and accountability for such grievous acts should be tentatively welcomed. As recently as July 28th, 2025, however, video footage was shared on Twitter by DEM Party Urfa MP Dilan Kunt Ayan showing men in khaki fatigues and speaking Turkish, kicking two huddled men on the floor while the men appealed in Arabic. According to the post, it is claimed that the footage is from Ceylanpinar, a municipality of Urfa on the Syrian border, with Kunt Ayan stating: "Allegations have been reported to us that migrants crossing the Syrian border are being systematically tortured by soldiers" and calling for "[an] immediate administrative and judicial investigation [...] regarding the individuals claimed to be members of the Turkish Armed Forces."



Zakaria Qastal, lying on a bed in Bab Al-Hawa Hospital, Syria, on March 12th, 2023: “[My] cousin died before my eyes while he was being beaten and tortured by the Turkish gendarmerie”. Source: Middle East Eye / Ahmad Fallaha

Real and fake news of migration to Turkey during Israeli-US attacks on Iran; plus Tehran crackdown and increased mass deportations of Afghans

This section has been written with support from BVMN by Elnaz Aydoğdu, a sociologist, refugee rights advocate and joint project coordinator with Ortakça Association, and is partly based on interviews conducted in June with Iranian and Afghani people in Van. They examine some of the consequences of the Israeli and US attacks on Iran.



Fearmongering of a new “mass influx” during Israeli and US attacks on Iran

The Israeli and US attacks on Iran have triggered numerous social and political crises in the region, and the developments have directly impacted migration trends and discourse in Turkey. Van province, in the Kurdish region of eastern Turkey, is a popular destination for Iranian tourists – who can enter Turkey for 90 days without a visa –, as well as a transit area in the general route from Afghanistan to Turkey, via Iran.

International and domestic media outlets, together with social media, circulated a variety of stories regarding movements from Iran to Turkey during the period of the attacks, speculating on the prospects of a mass migration from Iran. Some features included interviews with Iranians openly stating they were leaving Iran because of their fear of the attacks and security issues. Others showed people saying they were going to Turkey because of family concerns but that they would otherwise not have left Iran. Other images shared on social media claiming to show a huge group of people crossing over into Turkish territory were later proved to be entirely repurposed from totally different contexts. Turkey’s Directorate General of Migration issued statements declaring that there was no increase during this period and that claims of a “mass influx” were unfounded. Still, Turkey increased its border security during those days, according to a source in the Turkish Defence Ministry.

In Van, we did see a notable increase in arrivals to Van and heard directly of increased crossings at the border gates, but nothing that could be described as a “mass influx”. In interviews we conducted with some Iranian families staying as tourists in Van, many stated that they would not return due to security concerns, hoping either to stay in Turkey or to travel to another country.



Stills from a disinformation video with text reading: “Yes, the movement to Van has begun. God, our country has become like a roadside inn. Now it’s Iran’s turn. Van, Hakkari, Şırnak. A few days later, the big cities.” The footage was proven to be taken from a mushroom harvest in Nepal. Source: [Dogrulama](#)

Crackdown and mass deportations of Afghans in Iran

Swiftly following the attacks, the Iranian government, citing security concerns – primarily accusations of Israeli espionage and collaboration– carried out a major crackdown, dramatically increasing pressure on opposition figures and especially ethnic minority citizens, in particular Kurdish but also Balochi activists, as well as members of the Bah’ai and Jewish communities. It was reported that over seven hundred people were detained on suspicion of Israeli espionage, with estimates of between three and six people having been executed. Iranian families we spoke to stated that some of their relatives – mainly journalists and activists– had also been detained. Some Afghan individuals with international protection status living in Van province also stated that some of their relatives in Iran had been deported on the basis of such accusations, and some family members remained unaccounted for, fearing they may have been detained by Iranian security forces.

Regarding deportations to Afghanistan, already in 2024, an estimated 750,000 Afghans were forcefully returned from Iran, with the government announcing in September 2024 that they would deport two million by March 2025. In May 2025, they ordered all undocumented Afghans to leave the country by July 6th. In June 2025 alone, IOM recorded a record 256,000 Afghans forced back from Iran.



The severe crackdown in Iran —amidst the volatile situation with Israel and the US— is likely to bring about significant changes in irregular crossings into Turkey. Migration journeys via the Afghanistan-Iran-Turkey route, which reportedly averaged around \$5,000 per person, are expected to become more costly. Iran's increased internal and border security measures, along with a diversion of people smugglers to riskier and longer routes, can also be expected to further increase the risks faced by people on the move. The direct connections with EU and UK policy should be underlined, due to both actors' involvement in major support for the securitisation of Turkey's border with Iran, and pushbacks to Iran by Turkish border guards a regular feature of this border security practice



490,000 Afghan nationals have been deported by Iranian authorities since April 2025 from the Dogharoun-Taybad border. On July 4th 2025, 26,000 people crossed the border. Source: محمد برزو



Evictions of informal living sites in Calais and Dunkirk

In Calais, informal living sites are dismantled by the authorities every 48 hours. As a result, in 2 months –May and June–, at least 954 people, including women and children, were evicted from 11 different living sites –109 evictions, 29 police operations. At least 169 tents, 31 tarps, 50 mattresses, 19 chairs and tables and various other furniture items including child-care equipment –four strollers in one eviction– were seized. People are often not allowed to enter the site while it is evicted, preventing them from claiming back their personal belongings in time. On June 18th, a particularly violent eviction operation was carried out by the police. Starting at 6:30 am, it resulted in 70 people being evicted and 28 tents and 37 mattresses seized. It also resulted in a massive change in the site and terrain, for it was destroyed and its access blocked.

Meanwhile, in Dunkirk, where evictions used to happen less frequently, the practice has become more regular over the past two months. Notably, On April 29th, the sub-prefect of Dunkirk, Frédéric Loiseau, and the prefect for defence and security for the Hauts-de-France region, Vincent Lagoguey, announced that they would increase the number of evictions in the area. This announcement has since been put into effect: evictions are now taking place on a weekly basis, if not more frequently. In May and June, BVMN member organisation Human Rights Observers (HRO) documented at least 26 evictions of ten different living sites and at least four operations to destroy informal businesses. It is important to note that these informal businesses are the only places on site allowing a form of sociability and organization for people on the move. During these police operations, essential items were seized and destroyed –at least 193 tents, at least 67 sleeping bags and blankets, life jackets, food, phones and medical treatment. In total, at least 2246 people were evicted, including 118 minors. In addition, at least 41 people were arrested during these operations, thus making them even more stressful for people on the move.

Importantly, in the Dunkirk area, in just six months, 2025 has already exceeded the number of evictions recorded in 2024. Last year, HRO counted 36 evictions, spread over 20 police operations. By Wednesday June 4th, 2025, on the occasion of the 20th police operation of the year in and around Loon-Plage, a 37th living space had already been destroyed. A sad symbol of the policy of non-accommodation pursued by the British and French governments at the border.



This form of state violence leads to heightened precariousness and vulnerability for the 1,500 people on the move who are surviving in these informal camps.

Obstacles to monitoring work

HRO's monitoring work is often hindered by the police. Out of all of the evictions carried out in the last two months, at least 22 were made completely unobservable due to police perimeters. The reasoning for these large perimeters is often unclear and specifically targeting HRO, for in many cases, other residents are allowed to move about normally. HRO volunteers also face intimidation attempts from the police, including ID checks –e.g. seven ID checks in a single living site on June 2nd–, photographs without warning and being followed by the national police or the anti-crime brigade (BAC) assigned to surveil them –happened on May 16th and 19th, and June 9th, for example).

State's response to shooting breeding even more vulnerability

On June 14th and 15th, two separate shootings in Loon-Plage, near Dunkirk, left seven people injured and cost the lives of three others. As a sole response to the situation, the state carried out a massive eviction and destroyed the living sites in the following days, thus making the victims and witnesses of this tragedy even more vulnerable. By confiscating the goods necessary for people's survival, in particular tents and sleeping bags, the state is creating the rules of fierce competition for scarce resources. Moreover, by stopping people on the move in a random and arbitrary manner on a regular basis, the state is responsible for building a climate of mistrust, leading to less recourse to the police in cases of physical, sexual or psychological violence.

Segregation and racial profiling in public transportation

Over the past two months, HRO has witnessed discriminatory practices in access to public transportation in Calais. On May 13th, for example, police officers were present when people on the move were boarding a bus.



On two occasions, they allowed people perceived as white to board the bus first, then shouted at people on the move and violently pushed one of them away. This kind of segregation is documented increasingly frequently in Calais and has been the subject of legal proceedings carried out by HRO before the French Ombudsman.

Moreover, HRO has been documenting the consequences of the nationwide crackdown operation announced by the Minister of the Interior on June 18th and 19th. This operation aimed to track down, arrest and deport undocumented people. In Calais, roundups happen every day and heavy police presence in train stations is part of daily life. As a result of this operation, train stations have increasingly become hotspots for racial profiling, arrests and police violence in general. At Calais-Ville station, law enforcement officers are stationed outside the entrance almost around the clock. This constant surveillance deters people on the move from accessing transportation and often causes panic, putting them at risk near railway tracks or roads.

HRO cannot possibly witness every arrest but over the last two months, at least 36 people have been arrested –both in the context of evictions and other.



**Border Violence
Monitoring Network**

Network structure and contact

BVMN acts as an alliance of organisations in the Balkans and Greece. BVMN is based on the efforts of partner organisations working in the field of documentation, media, advocacy and litigation.

We finance the work through charitable grants and foundations, and are not in receipt of funds from any political organisation. The expenditures cover transport subsidies, several part-time paid coordination positions and some costs incurred by partner organisations for their contributions to our shared work.

To follow more from the Border Violence Monitoring Network, check out our website for the entire testimony archive, previous monthly reports and regular news pieces. To follow us on social media, find us on Twitter handle @Border_Violence and on Facebook.

For further information regarding this report or more on how to become involved, and for press and media requests please email us at mail@borderviolence.eu.



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