

MONTHLY REPORT | OCTOBER 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, Human Rights Observers and Calais Food Collective.

Mattresses in Amygdaleza PRDC.
Source: Anonymous



Border Violence
Monitoring Network

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LEGAL
CENTRE
LESVOS



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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

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



Executive summary

This report gathers updates from the month of October and brings together first-hand testimonies and observations from a range of countries in the Balkan region, Turkey, Poland and France, to look at the way European 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 look at the continuous negligence characterising Serbia's reception system, marked by poor conditions, insufficient services and gatekeeping practices that constantly force people into informal living arrangements. This situation affects adults and children alike, despite the increased vulnerabilities and specialised needs of the younger people on the move. The lack of support and access to basic services within the country's reception system constitutes another layer of violence that adds to the one perpetrated daily during pushbacks at Serbia's borders. In this report, we share accounts of several people on the move describing the illegal practices carried out by Hungarian, Bulgarian, or Croatian authorities alike, which are often accompanied by dog attacks, severe beatings, arbitrary detention and the theft and destruction of personal belongings. It is this systematic violence and the absence of safe migration pathways that force people into taking increasingly dangerous routes, often leading to completely avoidable deaths. This month, a person drowned in the Danube river during their attempt to cross the border.

The Western Balkans Summit, celebrated in Belfast in October with the presence of all non-EU countries from the region, as well as several EU countries and EU representatives, greatly exemplifies two important trends in European migration policy: the ever increasing weight (and dominance) of the EU and its priorities on the policies of neighbouring non-EU countries and the focus on securitisation over protection, with the resulting continuous erosion of asylum (and other human) rights. The final deployment of Frontex officers in Bosnia-Herzegovina – one of the last countries in the region to allow this – constitutes one of the latest examples of these patterns.

October also brought an end to the three month asylum ban for people coming to Greece from North Africa, widely criticised for its non-compliance with EU and international law. This month, the Ombudsperson published an open letter highlighting, among other issues, the “discriminatory” and “fragmented” implementation of the ban, as some categories of people were in fact able to submit asylum applications. Moreover, despite the end of the ban, people in Greece continue to face severe challenges to access their right to seek asylum. For example, people detained in Amygdaleza PRDC have long reported that expressions of intention to seek asylum are often ignored or mocked. Instead, people described



Executive summary

being pressured into signing deportation papers, while enduring extremely poor living conditions. Additionally, leaflets are now being distributed to people on the move held in various state facilities with the aim to disincentivise asylum applications, after a recent directive announced by the Minister for Migration and Asylum.

In the Aegean, 32 people have been killed by the border regime this month, in eight different sea incidents, some of them after dangerous chases by the Hellenic Coast Guard – who has also continued perpetrating illegal pushbacks in October. Meanwhile, people on the move who arrived in the islands face hostility, continuous administrative obstacles and overcrowded or insufficiently equipped reception facilities. On Samos, we look at the inconsistencies in the issuance of asylum interview dates, which often prevent people from accessing timely legal advice, as well as at the evictions of people who receive a decision on their application and are left with no housing alternative. On Kos, the end of the summer season results in the intensification of work and housing crisis for people on the move on the island, increasing reliance on the services of solidarity organisations. On Lesbos, the first arrests and convictions for “illegal stay” after the passing of the new law furthering criminalisation of movement in Greece have been registered.

While migrants and people on the move continue to be harassed, violated and prosecuted for the simple act of moving, their deaths are never met with the same level of legal scrutiny. A stark example of this impunity takes us to Turkey, where the death, in June 2024, of 11-year-old Syrian Ahmed Haskiro in the textile workshop where he was employed hasn't led to the prosecution of the company bosses. Only the elevator maintenance official and the building manager have been convicted. Their sentences, for less than two years in prison, however, have been postponed, effectively meaning that neither defendant would go to prison.

In the last part of this report, we take a look at the situation in Northern France, where the state continues to mobilise vast amounts of public resources to carry out evictions of informal living sites, with an increased frequency in Dunkirk. There, police performed eight displacement operations in October, compared to two in the month of September. The authorities also evicted a big informal living site known as “Total”, where an estimated 600 people were living. As is often the case in these major operations, the police then used environmental modification as a strategy to prevent people from coming back, destroying the site and starting the construction of a four-metre-high concrete wall along its edge. Without the existence of dignified housing alternatives, this policy of deterrence only perpetuates a cruel cycle of displacement that violates people's rights to shelter and safety on a daily basis.

UPDATE ON THE SITUATION



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Nowhere safe to turn: how Serbia's shelter system fails people on the move

People on the move in Serbia increasingly avoid entering the country's formal asylum and accommodation system, despite facing severe risks in informal settlements. Their decisions are shaped by fear, misinformation, and previous negative experiences with authorities and camp structures. Some are reluctant to give their biometric information to the authorities fearing the impossibility of seeking asylum in a different country. Others fear detention or retaliation for irregular border crossings.

At the same time, multiple accounts show that even those who want to enter official camps are sometimes denied access, redirected, or discouraged by unclear procedures and inconsistent gatekeeping practices. Reports of poor conditions and mistreatment in certain centers, such as Preševo, reinforce a perception that camps are unsafe or degrading. As a result, many people choose to remain in informal living sites, despite the serious dangers posed by exposure, untreated health issues, police raids, theft, and lack of basic services. For many, these insecure spaces feel less threatening than an institutional system they perceive as opaque, restrictive, or unsafe.

The growing reliance on biometric data collection, now a mandatory component of asylum registration, raises serious questions about privacy, data-sharing practices, and the safety of those who provide highly sensitive personal information. This is one reason why people avoid staying in Serbia's formal shelter system as they are afraid to get their fingerprints taken, get registered in Serbia and then be unable to seek asylum elsewhere in Europe. This data is not directly shared in EURODAC, the EU-wide fingerprint database used to manage asylum claims. However, the Western Balkan countries, including Serbia, have built a biometric system aligned with the EU, commonly referred to as the "Balkandac" system. Many questions remain regarding data exchange between Balkan states and EU members. Several aspects of this cooperation lack transparency and directly affect the sense of safety of people on the move, who are required to share highly sensitive personal information. However, handing over personal data doesn't guarantee protection at all. You can read more about surveillance technologies in Serbia [here](#), including the collection of biometric data from people on the move.

At the same time, a lot of misinformation is shared about people's rights, and they have limited access to legal aid, especially when living in informal sites and trying to hide from authorities. The Collective Aid team met a child travelling alone who shared he had been pushed back from Hungary and who did not want to ask for asylum in Serbia, because he was afraid of being put in jail, as he would have crossed borders '*illegally*'.



Another factor discouraging people from going to the camps is the negative experiences they or their friends report from camps in Serbia. One man said, 'if I break my leg or I'm bleeding out, I'll go to the camp, but otherwise, no way'. For example, the camp in Preševo, where people say they are often taken after being pushed back from Hungary, ostensibly to move them farther from the border, is frequently described as having particularly poor conditions.

However, the Collective Aid team in Serbia also met people on the move who wanted to go to the camps. They, on the other hand, shared that they were denied entrance to the facilities. Info Park's outreach teams in Belgrade and across the country confirmed this. They continue to register growing mistrust toward the institutional shelter system. Even when asylum and transit centers maintain decent infrastructure, actual accessibility and protection guarantees are often shaped by gatekeeping practices, confusing procedures, and ad hoc restrictions. Info Park has recorded several cases in which persons expressing the intention to seek asylum were told that 'there is no capacity' or were redirected elsewhere without clear explanation. For unregistered individuals, especially unaccompanied children, this results in a Catch-22 situation: they must first lodge an asylum claim to access shelter, but are unable to do so without support and access to the relevant authority. In this vacuum, many opt for informal settlements, despite risks of police raids, theft, violence, or exposure to the elements; perceiving them as safer than formal but inaccessible systems. Furthermore, the shift toward biometric-based registration and lack of legal aid at the entry point fuels anxiety and reinforces avoidance of state-run facilities.

As mentioned in earlier reports, the dangers of staying in informal living sites are not insignificant: this month people are talking about scabies, pain and wounds that are not being treated, and not having access to clean drinking water and food. Additionally, the temperatures are dropping quickly in Serbia, and many people have reported being extremely cold already, so cold that they could not sleep. When living in informal sites, people sleep with close to no protection from the weather; the huge neglect from the governments makes people depend on NGOs like Collective Aid to fill the gaps of services to provide, for instance, winter clothes and blankets.

Children on the move

In October, Collective Aid's team in Serbia met a 9-year old boy living in an informal living site. Even though the most common age for the team to meet is young adults in their twenties, children are frequently forced into the same dangerous transit as



adults. This month, a 16-year old boy was beaten so badly by the Bulgarian police that one of his teeth was broken. Throughout October, the team met a lot of 16-year-old boys, many of them experiencing violence from the police and getting their belongings stolen. For instance, one boy told the team that during a pushback from Greece to Turkey, the police took his shoes and socks, so he had to walk barefoot for four days. Children are not experiencing less violence than adults at borders, and they are not granted safe passages – they are having their childhood stolen as they try to survive in Europe, where governments are accepting the violence they face daily.

In Serbia, Collective Aid's team have been in contact with their partner organisations to discuss protection of minors on the move. The team learned that it is their partners' experience that the Social Services in Belgrade which officially should work to secure the safety of the children, are practically impossible to contact and hardly ever react, meaning that in reality there are no safety measures for children and no limit to the danger they can face.

Based on Info Park's field observations, children, especially unaccompanied boys aged 13 to 17, remain among the most underprotected and invisible categories of people on the move in Serbia. In multiple instances in the reporting period, Info Park teams engaged children who had not been registered by any state actor for weeks, despite repeated border crossings, health concerns, or security incidents. Institutional responses often hinge on the child's willingness to be officially recorded/registered, which is undermined by fears of detention or family tracing. Attempts to contact Centers for Social Work, mandated to intervene in such cases, have frequently gone unanswered. There is a systemic gap in mobile outreach social services, trauma-informed support, and accessible guardianship mechanisms. Moreover, pushbacks and police brutality are not isolated incidents – they are normalized experiences shaping children's perception of Europe. These patterns not only violate child rights norms but also create a hostile environment that strips children of agency and hope.

Drowning in the Danube river

In the evening of October 5th, one person died trying to cross the Danube from Serbia to Croatia, between the towns of Plavna and Sotin. It happened when a boat carrying 10 people from China and one person from Serbia capsized. The Serbian man is said to have steered the boat. On the Serbian side, rescuers were able to save four people who had fallen into the river, and on the Croatian side, five people were found afterwards. According to InfoMigrant, there have been an increasing number of Chinese people on the move due to social turmoil and instability in some parts of China.



Pushbacks from Hungary to Serbia

Like every month, Collective Aid's team in Serbia encountered a lot of people mentioning violent pushbacks from Hungary. People often report that after being pushed back from Hungary, they are sent to the Preševo camp in the south of Serbia; however, if they are unaccompanied children, they are sent to the camp in Principovac.

This month, a child travelling alone told the Collective Aid team about his pushback experience. Before going to the camp for minors in Serbia, he was held in detention for two days close to the border, on the Serbian side. He did not get any food or water there. He asked if he could buy some with his own money, but the police didn't allow it. He was in the same room as a family with two very young girls (5-6 years old). The girls got some beans to eat, but the others, nothing. He said: 'it was my first time getting arrested by police in all of my life', when the Hungarian police apprehended him.



In October 2025, IOM reported a fluctuating number of people on the move arriving at the three Temporary Reception Centres (TRCs) in BiH, with an average of 980 in a week and a total of 1,052 people at the end of the month. Main countries of origin are Egypt, Afghanistan, Morocco, Syria and Palestine. IOM also reported a fluctuating but ultimately increasing trend of departures (2,382), with higher numbers in the third (600) and the last weeks (508) of the month.

As for official statistics, during the first week of October, the number of potential unaccompanied and separated children is calculated as 29,5 %, following an increasing trend since the beginning of September.

Western Balkans Summit and border technology

At the beginning of October, the Western Balkans Summit took place in Belfast. The event brought together the six Western Balkan countries (WB6) –Serbia, Montenegro, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, North Macedonia, and Kosovo– all aspiring members of the European Union, along with supporting countries such as Italy, Germany, France, Croatia, Slovenia, Poland, Greece, Bulgaria, and the United Kingdom, as well as representatives of EU institutions. The main focus of the summit was migration, and more specifically, the “fight against human trafficking”. In this regard, the British Foreign Minister announced that the United Kingdom would invest 10 million pounds to fund ‘*innovative programs to offset human trafficking in the Western Balkans*’. Additionally, participants agreed to strengthen existing agreements between FRONTEX, the WB6 and the UK to improve the processing and exchange of biometric information at external borders among Berlin Process members. This was justified as a means to “to strengthen border management and tackle irregular migration”. In parallel, this month marked the introduction of the new Entry/Exit Border Control system, which will collect biometric data from non-EU citizens entering the Schengen area, verifying faces and fingerprints against stored data. Alongside the evident privacy concerns this system raises, there is a clear trend toward the expansion of surveillance infrastructure at Europe’s borders and the reinforcement of discriminatory practices against non-EU nationals –the main subjects of such control. Once again, technology stands at the center of border securitization policies, aimed at deterring people on the move from entering the EU.

The use of surveillance technologies is also widespread during illegal pushbacks. For example, at the Bosnia-Croatia border, Collective Aid Sarajevo talked to people who saw drones during pushbacks conducted by Croatian law enforcement authorities. An Afghan man, for instance, crossed into Croatia but was captured after five hours



together with 28 others. He recounted that the police beat them, broke their phones and drove them back to the border in police vehicles. As they were forced to cross back into Bosnia, they noticed drones following them and ‘*many cameras*’ along the way. A man from Palestine also reported being spotted by drones while crossing into Croatia. Another Afghan man described a similar experience: he crossed the border at the beginning of October with a group of men from Iran and Afghanistan, but they were apprehended by the Croatian police. He recounted being beaten and kicked, taken to a police station where officers destroyed their phones and power banks, even burning them in front of them. The police asked, ‘*why did you come to our country?*’ They were then pushed back to Bosnia, where they saw a drone flying above their heads. Drones were also mentioned by an Egyptian man during his pushback from Serbia to North Macedonia. When he and his group were apprehended by Serbian police near the border fence, they saw drones hovering above them.

Border surveillance and Frontex

On October 31st, Frontex Executive Director Leijtens attended a ceremony in Sarajevo, together with the Minister of Security, the Director of the Border Police and EU representatives, marking the beginning of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency’s operational presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The forces deployed will consist of 100 Frontex officers from across Europe who will conduct “border-management activities” under host-state command. Joint operations will take place along all of the country’s borders, including those with non-EU neighbours such as Serbia, and will be carried out both at border-crossing points and at airports.

This step is highly significant, as Bosnia and Herzegovina, together with Kosovo, was among the few countries in the region without a formal cooperation mechanism with Frontex until now. The partnership has been enabled by the Status Agreement between the EU and Bosnia and Herzegovina, signed on June 11th, 2025, which fulfils one of the objectives set out in the EU Action Plan for the Western Balkans and reflects the increasing militarisation of borders and the externalisation of European frontiers.

Transition to a state-led migration response in BiH

IOM is nearing the end of its mandate for managing the migration response in BiH, after which responsibility will be handed over to the State authorities. The budget proposal for this transition is expected by mid-November, so that it can be approved



and then submitted to the Treasury, given that the deadline for finalizing the Transition Plan is set for December 15th, 2025. However, at this stage, it appears unlikely that these deadlines will be met. Within this framework, it is relevant to observe IOM cooperation on Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRRs), which increased from 104, since the start of 2025, at the beginning of October to 139 by the end of the month. There are clear indications the EU is increasingly investing in so-called “voluntary returns”, both from EU member states and from transit countries, using them as an institutional means of outsourcing migration control. Scholars have pointed out that AMIF (Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund) has tended to overemphasize return operations, dedicating a relatively greater share of its resources to returns than to programs promoting inclusion.

Therefore, IOM’s ongoing cooperation on AVRR programmes in Bosnia during this transitional phase, marked by significant budget cuts and the closure of previous TRCs, aligns with the broader hierarchy of European priorities in the migration field. Moreover, the presentation of AVRRs as a benevolent opportunity offered to people on the move, frames return not as a policy tool serving European migration management, but as an individual “chance”, thus shifting attention away from the structural constraints on mobility and reinforcing the political agenda against irregularized migration.

Pushbacks at the Croatian–Bosnian border

While Croatian authorities praise their police forces for reducing irregular border crossings, the methods employed, such as illegal pushbacks of people on the move to Bosnia, remain extremely violent. Many people describe beatings in vivid detail, often expressing deep trauma. In October, Collective Aid Sarajevo talked to an Afghan man who crossed the border with a group of 64 people before being apprehended by the Croatian police. Their phones were destroyed, and they were beaten with sticks and kicked, describing ‘*all kinds of beatings*’. A Moroccan man reported being beaten by Croatian police in Slavonski Brod, where officers lined people up and struck their hands with sticks, leaving visible scars and bruises. An Iranian man gave a detailed account of another pushback at the Bosnia–Croatia border. He said that officers dressed in black and were identified by the respondent as a special rapid intervention Croatian police unit. When they captured him along with the others from his group, they forced their head between their knees. He was beaten, kicked and left with a bleeding back. The police broke his phone, stole his money and then put them in a car and took them to a forest. They ordered them to go back to Bosnia. Another Afghan man recounted being removed from a train, while crossing from Bosnia to Croatia. After being taken



off the train, he and others were severely beaten and humiliated. They were then handed over to the Croatian border police, who told them to sit. When they sat down, they hit them and asked them 'why are you sitting down?'. So they stood up, but after they stood up, the police asked them 'why are you standing?' and hit them again. They stole their money and phones, used their money to buy food and mockingly said 'this is your money, you paid for this'. Then, one of them kicked the Afghan respondent in the head with his heel, leaving bruises on his head and eye. Another man was left with a broken rib. They weren't given any food or water and the border police then drove them back to the Bosnian border.

Physical violence often goes hand in hand with the destruction of personal belongings such as phones or power banks. In some cases, items essential for people's health are also targeted. An Algerian man recounted his experience at the border with Croatia, when he was caught by those he identified as militaries. After beating and kicking him, they destroyed his insulin when he explained that he is diabetic. Another man from Sudan told MVI that Croatian police stole his asthma inhaler (salbutamol) during a pushback.

In the Bihać area, testimonies of pushbacks and violence at the border with Croatia are constant and have both invisible and visible consequences, with people in transit often sustaining severe injuries, such as fractured arms, and repeatedly returning to the TRC. In fact, keeping in mind the higher overall number of arrivals, it is still possible to observe that the average length of stay in October has increased compared to the summer months. This trend is linked to the tight surveillance and difficulty of crossing the border, which force people on the move not only to gather enough money to attempt the crossing again but also to take time to recover from the physical and psychological effects of illegal rejections. As a result, many people remain in the TRC longer than they initially intended, waiting both for the opportunity and the capacity to continue their journey.

Update on conditions in the Temporary Reception Centres (TRCs)

Living conditions in Blažuj TRC

As the future closure of Blažuj camp has become more concrete following a BiH Parliament's recent decision, no plans are in sight to improve the current living conditions in the TRC. The main issues are poor hygiene, lack of medical assistance and insecurity due to the presence of gangs inside the camp. As mentioned by a Turkish



man who talked to the Collective Aid team in Sarajevo, there are insects in the beds of the camp that make him itch while sleeping. When talking about the hygienic conditions of the common areas, he said:

"it's not normal. People don't think it's normal either [...], it's not very healthy to be in the bathroom or shower."

A man from Afghanistan said he avoids showering because the toilets are too dirty. A Syrian man also said that he finds the toilets *'disgusting'* and *'totally unclean'*. The lack of hygiene and neglect of basic needs reflects severe mismanagement by the camp administration, which fails in its fundamental duty to ensure adequate living conditions.

Medical care is equally inadequate. At the beginning of October, the Collective Aid team in Sarajevo spoke to three men with different health issues – all received the same treatment: four 400 milligram painkillers and no medical advice. One man said the medication *'didn't work'*. Another man reported that the camp doctor is not present every day in Blažuj and during his only visit he received just one pill of paracetamol, despite suffering from multiple health issues (back, shoulder, chest pain, as well as heart problems). A Palestinian man also said he was given only Panadol for back pain. An Afghan man injured by Croatian police talked about the fact that he didn't get any real help from doctors. The doctors at the camp didn't give him medications for his meniscus problem which resulted from a police beating so he had to buy medicines with his own money. At the camp, they told him that if he wanted to have physical therapy for his meniscus he would have to wait for two months. The health issues that people on the move have in Sarajevo are diverse, from back problems to toothaches, from broken limbs to sprained ankles but one thing is common: the treatment received in the camp is often the same. This further highlights how access to healthcare is severely lacking.

Insecurity in the camp has also grown. Many residents reported harassment and theft by groups identified as gangs. One man asked the Collective team in Sarajevo if they provided security services, saying he felt extremely unsafe inside Blažuj TRC. He said a group of men were taunting him, threatening to physically hurt him and torturing him mentally. Another man recognized individuals who had once kidnapped and robbed



him at the Bosnia-Croatia border, now operating inside the camp and threatening people. He reported being threatened by a group of men who said they would ‘peel off his skin’ if he talked. Similar accounts came from others, who spoke of phones and money being stolen. When one of the men reported the theft, police told him that Blažuj ‘is not a hotel, but just a refugee camp’. These gangs reportedly began operating in Bihać in 2023 as smugglers, but after the decline in crossings from Bihać, they shifted to extortion and kidnapping of people pushed back from Croatia. On October 30th, a major police operation, ‘East-Swat’, took place in Velika Kladuša, involving 200 police officers from five different police agencies. The operation targeted organised crime groups responsible for extortion and kidnapping of migrants. However, such operations and arrests of smugglers do not improve the overall situation of people on the move. Smuggling networks and gang violence thrive due to the lack of safe migration routes. The arrest of one smuggler or gang member does not change the structural conditions that allow these networks to persist, foremost the EU border regime.

Living conditions in Lipa TRC

Officially registered arrivals in TRCs in the Una Sana Canton stand at an average of 370 with a peak of 415 around the end of October. However, these numbers are not representative of the amount of people on the move in the Bihać area as many of them continue to rely on private or informal accommodation in the city. The number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) during October is variable but revolves between 70 and 100, while the number of families with children remains around 25 individuals.

The transition phase into state-managed facilities is already resulting in significant gaps in service provision. Following the closure of Borići TRC, the Child Friendly Space and the Mothers and Babies’ Corner active there and run respectively by the organizations LAN and Fenix, both fell under IOM’s responsibility. Yet, in the absence of new funding and after budget cuts, IOM is facing capacity constraints and is not effectively operating such spaces and ensuring coverage of the activities. This loss is significant, as these were spaces where women and children could gather separately and receive attention more tailored to their specific needs, supporting their well-being and sense of self-determination.

On another note, the existence of a TRC for families and minors previously allowed transfers of people experiencing heightened conditions of vulnerability. This meant that a single man who needed a safer environment for his well-being and protection,



could have been transferred to Borići. With the facility now closed, such alternative protection options are no longer available for people experiencing heightened risks. Specific cases involving people with pre-existing mental health needs or histories of domestic violence currently residing in the Lipa TRC highlight this concern. In the absence of appropriate facilities and qualified professionals, these individuals experience heightened distress, particularly following violent pushbacks, and often withdraw socially or engage in self-harm.

Moreover, general conditions in the facility are also far from adequate. Healthcare services inside the camp are insufficient, in terms of number of employees and working hours, to cover the needs of residents and particularly for proper follow-up care. Therefore, people on the move often end up relying on external actors for medical assistance.

When it comes to food provision, the main weakness at the TRC seems to concern single men's dinner. In fact, if families and minors receive hot meals both for lunch and dinner, single men are given a packed meal in the evening. Some people among single men and families cook for themselves on certain days of the week, although this has occasionally been hindered by water-related issues. Furthermore, there have been recurrent complaints related to the Wifi connection and mobile signal in the camp, as well as to or the impossibility to close containers, which often means people take turns going out while someone stays behind to guard their personal belongings.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

The condition of UASC remains fundamentally unchanged since September, with them having limited access to dedicated activities and services. The increase in the number of minors present in the camp, while the personnel of the main organization responsible for them (WVI), already understaffed, remained the same, led to frequent tensions and fights during the month, both between minors and staff and among minors themselves. Indeed, even though Lipa TRC is open, its isolated location and distance from city services make it difficult for people without social or economic resources, such as most UASC, to go out and find a place to decompress without relying on someone. The lack of dedicated services, forced coexistence without the possibility of real privacy, the waiting state in which all people on the move find themselves, the misunderstandings due to language barriers and changes in certain rules and schedules within the camp, can therefore degenerate into conflicts over everyday matters. Furthermore, the location of the minors' zone in the midst of families



and single men's areas creates confusion and makes it impossible to prevent mixed interactions and respect safeguarding policies. The referral mechanism for transferring UASC to other accessible locations continues, yet with significant limitations.

Violence in Bulgaria

As Collective Aid's team in Serbia speaks with people on the move, they regularly hear stories from various parts of their journeys. Reports frequently include accounts of violence within Bulgaria and at its borders, along with experiences of racism directed at non-Bulgarians.

This month, the team spoke with a man who described the informal living sites in Bulgaria as *'the worst'*, and police arriving to let their dogs attack people living there. The practice of using dogs to attack is something people often report. Another group mentioned encountering the police in Bulgaria, and the police stealing everyone's phones, a backpack, and a beanie from a child.

Many people on the move have also mentioned police violence at the border between Turkey and Bulgaria. One 17-year old boy from Afghanistan reported that the Bulgarian police are *'cruel and without humanity'* when explaining how his friend was badly beaten up. Another respondent told the team that he had broken his foot crossing the Bulgarian border when he jumped down the wall. He said he was crying in the night because of the pain, and now he wanted to see if he could go to a camp in Serbia to heal. However, the camps are extremely difficult for him to reach, as they are placed in rural areas and he cannot walk. Several more people have mentioned the fences and walls along the borders of Bulgaria as added sources of violence and danger.

Moreover, the team has met many people who report having been deported from Germany to Bulgaria. One young man who was deported had to leave his younger brother of only sixteen years of age alone in the country. The team sees the continuous consequences of the deportation strategy allowed through the Dublin Agreement, which forces people to repeat the same dangerous journey through Europe, as Bulgaria is in no way a safe country for a person on the move.



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Termination of the asylum ban: deplorable conclusions, unfulfilled commitments

October marked the end of the 3-month suspension of access to asylum for people arriving on Greek territory from North Africa. Widely regarded as unlawful, the Greek Ombudsman published an open letter to the Greek government as the ban ended, highlighting its non-compliance with EU and international standards and negatively evaluating its implementation on several grounds. Among those, the Ombudsman highlighted how the implementation of the ban was only “partial”, as half of the amendment –namely the return of people subjected to the ban– could not be carried out due to the risk of violating the principle of non-refoulement. This is partly a consequence of orders issued by the Administrative Courts of First Instance of Piraeus and Athens in August and September, prohibiting the expulsion of Sudanese and Yemeni applicants in situations where the ban was supposed to apply. In addition, the Ombudsman emphasised the “fragmented” and “discriminatory” application of the ban, as some categories of people were in fact able to submit their asylum applications despite having arrived from North Africa between July and October 2025. These categories were outlined in two internal circulars issued in July and September, as detailed in the BVMN September Monthly report. Finally, the Independent Authority highlighted its overall concern for the lack of “operational readiness” to provide for newly arrived people, and the “disproportionate burden” on the provision of services –in particular in Crete– that this created.

The handling of post-ban procedures also proved highly problematic and revealed, once again, the administration’s unpreparedness. According to an operational plan drafted by the Ministry, 50 asylum applications were meant to be recorded per day. This plan raised serious doubts as to how such a high pace would ensure respect for procedural guarantees. In addition, the objective was not reached, as many people from so-called “safe countries of origin” had still not been able to file their asylum applications by the end of October, and remained in detention.

Moreover, reports from the Amygdaleza Pre-Removal Detention Centre (PRDC) show that requests for information and access to asylum procedures were frequently denied and mocked. More importantly, some detainees shared that the only documents presented to them for signature were deportation papers. In the context of the undignified detention conditions people are forced to endure, these actions led one person to refer to the overall situation as one of “psychological pressure” aimed at forcing people to sign for deportation before they are able to apply for asylum.



Detention conditions in Amygdaleza and Sintiki

In a [statement](#) published at the end of October, BVMN detailed the horrific detention conditions people have been enduring in the Amygdaleza PRDC, corroborating [media reports](#). Multiple testimonies described overcrowded containers, highly concerning unhygienic conditions, complete lack of clothes distribution, rat infestations and inappropriate and insufficient provision of medical care, as well as violent behaviours from the authorities, both verbally and physically. Added to the impossibility to apply for asylum, the overall situation, marked by severe psychological distress, led detainees to organise several protests, including a hunger strike. Despite these, however, their requests were consistently ignored by the authorities. Meanwhile, in the detention facility in Sintiki, [reports](#) of poor conditions and bad treatment also continued, in spite of detainees' protests and requests for dignified treatment [since August](#).



Photos shared with BVMN showing dilapidated containers in Amygdaleza and mattresses detainees have to sleep on, on the floor and with no bed frame, October 2025. Source: Anonymous



UPDATES FROM THE ISLANDS

Shipwrecks, pushbacks and apprehensions in the Aegean

October has been the deadliest month in the Aegean since the beginning of 2025: at least 32 people were killed on the maritime border between Turkey and Greece, in eight different incidents. A minimum of three of these incidents can be linked to the direct involvement of the Hellenic Coast Guard (HCG), whose chase of the boats led to their capsizing or fatal damage. While this section only reports on the cases where lives were lost, it's important to note that, during this month, multiple other shipwrecks occurred due to chases by the HCG, luckily leading to no more deaths, though still causing several hospitalisations. It is worth mentioning that, in all these cases, several people were arrested and charged with "causing a shipwreck", "facilitating migration" and "endangering life", in an example of further criminalisation of people on the move in the face of authorities' negligence and violence.

This month, 5,429 people have attempted to cross the Aegean. From those, only 2,276 made it, while the Turkish Coast Guard apprehended 2,250 upon leaving and rescued 903 at sea. Of these, 541 had been pushed back by the Greek authorities in 17 different recorded pushback incidents. According to this data, eight liferafts were used in six different rescues.

Below is a description of the eight known incidents with loss of life that took place at the Greece-Turkey maritime border over the month of October:

- ❑ 05/10/2025. Lesbos. The HCG detected a speed boat in the sea area out of Plomari and a chase followed. According to the HCG, "the operator did not comply and repeatedly performed dangerous maneuvers. The speedboat suddenly stopped after its engine mount broke and part of its hull detached, causing all passengers to fall into the sea." 17 people were rescued and the body of a woman was recovered.
- ❑ 07/10/2025. Lesbos. There was a shipwreck near Tarti. 34 people were rescued and the bodies of four people were recovered.
- ❑ 14/10/2025. Rhodos. The HCG detected a speed boat in the sea area of Paradisi and a chase followed. The boat capsized, 16 people were rescued and two bodies were recovered.
- ❑ 16/10/2025. Chios. There was a shipwreck in the sea area of Pantouki Bay. 27 people were rescued and the bodies of two women were recovered.



- ▣ 19/10/2025. Farmakonisi. The HCG detected a speed boat going towards Farmakonisi. A chase followed, the boat shipwrecked and some people fell into the sea. 18 people were rescued from the sea, as well as the body of a woman that was pronounced dead. 30 more people were found on shore.
- ▣ 21/10/2025. Samos. A Palestinian man died while trying to cross to Samos. He was reported missing on October 12th and his body was found on October 21st in the area of Agia Paraskevi by local people.
- ▣ 24/10/2025. Muğla. A shipwreck took place off the area of Muğla's Bodrum district. 17 people died, including five small children, and two people survived.
- ▣ 27/10/2025. Lesvos. A shipwreck took place off Lesvos, southwest of Cape Agrilia. Seven people were rescued and 24 more made it to shore. Four bodies were recovered and one person is still missing, according to the survivors.

Samos

Pushbacks by Greek authorities

On October 23rd, Aegean Boat Report (ABR) documented a pushback by the HCG, involving 25 people who were drifting in Turkish waters, north of Samos. The group reportedly informed ABR that *"they were heading towards Samos when they were spotted by a vessel from the Greek coast guard. Masked men onboard the coast guard vessel cut the petrol hose, and removed the petrol from the boat. After being towed into Turkish waters, the Greek coast guard left them helplessly drifting in the middle of the sea in the dark"*.

Moreover, this month, a client of BVMN Member Organisation I Have Rights also reported on a pushback they experienced at the end of June 2025. They described the pushback operation in the following way: *"while we were in the boat and trying to cross the border, masked people caught us and they took the phones, passports and the money and threw them overboard. They said to us "go back" and then the Turkish authorities imprisoned us."*

As exemplified by the tragic incidents included in the section above and too many others over the years, these operations, carried out in a systematic way by the Hellenic Coast Guard, are not only illegal, but also extremely dangerous to the lives of people on the move seeking safety in Greece.



Isolation and de facto detention conditions

In October, the population in the Closed-Controlled Access Centre (CCAC) on Samos increased from 1,819 people at the beginning of the month to 2,023, reaching 99% of the facility's actual capacity. During this time, I Have Rights clients continued to report undignified and dangerous de facto detention conditions, among other violations described in the sections below.

For example, this month, one client reported having to sleep on a cardboard box on the ground without a blanket, while being held in isolation. The client could not confirm the exact number of people who were in isolation with them. Meanwhile, when asked about conditions under de facto detention in the facility, another client reported that *"they put many people in the same small rooms. It was not safe at all because they found a lot of snakes there."*

Another client, a survivor of human trafficking with an underaged child, also reported the presence of both scorpions and snakes in the camp. She stated that she killed a scorpion by herself, adding: *"At the camp they always shouted at us. If you asked for anything – to go to the hospital, for a blanket, or for any other need – they said no. That is why we wanted to get out."*

Inconsistencies in the issuance of asylum interviews

During this month, the team continued to register inconsistencies in the re-issuance of interview dates, which sped up or delayed the initial dates given to clients for their asylum interviews. The arbitrary and unclear communication between the authorities and applicants further complicated their access to timely and individualised legal advice, in already rights-depriving reception conditions; thus three clients reported receiving short-notice interview dates; two clients reported delays due to the lack of Lingala interpretation; four clients reported delays in their asylum interviews, and one client reported that interpreters shouted at his friends in their asylum interviews, got angry, and pressured them to finish early.

In one case, a client was on his way to the office of a legal aid organisation when he received a call from the Greek Asylum Service (GAS), informing him that he had to return to the CCAC for a last-minute appointment with officials because his interview had been moved to the following day. As a result, he did not receive individualised legal advice or adequate preparation before his asylum interview.



Moreover, at the end of October, Avocats Sans Frontières (ASF) informed IHR lawyers that there was no Krio interpretation available at the GAS during the month of October. Sierra Leonean individuals at the CCAC were thus asked by GAS if they spoke English and made to sit in a language test with unclear assessment criteria. They were then automatically given fictitious asylum interview dates so as to formally have a date on paper, even though these were going to be changed again by GAS.

Evictions, arbitrary practices and homelessness

On October 6th 2025, a client of IHR received a second-instance rejection. When he went to the office of the GAS, staff called the police, and two police officers stood next to him while he received the rejection decision. Afterward, the officers kept him under their custody outside the GAS but inside the CCAC, in an outdoor area, for about one hour, while they talked on their phones. They then just told him, "You are free now." On October 11th, the same client left the CCAC by himself. When he tried to return on October 18th, CCAC staff refused to allow him to enter and did not let him collect his personal belongings. As a result, he became homeless, without immediate access to housing or his possessions.

On the last Friday of October, three families were evicted from the CCAC, two of whom had received their documentation and were awaiting their flight to leave the island. Another five men were also evicted and forced to live in containers in the CCAC parking area, outside the facility. One of them had faced a delay in his fingerprint appointment. Médecins Sans Frontières reported that the conditions in the containers were extremely poor, describing them as "disgusting," with people living among garbage. These individuals were homeless, lacking access to adequate shelter, sanitation, and basic living conditions.

Another client of IHR received a positive decision on October 15th. He requested a fingerprint appointment, but the Registration and Identification Service (RIS) officer informed him that, since he had rejected the transfer order, the earliest possible date would be in two months time. The officer stated that he could stay in the CCAC until November 6th, but that he would become homeless after the 30-day limit, which would still be a month before his appointment. The client reported that the RIS officer pressured him to leave the camp on October 22nd and return on November 24th, saying, "we will give you an appointment one to two weeks later." The client understood that this arrangement might make the process easier or offer special treatment.



Together with ASF and Metadrasi, IHR contacted CCAC authorities via email regarding the arbitrary practice of not issuing fingerprint appointments for recognised refugees, including those who refused to accept transfer orders. ASF was also contacted by other clients who experienced delays in their fingerprint appointments, and the organisation filed a complaint with the Greek Ombudsperson. Metadrasi also filed a complaint of the same nature. These arbitrary practices contributed to prolonged periods of homelessness among recognised refugees.

Kos

Work and housing crisis

With the summer season officially coming to an end, most hotels, restaurants and bars on Kos close their doors from November 1st onwards. Since Kos' economy is primarily driven by the tourism sector, this means that the local population enters a season of –as they call it– the 'quiet life': many take a long break from the hectic summer months, enjoy spending time with friends and family, and generally live at a slower pace. This situation, however, has major implications for people on the move and refugees on Kos: they are faced with a lack of job opportunities, as well as with an even greater housing crisis now that their employers cannot provide them with accommodation. These circumstances make life in Kos nearly impossible for newly arrived people. As a consequence, many of them are forced to leave the island, hoping for better opportunities and support structures on the mainland.

Updates from the CCAC and the Hub

At the moment of writing, the CCAC on Kos hosts around 600 individuals –of which nearly half have been officially recognized as refugees and are waiting to receive their IDs. In October, the most represented country of origin in the facility was Afghanistan, followed by Kuwait, Palestine and Syria.

There is currently only one doctor and one nurse present in the CCAC, working under project Hippocrates –the medical and psychosocial programme introduced by IOM–, who offer medical services to the residents. Moreover, the conditions within the facility remain far from adequate: many of the spaces continue to be extremely unsanitary, and there is limited access to food and hygiene products. These circumstances have increased residents' reliance on Glocal Roots' shop, the Hub. There, the local organisation and BVMN partner supported over 760 individuals this month, providing them with clothes, food items, and hygiene products.



Moreover, the Hub has been made aware of some leaflets now circulated by the Greek authorities, which aim at disincentivizing people from applying for asylum, and encouraging them to leave. They are the result of a directive announced by Minister for Migration and Asylum Thanos Plevris on October 20th, which calls for the mandatory distribution of information leaflets to third-country nationals entering or residing “illegally” in the country and held in CCACs, Reception and Identification Centres, and Controlled Temporary Accommodation facilities for asylum seekers across the country. The leaflet warns people that “if you are not a refugee and are not entitled to protection, then you have entered and are remaining in the country illegally”, further explaining that their application will be rejected and they will be placed in administrative detention for up to 24 months. It also states that those people “have committed a serious criminal offence” for which the prison sentence goes up to 2 to 5 years. The brochure also points to “the only way to avoid these adverse consequences”: to leave Greece voluntarily and return to their home country. It adds: “The best time to decide this is now, before submitting your asylum application.”

The language used and the threatening message contribute to the harassment and criminalisation of people who have mostly arrived in the country after dangerous journeys, adding a major stress factor in the lives of those already enduring extremely difficult circumstances.

Children refugees

In October, a total of 344 new people on the move were registered at the Hub, of which 121 were children. Out of the total of 764 individuals supported this month, 256 were children –accounting for well over one third of all users of the space. As a result of the job and housing crisis on Kos, most of these children’s parents are unable to enroll them into the Greek education system. Notably, while staying in the CCAC, in addition to enduring poor living conditions, the children have no access to education and restricted access to recreational spaces. This situation significantly limits their overall wellbeing and increases their isolation from Greek society.

Furthermore, a report published by Equal Rights Beyond Borders in the beginning of October discussed the unlawful detention of five unaccompanied minors in the CCAC’s “Safe Area” for several months –the Court has since ordered for their immediate transfer to appropriate accommodation facilities. These five cases highlight broader systemic failures of the reception infrastructure on Kos: despite the vulnerability of these children, the system failed to provide them with suitable shelter on the mainland, thus also failing to protect them from human rights violations. These



cases exemplify the urgent need for solutions to ensure the adequate reception and protection of people on the move on Kos, specially of those belonging to more vulnerable groups.

Lesvos

Mavravouni CCAC living conditions and service gaps

October saw a rise of people on the move arriving in Lesvos. UNHCR stated that, during the first weekend of October alone, around the same number of people arrived (220) as did during the whole month of September (222). In the absence of alternative solutions by the authorities, this means even more people need to live in the available space in the camp, which has a maximum capacity of 3,840. Notably, Fenix Legal Aid, an organisation providing legal aid on Lesvos, received numerous complaints describing that, despite the relatively low number of residents at the CCAC, people are still forced to share housing units at full capacity, thus compromising their privacy.

During the entire month of October, 602 people arrived on the island and applied for international protection. The CCAC housed 712 people in the beginning of October, a number that rose to 1,064 at the end of the month. On October 10th, UNHCR reported that of the 956 people residing in the camp, 25% were recognised refugees. Afghanistan, Sudan, Syria, Sierra Leone and Eritrea are the most common countries of origin at the moment.

A first monitoring update from the Aegean NGO Network (ANN), examined conditions in the EU-funded CCACs on Lesvos, Samos, Chios, Kos and Leros. Based on reports from 11 independent organisations active on the islands, it documents existing systemic gaps. For the Mavravouni CCAC, Boat Refugee Foundation (BRF) reported several cases of people who were denied healthcare under the Hippocrates project in 2024 -due to a lack of interpretation. Fenix Legal Aid found that patients had to bring their own interpreters, which also compromises confidentiality. Similarly to the situation on the other Aegean islands, the Hippocrates project failed to meet Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) recommendations of one doctor and three nurses per 500 residents. Moreover, BRF reported that, in the Mavravouni CCAC, people often complain that the doctor is sometimes absent for several days and that there is limited availability of necessary medicines, particularly for those with chronic conditions. BRF stated that the Hippocrates programme lacks sufficient capacity to effectively take on protection needs. ANN's partners have also received complaints from the Mavravouni CCAC regarding low-quality food and irregular bulk distributions that often go on for an entire day or even several days, with no safe or cool storage available.



Additionally, the protection gaps are likely to get more severe as a result of the shrinking of US funds, which have led the Lesvos UNHCR office to reduce its staff to three people. The impact of this reduction is yet to be experienced and assessed. However, Fenix Legal Aid already warned that reduced UNHCR capacity will seriously affect protection cases and coordination.

Criminalisation of movement

As mentioned in previous BVMN Monthly Reports, the new Greek migration law (Law 5226/2025) issued last month further restricts people's access to asylum in the country, while also increasing the potential for criminalisation of people on the move even more. Now, since September, the sentence for so-called "illegal stay" has become a minimum of two years in prison, and the suspension of such sentence made only possible on the condition of "voluntary departure" to one's home country. This month, members of BVMN were notified about the first arrests on Lesvos and convictions for "illegal stay", following final rejections of asylum claims. Three people had been detained and brought to the criminal court: two citizens of Egypt, one from Iran. The court of Mytilene recognized mitigating circumstances and reduced their sentences to one year. They also ordered a three years' suspension for its execution.

As discussed during a Protection Workgroup hosted by UNHCR on Lesvos, according to the police, after conviction, those from nationalities generally "accepted" by pre-removal detention facilities on the mainland –mainly those from countries in the Maghreb region–, will be transferred for administrative detention to the Amygdaleza detention centre, while awaiting for their return. Meanwhile, people from other nationalities will reportedly be released with a police note providing fourteen days for voluntary return to their home countries, a period after which they can be arrested again.

At this moment, Lesvos has no facility for pre-removal detention, only a police station with a few small cells, which have reportedly held three to nine people over the month of October, according to statistics from the Greek Ministry for Migration and Asylum. However, once the new CCAC in Vastria is finished and operative, the island will have an official detention and pre-deportation centre. With such a facility at hands, the numbers of detainees might rise.

Updates on the Vastria CCAC

The construction of the Vastria CCAC continues to face obstacles and opposition. Earlier in the process, the Ministry of Migration withdrew the Environmental Impact



Study “in an attempt to avoid legal action”, after legal appeals were issued against it. Ever since, the state has failed to allow full public consultation in an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), which, in the words of Community Peacemaker Teams, “was in any case inaccurate and misleading”.

Now, a new Environmental Impact Assessment for Vastria is back on the table: since October 29th, actors from the North Aegean Region, and the municipalities of Mytilene and West Lesbos, as well as other stakeholders and citizens are able to submit their views on the project. The construction is almost completed, but in this new EIA the Ministry of Migration and Asylum is presenting a modified version of the same withdrawn study. Two projects have been added: on the one hand the installation of a 2.5 MW photovoltaic power plant on an area of 26.3 km²; at the other hand the opening and development of a new, 4.6km-long escape road. Part of this new road passes through the Natura 2000 protected area ‘Mount Olympus of Lesbos’ including an important Bird Area and Wildlife Refuge. Works to widen the road have already started, meaning clearance of trees. According to CPT, the problematic aspects of the previous study remain regarding water supply requirements, liquid waste processing, and fire safety measures, lacking focus on prevention. In addition, the assessment of the project’s social impacts is completely absent.

Meanwhile, racist political discourse continues to surround the construction of the facility: Panagiotis Paraskevaïdis, a Member of Parliament for Lesbos, belonging to the party PASOK-KINAL, addressed the government about his concerns on the opening and the government’s policy on migration on the islands of the Eastern Aegean. “They made a Muslim village, with thousands of residents and hundreds of police inside,” he said, adding that such decisions “exceed the limits of naivety”. He also claimed that “defense and development go together. We cannot talk about tourism and investment, and at the same time allow decisions that cause insecurity to the residents and damage the image of our islands.”



Removal Center report addresses certain violations but ignores other claims



Çatalca Removal Center image from Google maps as shared on Google Maps Comment feature (cropped).

Source: [Google](#)

Following the suicide of an Afghan woman at the Çatalca Removal Center (GGM) in early August 2025, a delegation from the human rights organisation MAZLUMDER managed to conduct a visit to the women-only facility on the western outskirts of Istanbul. The delegation observed the physical conditions at the center and interviewed detainees and administrators.

As far as BVMN is aware, this is the first visit to any of Turkey's 30+ GGMs conducted by an independent NGO or delegation in many years, and certainly the first to Çatalca. While the Directorate General of Migration Management has continued to issue statements speaking of the transparency and adherence to human rights in its 'migration management' system, visits to GGMs have been de facto banned, with access confined only to TIHEK (Turkish Human Rights and Equality Institute), whose purported independence has been widely brought into question. Notably, TIHEK also conducted an unannounced visit to Çatalca GGM in October, from which a report should be published.

The MAZLUMDER delegation, consisting of five lawyers and one teacher, visited the Çatalca GGM on August 29th. They stated that: "the physical conditions within the center were observed and interviews were conducted with foreign residents. Information was also obtained from the administrators on duty, and documents pertaining to the center's operations were reviewed. All personal and common areas were visited." The report does not state the number of residents they spoke to or any further details of the participants such as nationality or age.



The MAZLUMDER report is available in Turkish [here](#), and summarised in this [Karar article](#) by journalist Feyza Nur Çalikoğlu. Notably, just days after the publication of this article, it was announced that Çalikoğlu was facing a '[disinformation case](#)' brought by the Interior Ministry over allegedly "provocative and one-sided" reporting with regard to [previous alleged incidents of torture and inhuman treatment](#) at Çatalca GGM.

Alleged previous [rights violations at Çatalca](#) have included: arbitrary detention without clear legal basis; use of force by riot police; verbal and physical abuse; deprivation of food, bedding, and hygiene; coerced signing of deportation papers; restriction of communication; denial of access to legal support; and insufficient medical care. Claims of the use of [punitive "cold/quiet rooms"](#) have also been associated with the GGM but at times in reports that indicate a wider practice and with more explicit mention of other GGMs, such as Gaziantep, or Temporary Accommodation Centres (GBM) such as Harran in Urfa. Below is a summary of some of the violations described in the report by MAZLUMDER:

Insufficient space and capacity issues

Even though the center has an official capacity of 380, it was reported that a total of 406 people were staying at the time of the visit – 371 women and 35 children. It was noted that space per person in the wards is insufficient and there are not enough lockers for personal belongings. Moreover, the water in the toilets and bathrooms was described to frequently malfunction, repairs are delayed, and ventilation and natural light inadequate. Moreover, the cafeteria is apparently too small for the number of detainees, thus requiring meals to be taken in smaller groups. The space at the facility's garden is also reportedly insufficient, as is the children's playground.

Serious gaps in health services

The report also noted that there was only one doctor and one infirmary for 406 people, leading to days of delays in appointments. The infirmary lacked sufficient medical equipment and was observed to be small and stuffy. Those detained are reportedly not subjected to detailed medical examinations, and requests for hospital referrals are often unsuccessful. Furthermore, psychological support opportunities were described as limited and there were no child psychologists or pedagogues on-site.

Insufficient support for children

Of the 35 children housed at the GGM at the time of the visit, two have special needs. It was noted that the children's room does not meet the current needs and that there is



no specialized support for children with special needs. While a room with relatively better conditions was allocated for mothers with children and newborns are reportedly provided with formula and diapers, the report emphasizes that this assistance should be made available to all in line with the principle of the best interests of the child.

Violations of women's privacy

Although women are provided with basic hygiene supplies, the importance of providing them regularly and adequately was emphasized. It was noted that male security personnel are free to roam the women's floors, creating privacy concerns. The report also described that there are no social and cultural activities to support the psychosocial development and wellbeing of the women.

Security and rights violations

The report states that while an investigation was launched into the recent suicide incident, no personnel were suspended, thus casting a shadow over the effectiveness of such investigation.

Moreover, it was noted that sound insulation in lawyer-client meeting rooms was inadequate, that so-called "Foreign Terrorist Fighter" (YTS) status was often not based on concrete evidence, and that these individuals were deprived of other basic rights. AIDA's [2024 Country Report](#) on Turkey notes that people declared YTS can be deprived of their right to temporary protection, 'even where criminal proceedings have not led to a conviction.' The MAZLUMDER report also described that complaint boxes and electronic application devices do not provide confidentiality because they are under the supervision of security guards.

Suggestions

The report concludes by suggesting that GGM management should be more transparent, staff should receive human rights training, and physical and social conditions should be improved. It also advocated for better play and development areas for children, increasing psychological support services, and protecting women's privacy.

The MAZLUMDER report contributes to a growing body of claims about the inhuman conditions of Turkey's GGMs, though it is unfortunate that the report itself does not attempt to reference many of the past rights violation claims that have been specifically associated with the Çatalca GGM, of which MAZLUMDER has been among the most vocal critics in recent years.



No justice for Ahmed Haskiro



Ahmed Haskiro, the 11-year-old Syrian child who was killed at the Adana textile workshop where he was employed.

Source: [Bianet](#)

The Adana 13th Criminal Court of First Instance announced its verdict in the case of 11-year-old Syrian Ahmed Haskiro's death in June 2024, at the Dağ Tekstil workshop where he was employed.

Ahmed lost his life on June 11th, 2024, when he got stuck between an elevator and a wall in the workshop. The workshop owners initially claimed that Ahmet was "a child who came to visit", before it emerged that he worked with his mother in the workshop. After the accident, the prosecutor's office charged only the building manager Ömer Ince and the elevator maintenance company official Recep Karayi Öit with charges of "causing death by negligence". The actual bosses of Dağ Tekstil were only called to court as witnesses. Furthermore, the responsibilities of Dağ Tekstil's owners in the production process were not raised during the hearings.

In a result that representatives of the Birtek-Sen union described as "rewards over punishments", Ince was sentenced to one year, twelve months and five days and Öit to one year and eight months in prison. However, it was decided to postpone the application of the sentences, effectively meaning that neither defendant would go to prison. The case is indicative of the impunity surrounding the stark increase in child labour and workplace murders in which migrant and refugees are generally also disproportionately represented.



Violence against people on the move in Northern France, carried out as a direct consequence of the policies aimed at extending the Franco-British border across the region, continued unabated throughout October. The month was marked by discriminatory police harassment at public transport hubs, an escalation in large-scale police operations, and the deliberate modification of landscapes to render them uninhabitable.

Criminalisation of mobility in Calais

In Calais, informal living sites continue to be evicted every 48 hours. Police regularly clear these areas, seizing essential belongings such as tents and sleeping bags. This practice persisted systematically throughout October and was accompanied by another form of harassment that reveals how deeply the violence of the border regime is embedded in the daily lives of people on the move: discriminatory checks and arrests at the Calais bus station.

Even though buses in Calais are free of charge, they are far from accessible for people on the move. The bus and train stations, essential points of mobility for anyone in the city, have effectively become extensions of the border. Police patrols are constant; identity checks, searches, and harassment are commonplace, making access to basic public services challenging and dangerous.

These practices intensify whenever weather conditions make crossings more likely. During such “weather windows,” when the Channel is calmer, the French authorities respond with heightened policing. The presence of people carrying life jackets or large bags is often treated as a form of suspicion in itself, a visible marker of intent to move that invites hostile intervention.

On October 7th, for example, around thirty people, most carrying life jackets, gathered at a bus stop in Calais with the intention to travel towards Boulogne-sur-Mer, a common departure area for small boat crossings. Before the bus arrived, approximately twenty police officers surrounded the group, blocking the exits and ordering everyone to line up. Officers proceeded to carry out ID checks, body searches, and searches of personal belongings. Around a dozen people were arrested, seemingly at random, while others were left shaken, humiliated, and fearful of using public transport again. Couples were separated, leaving people understandably distraught, with no idea where their partners were being taken or why.



This instance of police harassment exposes how nationality dictates access to the right to mobility. Through discriminatory profiling, authorities decide whose movement is legitimate, and whose is not. For people on the move, this decision means further violence and challenges in daily life. Simply waiting for a bus, holding a travel bag, or standing in a public space has become grounds for police intervention. What is presented as “border management” is, in practice, an everyday regime of intimidation and control, one that turns ordinary public infrastructure into tools of exclusion.

Increase in evictions in Dunkirk

This month, Human Rights Observers (HRO)’s teams witnessed a sharp rise in police activity in the Dunkirk area, with a significant surge in evictions of informal living sites. In total, eight large-scale police operations were recorded in October, a fourfold increase from the two operations documented in September. These included six separate eviction operations affecting over 12 informal living sites, as well as three complete destructions of informal shops established by residents to provide food and other essential items.

Each operation involved the mobilisation of extensive state resources. Large convoys, often up to 30 vehicles and hundreds of officers from the national police, border police, and CRS (France’s militarised riot control unit), arrived early in the morning without prior warning. Officers, dressed in full riot gear and armed with tear gas launchers, riot guns, firearms, and batons, combed through the living sites, expelling inhabitants and carrying out seemingly arbitrary arrests. People were left with no time to gather or protect their belongings before they were seized or destroyed by the state-sanctioned cleaning teams. In October alone, HRO observed at least 548 people evicted, including a minimum of 28 babies and children, and recorded at least six arrests, with many more individuals escorted away by police. These figures should, however, be taken as an extreme baseline due to the systematic obstructions put in place to hinder observation.

The evictions deprive people of their most essential belongings: tents, sleeping bags, and blankets that provide vital protection as temperatures drop heading into winter. HRO also documented the confiscation of personal items such as mobile phones, chargers, clothing, mattresses, cables, gas cookers, and even children’s pushchairs. In total, HRO observed the removal of 16 digger baskets and four large skips filled with seized property, representing a total volume of approximately 136 m³ of confiscated belongings in October alone. Despite a verbal agreement with the subprefecture not



to confiscate blankets, HRO observed the continued and systematic seizure of these items during evictions. When questioned on this, police officers repeatedly declined to justify their actions.

This pattern reflects a broader practice of avoidance of accountability: police routinely establish large perimeters to obscure operations, refuse to answer questions, and hinder independent observation. During every eviction in Dunkirk throughout the month of October, HRO teams were escorted off-site by police to prevent monitoring of the evictions, at times with physical aggression. In one instance, during a police operation on October 8th, police forcibly seized the mobile phone from a member of the team and deleted footage documenting the eviction. This systematic obstruction of oversight serves to conceal the violence inflicted on people on the move and affirm the impunity of law enforcement.

In addition to the eviction operations, HRO documented two further large-scale police actions whose objectives remain unclear. These too mobilised large convoys that searched through living sites, accompanied by sniffer dogs and detection equipment. Such constant policing adds to the climate of insecurity and uncertainty that defines daily life in Dunkirk's informal settlements. These operations, even when not resulting in direct eviction, represent a form of psychological violence, depriving residents of rest and perpetuating a permanent sense of threat.

The eviction and closure of the living site "Total"

On October 28th, a major operation took place at the informal living site known as "Total", where an estimated 600 people were living. Beginning early in the morning, police cleared the entire area, preventing inhabitants from retrieving their belongings, which were subsequently removed or destroyed. Over the following week, police maintained a 24-hour presence, supported by large telescopic floodlights illuminating the site throughout the night. Shortly after the eviction, construction began on a four-metre-high concrete wall along the edge of the site, a project reportedly costing around €800,000, according to Mobile Refugee Support. The wall prevents people from returning to the site and exemplifies the broader strategy of using environmental modification as a form of control, turning once-inhabited spaces into inhospitable, hostile landscapes. It stands as a stark symbol of the violence of the state's "zero point of fixation" policy, which increasingly relies on physical barriers to exclude and invisibilise the situation of people on the move, with walls, fences and barbed wire spreading across northern France to externalise the border and push people further and further away from the coast.



Through actions like this one, or the ones described in the sections above, the state continues to violate the fundamental rights of people on the move, including rights to shelter and freedom of movement. The French state, with the aid of vast British investment, criminalises the very existence of people on the move in the pursuit of an ever more punitive and exclusionary border regime. This persistent neglect of fundamental rights, manifested by the choice of violent evictions over the provision of stable accommodation and legal asylum routes, underscores the urgent need for accountability and policy change to prevent further border violence.



**Border Violence
Monitoring Network**

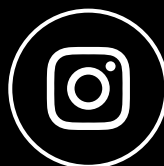
Network structure and contact

BVMN acts as an alliance of organisations in the Balkans, Greece, Turkey, France and Poland., 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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