

GREECE REVIEW

I. Justice system

B. Quality of justice

Other

Reception and collective expulsion of asylum seekers: Information received concerning the extrajudicial, arbitrary and collective expulsion of asylum seekers from Greece, prompted UN Special Procedures mandate holders¹ to issue a communication to Greece in August 2023 ([AL GRC 2/2023](#)). On 23 August, the mandate holders urged Greece to take steps to ensure a transparent and impartial investigation into allegations of violations of the principles of non-refoulement and non-discrimination and of the right to life involving Greek law enforcement personnel, including the Hellenic Coast Guard, and border violence. Particular concern was also expressed at by their failure to provide prompt and effective assistance to migrants in distress and ensure safe disembarkation and adequate reception of migrants ([Greece: UN experts call for safe, impartial border policies and practices | OHCHR](#)). In a separate communication by UN Special Procedures mandate holders², concern was raised at information about the halt of food provision to migrants, asylum seekers and refugees in the Mavrovouni Closed Controlled Access Centre (C.C.A.C.) on the island of Lesbos in Greece ([UA GRC 1/2023](#)).

C. Efficiency of the justice system

Other

Shipwreck in the Mediterranean Sea: Information received about 82 persons on the move and probably up to 600 persons reportedly disappeared following the sinking of the fishing boat “Adriana” off the Greek coast on 14 June 2023, prompted UN Special Procedures mandate holders³ to issue a communication to Greece in August 2023 ([AL GRC 3/2023](#)). The mandate holders expressed serious concern at reports of failure to assist and/or engage in coordinated emergency assistance for people in distress at sea by Greek authorities and underscored that State authorities have an obligation under international human rights law to prevent violations of the right to life and to conduct prompt, effective, thorough, independent and impartial, and transparent investigations into potentially unlawful deaths and disappearances. On 16 June, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights spoke out on the tragedy and underscored the

¹ Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent; Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants and Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance

² Special Rapporteur on the right to food; Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context and Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants

³ Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances; Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants; Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and Working Group on discrimination against women and girls.

need to investigate people smugglers and human traffickers and ensure they are brought to justice. ([Loss of life in Mediterranean “horrific tragedy” – Türk | OHCHR](#)).

IV. Other institutional issues related to checks and balances

D. The enabling framework for civil society

Rules and practices having an impact on the effective operation and safety of civil society organisations and human rights defenders.

On 13 January 2023, the UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR) issued a statement on the trial of 24 human rights defenders charged over their role in helping to rescue migrants in distress at sea began in Lesvos in Greece. Deep concern was expressed about those trials because they criminalize life-saving work and set a dangerous precedent. OHCHR emphasized that there has already been a chilling effect, with human rights defenders and humanitarian organisations forced to halt their human rights work in Greece and other EU countries and reiterated its call for charges against the 24 to be dismissed ([Trial of human rights defenders in Greece for helping migrants | OHCHR](#)).