

MONTHLY REPORT | MAY 2024

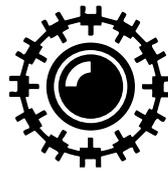
Illegal pushbacks and border violence reports



**Border Violence
Monitoring Network**

MONTHLY REPORT | MAY 2024

Illegal pushbacks and border violence reports



**Border Violence
Monitoring Network**



Push-Back Alarm Austria
+43 1345 1444





Table of contents

Executive Summary	4
Methodology and Terminology	6
UPDATE ON THE SITUATION	7
Serbia	8
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Population statistics across state camps• Updates from Belgrade• Continued policing of the Serbian–Hungarian border• Violent pushbacks at the Romanian and Bulgarian borders• Frontex operational activities increased within Serbian territory	
Bulgaria	12
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fortification of EU’s external border with Turkey continues	
Greece	13
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Court throws out criminal case against 9 Egyptian survivors of the Pylos shipwreck• Continued detention of undocumented people and asylum seekers in inhumane conditions• Situation in the Lesvos CCAC• Living conditions in the Samos CCAC: lack of shade and water and food challenges• Aegean Sea: numbers of rescues, arrivals and pushbacks in May 2024	
Turkey	19
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Iraqi LGBTQ+ Advocate’s Deportation• Interrogation for signing a collective petition: “Who wrote the complaint, who helped?”• Migration Commission Report: Violations in Çanakkale Removal Centre• Uzbekistan nationals arbitrarily detained in Removal Center• Summary of Goc Idaresi (Presidency of Migration Management) statistics	
France	22
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Update on the UK–Rwanda Deal	
Deaths and Disappearances	23
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deadly shipwrecks in the Aegean• Man found dead near Dunkirk	



Executive summary

In May, the Border Violence Monitoring Network (BVMN) shared 5 testimonies of pushbacks impacting at least 68 people on the move (POM) across the Balkans and Greece. This report gathers updates from May and brings together first-hand testimonies from a range of countries in the region to look at the way European Union states and other actors are affecting systemic violence towards people crossing borders.

This month, we report on the decreasing numbers of POM staying and transiting through Serbia, after the closure of several government-run Reception Centers and the increased policing of its northern borders since the end of last year. Moreover, the refusal to allow new registrations in the nearly empty Obrenovac Asylum Centre – the only one in Belgrade – continues to hinder the access of many to the asylum procedure. Very often, this also results in people having to sleep rough in the city or find their own expensive transportation to isolated camps in the south of the country. Despite the lowering numbers of people, or most likely as another cause for them, Serbian authorities continue to carry out violent pushbacks to Bulgaria, as described in a testimony shared by BVMN this month. As for Bulgaria, the low occupancy of the camps and similar massive decrease in arrivals have not influenced the authorities' plans for further securitisation of the country's border with Turkey either, a scenario of well-documented human rights violations for a long time.

In May, the dropping of all charges against the 9 Egyptian survivors of the Pylos shipwreck, nearly a year of pre-trial detention later, reminds us of the relentless criminalisation of POM in many European countries. This case is another example of how the judicial system is often used to punish people for seeking safety, in processes characterised by a lack of safeguards and that are likely to lead to further traumatising of survivors. Meanwhile, POM continue to be detained and accommodated in inhumane conditions in many parts of Greece. Updates on the situation in the Closed-Controlled Access Centers in Lesbos and Samos show how the rising temperatures have not been met with any measures from the authorities to adequate the facilities, where the lack of shade, proper shelter and enough food and water mark the lives of the residents of the camps.

In Turkey, the further vulnerability experienced by LGBTQ asylum-seekers and refugees is made more evident this month by the detention and deportation order for LGBTQ advocate Aws Jubeir, who's currently risking the forced return to Iraq, where his public activism places him at a greater danger. The police raids against POM in Turkish cities have also expanded recently with the growth of the Mobile Migration Points, which have contributed to the apprehension of 91,255 people in the first 5 months of 2024. Moreover, some of the people who



Executive summary

participated in the collective petition denouncing the conditions at the Antalya Removal Center have now been transferred and interrogated by the police about this action.

Lastly, we regret to report, once again, on several deaths and disappearances resulting from the racist migration policies of the EU which have cost their lives to at least 6 people in the Aegean and 1 in Northern France this month.



General

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 and Turkey including Rigardu, Are You Syrious, Mobile Info Team, PIC, InfoKolpa, Collective Aid, Blindspots, Pushback Alarmphone Austria and I Have Rights, Center for Legal Aid and Mission Wings

UPDATE ON THE SITUATION



**Border Violence
Monitoring Network**



Population statistics across state camps

On the 14th of this month Nataša Sranisavljević, Commissioner of the Serbian Commissariat for Refugees and Migration (SCRM) published some statistics that account for the reduced numbers of people currently migrating through Serbia. According to this data, the number of people registered at government-run reception and asylum centres has decreased by 73%, compared to the last year – this is 6,705 in the first 5 months of 2024, to 24,640 in the same period of 2023. They also stated that there were 503 people staying across the sixteen camps run by SCRM in the country, as of May 14th.

It is important to highlight, however, that five out of the sixteen facilities, those located at traditional migratory exit points by the borders with Hungary and Croatia, remain closed indefinitely since the end of 2023. Moreover, the only asylum centre (AC) in Belgrade (Obrenovac AC) continues to refuse to register new arrivals, thus further restricting people's access to the asylum system. Sranisavljević claims that the reason for this fall in numbers is due to:

“Newly established cooperation between the Turkish and Greek authorities in the field of preventing irregular migration on the Aegean Sea and on the land route”

The statistics published by the SCRM commissioner corroborate the observations of grassroots and non-governmental organisations active across Serbia. The Tutin and Sjenica AC's on the Montenegrin border – currently the most active camps in the country – show populations far below official capacity, and the organisation Asylum Protection Centre Serbia (APC) reported only 9 minors were staying within the 120 capacity Šid Reception and Transit Centre for unaccompanied minors as of May 11th.

Updates from Belgrade

A reduction in the visible transit population in the capital has also been observed by solidarity organisations working in Belgrade. The Serbian NGO InfoPark reports 15–25 people visit their centre – adjacent to Belgrade central bus station – daily. Due to the constant refusal of new registrations at the Obrenovac AC in Belgrade, people transiting through the city are usually forced to sleep in abandoned structures and other areas around Belgrade before they are evicted by the police.



Drops of emergency items in places where people had been sleeping rough outside of the Obrenovac AC, due to refused registration. ©Collective Aid

Teams of BVMN-member organisation Collective Aid working in the area have been told that those who seek registration in the Obrenovac facility are instructed to go to the camps of Tutin and Sjenica - over 300 km south - instead, without any assistance or advice on how to get there. The only feasible means of transportation from Belgrade to these centres for people on the move are hugely expensive taxis - reportedly charging around 300 euros per person - or public buses. However, as outlined in the [BVMN April Monthly Report](#) - people on the move often report instances of racial profiling by bus companies and the subsequent denial of access to these services based on their skin colour.

At the moment, those travelling through Belgrade usually make their way to Bosnia's geographically dangerous borders, marked by the Drina river and the mountains of the Tara national park. Despite the increased risks posed by this terrain, the lack of safe routes and the effective closure of the northern border with Hungary through maintained high police presence, has turned this into the preferred route for most in 2024.



Continued policing of the Serbian–Hungarian border

On May 22nd, members of a solidarity group working in Northern Serbia responded to an emergency call from a group of people on the move who had no water and were staying in the forest close to the border with Hungary. Upon arrival at the location, the team was intercepted and physically assaulted by Serbian border police. They were then escorted to the police station for questioning. This was the first time in months that members of this organisation had been active in this area close to the border and the response from the border police was much more intense than it had been in the recent past.

The continued and intensified policing of EU's external borders with Serbia aligns with pledges made in the context of the EU Migration Pact. The recently approved reform includes plans to further the cooperation with countries of origin and transit – such as those in the Balkans –, with the goal of limiting the arrivals of people on the move and combating people smuggling networks. EU's direct involvement in the securitisation of these borders is also reflected in the active presence of German and Italian Frontex vehicles in northern Serbia in the month of May.

Violent pushbacks at the Romanian and Bulgarian borders

Despite the decrease in the number of people on the move travelling through Serbia, many are still attempting the mountainous border crossing from Bulgaria by foot – and many are still illegally and violently pushed back by Serbian authorities. A [BVMN testimony](#) from May 8th outlines some of these violent practices used during a pushback near the Serbian border town of Dimitrovgrad. According to this testimony, Serbian officers inflicted beatings with batons and kicks to the face upon a group of three young men, and stole and broke their phones. Then, they forced them in the boot of a police car taking them back to the border where they were made to run back to Bulgarian soil.

Similar practices have been reported during pushbacks at the Serbian–Romanian border. This month, Serbian organisation InfoPark shared information about a violent pushback from Romania involving a man from Kazakhstan who described being subject to physical violence by Romanian police before being forced back to Serbia. Transit across the Serbian–Romanian border had largely stopped over the past few months, but might be [increasing](#) again as a result of the intense policing of the Hungarian border.



Numerous testimonies and further ample evidence published over the past few years attest to the systematic character of these illegal practices, which are regularly supported by the EU's selective blind eye accompanying funding packages for the improvement of "migration management".

Frontex operational activities increased within Serbian territory

At the end of May, the EU and Serbia signed an agreement which extends Frontex's activities throughout the territory of Serbia. The previous agreement limited the operations of the EU Agency to the EU's external borders (with Hungary, Croatia, Bulgaria and Romania) where Italian and German Frontex vehicles are frequently seen. It is likely that Frontex officers will now become operational on Serbia's borders with Bosnia, North Macedonia, and Montenegro in response to shifting migration patterns outlined in the December/January report - as well as a documented violent collective expulsion from Serbia to North Macedonia in February.



Fortification of EU's external border with Turkey continues

On May 9th, Bulgaria's police chief Anton Zlatonov announced that more police personnel will be deployed to the country's border with Turkey, together with an additional 40 vehicles. The increased personnel and equipment follows a line of expanding securitisation of Bulgaria's borders in the context of the country's partial accession to the Schengen zone and the associated Cooperation Framework. As a consequence of this agreement, the number of Frontex officers in the country has recently tripled, with 500 - 600 officers operating on this border since March. These changes come at a time of decreased transit of people on the move in the country and lowering populations within government-run accommodations. This month, caretaker Minister of Interior Kalin Stoyanov stated that there had been 12,000 attempts at 'illegal entry' into Bulgaria in 2024 as of May 16th, compared to the 42,000 during the same period of 2023. He also shared that the camps across Bulgaria were currently at 25% capacity.



Court throws out criminal case against 9 Egyptian survivors of the Pylos shipwreck

After nearly a year of detention on charges of causing the shipwreck of the *Adriana* at Pylos in June 2023, in which an estimated 600 people died, all charges against the 9 defendants were dropped on May 21st 2024.

The court of Kalamata refused to try the case, citing that Greece has no jurisdiction over international waters. It also found the defendants - all male Egyptian nationals - innocent of other charges, including smuggling and illegal entry into Greece. BVMN has documented testimonies in which people on the move have been pressured into 'admitting' guilt to the crime of facilitating illegal entry, demonstrating the widespread nature of the practice.

The 9 defendants have consistently declared that they were passengers on the *Adriana* and not involved in taking any payments for the transport of other people, nor planning the journey.

Evidence against the 9 defendants was labelled "incomplete and questionable" by Human Rights Watch, and both Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have stated that: "The disparities between survivors' accounts of the Pylos shipwreck and the authorities' version of the events are extremely concerning."

Many survivors believed that although the ship was in distress, it was the belated and ill-planned towing operation by the Hellenic Coast Guard which was the immediate cause of its capsizing. Witnesses reported that the *Adriana* had repeatedly asked for help from the Hellenic Coast Guard.

The Hellenic Coast Guard has consistently denied dereliction of duty, and has rather claimed that the 'captain' of the *Adriana* refused offers of assistance. Testimonies from survivors have contested the statements of the Greek authorities, as have the analysis from legal and maritime experts as well as testimony from witnesses on nearby civilian vessels.

In an appalling additional traumatising and injustice, many survivors were placed in detention centres upon arrival in Greece (where many remain, nearly a year later). Conditions in the detention facilities are reportedly not only inadequate, but also inhumane. Many are being held in Corinth Pre-Removal Detention Centre, on which BVMN has repeatedly reported, with regard to the horrific conditions.



Continued detention of undocumented people and asylum seekers in inhumane conditions

During the last month, BVMN's field teams in Greece have continued to document incidents of violence and inhumane treatment of people detained in Greek police stations and pre-removal facilities. Respondents reported being deprived of the possibility of freely communicating with anyone outside of the facility during the time of detention, including their lawyers and families. Some interviewees also described being forced to sleep on the floor and obliged to share overcrowded spaces with people that had various pending criminal charges.

Administrative detention in police stations continues to be a widespread and largely unmonitored practice in Greece. As stated by the CoE's Committee on the Prevention of Torture (CPT), a criminal suspect may, in principle, remain in the custody of a law enforcement agency for a maximum of six days following arrest. Even the Greek domestic law prohibits the detention of people in police stations, except for the time necessary for their transfer to prison or when their immediate transfer to a prison is not possible. According to a report of the CPT, detention in all contexts, including administrative detention, should last no longer than 6 days. Yet, BVMN's evidence shows that the detention period of many people on the move in police stations has often been extended for months.



Facilities at the Amygdaleza Pre-Removal Detention Center (May 2024).

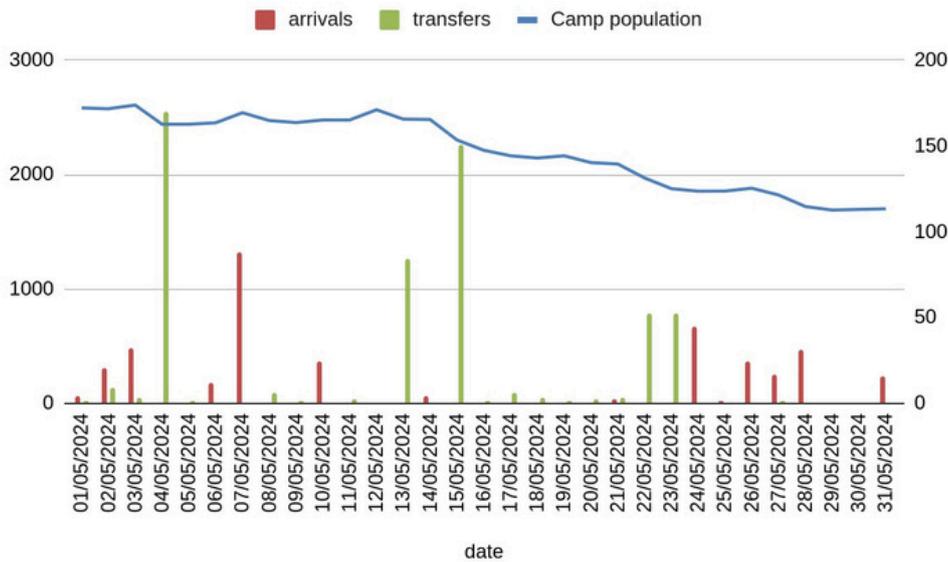


Police at the Corinth Pre-Removal Detention Center.



Moreover, according to the Greek Asylum Code, detention orders must be judicially reviewed by administrative courts (“ex officio reviews”) and, in any case, the concerned detainee can raise objections against the order. A [recent report from Refugee Support Aegean](#) identifies how only 20 % of the detention orders in 2023 were challenged through objections in administrative courts, and roughly half of them were granted. The report also shows that, in cases where the judges automatically reviewed the detention orders, without receiving further objections, they only found 0.5 % of the decisions to be unlawful. The inexistence of effective automatic review of the decisions concerning detention and prolongation of detention additionally aggravates the conditions of absence of free legal assistance. The same report also mentions how police authorities systematically circumvent Greece’s international obligations by indiscriminately issuing deportation orders against asylum seekers, thereby infringing upon their right to stay on the Greek territory.

Situation in the Levos CCAC



During the month of May, 323 people were registered in Lesvos and 549 were transferred outside of the island. Although the number of arrivals was very similar to the one in [April](#), the amount of transfers was much higher - compared to the 67 people from last month. Moreover, since March, we have been able to observe a big decrease in the number of people arriving in Lesvos, while registrations in other smaller islands in the Aegean have increased. The amount of illegal pushbacks by the authorities seems to not have changed but there are currently many more people arriving in Crete, a much longer and dangerous route that has become the most transited one over the last few months.



On May 31st there were 1697 people in the Closed Controlled Access Centre (CCAC) on the island. Even though this number is rather small, the camp policies continue to prioritise the transfers of people outside of the island, as well as the denial of any kind of support to those receiving a positive decision and those who received two rejections and have no open case - including food and water. Moreover, the camp authorities continue to kick people out of the facilities as soon as they get their travel documents. Even though the CCAC authorities are not able to legally force people to transfer against their will, residents of the camp report receiving threats regarding the refusal of support or the potential consequences on their asylum claim, if they don't transfer.



Picture taken by an anonymous resident in the camp (30/05/2024)

In addition, the situation in the camp regarding health and general wellbeing continues to deteriorate. According to a resident of the camp, "for months, many people in the camp have been struggling with scabies - an infectious skin disease. About 50-70% of the people in camp have scabies; a direct result of overcrowding and lack of sanitation."

With the arrival of the summer, temperatures inside of the rubhall units that constitute the only shelter for most of the current residents of the camp often exceed 35 degrees. So far, there have been no actions taken by the camp management to provide ways

to cool down the tents, nor to create any shaded areas in a facility that currently locks them. Moreover, there is no access to fridges, and people with chronic diseases, such as diabetes, are not able to store their essential medication in a cool place.



Mavrovouni CCAC in Lesvos. Picture from an anonymous camp resident (30/05/2024)

"In the camp, it is not possible to cook your own food . This is even prohibited. Cookers and gas stoves are not allowed. In addition, there are no refrigerators available. This means that



people in camp, especially on hot summer days can not keep cool their tents , cannot keep their food and drinks cool, resulting in spoilage. In addition, not being able to choose and prepare your own food has a great impact on the sense of humanity."

(Resident of the camp)

Living conditions in the Samos CCAC

Similar issues have been reported in the Samos CCAC, as I Have Rights (IHR) continued to receive concerning reports regarding living conditions in the facility. This month, the temperature reached 33°C, which exacerbated issues with access to water and shade. Food provision also continued to be a problem in May.

Moreover, as reported by an IHR client, single men and families remain accommodated together in the CCAC. The lack of locks in the containers between the different rooms has also led to clients describing feeling a lack of privacy and security.

Lack of shade and water

While temperatures soared in May, for a third year CCAC authorities failed to make shade in the facility and running water was only accessible for one hour two times a day. IHR's clients reported having access to water once in the morning, at around 8-9am, and a second and last time in the evening between 6 and 9 pm. This means that water was not available during the hottest hours of the day. Drinking water was also insufficient, with only one 1,5L bottle of water provided per CCAC resident per day. In order to receive drinking water people must (once again) physically present themselves to receive water. This means that people continue to not be able to ask someone else to collect their food (see below) and water if they are outside of the CCAC.

New food challenges

IHR's clients reported having to stand in line twice a day, in the sun, for about 40 minutes each time to receive food. They also need to present their ID card or police note to collect it and cannot ask another person to take it for them. This prevents residents from exiting the camp during the day if they want to receive food.



Aegean Sea: numbers of rescues, arrivals and pushbacks in May 2024

According to the data and statistics released by the Turkish Coast Guard (TCG) in May, the number of people rescued by the TCG this month is 1947. Amongst them, 1181 had been pushed back by Greek authorities. Moreover, the TCG shared that they apprehended 1820 people before they left the land this month, and that 3170 people arrived and were registered on the Greek islands.

All of these figures show an important increase compared to the previous month, when the TCG reportedly rescued 1384 individuals, 769 of whom had been pushed back by the Greek Coast Guard. By the end of April, the Turkish authorities claimed to have stopped 1812 people before they left the land, and 1897 people were registered on Greek islands. Compared to May last year, we have seen a decrease in the number of reported pushbacks (from 1770) and apprehensions (from 1296), though the number of arrivals and registrations on Greek islands has quadrupled – 831 to 3170. The number of rescues claimed by the TCG remains similar (1875 in May 2023 to 1947 this month). The numbers of people who arrived and registered in the Greek islands have almost quadrupled year-on-year.

One possible explanation for the increase in arrivals this month are the circumstances around the crossings. On one hand, the improvement of weather conditions is likely to have played an important role. On the other hand, the massive police operations carried out by Turkish authorities earlier this year might have decreased.



Iraqi LGBTQ+ Advocate's Deportation

Aws Jubeir, Iraqi refugee, human rights activist and the director of Aman Project, known for his work with the LGBTQ community, is facing imminent deportation from Turkey. Recently, Turkey has been deporting thousands of Iraqi citizens, as Iraq is no longer considered a country at war. Jubeir, who has resided in Turkey for 13 years, received notice earlier in May that the Ankara immigration office rejected his appeal.

Jubeir's situation is particularly precarious, given the recent passage of an anti-LGBTQ law in Iraq in May 2024. This law imposes severe penalties, including up to seven years in prison, on organisations and activists who support the LGBTQ community. Jubeir's outspoken and public advocacy for LGBTQ and refugee rights, which has received significant media attention in Turkey, Iraq, and internationally, places him at higher risk if forced to return to Iraq.

In recent months, violence against LGBTQ individuals in Iraq has also escalated. The murder of Noor BM, a prominent Iraqi blogger, has intensified fears among LGBTQ activists. Noor, a social media influencer, was killed in a coordinated attack in Baghdad, highlighting the dangerous environment for LGBTQ individuals in Iraq. "If I am deported, I could meet the same fate because of the same illegal groups" Jubeir commented.

The Turkish authorities have given Jubeir two options: to appeal the decision in court within 30 days or return to Iraq in 15 days. He has secured legal representation to begin the appeal process, but the associated costs are high. Legal fees alone are estimated at \$2000 USD, not including expenses for document translations, notarizations, court fees, and transportation.



Aws Jubeir ©chuffed.org

A sponsor group in Canada is actively working to bring Jubeir to Canada as a refugee, but immediate financial support is critical to ensure his safety. On the other hand, Jubeir's case highlights Turkey's poor record on LGBTQ rights, the uncertainty of its refugee policies, and how dangerous it is for people who are looking for a safe place in many respects.



Interrogation for signing a collective petition: "Who wrote the complaint, who helped?"

As described in BVMN's April Monthly Report, last month, 52 people staying in the Antalya Removal Centre reported on the inhumane conditions and mistreatment in the centre with a collectively signed petition. In the following weeks, 14 people staying in the facility were transferred to another removal centre located in Van province where they were interrogated by the police about their petition. Two lawyers from the Van Bar Association revealed the situation and shared it with the media. The Equality Monitoring Centre and Migration Research Association called on the relevant institutions to take action to investigate what happened, while the Migrant Union stood by the people who were detained in removal centres and demanded the closure of these, which have effectively become torture centres.

Migration Commission Report: Violations in Çanakkale Removal Centre

Turkish Medical Association Çanakkale Branch, Human Rights Association (IHD), Education and Science Workers' Union (Eğitim-Sen) and Health and Social Service Workers' Union (SES) Çanakkale branches published the "March 2023–March 2024 Migrant Commission Observation Report" on Ayvacık Removal Centre. The report includes various allegations such as one woman's statement that her husband was subjected to sexual assault, and another woman's statement that she was kept under unhealthy conditions and forced to stay with male residents. The report describes multiple violations, including hate speech by removal centre staff, deficiencies in health services and malnutrition. Among the recommendations of the Commission is the establishment of independent supervision of the centres.

There are currently 28 removal centres in Turkey, operating in 24 different cities across the country. The EU works in close collaboration with the Presidency of Migration Management of Turkey on detention, with the stated objectives of enhancing the capacity of the facilities and promoting alternatives to administrative detention, as well as access to basic services. However, removal centres in Turkey are frequently on the public agenda due to overcapacity, poor conditions and incidents of verbal and physical violence.



Uzbekistan Nationals Arbitrarily Detained in Removal Centre

According to "[Köklü Değişim](#)", a news network that publishes various content from an Islamic perspective, Uzbek nationals Asomiddin Boltaev and Mukhammad Mardonov, currently detained in Kırklareli Removal Centre, are soon to be arbitrarily deported despite a stop deportation order. On his [Twitter account](#), Lawyer Mustafa Kocamanbaş, stated that, in spite of this order, both of them were still forcibly detained and that their deportation was illegal.

Zehra Boltaev, Asomiddin Boltaev's daughter, also posted a [video message](#), including an audio recording of her father, where she said that her family may face the risk of death if they are deported, claiming that Muslims in Uzbekistan are subjected to persecution. In another video message shared on her Twitter account, Zehra Boltaev shared that her parents and brother had been detained with the G-87 code, that is the repatriation procedure "applied to foreigners who are considered to be linked to terrorism for general security purposes." In the same video, Boltaev denounced that this was slander and that his family was being unfairly held in the repatriation centre.

Summary of Goc Idaresi (Presidency of Migration Management) statistics

According to the statistics published by the Turkish Presidency of Migration Management, there were 91,255 "[irregular migrants](#)" apprehended by the security forces as of the end of May 2024. The top three nationalities involved in such incidents were Afghanistan, Syria and Turkmenistan. In addition, a total of 5,126 so-called "organisers" - a term used to refer to those accused of being involved in smuggling - were apprehended in the first five months of 2024. Furthermore, the number of temporary protection status (TPS) holders decreased in 2024. As of the end of May, there were 3.114.099 [TPS holders living in Turkey](#), compared to the 3,214,780 at the end of 2023..

Additionally, and as described in the [February BVMN Monthly Report](#), in recent months, the Directorate of Immigration Management implemented a project called "[Mobile Migration Points](#)" with the goal of detecting and apprehending "irregular migrants" in the cities. The operation involves the placing of large vehicles in the centre of big metropolitan cities, staffed with an interpreter and a representative of the Presidency of Migration Management. They carry out biometric data checks on people and are able to immediately refer them to Removal Centres for deportation if they find them to be in an "irregular" administrative situation. As of May, these vehicles started to "fight against irregular migration" in 9 new non-metropolitan cities.



Update on the UK-Rwanda Deal

On May 22nd, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak announced that a General Election would take place in the UK on July 4th. The following day, he confirmed that no flights to Rwanda would take place before then. Despite the relief this announcement may bring to many, the impact of the shock operation that saw an undisclosed number of people seized in immigration raids and taken to detention centres cannot be understated. The purpose-built immigration removal centres (IRCs), that held people who were to be removed to Rwanda, are built to the same specifications as Category B prisons, the second-highest level of security. Detention in this environment is likely to exacerbate or cause mental health issues such as depression, PTSD, and anxiety. While lawyers who represent some of those who were detained have stated that 79 of their clients have now been released on bail, it is not possible to know how many remain in detention since the government has not confirmed the total number of people. Moreover, due to the fear of being detained at their regular reporting appointments, many people failed to appear at these meetings over the past weeks. This could put their asylum claim at risk and possibly result in the revocation of their Section 95 support, which entitles them to accommodation and a weekly allowance of £49.18 per person for people living in self-catered accommodation, £8.86 for people in full-board accommodation.

The closeness in time between the announcement of the General Election and the apprehension and detention of so many people with the public aim of deportation seems to point at an attempt by the Conservative government to garner favour amongst their voting base. The use of human lives, particularly of those who have sought asylum in your country and are under your care, as pawns in an election battle is an abnegation of the UK's commitment to upholding human rights.



Deaths and Disappearances

Deadly shipwrecks in the Aegean

During the month of May 2024, at least two shipwrecks happened in the Aegean Sea. On May 2nd, the Turkish Coast Guard reported having conducted a rescue operation off the coast of Aydın's Didim district. During this operation, the body of one person was recovered.

Furthermore, on May 31st, two people died and four were reported missing in a shipwreck off the coast of Mugla's Bodrum district. On the same day, and as a result of the chase of a boat by the Hellenic Coast Guard, most of the people travelling in the vessel, by the coast of Symi, fell into the sea and needed to be rescued. As a consequence, five people were injured while one person lost their life. Another person was found unconscious after crossing from Turkey to the Greek island of Tilos, the person died soon after their arrival at the port. Additionally, on May 7th, the body of a person washed off on the shores of Skala Sikaminia village on Northern Lesbos. The person was later identified as a 79-year-old male.

Man found dead near Dunkirk

On Saturday May 4th, one individual in his 40s was discovered dead in the Bourbourg Canal near Dunkirk. He became the 411th person known to have died on the Franco-British border since 1999, as a result of the hostile border policy upheld in Northern France.



Testimonies published in April

Link	Incident	Recorded	Demographic	Group size	Organisation
------	----------	----------	-------------	------------	--------------

Croatia to Bosnia-Herzegovina

<u>1.1.</u>	1st March, 2024	4th April, 2024	Afghanistan	2	Collective Aid
<u>1.2.</u>	18th March, 2024	22nd March, 2024	Palestine, Syria, Morocco, Iraq	14	Anonymous



Testimonies published in May

Link	Incident	Recorded	Demographic	Group size	Organisation
------	----------	----------	-------------	------------	--------------

Bulgaria to Turkey

<u>1.1.</u>	21st January, 2024	3rd May, 2024	Morocco, Tunisia	8	Collective Aid
<u>1.2.</u>	1st June, 2023	3rd May, 2024	Syria, Algeria	11	Collective Aid

Bosnia to Montenegro

<u>2.1.</u>	28th April, 2024	3rd May, 2024	Morocco	3	Collective Aid
-----------------------------	------------------	---------------	---------	---	----------------

Greece to Turkey

<u>3.1.</u>	1st August, 2023	3rd May, 2024	Algeria	2	Collective Aid
<u>3.2.</u>	27th March, 2023	22nd April, 2024	Palestine, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Liberia	40	Anonymous
<u>3.3.</u>	27th December, 2023	16th April, 2024	Morocco	1	Anonymous

Serbia to Bulgaria

<u>3.4.</u>	8th May, 2024	20th May, 2024	Morocco	3	Collective Aid
-----------------------------	---------------	----------------	---------	---	----------------



Border Violence Monitoring Network

Network structure and contact

BVMN is a volunteer led endeavor, acting as an alliance of organisations in the Balkans and Greece. BVMN is based on the efforts of partner organizations 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 please email us at mail@borderviolence.eu.

For press and media requests please contact:
press@borderviolence.eu



@Border_Violence