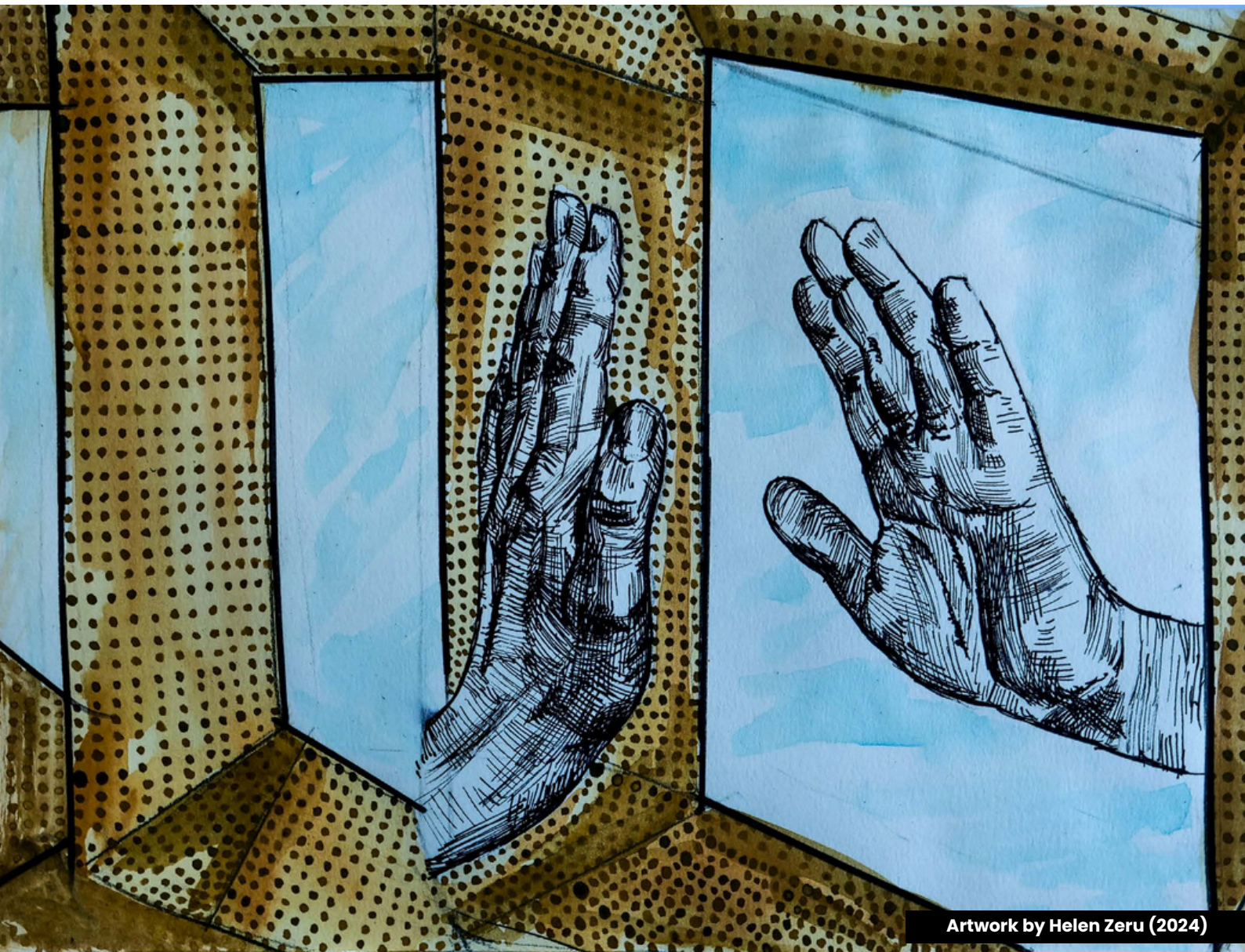


MONTHLY REPORT | DECEMBER 2024

# Illegal pushbacks and border violence reports



Artwork by Helen Zeru (2024)



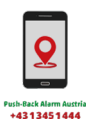
**Border Violence  
Monitoring Network**

MONTHLY REPORT | DECEMBER 2024

# Illegal pushbacks and border violence reports



**Border Violence  
Monitoring Network**





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# Executive summary

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

2024 has seen a continuous rise of a securitised discourse around migration, which keeps on prioritising surveillance, violence and deportations over safe routes, accountability and people's right to seek safety. The passing of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, after years of negotiations, promises an increase in the use of arbitrary detention and the worsening of the conditions faced by people on the move in their transit in Europe.

In this report, we address the latest moves towards the externalisation of EU borders in Bosnia-Herzegovina. With the Balkan country finalising the details of Frontex imminent deployment, donations from Western Europe keep boosting Bosnia's border regime. Thus, a million-euro donation for surveillance and border equipment by the EU was matched, on the very same day, by the UK's gifting of a DJI drone known for its reputation in enabling state violence, especially by the IDF against Palestinians. While huge amounts of money are pooled into further restricting people's ability to move and claim asylum throughout Europe, the lack of governments' adequate action and spending to protect people on the move from harsh winter conditions, especially in the facilities under state responsibility, is felt across borders. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, a snowstorm left over 100 people stranded and isolated in Lipa Camp for two days at the end of December. Croatian authorities carrying out illegal pushbacks at the border utilise these dangerous winter conditions to further terrorise people on the move, with a recent testimony describing officers burning the belongings and clothes of the transit group in front of them before the expulsion.

In Greece, selective spending and government planning (or lack thereof) continues to neglect the conditions at the Closed Controlled Access Centers (CCACs), in several of which many people remain without access to blankets, heaters and hot water in the middle of the winter. In the Samos CCAC, for example, the overcrowding has forced many people to sleep on the floor, as well as women having to sleep in common rooms with unrelated men, in the context of a reported rise in sexual violence in the facility. The understaffing in interpretation and medical services continues to pose serious difficulties for



## Executive summary

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people on the move in many of the centers, as is the case in the Kos and Lesbos CCACs. The Greek state's neglect of its responsibility to protect vulnerable populations in its facilities has been made official as the UN criticises Greece's failure to identify victims of trafficking after an investigation and detailed reports by solidarity organisations on the island.

In this report we also look at the ways in which some countries in Europe have reacted to the fall of Bachar al-Assad in Syria this December. After a 13 year-long civil war, the end of the Assad regime has been received with public celebrations in places like the city of Gaziantep, in south-eastern Turkey and the return of thousands of Syrian nationals. However, amidst these hopes, several European countries have been quick to send a hostile message to thousands of Syrian people still awaiting decisions on their asylum processes. Germany, Austria, Greece, and the UK immediately suspended asylum procedures for Syrian nationals after the fall of the regime, increasing the uncertainty and precariousness in the lives of thousands of people. Moreover, the use of pressure tactics and coercion to force the signing of "voluntary returns" has been reported in Bulgaria and Turkey.

In Turkey, we provide updates on the trials for the murders of migrant worker Vezir Mohammed Nourtani and Dina, a university student from Gabon, as they act as stark reminders of the lack of accountability for those who perpetrate violence against migrants in the country. In France, evictions and routine harassment of people on the move in Calais and Dunkirk continue in the midst of severe winter conditions. Meanwhile the so-called Calais group, an exclusive club made up of the interior ministers of France, Germany, the UK, Belgium and the Netherlands, meets up to discuss how to prevent movement further at the end of the deadliest year in the Channel on record, with at least 89 people losing their lives, as a result of European migration policies.

As 2025 begins, our thoughts are with all those affected by the racist, cruel and all too often deadly border regime enacted and continuously externalised by European states, from France to Greece to Turkey and beyond. We stand in solidarity with all those who are fighting for justice. We demand safe routes now, and everyday.



# General

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## REPORTING NETWORK

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

## METHODOLOGY

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

## TERMINOLOGY

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

## ABBREVIATIONS

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

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

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[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, I Have Rights, Center for Legal Aid and Mission Wings

# **UPDATE ON THE SITUATION**



**Border Violence  
Monitoring Network**





### **Snowstorm and emergency evacuation from Lipa camp**

From December 22nd to December 24th, despite warnings of an impending storm, over 100 people were left stranded in the remote Lipa camp – in the north-western part of the country – where more than a foot of snow fell within 48 hours. Due to the disruption in transportation, people were completely isolated, without food, water, or electricity for two days. The security staff stationed at the camp were also trapped, while other organizations were not able to reach the area.

The rescue efforts were led by private citizens in the afternoon of December 24th, who organized themselves to transport people to Bihać. Upon reaching the city, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) was waiting to take control of the transfer. 68 people on the move were transferred to the Borici camp and accommodated in a separate area, distinct from the regular residents. The remaining individuals were relocated to various other locations. On January 9th, they were returned to the Lipa camp.

Footage of the rescue operation, which had been circulating on social media for several hours, mysteriously disappeared and was replaced by official bulletins and press releases. The IOM, the Service for Foreigners' Affairs, and the Una Sana Red Cross later claimed to have managed the rescue entirely on their own.

### **General trends**

In December 2024, a total of 713 people entering Bosnia were recorded by the Ministry of Security, marking a significant decrease compared to the previous month (1,173), and a sharp drop compared to the same period last year (3,257). While this suggests a decline in arrivals, it is also likely to indicate that people on the move are trying harder to avoid being registered or are avoiding the Temporary Reception Centres (TRCs). The most commonly represented nationalities remain Morocco, Afghanistan, and Syria, although there was also a report of families arriving from Mongolia.

According to the IOM Migrant Mobility Situation Report, in December 2024, most people entered Bosnia and Herzegovina via the Bijeljina area, with additional entry points near Zvornik and Bratunac from Serbia. From Montenegro, most people cross into Bosnia at the Metaljka border crossing, near Čajniče. After entering the country, many of them head towards Sarajevo and then travel to Bihać, with the aim of crossing into Croatia



through the Velika Kladuša region. The Service for Foreigners' Affairs (SFA) and Bosnia's border police have reported an increase in the use of unofficial exit points along the northern border, especially between Svilaj and Orašje.

### **Frontex expansion and the externalisation of EU borders**

On December 18th, the cooperation agreement between Frontex and Bosnia-Herzegovina was ceremonially initialled, in preparation for the [imminent deployment](#) of Frontex's forces at the country's borders as soon as formal procedures are complete. The agreement is expected to be finalized soon, pending approval from Bosnia's central government and parliament. The arrival of Frontex in Bosnia is a product of the EU's expansion of its border regime into third states, and follows the deployment of the Agency in various other countries in the region. Of all the Western Balkan countries, only Bosnia and Kosovo have yet to formalize agreements with Frontex. On December 19th, the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina approved the decision to establish a Working Group responsible for preparing the Migration Response Transition Plan by April 1st, 2025.

For Bosnia, it is symptomatic of a recent push towards the increased militarization of its borders, in efforts to align the EU-hopeful country's border policies with the EU's exclusionist *acquis*. 'By joining the countries of the region that have already signed similar agreements, BiH confirms that it is an important part of European efforts for stability and security', [said](#) BiH's Minister of Security, Nesad Nešić (who, as of December 26th, has been under arrest for corruption charges).

In fact, 2 days earlier, on December 16th, Bosnia's EU Special Representative, Luigi Soreca, delivered an [EU donation](#) of €1.1 million worth of surveillance and border infrastructure equipment to the BiH Border Police. The donation included '130 document verification devices, 300 travel document readers, 180 computers for border crossings and specialised tools for detecting concealed persons and controlled substances'. By funding such 'specialised' surveillance technologies in the name of collective European security, the EU continues to push a narrative of people on the move as a threat that needs to be defended against, perpetuating a binary vision of a united and superior European 'us' versus a dangerous and non-European 'other', weaponized again and again against people at the Bosnian-Croatian border and beyond.



### **Drone gifted by UK also used by the IDF against Palestinians**

The same securitizing view of migration is being pedalled in Bosnia-Herzegovina by the UK. On the same day that Soreca handed over the EU's million-euro donation, Julian Reilly, the British Ambassador to Bosnia-Herzegovina, donated a DJI Matrice 350 RTK drone to the BiH Border Police on behalf of the UK's National Crime Agency. Such advanced aerial surveillance technology is used to detect, intercept and control people at Europe's borders. As a 2021 BVMN submission to the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, xenophobia and related intolerance highlighted, surveillance drones enable violence in the form of illegal pushbacks; they have 'only contributed to the ease in which these racist and repressive procedures are carried out against people on the move' along the Balkan route.

In fact, DJI drones of the sort donated by the UK to the BiH Border Police have a long record of being used to enable state violence. For years, DJI drones have been weaponized by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) to suppress Gazan civilians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. In 2018, Israeli military used DJI Matrice drones, modified to unleash tear gas, on Palestinian border protestors during 'The Great March of Return'. In 2024, the IDF reportedly procured 'thousands of drones' from DJI 'for short-range imaging and reconnaissance missions inside and outside buildings and for intelligence acquisition in Gaza'. In November 2023, footage used by the IDF to justify the wholesale destruction of Al-Shifa Hospital and the horrific massacre of several hundred civilians, patients and health workers seeking protection in the Gaza Strip's largest medical complex was reportedly filmed using a DJI Avata drone. The same technologies gifted by the UK for use against people on the move at Bosnia-Herzegovina's borders have played a fundamental role in aiding and abetting Israel's genocide against the Palestinian people, highlighting the dangerous role of such technologies in engendering colonial violence against primarily 'non-white' or 'non-european' individuals in the name of defending state borders.

### **State violence at the Croatian-Bosnian border continues**

Whilst the EU and UK help Bosnia-Herzegovina strengthen its techno-borders, and Bosnian officials continue pursuing the narrative of migration as a security threat, serious human rights violations continue to take place against people on the move at the country's borders. One account from a person on the move in December described how Croatian police stripped a transit group of their belongings and burnt them in front of them during a pushback from Croatia to Bosnia: 'The Croatian police took everything we had. They took it all, and they threw it in a fire they had made.'



They threw our clothes – the extra clothes we had in our bags – into the fire. They took our phones.’ Horrific, and often wholly sadistic, forms of physical violence are also prevalent. Two Iranian men recently described how, upon apprehension 400m away from the Croatian border, the Croatian police ‘put us in a van and drove us to a location where there was a 20 degree drop [a kind of cliffside or steep hillside]. They punched and slapped us, and they kicked us down the drop.’ Such accounts, recent but far from isolated, point at patterns of violence made visible by hundreds of testimonies taken over the years. So long as migration is primarily viewed as a matter of security, the crimes against humanity perpetrated against people on the move and sanctioned by EU and Western Balkan states will continue to go on, unnoticed and unabated.



### **Rising right wing and conservative populism**

Following the fall of Bashar al-Assad, Austria plans to overhaul its asylum policies for Syrians. Over 7,300 cases of new asylum applications and 1,146 family reunification applications have been put on hold, leaving refugees in uncertainty. Existing asylum protections, previously granted for three years, are now subject to review and potential revocation if Syria is deemed safe.

Interior Minister Gerhard Karner has ordered the creation of a deportation program in the context of the changes in Syria and the far-right Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) has intensified this push, calling for immediate revocations, mass deportations, and a halt to new applications. The timing of these announcements, amid a budget crisis, highlights the state's willingness to use their populist and Islamophobic narratives to further divide the population in Austria.

More updated information on current developments about the situation of Syrians in Austria can be accessed [here](#).

### **New report on migration detention**

The recently published report "There Are No Laws. They Are the Law" investigates the conditions at the highly isolated Vordernberg detention center in Austria. This study was conducted and published by Push-Back Alarm Austria and Deserteurs- und Flüchtlingsberatung (Counseling Service for Deserters and Refugees).

The idea for this detention center, designed to hold up to 250 people, emerged in 2001, following sustained criticism of Austria's migration detention practices by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) and the former Human Rights Advisory Council at the Federal Ministry of the Interior.

More than a decade after Vordernberg's opening, this independent study is the first of its kind. It includes an overview of legal processes that enable migrant detention in Austria as well as ten testimonies from former detainees. These accounts reveal conditions that strip individuals of their will to live and autonomy, posing severe risks to their mental and physical well-being. Collectively, these findings meet the United Nations's definition of a "torturing environment", as outlined in its legal framework on Torture.



Artwork by: Helen Zeru  
You can download the report [here](#).



### **Kuwaiti community harassed by police in Thessaloniki**

The intense policing of migrant communities, a concern the BVMN Thessaloniki team continues to monitor and has written about in [previous monthly reports](#), appears to be worsening. Towards the end of 2024 there was an increase in arrivals of Kuwaiti nationals at BVMN's anonymous member organisation in Thessaloniki. Many of these new arrivals have reported frequent and ongoing harassment by police forces in the city despite some of them having received a positive asylum decision. They have described being routinely stopped and questioned by authorities, with their documents checked multiple times.

In one incident, a group was stopped by the police and had their documents checked. One member of the group was then reportedly apprehended and, despite possessing legal documents, was taken to an unknown location outside the city by police officers. He reported that on arrival at the location, he did not know where he was and was advised by his friends to take the first taxi he saw to return to the city. He described paying 40 euro for this taxi journey, indicating that the location was probably far from Thessaloniki.

Another Kuwaiti national in this group reported being stopped and checked by police at least five times in December, sometimes by the same police officers. The authorities not only checked their documents but also subjected them to invasive body searches. After verifying their documents, the officers reportedly questioned why they were out on the streets, telling them they should be staying at home instead. As a result of this constant policing, some Kuwaitis have reportedly stopped leaving their homes altogether to avoid further harassment. Consequently, they have been unable to attend local food distribution sites and other places where they could receive support. Even when possessing the legal documentation to stay in the country, new arrivals in Thessaloniki remain vulnerable to unfair and abusive policing practices.

### **Greek Ombudsperson launches independent investigation into death of Muhammad Kamran**

In December, the Greek Ombudsperson launched an independent investigation into the circumstances surrounding the death of Muhamma Kamran Ashiq, who was [found dead](#) at the Agios Panteleimon Police Station in Athens on September 21st 2024. This action follows the Ombudsperson's repeated requests for information from the Greek police, which went unanswered.



The Embassy of Pakistan had submitted a request to the Ombudsperson for an inquiry into the circumstances of Kamran’s death on September 24th. The Ombudsperson noted in an earlier correspondence to the Greek police that it was monitoring the Hellenic Police investigation into the case, and reserved the right to initiate its own investigation.

As outlined in the Ombudsperson’s official announcement, the investigation aims to uncover the circumstances of Kamran’s death while under police supervision. The investigation will include questioning officers from various police stations Kamran passed through, including Omonia, Patision, Galatsi, and Kolonos, before his final detention at Agios Panteleimon. The announcement emphasises the need to broaden the scope of the inquiry, noting that Kamran had been missing for several days before his body was discovered, and that photographic evidence points to severe abuse during his detention.

**Yearly overview of shipwrecks, arrivals and pusbacks in the Aegean**

2024 has witnessed the blatant continuation of border violence as a state policy in most regions of Europe and beyond. The EU migration regime continues to deny safe and legal pathways to thousands of people on the move, implementing a policy of securitisation and deterrence that results in the, often deadly, severe, but routine, violation of human rights at the borders of Europe. In the Aegean Sea, official numbers point to a total of 106.273 people that have attempted to cross from Turkey to Greece (and, in a few cases, to Italy), this year. However, according to the Greek Ministry of Migration, only 48.468 people were registered. This means that more than half of the people who tried to reach the EU in this way did not make it, and were instead forced back to Turkey.

Registered arrivals to the Greek islands in 2024	
Lesvos	11065
Samos	8680
Chios	4442
Kos	3385
Leros	1251
Rhodes	79
Simi	21
Tilos	25
Ikaria	44
Other islands	19476





Among those who were taken back to Turkey, 33.962 were reportedly stopped and apprehended by Turkish Coast Guard before going into Greek waters, whereas 23.844 were rescued by the Turkish Coast Guard when their vessel was in distress. Importantly, more than half of the people who were rescued, 13.527, had been pushed back by the Greek Coast Guard. The pushbacks carried out by Greek authorities in the Aegean have been widely documented and these numbers point, once again, at the systematic use of a practice that constantly endangers the lives of people on the move.

Means of crossing (for 2126 recorded incidents)	
Inflatable Boats	1358
Life Rafts	318
Fiber/Fiber Inflatable Boats	195
On Land/Islands	162
Sailing Boats	36
Swimming	23
Ferry	7
Jet Ski	6
Wooden Boats	5
Motor Yacht	3
Speed Boat	1
Paddle Boat	1
Private Boat	1

Moreover, this year, an increase in the brutality displayed by the Greek Coast Guard when stopping the vessels at sea has been reported, with chases, collisions, dangerous manoeuvres, and even use of firearms documented, sometimes leading to shipwrecks. In one of those cases, on October 15th, shots were reportedly fired by the Coast Guard towards the vessel before the shipwreck that resulted in the death of two women and two children near the island of Kos. These increasingly dangerous tactics to stop the boats are more often carried out when people on the move are traveling in Fiber and Fiber Hull Inflatable boats, which are usually more stable and have better engines than rubber dinghies. The use of this type of boats has more than doubled in 2024, with 195 documented crossing attempts using these vessels, compared to 69 in 2023. This trend started in the middle of 2023 and is probably a reaction to the Greek authorities' systematic pushbacks, as people hope to have a better chance to arrive using this faster means.



According to the numbers shared by the Turkish Coast Guard, when it comes to the means of crossing, out of 2126 instances, the vast majority of vessels used to cross were still inflatable boats, 1358 this year. However, sometimes, after people are pushed back by the Greek Coast Guard, they are left on life rafts, their vessel disabled or destroyed, and in those cases (318 life rafts found in 2024), as well as in the cases when people do manage to arrive in the Greek islands, it is difficult to understand the kind of vessel they used to cross. These numbers thus remain incomplete.

Similarly, in a space so characterised by forced clandestinity and state impunity, the number of people who lost their lives at sea is never certain. In order to monitor deaths and disappearances, we rely on publications on the Greek and Turkish side. The Turkish Coast Guard sometimes publishes these cases in their “NEWS” section, and they provide a yearly number of deaths. For the Greek side, we looked at the publications from IOM, UNHCR and the Greek Coast Guard, as well as other media reports. According to those sources, 45 people died in Turkish waters (reports were found about 43 of them but 45 is the official number), whereas 59 people lost their lives in Greek waters (some sources mention 60). This makes a total of 104 people killed by the brutal migration policies in the Aegean Sea (including the island of Gavdos) in 2024. Moreover, many people remain missing on both sides of the border and, as always, these numbers fail to include the ones that tried and did not make it without us even knowing, as well as, hopefully, some that made it unseen.

Here, we provide a list of the shipwrecks in 2024 in which bodies were recovered. This does not mean we dismiss the reports from other people on those who have gone missing, but it would be difficult to follow up on all of those cases. For that reason, please consider this list incomplete.

Date	Location	Dead and Missing
10/01/2024	Greek waters, near Lesbos	2 people died
19/01/2024	Turkish waters, MUĞLA/Datça (Kos)	2 people died
29/01/2024	Greek waters, near Lesbos	2 people died, 1 missing
15/03/2024	Turkish waters, ÇANAKKALE/Eceabat (Samothraki)	23 people died



Date	Location	Dead and Missing
10/04/2024	Greek waters, near Chios	3 people died
25/04/2024	Turkish waters, ÇANAKKALE/Eceabat (Lesvos/Chios)	1 person died
28/04/2024	Greek waters, near Samos	1 person died, 4 missing
02/05/2024	Turkish waters, AYDYN/Didim (Leros)	1 person died
31/05/2024	Greek waters, near Symi	1 person died
31/05/2024	Turkish waters, MUĞLA/Bodrum (Kos)	2 people died, 4 missing
17/06/2024	International waters, Italian/Greek SAR	36 people died, many missing
09/07/2024	Turkish waters, İZMİR/Çeşme (Chios)	8 people died
23/08/2024	Greek waters, near Symi	1 person died
13/09/2024	Greek waters, near Samos	1 person died
23/09/2024	Greek waters, near Samos	4 people died, 1 missing
27/09/2024	Greek waters, near Kos	1 person died
15/10/2024	Greek waters, near Kos	4 people died
16/10/2024	Greek waters, near Gavdos	1 person died, 2 missing
21/10/2024	Greek waters, near Samos	2 people died



Date	Location	Dead and Missing
06/11/2024	Greek waters, near Rhodes	4 people died
25/11/2024	Greek waters, near Samos	8 people died
25/11/2024	Greek waters, near Lesvos	1 person died
28/11/2024	Greek waters, near Samos	4 people died
06/12/2024	Turkish waters, IZMIR/Seferihisar (Chios/Samos)	4 people died, 1 missing
15/12/2024	Greek waters, near Gavdos	4 people died
20/12/2024	Greek waters, near Rhodes	8 people died, 1 missing

### Lack of accountability in Pylos shipwreck investigation

In 2024, we were also witnesses to the ongoing lack of accountability of Greek authorities with regards to the Pylos shipwreck, where over 600 people died in June 2023. Lawyers representing survivors and victims of the tragedy expressed concerns regarding the ongoing investigation in a public statement on December 23rd, 2024. While initial findings hold the captain, crew members, and Coast Guard personnel accountable for serious criminal charges, the investigation has not extended to senior officials from the Coast Guard's leadership or the National Search and Rescue Coordination Center (EKSED), who oversaw the search and rescue operation of the vessel 'Adriana'.

Legal representatives allege that high-ranking officials failed to fulfill their legal obligation to carry out rescue operations despite knowing the imminent danger to the Adriana. The lawyers argue that omissions from EKSED, the Operations Center (KEPIX), and supervisory bodies were critical in leading to the shipwreck. Thus, they have filed a petition demanding criminal prosecution of responsible authorities and further investigative actions.



Investigating the systemic failures behind this and other recent deaths at sea is essential for upholding the rule of law. More importantly, it is crucial to prevent further tragedies, such as the one on December 20th, 2024, when eight people died in a collision between the boat people on the move were traveling on and a Coast Guard vessel near Rhodes, with one child still missing. These incidents are examples of the fatal consequences of European migration policies and the brutal practice of pushbacks carried out by the Turkish and Greek Coast Guard. In December 2024 alone, the Aegean Boat Report recorded 17 pushbacks in the Aegean, affecting 504 people trying to reach the Greek islands.

### **Effects of the fall of Bashar al-Assad on Syrian asylum seekers and refugees**

On December 9th, 2024, one day after the fall of the Assad regime, Greece suspended the processing of asylum applications from Syrian nationals, affecting approximately 9,000 applicants. This decision aligns with much of the European Union's response to the recent political developments in Syria, including the collapse of the Assad regime. Many European countries, such as Germany, Austria, Belgium, Greece, Italy, Sweden, Denmark and the United Kingdom, immediately decided to pause asylum procedures for Syrian nationals. The UNHCR urged states to continue providing Syrians with international protection until the situation in Syria stabilises.

In Greece, the suspension of asylum applications for Syrian nationals has led to a significant backlog, with thousands of applicants awaiting decisions. This situation has raised concerns about the adequacy of reception conditions and the potential for increased vulnerability among applicants. Moreover, solidarity organisations in other countries, such as No Name Kitchen in Bulgaria, have denounced the use of pressure tactics, interrogations and violence against Syrian asylum-seekers to force their return to the country.

### **Single-member committees reviewing asylum applications found unconstitutional**

The Greek Council of State has ruled that the single-member composition of the Independent Appeals Committees is unconstitutional. These committees are responsible for reviewing appeals on asylum applications rejected in the first instance. The law, which assigns only one judge to these bodies, has faced criticism for limiting the fairness and effectiveness of asylum procedures. The plenary of the Council of State reviewed this issue and found this provision violates the Constitution.



## Gaps in essential services at Lesvos CCAC

The conditions in the Lesvos Closed-Controlled Access Center (CCAC) have continued to deteriorate this month, especially with regards to hygiene, water and sanitation. A long-lasting and concerning issue in this facility has been the presence of insects, particularly cockroaches, which highlights the absence of effective pest control and hygiene standards in the center, leaving vulnerable populations at higher risk of infections and diseases. Moreover, the lack of access to hot water in the camp, together with the scarcity of heaters, blankets and other shelter essentials, adds to the extremely difficult living conditions in CCAC during the winter months. With resources stretched thin, the reported unequal distribution of aid fuels tensions, as some people, especially single men living in the camp, feel neglected. Communication gaps also contribute to unequal access to resources and prevent some communities from staying informed, as announcements on safety updates, changes in camp services, and scheduled events are not disseminated in all the languages spoken within the facility.

Additionally, this month, the situation has been exacerbated by the temporary departure of several non-governmental organizations over the Christmas holiday. Essential services, including some NFI and food distributions, medical care, and psychological support, were put on halt for approximately two weeks. The lack of these services has been particularly harmful, as the number of people on the move in Lesvos increased to nearly 4000 by the end of the month. 90% of people on the move in the island reside in the CCAC, which has essentially reached its maximum official capacity.

## Lack of adequate and sufficient services at the Kos CCAC

Meanwhile, in Kos, the situation faced by people on the move on the island remains extremely challenging. Like many areas in Greece, Kos faces a severe shortage of staff in the CCAC, including interpreters and medical personnel. This understaffing disrupts asylum procedures, limits access to healthcare, and leaves many needs unmet. For example, only three nurses are currently available for the entire facility, and Praksis, an organisation providing essential support for the most vulnerable cases, is leaving the island as the government attempts to centralise all services. However, the government has failed to invest enough resources to increase the capacity to meet these needs, leaving residents without sufficient support.

Moreover, while the CCAC now allows some individuals —primarily families— to stay longer than 30 days after receiving international protection, these people are no longer provided with food. They must either pay €8 per day for meals or find alternative ways to secure food from outside the CCAC, adding financial and logistical burdens.



December also saw an alarming incident of forced transfers involving asylum seekers from the CCAC of Leros to Kos. Several individuals were arrested and transferred without their identification cards or any means of communication. They waited for two days for their court hearing, which was initially postponed due to a lack of interpretation services, without receiving any support. Upon their release, once the hearing finally took place, they struggled to secure ferry tickets to return to Leros, as they lacked identification or any official documentation explaining their situation. This case starkly highlights the harassment and systemic neglect faced by people on the move at the hands of authorities in the Greek islands, serving as yet another example of border violence.

### **Continuing deplorable living conditions in the Samos CCAC**

In December, the living conditions at the Samos Closed Controlled Access Centre (CCAC) remained extremely poor, marked by overcrowding and insufficient and undignified services. According to the UNHCR, the population in the Samos CCAC peaked at 4,025 persons between December 23rd and 29th, pushing its operation to 110% of its official capacity. Also in December, Samos-based NGOs reported approximately 400 unaccompanied minors were detained residing in the so-called "safe zone" of the facility, an extremely worrying situation denounced in [previous monthly reports](#). The high population in the CCAC resulted in long queues to exit the facility, making it increasingly difficult to reach the nearest town and access essential services.

Multiple I Have Rights' clients reported undignified living conditions concerning hygiene, including long distances to showers and a lack of toiletries and hot water. They also reported to be held in overcrowded rooms with not enough beds for everyone, requiring them to sleep on the floor. Three different clients, one of them with six children, described not having blankets, which is especially concerning since temperatures dropped below 8 degrees at night. While it was communicated to Samos based NGOs that the CCAC distributed blankets at the beginning of December, I Have Rights clients reported they were not provided with any.

Moreover, in an interagency meeting, a Samos-based NGO reported the rise in sexual violence in the CCAC. In shared areas where newly arrived persons are detained, single women are often placed to sleep next to unrelated single men, raising significant safety issues.



## **UN criticizes Greece for failing to identify survivors of a trafficking ring on Samos**

In December, the UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, Siobhán Mullally, made public her letter of allegation to the Greek Government highlighting serious concerns about the treatment of trafficking survivors in the Samos CCAC. Mullally criticised inadequate identification and support for survivors of trafficking, particularly women and children, in the overcrowded CCAC.

This outcome follows two years of strategic litigation by I Have Rights, which included publishing a [detailed report](#) and submitting three [communications](#) to the Special Rapporteur documenting the dire treatment of human trafficking survivors on Samos.

The Rapporteur condemned the Greek Asylum Service for failing to account for trafficking experiences in asylum decisions, particularly when incidents occurred outside applicants' countries of origin, leaving survivors vulnerable to re-trafficking. This public statement by one of the world's leading experts on human trafficking underscores the urgent need for systemic reforms in Samos, Greece and across Europe to ensure the protection of trafficking survivors and compliance with human rights standards.





### Government Apprehension and Deportation Statistics for 2024

According to statistics published by the Presidency of Migration Management, 12,756 “irregular migrants” were apprehended in December 2024, with a total of 225,831 apprehensions for the year. The groups of nationals most affected by apprehensions – both in December and for the entire year – were Afghans, Syrians and Turks. Furthermore, authorities apprehended 900 so-called “organizers”, or those accused of facilitating irregular transit, last month, bringing the total number of such apprehensions this year to 12,594.

In a statement to Anadolu Agency later in December, Yerlikaya described Turkey’s five-step strategy aimed at combating “irregular migration”. The strategy focuses on tightening border security, increasing apprehensions within the country, combating irregular labour migration and implementing an “effective” deportation mechanism, Yerlikaya said. The interior minister also said Turkey had deported 130,000 people in 2023 and 141,000 in 2024. He contrasted those figures with the 92,500 deportations recorded across 27 European Union countries in 2023, and claimed the strategy is deterring migrants from considering entry into Turkey, describing the country as a pioneer in this approach.

### Developments in Syria and returns from Turkey

With the rapid overthrow of the Assad regime culminating on December 8th, 2024, huge gatherings took place in many cities across Turkey. The streets of many neighbourhoods were filled with the extremely rare sight of Syrian people openly celebrating and expressing hopes for the future.



Syrians celebrating in Gaziantep after Assad was overthrown. Source: [Martin Pavlik / @martinmafotak](#).



From December 8th, the six border crossings between Syria and Turkey became crowded with people queuing to leave for Syria. In a post on social media, Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya wrote that after the overthrow of the regime of Bashar al Assad, the number of people voluntarily returning to Syria increased rapidly. According to his statistics, for the first five days after Assad's ousting, over 7,621 Syrians had returned from Turkey "voluntarily, safely, honorably and regularly." In the first month after the regime was ousted, 52,622 Syrian people were recorded as having left Turkey. These movements are consistently described as "returns" - in this text also - but for many, it should be underlined that this will be their first time ever setting foot on Syrian soil.

In line with recent policies to reduce the Syrian population in Turkey, the Ministry of Interior and the Presidency of Migration Management are encouraging a fast and consistent voluntary repatriation of Syrian nationals. However, in the past few years, concerns have been increasingly raised over systemic abusive conditions in which Syrians especially are coerced into signing "voluntary return" forms, since they cannot legally be deported against their will. Importantly, much of Turkey's detention and deportation regime has been funded by the European Union.

While the legal framework governing Syrians residents in Turkey remains unchanged, with the "temporary protection status" still in effect as of December, changes are expected. The Turkish Interior Minister announced the opening of Turkish Migration Offices in Aleppo, where the majority of Syrians in Turkey originated. Moreover, the government has granted each head of families under temporary protection the right to enter and exit Turkey three times during the first semester of 2025. This urgency to return from the Turkish side also leaves the Syrian displaced population with new uncertainties to face. Many have established lives in Turkey and the scenario of returning to Syria comes with a new range of risks.

The activity of NGOs working with the Syrian community has also been affected. Over the past thirteen years, a complex network of humanitarian organizations has flourished, particularly in Turkish border regions. Many Syrian and international civil society organizations established their headquarters in Turkey to work with the displaced population there and managed operations in the Idlib region governed by Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham (HTS) prior to the fall of Assad's regime. Moreover, new Syrian and Turkish NGOs emerged in the border areas throughout this time.



Despite the crucial work done by many, it is important to note that there have been past instances of corruption in Turkey-Syria aid programs, while the model itself of focusing solely on emergency relief projects, as opposed to long-term development initiatives, created cycles of dependence for the displaced population.

The recent political shift in Syria presents an opportunity for many of these organizations to relocate their activities inside the country. Reconstruction efforts necessitate a substantial amount of support. This also coincides with a shift in funding opportunities, as European and other international donors seem now increasingly willing to support projects within Syria.



Cilvegözü Border Gate, Reyhanlı, Hatay: a family sits on the steps of a Directorate of Migration Management vehicle with the Turkish and European Union flags. Source: [Kazım Kızıl](#).

### **ISIG Assembly 2024: statistics on deaths of migrant and refugee workers**

According to the ISIG Assembly (Health and Safety Labour Watch) 2024 Work Murders Report, a total of at least 1,897 workers were killed at work in 2024. Of these, 94 were migrant and refugee workers. Syrians made up the great majority of those, with 49 recorded deaths. The next highest represented nationality was Afghanistan, with 13 documented deaths. In their monitoring and advocacy work, The Health and Safety Labour Watch has, for years, asserted that the term 'work murders' is the most appropriate one for these deaths, for all work-related fatalities are avoidable.



## Vezir Mohammed Nourtani Murder Trial Update

On December 20th, the fourth hearing in the trial over the killing of migrant worker Vezir Mohammed Nourtani was held in the Black Sea city of Zonguldak. Developments in the case have featured in several [BVMN Monthly Reports](#) from 2024.

Nourtani, who was from Afghanistan, was employed at an illegal mine, and his bosses Hakan Körnöş, Enver Gideroğlu and Ahmet Aydın are being charged with his murder. Mine employees Sercan Kayabaş and Eray Demiro, and coal trader Alaattin Çayırılı are also on trial for related charges. As in previous hearings, the families of the defendants continued to taunt and harass the Nourtani family and their supporters. Despite that intimidation, various political parties, representatives of civil society organizations, international observers and activists gathered in front of the courthouse in Zonguldak to follow the trial and demand justice. Meanwhile, Nourtani's family's application for international temporary protection to the Zonguldak Administrative Court was rejected during this process. The family still lives precariously in Turkey and is trying to keep the case alive. The next hearing of the case will take place on February 19th, 2025.

Prosecutors accuse the defendants of murdering Nourtani on November 9th, 2023, claiming the suspects attempted to burn Nourtani's body in the forest after his death to eliminate evidence. His body was also reportedly discovered to be missing one kidney. Nourtani's fellow migrant co-workers in the mine - who are also his cousins - were deported after their statements were taken by the authorities. They then sent a video from Iran to Nourtani's wife Kamergül Meliki, asking to be involved in the case. Though they did not mention it in their original testimony, in the video they said Nourtani was offered 10,000 US dollars to sell his kidney but that he refused, apparently demanding a higher fee of 30,000 US dollars. In their newer testimonies, they claimed that they were initially forced to testify that they "didn't see anything".

Meliki submitted the videos to the court through her lawyer, with the proposal that the miners' additional testimonies be retaken through the Iranian embassy. The court, however, refused to include the testimonies. In addition, a 21-page forensic report prepared by the Forensic Medicine 3rd High Board was submitted to the court. This report also concluded that Nourtani's body was burned after he was killed. Nourtani's lawyer also requested an additional report, recalling an initial document prepared by Koç University, which considered the possibility that Nourtani had not been killed prior to being burned.



Solidarity activists stand outside the Zonguldak court with a banner reading 'Justice for Vezir Mohammad Nourtani'. Source: [Migrant Refugee Solidarity Network](#).

### **Dina murder trial concludes with acquittal of sole defendant**

On December 17th, a court in Karabük acquitted and released Dursun Acar in the murder trial of Dina, a 17-year-old university student from Gabon. Jeannah Danys Dinabongho (Dina) Ibouanga was found dead in the Filyos River on March 26th, 2023. The case has been followed closely by the Feminists for Dina initiative since her death almost two years ago and has been reported in [BVMN's Monthly Reports](#) since then. A detailed description of the most recent hearing can be [read here](#).

Dursun Acar was the only defendant in the case. The prosecutor and Dina's lawyers had demanded he be punished for sexual assault and murder with possible intent. The defense claimed that Acar was innocent and insinuated that Dina's death was a result of suicide. At the end of the hearing, despite a wealth of evidence to the contrary, the court ruled that there was no case of sexual harassment and there was no suspicion of foul play.

Karabük is an Anatolian city with a very large proportion of fee-paying international students, especially from various African countries. There have been many reports of migrant women being forced into sex work by gangs and local men. Lawyers of the Feminists for Dina initiative describe being blatantly shown by local taxi drivers where the "prostitution ring for Black and virgin women" operates from.



Dina's case raises well-grounded suspicions in this regard. Her fears and stress from harassment and exploitation in Karabük were well-documented, as is the fact that she wanted to leave the city. Her mother, who spoke at the trial, described Dina's experiences of racism in the city and being offered money for sexual intercourse. However, there were no serious indications that she was suicidal - a claim that her lawyer described as a veil and a cover-up.

Lawyers from Feminists for Dina argue that the investigations and the indictment were deliberately left incomplete, that extreme negligence had been displayed at every step. The lawyers insist racist and patriarchal attitudes should also be addressed in the case and are appealing the verdict.



Feminists for Dina alongside her parents outside the court in Karabük.  
Source: Demirören News Agency.

### **Azerbaijani LGBTI activists report abuse in Turkish Removal Centers**

Two Azerbaijani queer activists arrested during an Istanbul protest on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women in November 2024 were subjected to severe mistreatment and inhumane conditions in multiple Turkish Removal Centers, as [BVMN reported in November](#). Throughout their detention, the two were reportedly transferred repeatedly between Arnavutköy, Çatalca, and Kocaeli GGMs, leaving their friends and support groups with no information about their whereabouts for an extended period.



The activists described harsh treatment, including being handcuffed for 10 hours, physical violence, and verbal abuse targeting their gender identity. Conditions in Kocaeli GGM were especially dire, they said, with detainees housed in freezing rooms with broken windows, inadequate food, and unsanitary facilities. Despite their repeated requests, the activists were denied interpreters, and they were pressured to sign voluntary return forms, leading to their forced return to Azerbaijan. Activists have criticized these practices as systemic efforts to obscure abuses within the removal centres and silence those detained.

### **Mülteci-Der highlights perilous conditions for Syrian Trans Women in Turkey**

A [new report by Mülteci-Der](#) found that Syrian trans women refugees in Turkey face systemic discrimination, unemployment, and hostility, driving many to attempt to flee via dangerous routes facilitated by human traffickers. An [attack on trans women refugees in İzmir](#) in November 2024 underscores the risks highlighted in the report. According to the report, pervasive violence and economic instability have left trans women refugees with few options but to risk death or exploitation to leave Turkey. Human trafficking has become entrenched in the Aegean region's economy, profiting from and exacerbating the vulnerability of refugees, according to [Mülteci-Der](#). Without combating violence and discrimination, trans women will likely continue to face life-threatening circumstances and fall prey to traffickers.



### Evictions of people on the move from informal living sites

In December 2024, Human Rights Observers (HRO) recorded at least 55 evictions of 8 different informal living sites located in Calais and its surroundings. As usual in this area, between 4 and 7 living sites were evicted one after the other during the same police operation, amounting to 10 operations in total for the month. Police forces evicted at least 643 people from the informal living site they survive in, without offering them any alternative housing solution but to reinstall on the exact same location once police forces have left. Two days later (except for a few exceptions), the same process was carried out again. This routine aspect adds even more violence to an already cruel practice: it demonstrates the aim of French authorities to harass people on the move on a daily basis and to keep them in a constant state of evictability, and thus, of insecurity. As a result, some people on the move adopt certain preventive behaviors in an attempt to preserve themselves and their belongings from the eviction. On December 16th, for instance, observers noted that the inhabitants of a living site had self-evicted before the police arrived.

As described in previous monthly reports, during the eviction operations, police forces are accompanied by a private cleaning company appointed by the French State to seize the personal belongings of the inhabitants, outside of the legal framework and in an arbitrary manner. HRO counted the seizing of at least 168 tents, including 6 tents full of personal belongings, 8 blankets and sleeping bags and 3 mattresses. By doing so, French authorities continue to put people in even more precarious living conditions at the dawn of winter. While, officially, French authorities claim to only take the belongings of people who are not present, once again, observers collected evidence that seizures are carried out arbitrarily. On December 16th, a person on the move arrived at the living site during the eviction. He wanted to pick up his personal belongings. However, National Police officers refused to let him through, talking to him without an interpreter, and holding their batons in their hands.

This is also a clear example of how, despite interpreters being appointed by the State to be present during the evictions, police forces rarely resort to their services to interact with people on the move. They seem to rather speak French, a few words of English or use interjections and gestures, thus neglecting the right of the residents to be adequately informed about the operations.





Moreover, HRO recorded at least 5 people on the move being arbitrarily arrested by the Border Police (“Police aux Frontières”) during the evictions. Observers witnessed two of them being body searched before the arrest on December 20th, while surrounded by numerous police officers in an intimidating manner.



Officers during evictions in Calais ©@elio\_j\_

*HRO’s data is based on their observations and is therefore not exhaustive.*

### **Police violence outside of evictions**

HRO also witnessed different instances of police violence and discrimination against people on the move outside of eviction operations. During one of these, on December 11th, police officers carried out identity checks, searches and pat-downs on at least 2 people at the Calais-Ville train station. Passengers getting off a train were either sent in the back hallway or the hall station. Selection was discriminatory, with people perceived as “white” sent on one side and racialized people on the other.



## Hindrances and intimidation of observers

Once again, HRO recorded numerous attempts from police forces to obstruct observation work and intimidate the observers. Observation was made impossible at least on 14 occasions and observers were filmed by police agents at least once without being notified, contrary to French law. On December 9th, police officers pushed some members of HRO, while on December 16th and 23rd, observers were followed by a police car. On December 28th, the team went through an arbitrary car check during an eviction operation and received 2 fines.

## December in the area of Dunkirk

In December 2024, HRO did not record any eviction of the informal living sites around Dunkirk. However, a steady police presence was observed in the area, with vans from the Border Police and National Police conducting surveillance, intimidating, and arresting people on the move. Moreover, barbed wire was installed above the fences surrounding the living sites. In 2024, kilometers of barriers were erected in the region, nearly enclosing entire areas where people survive. These barriers contribute to isolating people on the move, while hindering their movements, turning living sites into somewhat open-air cages.

## “Calais Group priority plan”: hostility instead of human dignity

On December 10th, the so-called Calais group, made up of the interior ministers of France, Germany, the UK, Belgium and the Netherlands, met for the fourth time in London. Other relevant actors of the violent European border regime, such as EU agencies like FRONTEX and Europol were present as observers.

The meeting follows on from the [“UK-Germany Joint Action Plan on Irregular Migration”](#), signed on December 9th. In this bilateral commitment, the two actors agreed on a strengthened partnership that aims to work against “irregular migration” and smuggling and trafficking of persons to deliver “more secure borders”. In the agreement, the actors commit to “b. Preventing irregular border crossings”, which in practice is likely to mean an increased amount of police violence against people in transit. An example of this violence can be found in the French authorities’ systematic tactics that aim to prevent departures at the beaches in the north of the country, which have been described in multiple [BVMN Monthly Reports](#). Though another part of their plan points at the need to “3. Prevent loss of life on migratory routes and in the Channel”, no details are provided on how to implement this as a policy. They also set



targets such as “2. Reduce irregular migratory flows into Germany, the UK, and Europe” or “4. Increase the returns of individuals with no right to be in the UK or Germany”, strengthening a securitised vision of migration that prioritises deportation and hostility, over people’s right to seek safety.

On December 10th, the Calais group agreed on the “Calais Group priority plan” which sets out five priorities in the work against organized crime groups. The first one is “preventative communications” which refers to further collaboration with countries of origin and transit in the Western Balkans, Asia, the Middle East, as well as North and East Africa in order to deter people on the move from paying organized crime groups. Examples of what this deterrence actually looks like, for example in the Western Balkans, can be found in the BVMN Pushback Testimony Database. In addition, law enforcement will be strengthened “through Europol to enhance targeting and disruption of prominent OCGs (organized crime groups) and their criminal supply chains” and “enhance operational and technical cooperation, collectively and with other relevant partners such as FRONTEX, to tackle irregular migration”. This is despite – perhaps because of – the documented role of the European Border Agency in pushbacks and other types of border violence.

### **Fatal consequences of the hostile border regime in Calais winter**

The extreme winter weather conditions in Northern France – especially harsh this year – make the already challenging life of people on the move in the region even harder. With no sufficient alternative accommodation provided, hundreds of people remain on the street, their tents removed at least every 48 hours during the systematic evictions. In the first week of December, 60 unaccompanied minors asked for shelter in a camp near Dunkirk. Authorities refused, arguing there wasn’t space, leaving them in the cold. Similarly, during Christmas day, Le Département du Nord reportedly left three unaccompanied young girls, aged between 15 and 16, on the streets, thus neglecting, once again, the state’s responsibility for minors.

According to Médecins Sans Frontières, in this situation, people are at high-risk of developing cold-related illnesses and more severe complications due to the lack of treatment for infections. On December 26th, Calais Food Collective (CFC) reported that during a water distribution at one of the informal living sites, two men informed the CFC team that a 22-year-old man was unable to breathe, with symptoms of pneumonia. Emergency services were called and firefighters took the man to the



hospital, where he remained for some time. Moreover, reports were also shared by people on the move in December describing that police used pepper spray and soaked their clothes with water, an extremely cruel practice, especially given the increased risks of illnesses it poses for the people who suffered them.

In addition to the risk of physical illnesses, many people on the move carry the burden of emotional or traumatic journeys, including police violence, shipwrecks, isolation and the constant insecurity of their situation, which further puts their lives at risk. Recent news of the tens of suicides - the actual number is hard to estimate - among people on the move awaiting asylum decisions in the UK in the past years are yet another sign of the inhumane system faced by people seeking safety, nearly every step of the way.

### **The deadliest year on the Channel**

On December 8th, the body of a person was found in the sea near the beach at Escalles. Due to the advanced state of decomposition, it was impossible to identify the body, which had probably been in the water for several weeks. This death may be linked to the events of October 23rd, when three people died and at least 16 went missing, believed to have drowned during the shipwreck. This is the 15th body that has been found since that incident. On December 14th, five people were killed in a shooting that took place near Dunkirk. Among the victims were two people on the move aged 19 and 30, two male Kurdish people from Iran. They were shot dead on the outskirts of Loon-Plage at around 4pm. According to French authorities, a man aged 22 turned himself in, saying he was responsible for the five murders. No psychological support nor immediate shelter were provided for the people on the move who witnessed the crime. Moreover, much of the media coverage of this event was often discriminatory, with several outlets not treating the Kurdish victims the same way as the French ones.

On December 21th, two more bodies were found dead. One was found in the morning at the beach at Wimereux, Boulogne-sur-Mer. The death was probably linked to an attempt to cross the Channel to seek safety in the UK. The other one was a man found dead in his tent at an informal living site near Dunkirk, the same area where two people on the move had died during the shooting on December 14th.

On December 29th, three men died during an attempt to cross at Sangatte. At around 6am, people on the move tried to get on board and ended up in the water. Three men were found dead in the water. 45 people from the boat were treated at the beach, many suffering from hypothermia. Four people were taken to the hospital. On December 30th, another body was found near Calais, probably from that incident.



2024 was the deadliest year since records began in 1999. At least 89 people died as a result of the British-Franco border policies. Among the victims, around 15 minors including three babies and three children aged two, four and seven years old. The victims came from Afghanistan, Eritrea, Kuwait, India, Iraq, Iran, Romania, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Turkey and probably other countries. We will not forget those who have lost their lives. Our thoughts are with all those affected, especially their families and friends. We stand in solidarity with all those who are fighting for justice. We demand safe routes now.



# Border Violence Monitoring Network

## Network structure and contact

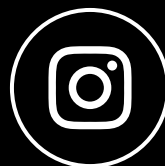
BVMN acts as an alliance of organisations in the Balkans and Greece. BVMN is based on the efforts of partner organizations working in the field of documentation, media, advocacy and litigation.

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](mailto:mail@borderviolence.eu).

For press and media requests please contact:  
[press@borderviolence.eu](mailto:press@borderviolence.eu)



**@Border\_Violence**