LESBOS BULLETIN

Update on the EU 'hotspot' Moria, by the Greek Council for Refugees and Oxfam

The extended area outside Moria camp in Lesbos, Greece, also called 'the jungle', where the vast majority of asylum seekers are left to survive on their own means - February 2020. Spyros-Vlad Oikonoumou/GCR.

- As a result of the EU-Turkey deal, as well as ongoing challenges in securing sufficient accommodation on the Greek mainland, [1] **over 42,000 people remained trapped on the Greek islands** at the end of February.[2] In the first two months of 2020, the island of Lesbos alone received 3,047 arrivals.[3] Many are vulnerable and in need of immediate medical support, yet all remain in highly unacceptable conditions in EU 'hotspot' camps, where access to services are severely limited.
- As of 1 March, following the announcement from Turkey that it would 'open its borders',[4] **Greece suspended all asylum applications** for a period of one month, with anyone arriving detained for the purpose of being returned to their countries of origin without their asylum claim being assessed, in violation of EU law and the *non-refoulement* principle.
- In a welcome development, Germany, Portugal, Luxembourg, Finland and France made a commitment **to relocate up to 1,500 unaccompanied children from the Greek islands**. Despite this, much more needs to be done to alleviate the pain and suffering on the Greek islands, and to protect children in particular. Initiatives by individual member states cannot replace the need for concerted efforts at the EU level, where discussions remain deadlocked.
- The Greek government decision to start the construction of closed centres on the islands was met with mass protests and mobilization by local authorities and communities. **The lack of local consultation and the resulting frustration has increased tensions and opened up space for the intensified use of violence towards refugees and NGOs**.
- A new practice in Kos, where **detention is indiscriminately imposed on nearly all newly arrived asylum seekers**, raises serious concerns with respect to how these closed centres will function once operational.

OXFAM

GREEK COUNCIL FOR REFUGEES

CALL TO ACTION

GCR and Oxfam continue to call on EU member states' governments to:

- **Urgently share responsibility with Greece for receiving and welcoming people seeking asylum in Europe**. This should include the emergency relocation of vulnerable asylum seekers from Greece, specifically by joining the commitment to relocate up to 1,500 unaccompanied children.

We also call on Greece, with the support of other EU member states' governments and the European Commission, to:

- **Immediately restore access to asylum** and provide crucial legal information and assistance that people seeking asylum in Greece need and are entitled to, as per Greece's legal obligations under national and EU law. Greece's sovereign competence to manage its borders cannot justify the indiscriminate detention and pushbacks of persons seeking asylum to life-threatening risks and/or risks to their freedom and security.

- **Rapidly deploy additional expert staff to the EU 'hotspots' on the islands**, prioritising doctors, psychologists and cultural mediators. Border guards cannot provide the medical and psychosocial treatment that asylum seekers and especially vulnerable people urgently need, in accordance with their rights.[6]

- Implement an urgently needed **state-run guardianship scheme for unaccompanied minors** so that they are supported in their needs and get assistance going through the asylum and/or family reunification process.

In addition, we call on Greece and the other EU member states to increase measures for responsibility sharing and eliviate pressure off facilities on the islands by:

- **End the regime of geographical restriction that entraps asylum seekers on the Greek islands** for an unknown and unlimited period of time. These restrictions have led to a cycle of overcrowding and degrading living conditions in the islands' camps, while externalising Europe's responsibility to protect to the Eastern Aegean islands.

- **Urgently increase long-term reception and accommodation capacity on the Greek mainland**, especially for children, by enhancing the capacity of the ESTIA[7] accommodation scheme. This would both ensure safe and dignified living conditions for asylum seekers in urban accommodation and facilitate the process of integration for those that will be recognized as refugees or beneficiaries of subsidiary protection.

- Properly implement the provisions for family reunification under the Dublin regulation, **while continue to discuss a fairer mechanism to share responsibility amongst EU member states for the future.**

"There is no more time for political wrangling over the relocation of a few dozen asylum seekers here and there. ***Talks need to be about very substantial numbers if the notions of solidarity and responsibility sharing are to have any meaning.****"*

Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights[5]

OVERALL SITUATION AND STATISTICS

Despite winter conditions, arrivals into Greece continued at an increased rate compared to previous years, with the total number of arrivals reaching 8,432 during the first two months of 2020.[8] Irregular arrivals by sea to the five Greek islands (Lesbos, Chios, Kos, Leros and Samos) reached a total of 6,196 persons, amounting to a **72% increase compared to the same period in 2019**. The island of Lesbos continued to receive the largest number of asylum seekers, with **3,047** arrivals in January and February.[9]

The vast majority of sea arrivals (71%) continued to be nationals of Afghanistan and Syria,[10] which alongside Palestinians and Somalis constitute **81% of the population now stranded on the islands**[11]. **These persons have a very high probability of being in need of international protection**, as also highlighted by the rate of positive decisions issued by the Greek Asylum Service (GAS) in cases concerning these nationalities.[12]

Most newcomers are families with children, who are considered vulnerable as per EU and Greek legislation.[13] Most children are **under the age of 12 (60%) and a significant number of them are unaccompanied (15%)**.[14] As a result of the imposition of the geographic restriction, which impedes people from leaving the islands, **all remain trapped on five Greek islands**, which now host more than 38,000 persons in facilities designated for the temporary accommodation of 6,178. [15]

Efforts have been made to move people off the islands, yet they are nowhere near enough. Of the 6,119 persons that departed to the mainland in January and February, only 2,683 were through organised transfers and thus with guaranteed access to accommodation.[16] Growing challenges in securing spaces on the mainland, where the ESTIA-based apartments are at their limits and several of Greece's mainland camps already operate beyond capacity,[17] mean the situation remains in a deadlock. This is raising the risk of many asylum seekers and increasingly recognised refugees of being homeless.[18] In the meantime, no progress has been observed with respect to previously reported plans to create new facilities on the mainland.

After the Turkish government announced that it would 'open' its borders in late February, the Greek government responded with measures aimed at detaining all those arriving irregularly after 1 March for the purposes of being returned to their countries of origin, without being registered and **without being allowed access to asylum**.[20] **This is in stark violation of their rights and the principle of *non-refoulement***.[21]

Adding to the deadlock of this human rights crisis, the new law on international protection no longer exempts vulnerable persons from undergoing fast-tracked asylum procedures at the borders.[22] This means that vulnerable persons are at risk of being without access to the support they need for prolonged periods of time, in violation of their rights under EU law.[23] It also means that more people can now trapped on the islands, where conditions in the 'hotspots' may further deteriorate.

The level of overcrowding in Moria camp on Lesbos is currently **close to seven times the official capacity of the EU 'hotspot'**[24] – the situation is similar, if not worse, on the other islands.[25] As a result, the reception conditions which Greece is obliged to provide under EU law to asylum seekers within its territory remain void in practice. More than 2 out of 3 people in Moria camp have spent the winter in camping tents, improvised sheds and even on the ground, in the overspill areas where persons seeking protection are largely left to survive on their own.[26] This includes more than 600 unaccompanied children. They are in the cold, rain and mud day and night, with access to electricity, and thus light and heating, for only 2 hours per day.

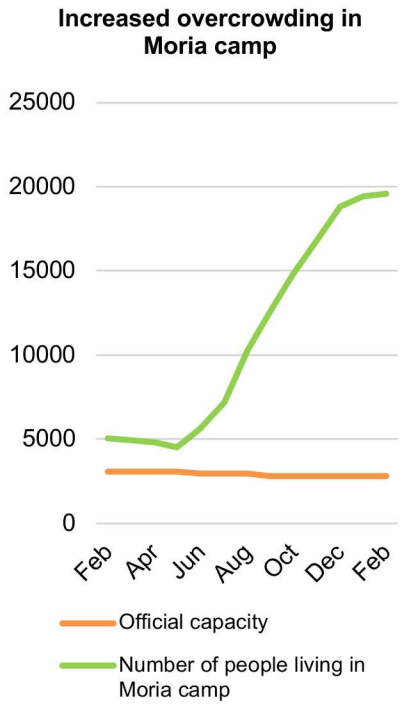

Figure 1 - Increase of overcrowding in Moria 'hotspot' (Feb 2019 - Feb 2020)

***"Conditions on the islands are shocking and shameful.** Greece - with European support - has to act now to deal with an untenable situation, while the longer-term measures are put in place."*

Filippo Grandi, UN High Commissioner for Refugees[19]

Sanitary conditions are horrific. Most days, people do not have access to clean, running and warm water. Parents are afraid of bathing their children, in fear that they may catch a cold or, worse, will die. Meanwhile, the camp's overspill areas keep piling up with garbage, as they are officially considered outside the facility's jurisdiction, and thus no concerted plans to collect them are in place.

Many of the people are sick, either due to chronic conditions or as a result of living conditions in the camp. Despite this, they **still remain without access to the medical examinations, medication and preventive care that they desperately need.** The state medical actor operating in Moria camp is highly understaffed. The 3 doctors currently operating in the facility are by necessity restricted to administrative duties and are unable to provide primary healthcare services. Meanwhile, free access to the public healthcare system is not available, in violation of Greek and EU law.

*"The people here are not looking for a fight**. They feel hungry and abandoned. They merely want a better life."***

Single woman refugee from Somalia

The resulting heightened levels of violence put children particularly at risk, as well as single women and others in vulnerable positions. Even within Moria camp, there is no security at night.[27]

Meanwhile, the Greek government's decision to start the construction of five new closed reception centres on the islands was met with mass protests and demonstrations by local communities. Violent incidents between riot police and local occurred at the end of February. These plans have now seemingly been put on hold, pending the proposal of alternatives by local authorities, and due to the developments at Greece's borders.[28]

Despite the ongoing display of solidarity towards asylum seekers, the resilience of local communities has been put to the test. Local communities, who have consistently called for relocation and responsibility sharing, have **increasingly felt abandoned by Greece and the EU**. This has also led to a strong anti-migrant sentiment with some locals, which is further exacerbated by the increasing 'securitisation' of a humanitarian refugee situation. The violence and insecurity on the Greek Islands are now severely affecting both refugees and those trying to help them.[29]

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS AND POLICY CHANGES

THE NEW LAW ON ASYLUM: PROTECTION DENIED

As of 1 January, Greece's new law on international protection entered into force. A month into its implementation, the Union of Employees of the Greek Asylum Service issued a press release, stating that **the new law "tramples on fundamental rights**, […] severely restricts […] the right to international protection [and] **introduces a punitive character that casts a large number of persons out of the asylum procedures**".[31]

The most concerning issue is that from the very early stages of its implementation, **the new law on international protection has been officially considered as a further tool to "restrict[ing]" mixed migration flows**, as amongst others stated by the competent Minister on multiple occasions.[30]

This is for several reasons, including:

- The very fast processing times, which force asylum seekers to undergo their interviews within just days of their arrival, leaving them without sufficient time to prepare or consult a lawyer, and often without a prior medical examination having taken place. This issue particularly affects vulnerable persons, such as victims of human trafficking, persons with serious illnesses or mental disorders and persons who have been subjected to torture, rape or other serious forms of violence. Accessing comprehensive information remains a challenge as well, with asylum

seekers being largely unaware of both their rights and responsibilities. This is concerning as failure of asylum seekers to comply with their obligations can lead to the immediate rejection of their asylum application. This has been seen in at least 15 cases in Lesbos in January, where people have been rejected without an interview and thus without having been provided with the possibility to explain their fear of persecution, in direct violation of EU legislation. The cumulative effect is the **undermining of the fair character of the asylum procedure**.

- For applicants who are rejected at first instance, **the right to an appeal is severely restricted**, both by administrative obstacles and the overwhelming gaps in legal aid. As of January, the only state-funded lawyer on Lesbos suspended their operation until the end of June. Applicants who want to file an appeal have to find a lawyer on their own. The scarce number of lawyers provided by NGOs are unable to manage the level of needs, so most asylum seekers are left to cope alone with a complicated appeal process in a language that none of them speak. All of this makes **their right to an effective remedy void in practice**.

To make matters worse, the Greek government is now exclusively focusing on processing the applications of 2020 newcomers. This has resulted in further delays to the registration and examination of the claims of everyone else, who are forced to remain for even longer periods in highly substandard conditions in the Moria camp.[32]

More than 6,000 asylum seekers, many of whom have been in Moria for months, **have their asylum interviews scheduled for August 2021**, only because they arrived in Greece before the implementation of the new law.

Lastly, as of the 1st of March, following the issuance of an Act of Legislative Content, asylum applications in Greece have been temporarily suspended for a period of one month. This means that anyone arriving in March will no longer have access to asylum and will instead be detained for the purposes of being returned to their countries of origin. Returned to a place where their lives and freedom may be at risk, or where they may be at risk of suffering torture or other inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, in clear violation of EU law and the principle of *non-refoulement*.

CHILDREN: TRAUMATIZED AND WITHOUT CRUCIAL SUPPORT

Conditions in Moria 'hotspot' for the 1,100 unaccompanied minors who **are forced to live without protection, in and around Moria camp** remain particularly concerning. By the end of February, only 1 in 3 unaccompanied minors were accommodated inside the facility, in severely overcrowded spaces, which consistently fail to guarantee their safety and security. **On 28 January, a young boy from Afghanistan was stabbed and severely wounded inside Moria camp**.[33] The child was urgently transferred to the island hospital, where his condition stabilized. This incident, as so many other taking place in Moria,[34] has left its mark.

"*Life here is [the life] of an animal. Nobody hears! No one ever came to ask us if we need anything.* ***My wife is pregnant; she should be allowed to live in a calm environment****."*

A., a national of Afghanistan, who at the end of January had been living for more than 5 months in a tent, in the overspill area of Moria, alongside his pregnant wife and their 2-year-old child.

The fear, insecurity and prolonged stay in highly sub-standard and unsafe conditions has a severe impact on children's mental health. These children have survived wars, persecution and a long and dangerous journey, only to be further traumatised in the EU's 'hotspot' camps. Children as young as 7 are harming themselves, developing suicidal tendencies and claiming they want to die. The situation is even more worrying for the **more than 600 unaccompanied minors**, staying **alone and unprotected in the areas surrounding Moria camp**, without access to basic protection and services.

The Greek Prime Minister's pledged in November 2019 that 'no child would be left alone', stating that the protection of unaccompanied minors would be an urgent priority and that shelters with a capacity of 4,000 places would be expediently created.[35] However, by mid-February the capacity of the nationwide system for the accommodation of these minors had increased by merely 243 places. This means that 1,800 children are forced to remain in

overcrowded, unsanitary and unsafe conditions in the island 'hotspots' for prolonged periods of time. In the case of Moria, this can be up to 8 months. Meanwhile, more than 1,000 unaccompanied minors throughout Greece are estimated to be living in precarious situations or are homeless.

The end of the NGO-run guardianship scheme at the beginning of 2020, and the lack of short-term solutions until the scheme will allegedly be fully taken over by the state in March, further deteriorates the situation. This means that unaccompanied minors are left without a guardian to support their needs or guide them through the asylum and/or family reunification process. **Up to 600 children are now at great risk of losing out on the opportunity to be reunited with their family in other EU member states.**

RIGHT TO HEALTH STILL DENIED

Despite the issuance of a Joint Ministerial Decision that restores asylum seekers' right to a social security number as of the end of January – a number that is needed in order to access the free medical aid to which they are legally entitled – newly arrived asylum seekers continue to be excluded from Greece's public healthcare system. Though following the decision, they are now in theory eligible to a 'Temporary Aliens Insurance and Health Care Number',[36] which is to be included on the asylum seeker cards issued by the GAS, the system has yet to be implemented in practice.

As a result, all asylum seekers who arrived in Greece after July 2019, remain without much needed medical care. They are forced to rely on the limited capacity of UNHCR and civil society to assist them in procuring medication or examinations. Others remain dependent on the scarce capacity of NHPO to tend to their healthcare needs. The situation is further aggravated by the severe understaffing and under capacity of the public hospital on Lesbos, which impacts on refugees and local communities alike. Even highly vulnerable asylum seekers, with chronic and/or life-threatening conditions, do not have access to crucial support.[37] This includes children and the elderly, amongst whom are diabetics and cancer patients.

M., an elderly woman from Somalia, is in dire need of treatment and medication. **Constantly in pain, without painkillers, she is unable to sleep during most nights.** Yet she, as many others, need to remain in Moria while they wait for transfer and specialized care on the mainland.

DE FACTO AND GENERALISED USE OF DETENTION IN KOS: A GLIMPSE INTO THE FUTURE?

As of 26 January, following the Minister of Asylum and Migration's visit to Kos, all newcomers on the island are completing a 1-2-day registration process, in which they are (medically) screened. After which, they are immediately transferred to the island's pre-removal detention centre, where they are detained throughout their asylum procedure. The only exception are unaccompanied minors, if they are properly identified as such.

In a short time, this new practice led to the near doubling of detained asylum seekers, from 170 in January to 355 by 12 February. Amongst them are families with young children, vulnerable asylum seekers who need urgent medical and/or psycho-social support, and survivors of gender-based violence. They are however all without access to medication or care,[38] stuck in a state of limbo they do not understand, as they are neither informed about the reasons of their detention nor its extensions.

This new practice in Kos, in view of the government's insistence on the creation of closed centres on all the Greek islands, creates a bleak picture for the future. **Generalized and lengthy detention used as a means of deterring persons in need of protection from Europe is unacceptable.**

NOTES

[1] Indicatively, as of the end of January 2020, the main two accommodation schemes available on the Greek mainland (ESTIA apartments and a total of 30 open camps) were both operating at a capacity of over 90%, with several of Greece's mainland camps having already exceeded their capacity. IOM + ESTIA

[2] General Secretariat for Information and Communication, 'National Situational Picture Regarding the Islands at Eastern Aegean Sea (29/2/2020), available under: https://infocrisis.gov.gr/8052/national-situational-picture-regarding-the-islands-at-eastern-aegean-sea-29-2-2020/?lang=en

[3] UNHCR, Aegean Islands Weekly Snapshot from 30 December 2019 up to 1 March 2020, available under: https://data2.unhcr.org/en/search?country=640&country_1=0&situation%5B%5D=11&text=%09+Aegean+Islands+Weekly&type%5B%5D=document&partner=&sector=&date_from=&date_to=&country_json=%7B%220%22%3A%22640%22%7D&sector_json=%7B%220%22%3A%22%22%7D&apply=.

[4] See also Oxfam, 'Oxfam reaction to situation at the Greek boder with Turkey' (2 March 2020), available under: https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/oxfam-reaction-situation-greek-border-turkey

[5] Council of Europe, 'Time to immediately act and to address humanitarian and protection needs of people trapped between Turkey and Greece' (3 March 2020) available under: https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/-/urgent-action-is-needed-to-address-humanitarian-and-protection-needs-of-people-trapped-between-turkey-and-greece

[6] Directive 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection, Art. 19.

[7] The ESTIA program is run by UNHCR through NGO partners and funded by DG Home. It provides dignified accommodation to asylum seekers in apartments throughout Greece, thus enhancing the prospects of integration and cohabitation between communities. More information available under http://estia.unhcr.gr/en/home/.

[8] UNHCR Operational portal for Greece, data as of 2 March 2020. Available under: https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean/location/5179

[9] UNHCR, *Aegean Islands Weekly Snapshot from 30 December 2019 and up to 1 March 2020 op.cit*

[10] UNHCR, *Sea Arrivals Dashboard* (January 2020), available under: https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/74139

[11] Afghanistan (49%), Syria (20%), Somalia (6%) and Palestine (6%). UNHCR, *Aegean Islands Weekly Snapshot* (24 February-1 March 2020), available under: https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/74359

[12] Based on the statistics issued by the GAS, the recognition rates of international protection for nationals of Syria and Afghanistan stand at 99.3% and 71.3%, respectively. Hellenic Republic: Ministry of Migration and Asylum, *Asylum Service statistical data* (as of 31.01.20), available under: http://asylo.gov.gr/en/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Greek_Asylum_Service_data_January_2020_en.pdf

[13] As per article 39 (5)(d) of L. 4636/2019 on International Protection, which transposes article 21 of the (recast) Reception Conditions Directive, "minors, unaccompanied or not, the immediate relatives of shipwreck victims (parents and siblings), persons with disabilities, the elderly, pregnant women, single-headed families with underage children, victims of trafficking in human beings, persons with chronic diseases, persons with mental disorders and disabilities and persons that have been subjected to torture, rape or other forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence, such as victims of genital mutilation", are considered vulnerable and are thus *de facto* subject to the special reception needs and special procedural guarantees provided in the context of Reception and Asylum, as per the relevant EU Directives.

[14] *Ibid* 10.

[15] As of 5 March 2020. General Secretariat for Information and Communication, 'National Situational Picture Regarding the Islands at Eastern Aegean Sea (5/3/2020), available under: https://infocrisis.gov.gr/8088/national-situational-picture-regarding-the-islands-at-eastern-aegean-sea-5-3-2020/?lang=en. The reminder 4,000 of the more than 42,000 trapped on the Greek islands are in other accommodation and / or in detention facilities.

[16] *Ibid* 3

[17] IOM SMS Factsheet January 2020, available under: https://greece.iom.int/en/sms-factsheets

[18] On the 5th of March, a new law, inter alia amending article 114 of L. 4636/2019, was voted by the ruling party at the Greek Parliament. The amended article provides for the exit of recognised refugees from accommodation sites and their exclusion from reception provision within 30 days of status recognition or 30 days from the date of reaching adulthood in cases concerning unaccompanied minors, and is expected to lead to the eviction of 1,000 recognised refugees in the immediate future. 'Amendment Min. of Migration: Exit of Recognized Refugees from Sites (video)' (5 March 2020), available in Greek under: https://www.ert.gr/frontpage/tropologia-toy-yp-metanasteysis-gia-apochorisi-ton-anagnorismenon-prosfygon-apo-tis-domes/. Though indeed reception provisions are only provided for asylum seekers in law, in the ongoing absence of wide-scale, state-led integration measures, this is expected to leave many recognised refugees at a risk of homelessness.

[19] UNHCR, *Act now to alleviate suffering at reception centres on Greek islands - UNHCR's Grandi* (21 February 2020), available under: https://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2020/2/5e4fe4074/act-alleviate-suffering-reception-centres-greek-islands-unhcrs-grandi.html

[20] On the 1st of March, the Greek Governmental Council on Foreign Affairs and Defense (KYSEA), *inter alia* announced the upgrading of security measures to the maximum at Greece's land and sea borders, the suspension for a month of asylum applications by newcomers and their immediate return, where possible, to their countries of origin without any registration whatsoever. The temporary, one month suspension of asylum application was consolidated the next day, through the issuance of a Legislative Act. Greek Government, *Statement by Government Spokesman Stelios Petsas on the decisions of the National Security Council* (1

March 2020), available in Greek under: https://government.gov.gr/dilosi-kivernitikou-ekprosopou-steliou-petsa-gia-tis-apofasis-tou-kivernitikou-simvouliou-ethnikis-asfalias/.

[21] UNHCR, 'UNHCR statement on the situation of Turkey and the EU border' (2 March 2020), available under: https://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2020/3/5e5d08ad4/unhcr-statement-situation-turkey-eu-border.html.

[22] Ministerial Decision 1140/2019 on the "Limitation of the Freedom of Movement of Applicants of International Protection" (21 December 2019), Gov. Gazzete 4736/B/20-12-2019, available in Greek under: https://bit.ly/39YIAfD. Furthermore, as per the new Decision, any special reception needs that are otherwise guaranteed for vulnerable asylum seekers as per EU law, are no longer taken into consideration for the purposes of lifting an applicant's geographical restriction, even though it is impossible to provide them with necessary support on the islands. Lastly, the decision to lift said restriction is now solely left at the discretion of the Director of the EU 'hotspot'. By the end of February, with the exception of Chios, the island 'hotspots" did not have a Director, following the resignation of the Directors of the 'hotspots' of Lesbos and Kos. An open call was issued for these positions on 5 February. This also raises concerns as to whether and / or to what extent it will be possible to implement this measure.

[23] Inter alia articles 17 (2), 19 and 21 to 25 of DIRECTIVE 2013/33/EU OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 26 June 2013 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection (recast), available under: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013L0033&from=EN.

[24] *Ibid* 14.

[25] *Ibid* 14. As of 5 March, overcrowding stands at 562% for the 'hotspot' in Chios, 1,171% for the 'hotspot' in Samos, 266% for the 'hotspot' in Leros and 386% for the 'hotspot' in Kos.

[26] Harriet Grant (The Guardian), 'Moria is a hell. New arrivals describe life in a Greece refugee camp' (17 January 2020), available under: https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/jan/17/moria-is-a-hell-new-arrivals-describe-life-in-a-greek-refugee-camp?fbclid=IwAR2bppE2d-3Z4H4pe_hQ1MSqqSyH_KPOHmKN9e-aKZB7xj_Mvq3L1PVECIM

[27] At night there is only one staff that guard the facility's main entrance, while the four sections in Moria that accommodate unaccompanied minors, single women and families remain without supervision whatsoever.

[28] Greek Government, 'Political Reporters and Foreign Correspondents' Update by Deputy Minister, under the Prime Minister, and Government Spokesman, Stelios Petsas' (4 March 2020), available in Greek under: https://government.gov.gr/enimerosi-politikon-sintakton-ke-ton-antapokriton-xenou-tipou-apo-ton-ifipourgo-para-to-prothipourgo-ke-kivernitiko-ekprosopo-stelio-petsa/

[29] See, *inter alia*, Helena Smits, 'Crisis in Lesbos as more refugee arrive' (9 February 2020), available under: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/feb/09/tensions-refugees-and-islanders-crisis-on-lesbos

[30] See, *inter alia*: Tania Georgiopoulou, 'Deportations, returns at focus of new ministry' (26 January 2020), available under: http://www.ekathimerini.com/248858/article/ekathimerini/news/deportations-returns-at-focus-of-new-ministry

[31] 'Ο νέος νόμος καταπατά θεμελιώδη δικαιώματα των αιτούντων/αιτουσών άσυλο' (31 January 2020), available under: https://www.newsbeast.gr/greece/arthro/5956896/o-neos-nomos-katapata-themeliodi-dikaiomata-ton-aitoynton-aitoyson-asylo. The full announcement is available in Greek on the Union's Facebook page, under: https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=838691396578536&id=526433454471000.

[32] More than 900 (approximately 950 – 970) asylum claims were pending registration on 14 February, while an estimated 6,213 itnervies of asylum seekers that arrived in 2019 have started being scheduled for August 2021. Even if hilghly vulnerable, non-registered asylum seekers are forced to wait in unstuiable conditions in Moria, since their registration is a pre-requisite in order for their access to ESTIA accommodation to be possible.

[33] In August 2019, a 15-year old boy died after being stabbed by another minor in Moria's safe zone, which is designated for the accommodation of the youngest children. UNHCR statement (25 August 2019): https://www.france24.com/en/20190825-un-urges-greece-to-protect-migrant-youths-after-death-at-camp

[34] The incident took place during the same month when an Iranian asylum seeker was found hanged in the Pre-Removal Center that operates inside Moria, and a refugee from Yemen lost his life, after being stabbed to death while visiting his friends in the facility. In.gr, 'Moria: second death of refugee within 10 days' (16 January 2020), available under: https://www.in.gr/2020/01/16/greece/moria-deyteros-thanatos-prosfyga-mesa-se-deka-meres/ ; http://www.ekathimerini.com/248542/article/ekathimerini/news/young-migrant-stabbed-to-death-at-moria-camp

[35] 'Δέσμευση Μητσοτάκη: «Κανένα παιδί μόνο» - Κυβερνητικό σχέδιο για τα 4.000 ασυνόδευτα προσφυγόπουλα (24 November 2019), available under: https://www.protothema.gr/greece/article/948886/kanena-paidi-mono-to-kuvernitiko-shedio-gia-ta-4000-asunodeuta-prosfugopoula/

[36] Joint Ministerial Decision 717/2020 setting out "Regulations for ensuring the access of applicants for international protection to health services, medical care, social insurance and the labour market – issuance of PAAYPA", Gov. Gazette 199/B/31-1-2020, available under: https://www.e-nomothesia.gr/kat-allodapoi/prosphuges-politiko-asulo/koine-upourgike-apophase-717-2020.html

[37] MsF, *Greece denies healthcare to seriously ill refugee children on Lesbos* (23 January 2020), available under: https://www.msf.org/greece-denies-healthcare-seriously-ill-refugee-children-lesbos

[38] Indicatively, the facility only has one nurse.

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This paper was written by Spyros-Vlad Oikonomou and Evelien van Roemburg. It is part of a series of papers written to inform public debate on development and humanitarian policy issues.