

**45 RIGHTS GROUPS FROM 21 EURO-MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES
DECRY FREQUENT AND GRAVE VIOLATIONS
OF FOREIGN DETAINEES' RIGHTS IN GREECE**

Athens, 15 June 2002. The undersigned NGOs, meeting in Athens between 13-15 June, 2002 in the framework of the General Assembly of the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN), and after having been informed on the situation of migrants and refugees in Greece, would like to express their great concern about the frequent and grave violations of the rights of thousands of foreigners who arrive or live in Greece as (potential) asylum seekers or (un)documented migrants and are detained pending judicial or administrative deportation.

Greek NGOs have documented an almost systematic absence of competent translators during examination by law enforcement officials or in court. Moreover, the Greek authorities frequently fail to inform foreigners of their rights, refuse them asylum application forms or even provide misleading information. Undocumented migrants or asylum seekers have often been tried without benefit of legal counsel, and sentenced to imprisonment or deportation after trials lasting only a few minutes. Detention conditions are in many cases degrading and inhumane, and access to lawyers and NGOs has been severely and arbitrarily limited. When authorized representatives of detainees have requested the full documentation for their cases, this has been denied by the authorities, on the grounds that this might hinder efforts to deport them.

We welcome last week's statement by the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights, Alvaro Gil-Robles, that "Greece should not forget that deportees are human beings, too"; and we appeal to the Greek authorities to radically revise their treatment of foreigners under arrest, detention, trial or deportation. We also call upon all inter-governmental organizations (UN, OSCE, CoE, EU) to use all of their mechanisms (expert committees, special rapporteurs, commissioners, etc.) to review this situation regularly and to urge Greece to honor its human rights commitments, in this as well as in many other areas. They should review Greece's record and judge it according to universal international standards which protect the rights of detainees, the right to fair trial and the rights of refugees.

International NGOs

Amnesty International (AI)

Article 19

Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN)

Fédération Internationale des Ligues de Droits de l' Homme (FIDH)

Human Rights Watch (HRW)

International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF)

Organization Mondiale Contre la Torture (OMCT)

Greek NGOs

Greek Committee for International Democratic Solidarity (EEDDA)

Greek Helsinki Monitor (GHM)

Other National NGOs

Al Urdun Al Jaded Research Center (Jordan)
Arab Association for Human Rights (Israel)
Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK
Association Démocratique des Femmes de Maroc
B' Tselem (Israel)
Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (Egypt)
Center for Media Freedom, Middle East and North Africa (UK)
Collectif 95 "Magreb Egalité" (Algeria/Morocco/Tunisia)
Comite pour le Respect des Libertés et des Droits de l' Homme en Tunisie (France)
Committee for Defense of Human Rights (Syria)
Conseil National pour les Libertés en Tunisie
Danish Center for Human Rights
80:20 Education and Acting for a Better World (Ireland)
Espace Associatif (Morocco)
Fédération des Tunisiens pour une Citoyenneté des Deux Rives (France)
Foundation for Human and Humanitarian Rights (Lebanon)
Foundation Réne Moawad (Lebanon)
Human Rights Association (Turkey)
Institut Arabe des Droits de l'Homme (Tunisia)
Intercenter (Italy)
International Association for Human Rights in Cyprus
Italian Refugee Council
Italian Helsinki Committee
LAW Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment
Libyan League for Human Rights
Ligue Algérienne des Droits de l'Homme
Ligue Algérienne pour la Defense des Droits de l' Homme
Ligue des Droits de l' Homme (France)
Ligue Tunisienne des Droits de l'Homme
Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies (Malta)
Norwegian Council for the Rights of Kurdish People
Norwegian Helsinki Committee
Organisation Marocaine des Droits Humains
Rights and Freedoms Association (Cyprus)
Soutien aux Libanais Détenus Arbitrairement (France/Lebanon)
Swedish Refugee Council