



International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance

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Summary record of the 384th meeting

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Chair: Mr. Ravenna

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Mr. Ravenna took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Consideration of reports of States parties to the Convention (*continued*)

Initial report of Greece (continued) (CED/C/GRC/1; CED/C/GRC/Q/1; and CED/C/GRC/RQ/1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Greece joined the meeting.*
2. **The Chair** invited Committee members to resume their consideration of the initial report of Greece (CED/C/GRC/1).
3. **Ms. Villa Quintana** (Country Rapporteur), referring to paragraphs 46 to 58 of the State party's replies to the list of issues (CED/C/GRC/RQ/1), said that, notwithstanding the State party's reassurances regarding its observance of the principle of non-refoulement and its assiduity in considering individual asylum applications, the Committee remained concerned at the reported lack of procedural safeguards in place to ensure the strict application of the relevant legislation and regulations. In particular, given the proliferation of complaints concerning sometimes violent expulsions of migrants back to Turkey without individual assessments of their exposure to the risk of enforced disappearance being carried out, she would appreciate information on any investigations conducted into such complaints and their outcomes, as well as on expulsions carried out in the context of joint operations of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex).
4. She would also like to receive information on persons expelled to Turkey under the European Union-Turkey Statement on Refugees and subsequently transferred to a third State where they might be at risk of enforced disappearance. According to reports received by the Committee, some of them had already been registered as asylum seekers in Greece. Had any investigations been opened in that connection?
5. In the light of reports that asylum applications submitted at the border were not duly considered or rejected; that information on asylum procedures under Greek law was not provided to new arrivals; that persons held in migrant detention centres had no access to legal assistance or interpretation during asylum proceedings; that the appeals procedure was not independent and impartial; and that access to asylum applications for persons crossing the border had been suspended for 10 weeks in 2020, she would like to know which of the three laws mentioned in the State party's documentation was currently applicable: Law No. 4375/2016, Law No. 4636/2019 or Law No. 4686/2020.
6. It would be helpful to know more about any plans to set up an independent national mechanism for oversight of border procedures and about any instruments the State party intended to adopt to ensure the proper assessment of an individual's risk of being subjected to enforced disappearance. What criteria were currently taken into account in making such an assessment? Could the delegation describe the different stages of asylum appeals procedures and indicate whether such appeals had immediate suspensive effect?
7. According to alternative sources, detention with no consideration of alternatives to imprisonment had become the norm, including for asylum seekers, and there was limited opportunity to challenge the legality of detention. She would be interested to know under which legal provisions persons with a legitimate interest could challenge the legality of a detention before the courts in the event that enforced disappearance was suspected, and what safeguards were in place to prevent the obstruction of such challenges.
8. The Committee had likewise received information to the effect that the practice of secret detention had become widespread and that migrants and refugees in particular could be held in abandoned buildings or railway stations guarded by armed individuals wearing a variety of uniforms. Police officers reportedly destroyed mobile telephones to prevent individuals from being traced by GPS. In some cases, migrants had been expelled after having been stripped of their clothing, which put their lives at risk in adverse weather conditions. She would like to know which provision of Greek law, if any, prohibited secret detention; what steps had been taken to investigate complaints concerning migrants held incommunicado in detention centres or in unofficial places of detention on the border with

Turkey; what penalties, if any, had been handed down; and what reasoning had been adduced where cases had been dismissed.

9. **Ms. Kolaković-Bojović** (Country Rapporteur) said that she would appreciate clarification of the information provided by the State party at the previous meeting ([CED/C/SR.383](#)), on the statute of limitations for enforced disappearance. The delegation had stated that the period of limitation began on the date on which the disappeared person was found. She had not, however, been able to find a legal provision to that effect; the Criminal Code simply stated that the period of limitation began to run on the day on which the offence was committed or the perpetrator was deemed to have acted. Did the statute of limitations for enforced disappearance therefore apply from the time when the crime was committed or from the time when the victim was found, whether dead or alive?

10. With regard to the definition of “victim”, the State party’s reference to article 63 of the Code of Criminal Procedure in its written replies ([CED/C/GRC/RQ/1](#), para. 87) appeared to be incorrect. The delegation might indicate which provision of Greek law contained the exact definition of “victim” and explain how that definition met the requirements of the Convention.

11. She would appreciate further information on the measures in place to guarantee victims’ right to know the truth; on the procedures in place to enable victims to obtain reparation and compensation; on any time limits for claiming such reparation; and on the kind of compensation and reparation available and the applicable legal provisions.

12. She would be interested to know whether a victim of enforced disappearance was entitled to submit a claim for compensation during the criminal proceedings rather than during separate civil proceedings and, if so, at what stage the victim would normally make such a claim and whether the court was obliged to rule on the claim during the criminal proceedings.

13. She would appreciate more details on the compensation for damages that could be claimed under article 932 of the Civil Code and would like to know, in particular, whether compensation for moral damages could be awarded to the victim’s family even when the act of enforced disappearance had not resulted in the victim’s death and what forms of reparation, other than compensation, were available to victims.

14. She wondered whether a conviction by a criminal court was a precondition for bringing a claim in civil proceedings, whether criminal and civil proceedings could be initiated in parallel and whether the civil court could issue a ruling without waiting for the criminal court to rule. She would also like to know whether the application of the basic 15-year statute of limitations for compensation claims was conditional on a decision by the criminal court. Did a statute of limitations apply in cases where a person had been subjected to enforced disappearance when it constituted a crime against humanity under article 5 of the Convention?

15. With regard to the search for missing or disappeared persons, the Committee would like to see the exact wording of the texts referred to in paragraph 91 of the State party’s written replies and to know whether, in addition to the internal coordination mechanisms of the Hellenic Police, there was an inter-institutional coordination mechanism in place.

16. She would appreciate details on the authority responsible for issuing a declaration of absence and on the procedure to be followed. She wondered whether a declaration of absence was sufficient to grant family members access to the individual’s property and benefits. The delegation might also describe the rules and procedures for declaring a missing person dead.

17. With regard to the protection of children, she would like to know how the wrongful removal of children was addressed in the Criminal Code. She would also appreciate additional information on the mechanisms in place to protect unaccompanied or separated migrant children from enforced disappearance and to facilitate the reporting and investigation of cases of missing unaccompanied minors. Following the decision to discontinue protective custody arrangements for unaccompanied minors in police detention centres, and to transfer such minors to appropriate accommodation facilities, she wondered how many minors had been transferred thus far and to where, how many had been adopted and how many had been

reunited with their families. Lastly, she wished to know what progress had been made towards unifying the various databases currently operated by different State agencies.

18. With regard to article 25 (4) of the Convention, the Committee would be interested to know how the time limits for challenging adoption decisions under the Code of Civil Procedure affected children's right to re-establish their true identity.

19. With regard to the investigations into the disappearance of minors from the Agia Varvara Care Unit, the Committee would like to hear about the outcome of the proceedings before the Athens Court of First Instance, as mentioned in the State party's written replies (CED/C/GRC/RQ/1, para. 123).

The meeting was suspended at 10.40 a.m. and resumed at 10.50 a.m.

20. **Mr. Stamoulis** (Greece), speaking via video link, said that the Greek authorities had received allegations from individuals, international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) of pushbacks on the border between Greece and Turkey, involving collective expulsions, violence on the part of uniformed staff and confiscation of migrants' personal belongings. The police officers responsible for border control received continuous training on all aspects of their work, including the protection of human rights, from organizations such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

21. All allegations of human rights violations were thoroughly investigated by the relevant authorities, such as the Office of the Greek Ombudsman and the National Transparency Authority, in cooperation with the Hellenic Police. Following the investigation, the cases were referred to the appropriate authorities for further action, where applicable.

22. The methods and practices used by border control police were in line with national and European Union law. The two priorities of the border control police were public security and the protection of human rights. Frontex provided staff to monitor human rights protection at the border and to support the Greek authorities in their investigations of alleged violations.

23. There were no secret detention facilities in Greece. Detention was always carried out in accordance with the Code of Criminal Procedure, which required detained persons to be brought before a prosecutor within 24 hours.

24. Pre-removal detention centres were subject to the same standards as arrival hotspot facilities. The Hellenic Police had exclusive responsibility for the centres, although health-care services were typically be provided by other entities. Special attention was paid to meeting the needs of vulnerable groups. For example, families and unaccompanied minors were held separately from other detainees.

25. The persons held in those centres had been detained on the basis of an individual expulsion order issued by the local police chief, which would only be carried out after all technical issues had been resolved. While in detention, they had access to legal assistance and other essential services, and could communicate with the outside world.

26. Greek law set strict limits on detention, which was imposed only for the time necessary for the removal procedure to be completed, or a maximum of six months, which could be extended by a maximum of one year. The maximum period of 18 months was applicable in cases where the foreign national refused to cooperate or where receipt of the necessary documents from third countries was delayed. Detention could be challenged before the administrative courts at any time and was automatically reviewed by the courts every three months.

27. Removal procedures were monitored by the Office of the Greek Ombudsman in cooperation with international organizations and NGOs. Persons in immigration detention were entitled to receive visits, had access to legal aid and were duly informed of the regulations applicable to detention facilities and of their rights and obligations, including their right to contact representatives of UNHCR and NGOs.

28. Persons subject to an administrative return or expulsion order could lodge an appeal with the competent administrative court, which could order enforcement of that decision to be suspended pending review. Removal procedures were carried out in strict compliance with

the principle of non-refoulement set out in article 16 (1) of the Convention, including under the agreement contained in the European Union-Turkey Statement on Refugees and in the context of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

29. **Ms. Avraam** (Greece), speaking via video link, said that an administrative review was conducted promptly in response to each complaint of alleged refoulement or mistreatment of migrants by the Hellenic Coast Guard. In parallel, the cases were referred to the public prosecution authorities. The activities of the Hellenic Coast Guard were monitored by the Office of the Greek Ombudsman and the National Transparency Authority.

30. **Mr. Apostolidis** (Greece), speaking via video link, said that Greek law set out in detail the action to be taken by the Hellenic Police upon receiving a missing person report. That action included the accurate recording of the person's physical characteristics and the place, time and circumstances in which the person had gone missing and the collecting of recent photographs and gathering of information from all possible sources, including hospitals, transport agencies, passport control services and relatives and friends of the missing person. Notification was immediately given to all police bodies and to a central police service so that it could record the incident in the national database of missing persons and the Schengen Information System. A diligent investigation was then conducted, starting from the place where the missing person had last been seen.

31. The Hellenic Police remained in constant contact with the persons who had made the report and cooperated with all relevant authorities, including internationally through channels such as the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation and the International Criminal Police Organization. The above-mentioned action was taken in all missing person cases, regardless of the person's nationality. A specific police body had been designated a central point of reference, issuing operational directives and coordinating the efforts of the different authorities involved in individual cases.

32. **Ms. Halkia** (Greece), speaking via video link, said that all instances of persons being detained on administrative or criminal law grounds were recorded in an official register. Since 2015, the General Secretariat for Anti-Crime Policy had maintained an integrated electronic register, including information about the identity of the person deprived of his or her liberty, the date, time and place of the deprivation of liberty, the authorities responsible for supervising the deprivation of liberty, the persons to be notified in case of emergency and the family and health status of the person deprived of his or her liberty. The date and time of release or transfer to another place of detention, the destination and authority responsible for the transfer, and, where applicable, the circumstances and cause of all deaths during deprivation of liberty were also recorded.

33. The records could be consulted by any judicial or other competent authority. The General Secretariat provided the Office of the Greek Ombudsman with full access to documentation during its inspections of detention centres and investigations into complaints. In accordance with article 17 of the Convention, the Penitentiary Code established the right of detainees to inform a close relative of their detention, to receive visits and to be informed about their rights and obligations. Although the General Secretariat had been forced to suspend in-person visits to detention centres owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, it had created specially equipped spaces where remote visits could take place.

34. **Ms. Goula** (Greece), speaking via video link, said that the national reception system had been overhauled to cope with the continuing mass arrivals of asylum seekers. Appropriate facilities with improved living conditions had been set up at the country's island borders and on the mainland. Legislative amendments, structural reforms and the digitization of procedures, including electronic self-registration and remote interviews, had helped to speed up the asylum process. Asylum applications could be submitted in person at asylum offices, via videoconference or upon referral by social partners. Unsuccessful applicants were provided with free legal assistance to appeal the decision. The backlog of pending applications had decreased by over 50 per cent between 2020 and 2021.

35. According to Eurostat data, the Greek asylum service ranked fourth in the European Union for issuance of final decisions. Asylum seekers arriving in Greece received an initial decision within 29 days of submitting an application. The asylum service conducted regular checks on first instance decisions to ensure compliance with international standards and

European Union directives. Over 8,000 asylum applications had been submitted in the last quarter of 2021.

36. **A representative of Greece**, speaking via video link, said that the practice of placing unaccompanied minors who found themselves without safe housing or held no identification documents in protective custody had been ended by law in December 2020. In April 2021, the State, together with UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and NGOs had operationalized a national emergency response mechanism for all minors in need of immediate protection and accommodation. The mechanism included a hotline, which had received over 2,500 calls relating to almost 2,000 individual cases. The vast majority of calls concerned requests for accommodation and the remaining calls related to requests for other types of support, such as legal aid.

37. The mechanism allowed for the prompt registration of unaccompanied children and their placement in emergency accommodation. Some 160 places were available in the emergency accommodation facility for minors, which was operated in cooperation with IOM. Children could use the 24-hour hotline and request the support of child protection experts and interpreters, if necessary. The mechanism included two helpdesks, located in Athens and Thessaloniki, respectively, and multidisciplinary mobile teams who worked in the field to identify children in need of protection. The mechanism's annual budget, which amounted to around 2 million euros, would be paid through UNHCR until June 2022. Subsequently, the national authorities would secure funding to continue the initiative.

38. **Mr. Kakavoulis** (Greece), speaking via video link, said that all legal issues regarding the detention of asylum seekers and the consideration of appeals against removal decisions had been resolved following the adoption of Law No. 4636/2019, as amended by Law No. 4686/2020, while the procedures for the consideration of appeals by the administrative courts had been accelerated. Anyone with a legitimate interest could request copies of the relevant administrative documents by means of an order from the public prosecution authorities.

39. Under the Constitution, in Greece, persons could be detained only by order of an investigating judge or a court or following an arrest in flagrante delicto. All arrested persons and suspects were entitled to appoint a legal counsel without undue delay. Those provisions precluded the possibility of secret detention.

40. In criminal proceedings for cases of enforced disappearance involving more than one victim, the public prosecutor of the court of first instance could issue an order, subject to judicial approval, prohibiting the alleged perpetrators from leaving the country. The investigating judge could impose pretrial detention regardless of the number of victims. During the preliminary inquiry, alleged perpetrators were obliged to provide an accurate address so that they could be summoned by the competent authorities.

41. Any person with a legitimate interest, including victims and their relatives, could obtain copies of any document in a criminal case file, by decision of the public prosecution authorities during the preliminary inquiry, and by decision of the investigating judge once criminal proceedings had been initiated. Victims of enforced disappearance were entitled to make a statement in support of prosecution during criminal proceedings. They likewise had the right to be informed about the progress of the case, to obtain copies of the case file and to be present, along with their legal counsel, during investigative actions other than the questioning of witnesses and the accused. Victims, or their relatives, could seek compensation for deprivation of liberty, pecuniary losses, moral injury, harm to health or integrity or death without a criminal conviction having been secured. If the perpetrators were private individuals, a civil suit could be filed against them. If the perpetrators were public officials, or the State was liable for omissions, a claim could be brought before the administrative courts. Compensation claims were subject to a term of limitation of five years from the date on which the victim became aware of the damage and the identity of the person liable, or 20 years from the date on which the offence was committed. However, the term of limitation for the crime of enforced disappearance was 15 years, which also applied to related civil claims.

42. The commission of an offence of enforced disappearance against a minor or other vulnerable victim constituted an aggravating circumstance, which would result in the maximum sentence of 15 years' imprisonment being imposed. The penalty for the

falsification of documents attesting to the true identity of children was 10 days to 5 years' imprisonment and a fine of 360 euros to 36,000 euros.

43. As enforced disappearance was a continuous crime, the period of limitation began when the victim regained his or her liberty or was found dead. Under Greek law, any person who had suffered as a result of a criminal offence was considered a victim and could therefore seek compensation without criminal proceedings having to be initiated. Under the national law ratifying the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, no statute of limitations applied to enforced disappearance when it constituted a crime against humanity.

44. **Ms. Zerva** (Greece), speaking via video link, said that, under the Civil Code, the time limit for an appeal against an adoption decision was one year from the date of publication of the decision. The time limit for a third-party appeal was six months from the date of becoming aware of the adoption and three years from the date of the final decision.

45. With regard to the investigations into the disappearance of 500 children from the Agia Varvara State-run care home between 1998 and 2002, the public prosecution authorities had submitted relevant information and no further requests had been received, either by the public prosecution authorities or by the Albanian authorities.

46. The new legal framework governing child protection in institutions, adoption and foster care procedures was aimed at replacing institutional care with a family support model and, where necessary, with family-based alternative care through adoption and foster care.

47. Law No. 4538/2018 on adoption and foster care provided for the simplification of bureaucratic procedures, and the maintenance of national registers of children in institutions and persons who wished to become foster or adoptive parents. Applications for fostering or adoption could be submitted through an electronic platform that guaranteed procedural transparency.

48. Law No. 4837/2021 on child protection laid down strict regulations for the functioning of children's institutions and made it mandatory to appoint highly qualified persons to head such institutions.

49. The country's deinstitutionalization strategy had been drafted with the support of the European Commission, which had specified the reforms required for the development of an institutional and financial framework that would eventually lead to the closure of all institutions. The tools used included early childhood intervention, the transfer of adolescents from child protection centres to semi-autonomous apartments, and the promotion of adoption and foster care in accordance with the relevant legislation.

50. **Ms. Kolaković-Bojović** said that, according to the State party, no official complaints had been received regarding the disappearance of around 3,000 children who had been illegally adopted in Greece between 1930 and 1970 and had allegedly been taken to the United States of America and the Netherlands. As the public prosecution authorities could investigate a case of enforced disappearance in the light of available information without receiving an official complaint, the Committee would like to know whether they had investigated any public allegations relating to that period.

51. The Committee would also appreciate further information on the investigations conducted into cases of migrant children missing from arrival hotspot facilities.

52. **Ms. Villa Quintana** said that she wished to know which legal provisions explicitly prohibited secret detention and whether independent human rights organizations might have a role to play in supervising existing reception centres, arrival hotspot facilities and other areas with a large inflow of migrants.

53. The delegation might explain how the safeguards provided for in the Code of Criminal Procedure were aligned with article 17 (2) (d) of the Convention, according to which persons deprived of their liberty must be allowed to communicate with and receive visits from members of their family, lawyers and any other persons of their choice. She would also welcome information on any complaints filed in that connection, procedures for submitting complaints to the Office of the Greek Ombudsman, which was the national mechanism for the prevention of torture, the number of reports issued by the Office of the Greek Ombudsman and the follow-up action taken.

54. The Committee would appreciate additional data on the official registers of persons deprived of their liberty, including in the five arrival hotspot facilities and psychiatric hospitals. The data should include the details listed in article 17 (3) of the Convention. She wished to know whether persons with a legitimate interest in the information set forth in article 18 of the Convention could take legal action to obtain immediate access to it and whether the aforementioned registers were regularly updated and monitored.

55. It would be useful to hear about the penalties that could be imposed for conduct that delayed or impeded the release of persons deprived of their liberty and other violations of article 22 of the Convention, and to learn about the procedures for reporting and overseeing a person's release.

56. According to the State party, free legal aid and interpretation services were available to all. However, the Committee had received information to the contrary. If the State party had received as many as 8,000 asylum applications, she wondered how the requisite number of lawyers and interpreters could be provided. The Committee would also be grateful for additional information on the asylum procedure leading to a final decision.

57. Lastly, she wished to know whether regular training on the Convention was provided to coastguards, police officers, prosecutors and the authorities responsible for processing asylum applications with a view to meeting the objectives set by article 23 of the Convention, such as prevention of the involvement of officials in enforced disappearance and prohibition of the issuing of orders or instructions authorizing or encouraging enforced disappearance.

58. **Ms. Janina** said that the military junta that had ruled the State party in the 1970s had committed many human rights abuses. She wondered whether those abuses had included acts of enforced disappearance and, if so, whether steps had been taken to guarantee the right to know the truth about the fate of the victims.

59. She would appreciate clarification on the applicability of the principle of double criminality, which was exercised in the State party's jurisdiction for offences of enforced disappearance committed abroad by Greek nationals. She understood from article 8 of the Criminal Code that the double criminality requirement did not have to be met in order to prosecute State agents, but it was unclear whether the same was true for non-State actors who acted with the authorization of the State. She wished to know whether there was a particular provision of the Criminal Code under which jurisdiction could be exercised over cases covered by article 9 of the Convention, regardless of the nationality of the offender and the victim.

60. She would be interested to know whether, in the context of asylum, the State party recognized the concept of a safe third country of origin and, if so, how many countries were included in that list. She also wished to know whether there was an accelerated procedure for reviewing asylum applications from nationals of listed countries and whether they were entitled to lodge an appeal and request suspension of asylum proceedings.

61. **Mr. Apostolidis** (Greece) said that requests for international protection by detained foreign nationals were carefully examined before any return decision was carried out and that a significant number of special tools were available for that purpose. Expert investigators from the Office of the Greek Ombudsman supervised the entire process, in cooperation with members of the Hellenic Police. Special deprivation of liberty facilities came under the remit of the Office of the Greek Ombudsman with the support, where necessary, of the Hellenic Police. Up-to-date training in human rights was provided in the Schools of the Police Academy.

62. **Ms. Goula** (Greece) said that, since 2020, the legal provisions on the protection of unaccompanied minors had undergone significant improvements. The State took all possible measures to prevent children from going missing. Legal pathways for joining family members or ethnic communities in other countries had been established through multilateral agreements. Training and awareness-raising workshops on the risks of abuse and exploitation of minors were organized for professionals. Employability programmes were run by many NGOs.

63. Accommodation capacity for unaccompanied minors had increased considerably; it was estimated that around 2,100 of the 2,500 places for unaccompanied minors in accommodation facilities around the country were currently occupied.

64. A vulnerability assessment was conducted when minors arrived at reception and identification centres. When it was suspected that a child was a victim of trafficking, the national mechanism for the identification and referral of victims of trafficking was immediately notified, and standard operating procedures were followed. Children were promptly referred to the accommodation mechanism with a view to being placed in long-term accommodation facilities on the mainland.

65. The voluntary relocation programme and family reunification procedures were implemented with the assistance of the Special Secretariat for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors and the support of the European Commission, UNHCR and numerous national actors. Children were thus transferred lawfully to other European Union countries and the risk of trafficking, exploitation or other illegal acts was eliminated.

66. Former unaccompanied minors took part in mentorship programmes. A comprehensive social integration programme for teenagers in accommodation facilities was being designed with the assistance of the United Nations Children's Fund. A similar support programme for young adults in the 18–21 age group was being developed with IOM and local administrative authorities.

67. A five-year plan for the protection of unaccompanied minors, focusing on reception conditions, access to rights, durable solutions, protection from violence and exploitation, and data collection, had been developed. As all minors were placed in long-term accommodation facilities, the staff of such facilities were authorized by the public prosecution authorities to act in their best interests and to represent them whenever necessary. The legal and operational framework for the guardianship of unaccompanied minors was currently being reformed.

68. **Mr. Gioutikas** (Greece), speaking via video link, said that, under the Code of Criminal Procedure, victims were entitled to appoint two lawyers at the pretrial stage and three lawyers during the trial. All costs could be covered by the State.

69. With regard to the principle of double criminality, article 8 of the Criminal Code, read in conjunction with article 9 (2) of Law No. 4268/2014, stipulated that Greek criminal law was applicable to both Greek and foreign nationals, regardless of the law in force in the country where the crimes were committed.

70. If the competent authorities perpetrated any of the acts described in article 22 of the Convention, complainants could invoke article 259 of the Criminal Code on breaches of duty.

71. Law No. 4478/2017, which incorporated the provisions of European Union Directive 2012/29/EU, establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, was designed to, inter alia, protect victims and promote restorative justice.

72. Under the Criminal Code, victims of enforced disappearance continued to enjoy their property rights while they were deprived of their liberty. A certificate of absence or death of a disappeared person could be produced upon the request of an interested party if it could be proven that their relatives were unable to locate them. There was no minimum period of absence. The investigation of a disappearance would continue until the perpetrators had been identified and the fate of the disappeared person had been discovered.

73. **Ms. Halkia** (Greece) said that, according to official records, the General Secretariat for Anti-Crime Policy was responsible for 11,500 detainees. More detailed statistics on the crimes committed by those detainees could be extracted upon request. The General Secretariat granted the Office of the Greek Ombudsman full access to relevant information during the investigations it conducted in its capacity as national preventive mechanism.

74. Prison staff received continuous training in all relevant aspects of international law, including international human rights law.

75. **Ms. Zerva** (Greece) said that, according to the records of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, all the adoptions that had taken place between 1930 and 1970 had been

recognized by the courts in Greece and in the destination country. The Ministry had assisted every adopted person who wished to discover their roots.

76. **Mr. Karampatsakidis** (Greece), speaking via video link, said that members of the Greek armed forces received training in all aspects of international humanitarian law, including relevant aspects of enforced disappearance. A handbook had been issued to reinforce that training, which was conducted by members of the legal corps of the armed forces and academics. Training seminars were intended for all personnel, regardless of rank, and were compulsory in most cases.

77. **Mr. Albán-Alencastro** said that he would like to receive further information on the safeguards in place to ensure that detainees, particularly foreign nationals, were informed of their rights and had access to a lawyer. He would like to know how the right to communicate with family members and to receive legal or consular services was ensured for individuals held in migrant detention centres and for other persons deprived of their liberty, such as patients in psychiatric hospitals.

78. It would be helpful to receive more information on the records kept in prisons, migrant detention centres and other places where persons could be deprived of their liberty. Who was responsible for maintaining those records and ensuring that there were no errors or omissions?

79. **Ms. Kolaković-Bojović** said that she would be grateful if the delegation could provide more information on the support services available to victims. She would like to know whether there was a nationwide network of such services, who was responsible for providing them, what kind of services were available, at which stage of proceedings those services became accessible and which services were available to the families of missing migrants.

80. **Ms. Villa Quintana** said that she would like to know whether the 11,500 detainees who were currently under the supervision of the General Secretariat for Anti-Crime Policy included migrants. If that was the case, she wished to know the status of those migrants, where they were being held and whether they were asylum seekers or had been accused of a crime. She would likewise appreciate clarification on whether legal assistance was available free of charge to persons deprived of their liberty, including asylum seekers. Information on any disappearances involving non-State actors would also be welcome. The delegation could reply to the remainder of the Committee's questions and provide the requested clarifications in writing.

81. **Ms. Lochbihler** said that the delegation might explain the discrepancy between the information contained in the initial report and that received from alternative sources about the mistreatment and pushbacks of migrants. She would also like to know more about the work of the Office of the Greek Ombudsman and whether the Office had sufficient resources to carry out its mandate.

82. **A representative of Greece** said that data on the migrant population in Greece was stored in a variety of databases operated by different agencies. The Government was in the process of linking those databases to make those data more readily accessible. A database of unaccompanied minors and migrant families was being created by the competent authorities.

83. **Ms. Halkia** (Greece) said that she wished to clarify that the previously cited number of detainees, 11,500, did not include migrants, rather only persons who had been deprived of their liberty by court order. Those individuals were being held in detention centres.

84. **Mr. Gioutikas** (Greece) said that, under the Code of Criminal Procedure, when an investigation was opened, the investigating judge and the public prosecution authorities were obliged to inform the victim and the accused of all their rights, including their right to legal counsel. The right of victims to free and confidential support services, including legal counsel, was guaranteed under Greek law. The Office of the Greek Ombudsman was an entirely independent authority with sufficient resources to provide the highest level of protection to victims.

85. **Mr. Alexandris** (Greece), speaking via video link, said that all persons present on Greek territory, including asylum seekers, enjoyed rights under the Constitution. He wished to thank the Committee members for their questions, to which the delegation would continue

to make efforts to respond. The dialogue had proved to be a useful exercise that would inform his Government's future work.

86. **The Chair**, thanking the delegation for its participation, said that the State party and the Committee were working towards a common objective: ensuring the full implementation of the Convention. The State party could count on the Committee's continued support in that regard.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.