

**RECORDING NETWORK OF INCIDENTS OF RACIST VIOLENCE
PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS OF THE PILOT PHASE
1.10.2011-31.12.2011**

With the initiative of the Greek National Commission for Human Rights (GNCHR) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees in Greece (UNCHR), the **Racist Violence Recording Network** was created with the participation of 18 non-governmental organizations and other actors: Aitima, Antigone, Medecins du Monde, Amnesty International, the Hellenic League for Human Rights, the Greek Agreements' Observatory of Helsinki, the Greek Council for Refugees, the Greek Forum of Migrants, the Greek Forum of Refugees, the Day's Centre 'Babel', the Defense Move of the Rights of Refugees and Migrants (Patras), the METAdrasi, the Universal Programme for Refugees, the Group of Lawyers for the Rights of Refugees and Migrants, the Legal Group for the Defense of the Rights of Refugees and Migrants (Thessaloniki), the Migrants' Forum in Creta, the i-RED Institute for Rights, Equality and Diversity and PRAKSIS, as well as the Greek Ombudsman as an observer. The participating actors have signed a cooperation agreement **aiming to compensate the vacuum created by the absence of a formal and effective system for recording incidents and trends of racism and racist violence in Greece**, according to the international and European obligations of the state. The Recording Network is open to any actor having the required participation characteristics, meaning providing medical, social and legal services and / or comes to direct contact with victims of racist violence.

The systematic recording of racist violence acts started with a pilot phase on 1 October and a common **Recording Form of Racist Incident** in order to provide as clear and comprehensive indications of the quantitative and qualitative trends in racist violence in Greece as possible. Within three months of the pilot phase, incidents were recorded mainly within the geographical area where the participant organisations are active, namely in the areas of downtown Athens (near Omonia Square, in Attica Square, in Agios Panteleimon) and in certain areas of Patras. Therefore, due to the severe geographical limitations and the recording method based on the victim's **voluntary testimony**, the results represent a small to bare minimum sample of the real situation. The participant organisations noted that even in cases where the victim, often with fresh signs of violence is addressing their services for some help, still avoids filing a complaint. The reasons of this reluctance can be found on fear, lack of confidence in the system and sometimes the passive familiarity with racist behavior.

In brief, during the period 1.10.2011-31.12.2011 **63 incidents of racist violence** were registered. In **51** of them **more than one perpetrators** were involved.

Data regarding the perpetrators: 18 perpetrators seem to operate as members of extremist groups and **26 as individual citizens**. Most **perpetrators** are **men** (61 versus 2 women). Note however that in group incidents women are involved as well.

Details regarding the victims: mostly **men**, a ratio of 56 to 7 women (in cases with more than one victims the recording was based on one victim's testimony). The victims mainly come from Afghanistan (25), Sub-Saharan Africa (21), Bangladesh (4) and Pakistan (2).

From the victims' total, **27 are undocumented, 23 are asylum seekers, 5 are legal residents 5, 1 is a recognized refugee and 1 has the subsidiary protection status** (in 6 cases the victim's status is unknown).

Information regarding the racist act: mostly personal injury (30) and severe injury (12) (10 needed medical care). There were, finally, cases of property destruction (destruction of grocery delivery vehicle, flower shop arson).

Additionally, what follows is a trend of **group violence involving minors**. In those cases what is documented is the **basic organization in the public space** (squares, etc.) and the **use of mainly**

improvised weapons, however potential lethal. Moreover, what is documented is the "patrol" practice by motorcyclists dressed in black with **helmets or covered faces**, attacking on the move and often at bus stops. The teams also use **large dogs** for intimidation. The attacks against women have evidence of sexual threat to their dignity explicitly linked to their color.

A special category is formed by the 18 incidents where the **police is linked to racist violence** (10 in Athens and 8 in Patras). These are incidents where police officers exercising their functions and in routine patrols resort to unlawful acts and practices of violence. There were also cases where people were brought to the police stations, were detained and ill-treated for some hours, and had their legal documents destroyed. In one case, a police officer destroyed medicines that the alien was provided with in a NGO clinic.

The **Racist Violence Recording Network** concludes that the results of the pilot phase are extremely alarming and that the anxiety is increasing due to the fact that it is not even the tip of the iceberg. The short-lived pilot phase, the limited resources of the Network, the need to strengthen cooperation with immigrant communities and the frequent occurrence of incidents in other public areas from where participant actors are based reveal that racist violence is spreading with terrifying speed and threatens the already affected social cohesion. It is noted with the utmost emphasis that under the circumstances of the present economic recession, damage of the social rupture, social rapid marginalization of population groups, the phenomenon threatens to take other dimensions.

The **Recording Network of Incidents of Racist Violence** recalls that impunity is fueling crime, perpetuates the vicious cycle of violence and stirs up social strife. For these reasons, it proposes to the State:

→the creation of a **single special racist crime recording system**, which will be managed by the Ministry of Justice. This system will link data from NGOs, hospitals and other appropriate bodies.

→ the **constant collaboration** with the Recording Network of Incidents of Racist Violence, NGOs and migrant communities, which are in direct contact with the victims, in order to find appropriate solutions and design specific measures against racist violence.

→ to **establish specific guidelines on the police's procedures investigating racist crime**, to fight police's tolerance of such behavior and to ensure that perpetrators are referred to justice, according to the rules.

The organizations and institutions involved in the Network are aware that the serious problems of degradation and increased delinquency, characterizing a range of areas where large numbers of marginalized migrants and refugees are concentrated, constitute a fertile ground for the development of social tensions, racist behavior, and even tolerance of racially motivated acts by a portion of the population. Therefore, we note that the above suggestions in order to effectively deal with acts of racist violence, have to be accompanied by measures and policies aiming to improve the feeling of security in neighborhoods, countering human trafficking, drug dealing, prostitution and crime, upgrading these areas and relieving the entire population, reducing the ghettos formed by the poor / homeless migrants and refugees and promoting their social inclusion, wherever possible.

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