



Greek National Commission for Human Rights (GNCHR)

**Reply of the GNCHR
to the Questionnaire on the report of the United Nations High
Commissioner for Human Rights: “Accelerating efforts to eliminate all
forms of violence against women and girls: preventing and responding to
all forms of violence against women and girls in criminal justice detention”**



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The Greek National Commission for Human Rights (GNCHR) is the independent advisory body to the Greek State on matters pertaining to human rights protection and the National Human Rights Institution (NHRI). It was established in accordance with the UN Paris Principles and is governed by Law 4780/2021. Its members are persons appointed by forty-two institutions whose activities cover the field of human rights (independent Authorities, universities, third level trade unions, NGOs, political parties and the Administration).

ANNEX

Questionnaire on the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights: “Accelerating efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls: preventing and responding to all forms of violence against women and girls in criminal justice detention.”
Please provide information including with regard to the following:

1.

Could you share up-to-date disaggregated data based on gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, and any other relevant category on the following:
a) number of sentenced and unsentenced in your country

The General Secretariat for Criminal Policy of the Ministry of Citizen Protection in Greece provides [annual statistical data](#) on the country’s prison population. This data is organized into categories such as detainees awaiting trial, foreign nationals, women, juveniles (ages 15–18), young adults (ages 18–25), adults (ages 25+), and individuals convicted of specific offenses, such as drug law violations. Additional distinctions are made for prisoners serving life sentences, those with fixed-term sentences (further broken down by years), detainees held in special correctional facilities, individuals under therapeutic measures, and those detained due to unpaid debts. According to the latest available data (1/1/2024), there are 10,242 detainees in total, with 2,765 awaiting trial. This group of unsentenced detainees constitutes approximately 27.0% of the overall prison population. However, while the data includes some breakdown by gender (such as the total number of women detainees) and age categories, it lacks further disaggregation for other critical demographic and social factors. Specifically, there is no information provided on the ethnicity, religion, or disability status of detainees, nor on the specific needs of subpopulations within the prison system. Additionally, data on gender within the unsentenced detainee population is not separately disclosed, limiting insights into the number of women awaiting trial.

The absence of published data on ethnicity, religion, disability, and other relevant categories presents a barrier to fully understanding the composition and needs of Greece’s prison population.

More information can be found at the following table:

A/A	Description	1/1/2024
1	Total detainees	10.242
2	Unsentenced persons	2.765
3	Foreigners	5.562
4	Women	496
5	Minors	

5α	Minors (15+-18 years old)	30
5β	Young adults (18+-25 years old)	1094
5γ	Adults (από 25+ και άνω)	9118

Source: [General Secretariat of Criminal Policy, Ministry of Citizen Protection](#)

b)

Offences or reasons for detention;

According to the data published by the General Secretariat for Criminal Policy, there are currently 1,876 detainees held for drug-related offenses. However, it is important to note that the officially published statistical tables do not categorize detainees by specific crimes committed but rather by the type of penalties imposed. This approach means that while the data includes detainees under various sentencing categories (such as life sentences, fixed-term imprisonment, and those under therapeutic measures), it does not specify the offenses leading to detention, aside from general categories such as drug law violations. The lack of offense-specific data limits the ability to analyze the detainee population based on the nature of crimes committed, making it challenging to assess trends or patterns in criminal offenses within the prison system. Enhanced data collection and reporting, with a focus on offenses rather than solely on penalties, would offer a more comprehensive understanding of the detainee demographics and the factors contributing to incarceration.

c)

Number of detention facilities in your country, specifying how many are designated for women and whether these facilities are separate from those for men or are annexes of male prisons;

Greece operates [a total of 35 correctional facilities](#), of which two are specifically designated for women. These women's facilities are entirely separate from those housing male detainees. The Korydallos Correctional Facility primarily accommodates women awaiting trial, whereas the Eleonas Thiva Correctional Facility is designated mainly for convicted women.

d)

Gender-based violence against women and girls in criminal justice detention, including the number of cases reported to independent oversight mechanisms and/or number of cases reported/prosecuted/adjudicated and types of violence?

The annual reports on violence against women, published by the General Secretariat for Gender Equality and Human Rights (Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family), do not include information concerning incidents of gender-based violence occurring in criminal justice detention facilities. Furthermore, the General Secretariat for Criminal Policy (Ministry of Citizen Protection) has not provided any relevant data on reported cases, prosecutions, or adjudications

involving such incidents. Additionally, there is no official data available regarding the Greek Ombudsman.

2.

What good practices, effective strategies, and measures have been adopted for preventing violence against women and girls in criminal justice detention?

The latest [Annual Report of Violence against Women \(2023\)](#) from the Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family highlights several measures and strategies undertaken in Greece to prevent violence against women and girls in criminal justice detention settings. The Independent Office of Equality, in collaboration with the Regional Equality Committee of Crete, Municipal Equality Committees, and local social organizations, organized a series of educational and awareness-raising activities targeting both incarcerated women and the wider community. These initiatives included distributing posters and leaflets to Neapolis Prison, schools in the Regional Unit of Heraklion, women's associations, and municipal equality committees, with the goal of raising awareness about preventing and addressing gender-based violence.

Additionally, the Greek NGO Diotima organized a [Gender Equality Week at Thiva Prison](#), dedicated to promoting gender equality and addressing violence. This program focused on informing incarcerated women about the support services provided by the Diotima Center, equipping them with knowledge of legal rights, resources, and support systems available to them. By offering information on tools and opportunities for reintegration, the initiative emphasized the importance of empowerment during incarceration to reduce the impact of social exclusion post-release, facilitating their successful reintegration into society.

3.

Please provide examples of good practices for non-custodial measures for women in your country, including at the pre-trial, sentencing, and post-sentencing stages.

Community service as a non-custodial measure is recognized under Greek law (Article 81, Law 5090/2024) as either a primary penalty or as an option to convert imprisonment (Article 104 of the Penal Code) for sentences not exceeding two years. This measure applies to all genders and requires the consent of the convicted individual. The Penal Code provides also special provisions for mothers with children up to eight years old who have been sentenced to imprisonment of up to eight years (Serving of Sentence at Home, Article 105, Law 4619/2019).

Regarding sentencing, the General Secretariat of Criminal Policy in 2024 has issued two guides that are referring to vulnerable populations:

- [Guide for the treatment of LGBTQI+ Prisoners](#): Aligning with the National Strategy for LGBTQI+ Equality, this guide focuses on protecting the human rights of all inmates, specifically LGBTQI+ individuals. It aims to improve daily life for both prisoners and correctional staff by promoting dignity and

preventing all forms of harassment through education and training. In this regard, this guide address inter alia femininities in prison.

- [Guide for the treatment of prisoners with disabilities](#): This guide aims to equip correctional officers with the appropriate tools to interact positively with inmates who have diverse backgrounds and needs. It emphasizes treatment based on human rights and the rule of law, ensuring that prisoners with disabilities receive appropriate care and consideration. Especially, in the context of intersectionality this guide could be regarded as an added value i.e., for women with disabilities.

As for reintegration and post-sentencing stages, [EPANODOS](#), the legal person governed by private law non-profit-making and supervised by the Ministry of Citizen Protection serves as the first and only official organization dedicated to post-penal care in Greece. EPANODOS collaborates with [designated reintegration liaisons](#) (social workers, psychologists, etc.) across the country's correctional facilities. According to the [latest annual report of EPANODOS \(2023\)](#) it is noted that between July and August 2023, EPANODOS conducted 20 summer educational programs across 18 correctional facilities, each lasting 60 hours and concluding in September. Specifically, at the Women's correctional Facility of Eleonas Thiva, a Greek language course was provided to 25 female inmates, aiding in their personal development and future reintegration. Also, EPANODOS in 2023 provided services to 344 individuals—significantly increasing from 192 in 2022—through 1,459 scheduled meetings (an average of 4.2 meetings per person). Services were offered both in person at their offices and via telephone consultations (95 total—86 men and 9 women). To address housing needs, EPANODOS facilitated accommodation for 102 released individuals (98 men and 4 women), totaling 807 overnight stays. Additionally, they have published a [hosting guide](#) with information on accommodation facilities throughout Greece. The percentage of women served is notably lower than that of men, reflecting the underrepresentation of women in the prison population. However, the ratio of female beneficiaries has remained relatively stable over the years, with minor fluctuations. While progress has been made, attention to increased support for women, particularly in post-release services, would further enhance these initiatives. In addition, EPANODOS has published a [concise guide](#) about the rights of prisoners and ex-prisoners.

In addition, there is the initiative “[KETHEA EN DRASI](#)”, which is a comprehensive programme consisting of counselling, treatment and social reintegration for former inmates who are drug users.

KETHEA EN DRASI runs therapeutic communities within the prison system in the Korydallos Remand Prisons, the Korydallos II Detention Centre, and the Eleonas Women's Prison in Thiva. They are housed in areas which the prisons have set aside for them and welcome prisoners who have completed a counselling

programme. Their goal is to help the participants towards full recovery and to prepare them for social reintegration. Their daily schedule includes treatment, education and training. In Athens, KETHEA EN DRASEI runs a Welcome Centre for Released Prisoners and a Rehabilitation Centre. Prisoners who have participated in a treatment programme while in prison are referred to the Reception Centre after their release. They join the treatment phase which is best suited to their individual needs: preparation and mobilization for treatment, the main treatment phase (Therapeutic Community), or social reintegration. All ex-prisoners who are drug users can apply to the Welcome Centre; they do not need to have participated in a treatment programme while serving their sentence. Addicted mothers and their children can also be given treatment and accommodation at the Welcome Centre. Emphasis is given to the mothers' full recovery and to supporting them in their parental role. All KETHEA EN DRASI services in Athens are provided on a daily outpatient basis. The homeless and users from outside Attica can be provided accommodation in the programme's hostel. Special emphasis is given to keeping the participants in touch with the wider community through professional, educational and social activities.

Civil Society is also operating in Greek prisons: Examples of initiatives led by civil society include:

The [Women Prisoners and Ex-prisoners' Supporting Network](#). The Support Network for prisoners and ex-prisoners Women is a non-profit organization primarily dedicated to supporting women who have experienced or are experiencing incarceration in correctional facilities. The Network's core principle is a sense of solidarity based on equality, rather than charity, toward individuals belonging to this vulnerable population group. The Network's support for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women can take the form of: a) Material assistance (financial aid, clothing, food, household items, etc.), b) Educational and training support (development of programs on Health Education and Legal Support, classes, organization of seminars and workshops), c) Counseling (psychosocial support, connecting women with support networks, etc.), d) Provision of legal services.

The [Support Office for Released and Detained Persons](#) of the NGO 'Arsis' was established in December 2018. The aim of the Office is to prepare the social integration of detainees who are about to be released, recently released individuals, as well as the families of individuals who are either detained or have been recently released. The primary objective of the Office is the multifaceted support of these individuals and their families, depending on their needs, specific characteristics, and the difficulties each person faces in their effort to secure the necessary conditions for a decent living and smooth reintegration into economic and social life. Within this framework, the actions of the Office are developed along two axes: 1) Actions carried out within correctional facilities (Thessaloniki

Correctional Detention Facility in Diavata Thessaloniki, the Central Macedonia III Central Correctional Facility in Nigrita Serres, and the Kassandra Agricultural Correctional Detention Facility in Kassandra Chalkidiki). Specialized social scientists visit the above detention facilities to inform detainees who are about to be released in the upcoming period. 2) Actions carried out outside the correctional facilities, at the location where the Support Office for Released Persons is housed, which welcomes both individuals who have been released and their families, as well as the families of detainees.

4.

What are the measures in place, including institutions, mechanisms, policies, and good practices for monitoring and responding to cases of gender-based violence against women in detention? For example:

✓

Does your national legal and policy framework establish a specialised independent body to proactively monitor places of detention and to attend to individual complaints of gender-based violence against women?

Greece ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment through Law 4228/2014. Furthermore, under the second article of this law, the Ombudsman was designated as the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture. The mission of the National Preventive Mechanism (hereinafter NPM) includes the regular examination of the treatment of individuals deprived of their liberty, issuing recommendations for improvement to the relevant authorities, and submitting proposals and observations regarding existing legislation or any draft laws. According to Article Four of Law 4228/2014, the NPM is authorized to conduct visits to all public or private places of deprivation of liberty, with or without prior notification to the relevant authorities. Its [latest report 2022](#) the NPM does not mention issues related to gender-based violence. However, the latest [report](#) of the National Prevention Mechanism for the Investigation of Arbitrary Incidents (E.MH.ΔI.Π.A) 2023 notes that, in many cases where the complainants belong to vulnerable groups (whether young people, **women**, foreigners, or victims of discrimination due to racial origin), the withdrawal or complete reversal of their initial complaint results in these cases not being investigated. Consequently, this strengthens suspicions of an unreported number of such cases. Also, The disciplinary reality in 2023 continues to fall short of the heightened requirements that define and set boundaries for the administrative investigation of complaints of detainee ill-treatment, including, among others, cases involving women who found themselves in a similarly vulnerable position (Files 304104, 299881, 305522, 306587, and 284470), with one of these cases (File 284470) being the third in a series of complaints from female detainees in the same administrative detention facility in Athens. In the latter case, the findings of the internal administrative inquiry concluded with a recommendation to refer

the involved police officer for dismissal on charges of attempting to exploit a detainee for sexual acts, pursuant to subsection (c) of Article 343 of the Penal Code. It is worth noting, however, that the second case in sequence (File 273572) also involved, among other things, an incident of alleged sexual harassment that reportedly took place six months prior to the above-mentioned order for an internal inquiry, in the same administrative detention facility and involving the same police officer. This case was archived 'due to lack of evidence'.

✓

Is there a national plan, policy, or strategy to address gender-based violence against women in criminal justice detention that is overseen by a national institution?

According to the [National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2021-2025](#), the following are foreseen:

-Operation of a creative activity center for children of incarcerated women, aged 1.5 to 2.5 years, who live with their mothers within the detention facility. Specifically, from the age of 2.5 years, the children of incarcerated mothers are transported, under the care of the facility, to a public nursery school in Thiva on a daily basis for their attendance until the age of three (3) years, at which point their residence within the detention facility ceases.

-Implementation of a research program for the pilot operation of a family support intervention at the Women's Detention Facility of Elaionas Thiva, as well as the evaluation of the intervention. The intervention will aim at researching, providing, and evaluating specialized support services to the families of the incarcerated, in order to make it possible to maintain and strengthen the family bonds of incarcerated women.

-Training of women who are about to be released and those who have been released on issues of family reintegration.

-Training and education of women who are about to be released and those who have been released on specific issues of integration into the labor market.

-Training of human resources (detention facilities, Police, Public Employment Services, Municipalities, Asylum Services, Immigration Services, etc.) on issues of family reintegration of incarcerated and released women.

-Also foreseen are research on incarcerated mothers as well as a study on sexual violence in prisons, updating of a guide for incarcerated women, and creation of a pilot family counseling support office in selected detention facilities.

The last report on the planning, creation of standards, and monitoring of gender equality policies was published in 2020 before the new National Action Plan for Gender Equality came into effect. Since then, no interim report/account has been published regarding the National Action Plan 2021-2025.

✓

To what extent do capacity building programmes for prison staff and policies and

regulations on the conduct of prison staff address gender-based violence in criminal justice detention?

A certified seminar titled "[Training of correctional officers of women's prisons on gender issues](#)" is conducted throughout the year specifically for correctional officers working in women's prisons. The training is designed and implemented by the Training Institute of the National Centre of Public Administration and Local Government (ESSDA) in collaboration with the General Secretariat of Equality and Human Rights of the Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family, and the Ministry of Citizen Protection.

5.

What avenues do women have to access justice, remedies, and reparations when they face gender-based violence in criminal justice detention?

According to the Penitentiary Code (article. 6, L.4985/2022) in the case of an illegal act against them or an illegal order, detainees have the right to refer in writing and within a reasonable time to the Prison Council, provided that, according to the provisions of this Code, no other legal remedy is available to them. Within fifteen (15) days from the notification of the decision rejecting their request or within one (1) month from the submission of the report, if no decision has been issued, detainees have the right to appeal to the Sentence Execution Court. This Court, if it accepts the appeal on its merits, removes the consequences arising from the illegal act or order. The competent service of the Ministry of Citizen Protection, which supervises the operation of the facility, ensures immediate compliance with the decision of the Prison Council, revokes the illegal act, satisfies the request of the detainee, and checks those responsible. The management of the facility is obliged to forward, at the latest within three days, any report or letter from a detainee addressed to a public authority or international organization, without being aware of its content. For this purpose, a special protocol book is kept.

Through the [Bar Associations](#), detainees could have support in courts via the institution of Legal. The institution of legal aid within the framework of criminal proceedings was regulated for the first time in Greece with the introduction of Article 96A of the Code of Criminal Procedure through Article 17 of Law 2721/1999. This was subsequently repealed by Law 3226/2004, which—up to today, as amended by Law 4596/2019—comprehensively regulates the issue of legal aid in criminal cases, as well as in civil and commercial cases. In addition, legal counseling is provided is offered by civil society organizations specialized in gender-based violence such as Diotima.

6.

What rehabilitation and social reintegration programmes and services are available for women affected by gender-based violence against women in criminal

justice detention in your country, both in prison and after release? How do these activities and services promote women's physical and psychological well-being while facilitating their reintegration into society, including the labour market?

As it is mentioned above, EPANODOS offers counselling along with civil societies organisations. Regarding especially after release period there are the [counselling centers](#) of the General Secretariat for Gender Equality and Human Rights and also at the Municipalities i.e. as the [Center for Combating Gender-Based Violence and Multiple Discrimination](#) established at the City of Athens.

Under certain conditions, a special allowance is provided to released prisoners. Individuals who have served a custodial sentence (released prisoners), provided that their sentence was equal to or greater than two (2) months and was not interrupted under the condition of payment of a financial guarantee, and have a positive recommendation from the prison social worker or the prison director (if there is no Social Service in the prison). With Joint Ministerial Decision 113582/29.12.2023 (Government Gazette B 7469/2023), the terms and conditions are defined for the granting of the special allowance (Article 22, paragraph 6 of Law 1836/1989) provided by Public Employment Service - DYPA to vulnerable groups of the population. The amount of the allowance amounts to €718.5 (37.5 daily unemployment benefits) and is increased by 10% for each indirectly insured dependent member. It is granted once every two years.

DYPA also, through educational programs, attempts to enhance the employment of vulnerable and special groups of the population who are threatened with exclusion from the labor market. In this context, DYPA collaborates with the General Secretariat of Anti-Crime Policy of the Ministry of Citizen Protection and implements special educational programs for prisoners, aiming at preparing them for their social and professional reintegration. The programs are implemented through DYPA's Vocational Training Centers (KEK) and have been conducted in various prisons, including the women's prison of [Eleonas Thiva](#).

The Greek National Commission for Human Rights (GNCHR) stresses in its [work](#) the unique needs of incarcerated women, highlighting that these needs often remain insufficiently addressed despite the implementation of positive initiatives. Many face gender-specific challenges such as violence, inadequate healthcare, and weak family support, which often persist after release, deepening their marginalization and complicating reintegration. Addressing these issues requires stronger institutional frameworks with gender-specific policies to protect women's rights both in prison and after release. Collecting gender-disaggregated data. Furthermore, continuous education and capacity-building programs for all staff involved are essential, enabling them to better understand and respond to the specific needs of women in detention. Developing a comprehensive guide for

preventing and addressing gender-based violence in criminal justice detention would also play a crucial role in safeguarding their rights and well-being.

7.

Could you share the name and email of a focal point with whom OHCHR could be in touch?

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