



Concerning rise in online hate speech alongside the escalation of racist violence

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The Racist Violence Recording Network (RVRN) has recently noted an increasing number of incidents of online hate speech. This trend coincides with a rise in incidents of racist violence and underscores the need for close monitoring of the growing spread of hate speech in the digital sphere, as well as its interaction with acts of violence occurring offline.

Illustrative of this trend is the publication of dozens of comments and reactions reproducing or inciting hate speech, as well as racist comments, in response to social media posts by Network members concerning their work and current developments, such as the increase in incidents of racist violence, the anniversary of the Pylos shipwreck, and other related issues. Numerous online homophobic and transphobic attacks were also recorded during Pride Week, targeting both individual users and other member organizations of the Network. The content of these comments, together with the widespread endorsement they receive from platform users, demonstrates the systematic use of social media to disseminate racist, xenophobic, sexist, ableist, homophobic and transphobic rhetoric, and raises growing concerns about the normalization of hate speech online and the increasing targeting of human rights defenders.

At the same time, since the beginning of the year, a series of serious incidents of racist violence has been recorded. These include the organized assault and injury of the President of the Filipino Community of Greece during a cultural festival; the attack against a trans woman in Kallithea; the beating of two young Egyptian men in the same area, accompanied by the dissemination of false information targeting them; a homophobic attack in Zappeion; as well as acts of intimidation involving fascist slogans and Nazi salutes in Alexandroupoli. Against this backdrop, particular concern is caused by public statements made by officials and individuals holding positions of responsibility that contribute to the perpetuation of stereotypes and intolerant rhetoric, particularly against refugees and migrants.

The alarming increase in the dissemination of content that condones or incites racist violence, which becomes even more pronounced during election periods, contributes to creating a climate of fear and insecurity for targeted individuals, communities and those who defend them. It undermines social cohesion and creates conditions conducive to the further escalation of racist violence.

The Network recalls that effectively addressing online hate speech and hate crimes requires the timely recording of incidents, their effective investigation by the competent authorities and the promotion of public discourse that fosters respect for human dignity, diversity and inclusion, and contributes to social cohesion.

The Network will continue to closely monitor these developments and calls on the competent authorities, social media platforms and civil society to exercise heightened vigilance in addressing online hate speech and protecting the individuals, communities and human rights defenders who are targeted.

For more information:

Mariliza Deftou, tel. 2107233216, racistviolence@nchr.gr
www.rvrn.org

The **Racist Violence Recording Network** was established in 2011 by the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) and UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency. The Network comprises of 58 members: Aitima, Solidarity Now, Antigone -Information and Documentation Centre, University of Aegean Anti-Racist Observatory, Arsis, Doctors of the World (MdM), Amnesty International, Network for Children's Rights, Network for Social Support of Refugees and Immigrants, "Pleiades - Hellenic Action for Human Rights", Hellenic League for Human Rights, Hellenic Red Cross, Greek Council for Refugees, Greek Forum of Migrants, Greek Forum of Refugees, Human Rights Commission of the Bar Association of Rhodes, Positive Voice, Medical Intervention, Caritas Athens, Caritas Hellas, Centre for Research on Women's Issues "Diotima", "Babel" Day Centre, Centre for the Support of Repatriated and Migrants - Ecumenical Refugee Program, Network for the Support of Refugee and Migrant Rights (Patras), World Without War and Violence, LATHRA? - Solidarity Committee for Chios refugees, METAction, Rainbow Families, Group of Lawyers for the Rights of Refugees and Migrants, Group of Lawyers for the Support of Refugee and Migrant Rights (Thessaloniki), Homosexual and Lesbian Community of Greece, Association of Afghans United In Greece, Association of Social Workers of Greece, Greek Transgender Support Association, Faros tou kosmou, Forum of Migrants in Crete, Refugee Support Aegean, Act Up Hellas, ASANTE, Colour Youth - LGBTQ Youth Community of Athens, Generation 2.0 RED, HIAS in Greece, HumanRights360, Melissa Network, PRAKSIS, A21, Simeio for studying and fighting the far-right, Lesvos Solidarity, Steps, Legal Centre Lesvos, Aegean Migrant Solidarity | Christian Peacemaker Teams, the Panhellenic Confederation of the Greek Roma "Ellan Passe", International Rescue Committee (IRC), Centre for the Study of Social and Humanitarian Crises (CSSHC), Thessaloniki Pride, I Have Rights, Velos Youth, Mobile Info Team, Athens Pride.