

Respect PIKPA spirit – Respect humanity and dignity

A shelter that has for years been a symbol of humanity and solidarity is forced to close today

Police forces are evacuating PIKPA in Lesvos, a place that hosted thousands of vulnerable asylum seekers and refugees since 2012. They are doing it with no previous notification, on the same day that the European Court of Human Rights was about to judge on the applications for interim measures of two vulnerable cases who had asked for the suspension of their removal. They are doing it despite the fact that, throughout all its years of operation, PIKPA has provided dignified living conditions to its residents in stark contrast to reception facilities run by the state.

The widespread reaction to the Greek Government's intention to move the people hosted in the shelter, at least, saved them from having to be moved to unacceptable conditions, like those prevailing in the new Kara Tepe hosting facility (rightly described as Moria 2.0). They will instead be moved to the old Kara Tepe, which is run by the Municipality with the assistance of UNHCR, as per the government's announcement.ⁱ

However, this facility is also planned to close on 31-12-2020, according to the Ministry's announcement,ⁱⁱ and there is no prospect of creating or preserving a proper reception facility for the most vulnerable. On the contrary, Greek and European authorities are assessing the possibility to create a new closed/controlled center in the middle of nowhere that will *inter alia* further hinder asylum seekers' and refugees' access to crucial services, such as healthcare, while further marginalizing and stigmatizing them, through their isolation them from the local community.

PIKPA's spirit of solidarity should instead prevail: for the sake of the people that the shelter has welcomed over the years, for the sake of the local population that has for years hosted thousands or even millions of people, for the sake of dignity and humanity.

We call on the Greek authorities to:

- Respect the people hosted in PIKPA and provide them with dignified reception conditions, in line with EU law, along with protection of the most vulnerable among them
- Preserve the old Kara Tepe facility, where the special needs of vulnerable persons can be catered for and respected,
- Refrain from creating a closed reception center that will lead to even more pain to persons in a situation of vulnerability

- Respect the right of all people to organize and seek the help of civil society organizations and support initiatives, and especially those, such as LESVOS Solidarity, that are based on the spirit of solidarity and volunteerism.

Signatories

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GREEK COUNCIL FOR REFUGEES (GCR)
GREEK FORUM OF REFUGEES (GFR)
GREEK FORUM OF MIGRANTS
GREEK HOUSING NETWORK
HELLENIC LEAGUE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
HELP REFUGEES/ CHOOSE LOVE
HIAS GREECE
HUMANRIGHTS360
INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE
INTERSOS HELLAS
INTERVOLVE
LEGAL CENTRE LESVOS
LESVOS SOLIDARITY
MOBILE INFO TEAM
NETWORK FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS
ODYSSEA
OXFAM
REFUGEE RIGHTS EUROPE (RRE)
SAFE PLACE GREECE
SOLIDARITYNOW
SYMBIOSIS-SCHOOL OF POLITICAL STUDIES IN GREECE

ⁱ <https://migration.gov.gr/klisimo-domis-pikpa-lesvos/>

ⁱⁱ https://www.ethnos.gr/ellada/125361_lesbos-kleinoyndyo-domes-prosfygon