



(1) Conditions in the camp

- 23 January: Inhuman and degrading camp conditions; Greek state admits lead found on site of 'Moria 2.0'
- 9 February: LCL denounces ongoing failure of Greek authorities to transfer people to the mainland in accordance with their own laws, which amounts to attack on the right to life
- 15 February: Ongoing discriminatory application of COVID-19 restrictions and enforcement
- 4-9 March: Greek government instructed by European Court of Human Rights to guarantee rights of 3 LCL clients: an indictment of reception conditions in Lesvos

(2) Asylum procedures

- 11 January: Procedural violations and confusion surrounding appeals and the right to free legal aid; short notice changes to interviews obstructing access to procedure

(3) Pushbacks

- 9 January: LCL files fourth application to the European Court of Human Rights regarding collective expulsion ("pushback") incidents in the Aegean
- 1 February: LCL publishes report on collective expulsions as crimes against humanity in the Aegean
- 15 February: Legal Centre Lesvos and Front-Lex formally call upon Frontex to suspend or terminate its activities in the Aegean Sea region

(4) Criminalisation

- 21 February: Legal Centre Lesvos and HIAS Greece defend woman facing severe criminal charges in response to her attempt to self-immolate
- 25 February: Client facing smuggling charges avoids pre-trial detention disproportionately used against migrants

- 9 March: Justice for the Moria 6

(5) Political updates and resistance in Lesvos

- 8 January: Takeover of speaker system in Ermou
- 14 January: Greece submits formal request to deport 1,450 people to Turkey
- 3 February: Construction of new ‘controlled’ camp in Lesvos approved in controversial vote
- 16 February: Fascist occupation of local Mytilene high school protesting attendance of migrant children; and anti-fascist resistance
- 28 February: Anti-fascist resistance to far-right actions in Lesvos marking the anniversary of the ‘MAT-invasion’ and recall to Athens
- 17-21 March: 5 years of violence and misery under the EU-Turkey Deal
- 29 March: Spring is the best time to tour Europe’s prison islands for migrants in a helicopter: Yvla Johansson visits Lesvos.

(1) Conditions in the camp

- **23 January: Inhuman and degrading camp conditions; Greek state admits lead found on site of ‘Moria 2.0’**

Mavrovouni / Karatepe ‘Temporary Reception and Identification Centre’ – more commonly known as ‘Moria 2.0’ – is unfit for human habitation. Nobody should be forced to live in the mud, in a tent, by the sea, exposed to all elements. Nobody should have to live in a shelter they are forced to rebuild multiple times a day because it repeatedly collapses or floods in the current conditions of strong wind, heavy rain, hail and snow. Nearly 7,000 people currently live in Moria 2.0. There is insufficient healthcare, privacy, food, electricity, running water, hot showers, operational toilets and other hygiene facilities. Measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are inadequate and physical distancing is impossible, given camp residents have to queue to access all basic necessities. As if this were not enough, on 23 January, the Greek government [publicly](#) confirmed that dangerous levels of lead had been found in the soil samples taken from Moria 2.0. The Greek state knowingly built Moria 2.0 on a site that had been a military firing range from 1926 until its hasty transformation into a camp in September 2020 following the fires that [destroyed Moria camp](#). There is [no level of lead exposure](#) known to be without harmful effects. Lead poisoning causes organ damage, cancer, death. It affects the development of the nervous system and the brain, making lead exposure particularly harmful during pregnancy and for young children – who make up 37% of camp residents. The Greek government continues to [downplay](#) the risk presented by these findings and [insufficient action](#) has been taken to guarantee the non-derogable rights to life of Moria 2.0 residents accommodated near where the high levels of lead were detected.

→ A joint statement signed by LCL denouncing the risks of lead exposure as a threat to the lives of migrants and workers can be found [here](#)

- **9 February: LCL denounces ongoing failure of Greek authorities to transfer people to the mainland in accordance with their own laws, which amounts to attack on the right to life**

On 9 February, the Legal Centre Lesvos submitted a complaint to the Greek Ombudsman urging action to redress the systematic denial of healthcare and adequate reception conditions for 21 LCL clients and their families, whose urgent medical needs have been systematically ignored by the Greek

authorities. Greek authorities are systematically failing to transfer “vulnerable” people to the mainland where their specific needs can be met. COVID-19 is no excuse. The restrictions on movement related to the pandemic contain clear exceptions for medical care, meaning Greek and EU nationals are able to travel to the mainland in this way. Administrative status is no excuse, since the right to life is non-derogable under Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights and Article 5 of the Greek Constitution. Nobody should be forced to live in a camp, not here in Lesvos, not anywhere, not ever. Everyone’s specific needs should be recognised and provided for. The provisions and categories that exist in both Greek and European law are manifestly inadequate. But the Greek state’s failure to even act in accordance with these laws, to transfer people who are disproportionately exposed to danger and death in the inhuman conditions of Moria 2.0 to appropriate medical care and accommodation on the mainland, amounts to an attack on migrants’ lives.

→ Read the full statement [here](#).

➤ **15 February: Ongoing discriminatory application of COVID-19 restrictions and enforcement**

The pandemic related restrictions have only compounded the situation of police violence, discrimination and [effective mass detention](#) for migrants. Measures including curfews and the requirement to carry a justification for movement have been applied in an unjustifiably discriminatory manner. On 15 February, for example, the curfew for the general population in Lesvos was lifted from 6pm to 9pm, yet for migrants living in the camp a separate regime of restrictions remains in place: people are subject to a more stringent curfew of 5pm and only one family member can leave the camp once a week except medical or legal appointments. Even with written justification, permission to leave the camp is often arbitrarily denied. The police disproportionately target racialised people in checking documents and justifications for movement as well in the imposition of fines.

➤ **4-9 March: Greek government instructed by European Court of Human Rights to guarantee rights of 3 LCL clients: an indictment of reception conditions in Lesvos**

In the first two weeks of March 2021, LCL submitted 5 applications for urgent interim measures to the ECtHR. Three of these interim measures were granted by the Court within 48 hours of submission – A.J. v Greece on 4 March, A.M. v Greece on 5 March and H.A. v Greece on 9 March. In response to the fourth, the Court requested further medical documents within a 7 day deadline, which the person making the application was unable to obtain given the obstacles to accessing medical services in Lesvos – which was itself the subject matter of the application. The fifth application was eventually rejected, following an exchange between the Greek government and the European Court, but only after the Greek government lifted geographic restrictions for the individual and transferred him to accommodation in mainland Greece, rendering the application moot, as this had been its primary objective. In granting each application, the **Court indicated to the Government of Greece its obligation to guarantee, to A.J. A.M. and H.A respectively, living conditions compatible with Article 3** of the Convention having regard to their state of health, and to provide them with adequate healthcare. **These successive ECtHR decisions are a damning indictment of reception conditions in Lesvos, which not only fall miserably short of the minimum standards mandated by the European Reception Conditions Directive 2013/EU/33, but violate the non-derogable right to be free from inhuman and**

degrading treatment. Following the ECtHR decisions, A.J, A.M. and H.A. were all transferred to Athens in a matter of days. It is worth noting that this transfer took place for A.M. and her son whose care she depends on, despite the fact that both are no longer technically in the asylum procedure, which has consistently been cited by authorities as a reason not to transfer individuals, despite the fact that the right to life and to be free from the inhuman and degrading treatment that deprivation of healthcare constitutes must take precedence over immigration status.

It should never have required an application to the European Court of Human Rights for the Greek state to comply with its own laws. The very fact that A.J., A.M., and H.A. were not identified, prioritised and transferred to the mainland for requisite medical attention as a matter of urgency by the Greek authorities and UNHCR, over such a long period of time, is further proof that the laws on international protection in Greece fail to even safeguard the conditions of bare life, let alone the conditions of human dignity, self-determination and flourishing that A.J., A.M., and H.A. and everybody subject to Europe's violent border regime deserve. There are nearly 7,000 people living in Moria 2.0 in the same inhuman and degrading conditions. Many of them have physical and mental health conditions and particular needs analogous to A.J., A.A., or H.A. On 24th March, LCL sent a follow up email to all the relevant Greek authorities demanding they facilitate the urgent transfer to adequate accommodation and requisite medical care on the Greek mainland for 34 cases (individuals and families) in analogous situations to those granted interim measures by the European Court of Human Rights. In particular, LCL demanded the situation of these people be acted on as a matter of urgency equivalent to that with which authorities acted following the ECtHR interim measures decisions, without requiring further such applications to be made.

→ Read the full statement [here](#), and the statement on the first client granted interim measures [here](#).



(2) Asylum procedures

➤ **11 January: Procedural violations and confusion surrounding appeals and the right to free legal aid; short notice changes to interviews obstructing access to procedure**

On 11 January the Regional Asylum Office (RAO) attempted to begin issuing first-instance negative asylum decisions and to open the appeals procedure after months of not accepting appeals. The legal aid working group (which LCL is part of) publicly denounced this development in a context where free, state-provided legal aid is not guaranteed as required by Article 20 of the EU Asylum Procedures Directive 2013/32/EU and Article 71(3) of Greek Law 4636/2019. Lack of free legal aid on appeal prevents people understanding the reasons their claim has been rejected, makes it harder to specify grounds for appeal and to avoid appeals being rejected as inadmissible; particularly given the strict deadlines for filing an appeal following a negative decision. Following this, authorities announced the issuance of negative decisions had been suspended. However, since 19 January 2021 the RAO has been issuing first instance rejection decisions, and people are being given appointments to lodge appeals. Further emergent procedural violations include authorities giving insufficient notice for asylum interviews, and changing interview dates with little warning – practices which violate guarantees for applicants under Article 12 of the EU Asylum Procedures Directive, which mandates: “*They shall be informed of the time-frame[...] That information shall be given in time to enable them to exercise the rights guaranteed in this Directive.*” The violations of procedural safeguards attendant on the introduction of remote interviews – denounced [here](#) – also remain ongoing.

It is worth noting that since September 2020, when Moria Reception and Identification Centre was burned down - together with the EASO Offices - asylum seekers have had no access to the asylum office, except when given an appointment by authorities, or when an appointment is scheduled by an attorney. In practice this has meant that individuals are unable to inquire about their case status, submit documents, submit subsequent applications for international protection when they have new evidence that they face a serious risk of harm in their home country, or even to submit appeals in cases that had been rejected before the fire.

(3) Pushbacks

➤ **9 January: LCL files fourth application to the European Court of Human Rights regarding collective expulsion (‘pushback’) incidents in the Aegean**

On 9th January, the LCL submitted an application to the European Court of Human Rights on behalf of a family with three small children who were pushed back on numerous occasions from Greek territory to Turkish territory at the hands of Greek authorities and their Agents – including the Hellenic Coast Guard, the Greek police and teams of commandos – masked men in black uniforms without insignia. The

application concerns three of the violent pushback incidents of collective expulsion this family survived. LCL argued that Greek authorities who perpetrated the collective expulsions violated the Applicants' right to life under Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), their right to be free from torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment under Article 3 ECHR, their right to liberty and security under Article 5 ECHR, in conjunction with their right to an effective remedy under Article 13 and the prohibition of discrimination under Article 14 ECHR. Numerous applications to the ECtHR regarding collective expulsions of migrants from Greece to Turkey at both land and sea borders have been filed by various legal organisations, including three previous applications filed by LCL. However, ECtHR timelines mean that it could take years for such applications to even be considered at the admissibility stage by the Court. Given this, and given the large number of applications deriving from the same underlying problem – i.e violent, systematic, collective expulsions perpetrated by Greek authorities – the LCL hopes that the Court will make use of what is known as the [pilot judgement procedure](#), through which it can seek to achieve a faster solution that extends beyond a particular case so as to cover all similar cases raising the same issue, with the objective of eliminating the underlying systemic or structural root problem.

➤ **1 February: LCL publishes report on collective expulsions as crimes against humanity in the Aegean**

On 1 February 2021, LCL published its second report on systematic pushbacks in the Aegean. The new report contributes to the growing body of evidence that **Greek authorities are deliberately and systematically abandoning hundreds of migrants in the middle of the Aegean sea, without means to call for rescue, on unseaworthy, motorless dinghies and liferafts.** It is intended to serve as a resource for survivors of collective expulsions and solidarity actors. The report is based on evidence shared by over fifty survivors of collective expulsions, and underscores the **widespread, systematic and violent** nature of this **attack against migrants.** Beyond being egregious violations of international, European and national human rights law, the report argues that the constituent elements of the *modus operandi* of collective expulsions in the Aegean – analysed in detail in section 3 of the report – **amount to crimes against humanity within the definition of Article 7 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.**

→ Read the press release in English, Greek, French and Arabic [here](#). The full report can be found in English [here](#), in Greek [here](#).



➤ **15 February: Legal Centre Lesvos and Front-Lex formally call upon Frontex to suspend or terminate its activities in the Aegean Sea region**

On Monday 15 February, the Legal Centre Lesvos and Front-Lex [sent](#) a formal request to suspend or terminate Frontex operations in the Aegean Sea to Fabrice Leggeri, the Executive Director of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex), pursuant to Article 265 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. The request is based on an accumulation of evidence showing Frontex and its Executive Director have failed to act, in infringement of European Treaties, in relation to fundamental rights and international protection obligations violations in the Aegean Sea region, including: (1) failure to decide against launching Frontex's Rapid Border Intervention Aegean in March 2020 despite the fact that the Greek state had by that time already implemented a set of violent anti-migrant measures; (2) failure to suspend or terminate ongoing Frontex operations in the Aegean (Joint Operation Poseidon) despite well-documented, systematic, collective expulsions; (3) failure to give a transparent, truthful and accurate account of the circumstances and number of pushback incidents recorded in the Aegean sea in which Frontex has been implicated, notably during hearings before the European Parliament; (4) ongoing and inherent failure of Frontex's internal reporting and monitoring mechanisms in relation to fundamental rights violations.

→ Read the full press release [here](#).



(4) Criminalisation

➤ **21 February: Legal Centre Lesvos and HIAS Greece defend woman facing severe criminal charges in response to her attempt to self-immolate**

On 21 February at 11 a.m. M.M, in a state of distress, attempted to take her own life by setting fire to her tent, where she lived with her husband and three small children. On Friday 25 February, in a preliminary hearing held while she was still recovering in a hospital bed with serious burns, she was formally charged with the felony of aggravated arson with intent, resulting in danger to human life and property. This charge could carry a prison sentence of up to ten years, and could potentially result in the Greek state revoking her refugee status. Furthermore, she is prohibited from leaving Greece until tried. M.M. testified that the postponement of the family's relocation to Germany facilitated by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) had driven her to a state of acute distress and suicidal ideation due to her fear of

imminently giving birth in the unsanitary, inhumane Moria 2.0 camp conditions. The procedures for transfer from Lesvos to Germany are not transparent: there is an absence of information regarding the eligibility criteria and procedure; when people are accepted they are given practically no notice and often are not informed of their precise destination. This lack of transparency compounds the situation of extreme precarity that people like M.M. are already subject to, which takes a heavy toll on mental health. Pressing criminal charges in response to a suicide attempt forms part of an apparent tactic on the part of the Greek state to frame migrants as criminals and threats to the nation in order to distract from the state's own liability for the violent, inhumane and degrading treatment of migrants in Lesvos and other 'hotspot' Aegean islands. In this regard, the decision to prosecute M.M. reveals the same logic as the perverse decision to [prosecute the father of a six year old child who tragically drowned](#) in a shipwreck near Samos in November 2020 for endangering his son's life. The good news following the preliminary hearing was that M.M. was not subject to pre-trial detention – disproportionately used against foreign national defendants in Greece – and that M.M. and her family will in any case eventually be transferred to Germany where she will remain subject to reporting requirements pending trial.

→ Read the joint press release with HIAS [here](#)

➤ **25 February: Client facing smuggling charges avoids pre-trial detention disproportionately used against migrants**

On 25 February, the Legal Centre Lesvos also represented A.A., an individual facing charges of illegal entry and facilitating illegal entry – 'smuggling' – at his preliminary hearing. The individual, who is an applicant for international protection, arrived in Lesvos at the [beginning of March 2020](#), at a time when the Greek state had unlawfully, unilaterally suspended the right to asylum and was systematically pressing criminal charges of illegal entry against migrants arriving and attempting to access asylum procedures. He was detained on arrival first in the port of Mytilene, and later in a military vessel – [like hundreds of others held in unofficial sites of detention at that time](#) including buses, ports and boats – before being transferred to Serres, and later Volos. Three months after arrival, at the end of June, an officer of the Hellenic Coast Guard testified that A.A. had been driving the migrant boat he arrived on, and he was charged with illegal entry and facilitating illegal entry – the latter of which is a felony under Greek criminal law. Pressing such charges against migrants identified as having driven a boat is a [systematic practice of the Greek state](#) premised on the absurd notion that whoever drives a migrant boat is a smuggler, which in practice involves accusing individuals of having been the boat driver; arresting them without sufficient evidence; incarcerating them for months in pre-trial detention; and when their case eventually goes to trial the conviction is determined in very short procedures that violate standards of fairness and lack due process. The good news in this case is that A.A. had videos clearly demonstrating that he was not the driver of the boat, and legal arguments resulted in him not being ordered detained pending trial – which is unusual and a success in the circumstances. Disturbingly, on the court order following the preliminary hearing it states "there is enough evidence to indicate that he will be convicted", which does not bode well for his right to fair trial. Systematically prosecuting migrants attempting to access asylum procedures for illegal entry in this manner is a flagrant violation of Article 31 of the 1951 Refugee Convention, which explicitly prohibits penalising illegal entry or presence.

➤ **9 March: Justice for the Moria 6**

On Tuesday 9 March 2021, following a six hour trial before the three member Juvenile Court of Mytilene, two of the Moria 6 defendants, A.A. and M.H. were found guilty of arson, related to the fires that destroyed Moria refugee camp in September 2020. Despite the lack of credible evidence presented against them, both were convicted and sentenced to 5 years in prison including time served, which has been appealed by Legal Centre Lesvos lawyers. Unless their sentence is overturned or reduced on appeal, in practice this sentence will mean 2 further years in prison for these two young men, as they will be eligible for release after serving half the sentence. The trial of these two members of the Moria 6 constitutes a gross miscarriage of justice, which appears to form part of a systematic effort to crush any resistance to Europe's border regime through collective punishment, by arbitrarily arresting and pressing criminal charges against migrants following migrant-led resistance, such as in [the case of the Moria 35](#). The Legal Centre Lesvos will continue to defend the two young men, to fight for their release from incarceration and to work towards their conviction being overturned on appeal. Alongside other comrades in Lesvos and internationally, including powerful solidarity among the Hazara community demonstrated outside court on the day of the trial, we will continue to fight for justice for the Moria 6 and to stand in solidarity with all those who face the unjust collective punishment of Europe's border regime.

→ Read the full statement [here](#).



(5) Political updates and resistance in Lesvos

➤ **8 January: Takeover of speaker system in Ermou**

On Friday 8th January, in the early evening, the hacked speaker system in Ermou – the main street of Mytilene – blasted out a message of solidarity to residents and workers. Ordinarily used to for advertisements, announcements, or Christmas songs, for approximately one hour Mytilene's loudspeakers instead played songs by anarchist rock band Ochra Spirocheti (Ωχρά Σπειροχαιτη) and by Mora sti Fotia - Babies on Fire (Μωρά στη φωτιά), words of Tzimis Panousis and Katerina Gogou, songs by Laïko (Greek popular music) singer Kazatzidis, as well as Partisan songs and satirical audio material. The intervention, which could be heard from the Legal Centre Lesvos (LCL) office, was interspersed with Greek slogans against detention centres and the incarceration of migrants and slogans against the government's anti-democratic measures and instrumentalisation of the COVID-19 pandemic. Excerpts included:

"Don't trust the Prime Ministers, the mayors, and their consultants, their interests come before honesty. The profits they make from immigration are more important to them than the dignity of the people."

"Those who fall into the hands of the state are captives for a society of freedom, justice and tolerance. They are your captives. The power of solidarity will build the new world."

➤ **14 January: Greece submits formal request to deport 1,450 people to Turkey**

On 14 January, the Greek state submitted a request to the European Commission and European Border and Coast Guard Agency Frontex for the immediate return of 1,450 migrants whose applications for international protection have been rejected, under the provisions of the [EU-Turkey 'Deal'](#). At the time of the request, 955 of those people are currently in Lesbos, 180 in Chios, 128 in Samos and 187 in Kos. The [statement](#) given by the Greek Migration ministry in connection with this request explicitly connects "the acceleration of asylum procedures" with migrants supposedly "not entitled to international protection". This is particularly disturbing given the long list of procedural violations produced by the attempt to rush people through the asylum procedure from September to December 2020, denounced by the Legal Centre Lesbos [here](#). The EU Commissioner for Home Affairs, Ylva Johansson, in her 29 March visit to Lesbos detailed below, called on Turkey to resume accepting deportations from Greece, and emphasised the need to "protect our external borders" describing this – in a hideous distortion of the word – as "part of *solidarity*". Turkey has so far refused the request.

➤ **3 February: Construction of new 'controlled' camp in Lesbos approved in controversial vote**

On 3 February – less than a month after the European Commission [promised](#) to increase funding to the Municipality of Mytilene to "help the Greek authorities face the challenges of specific realities like the one in the island of Lesbos" – the Municipal Council of Mytilene approved the construction of a new "controlled" camp in Lesbos. The construction of the new camp was approved by a margin of one vote, despite vehement local opposition over the past year. During the Council meeting, there were also racist, dog-whistle, speeches including promises that soon there will be no sight of migrants in the towns or on the streets, and the [resolution itself](#) emphasised the fact that the camp will be "outside the urban fabric and residential areas" in order to "meet safety and hygiene conditions and for the protection of the inhabitants of the area and residents in it" and promised to "continue the strict control of the activity of NGOs".

➤ **16 February: Fascist occupation of local Mytilene high school protesting attendance of migrant children; and anti-fascist resistance**

On the 16 February, an anti-fascist counter action took place in Mytilene outside the offices of the Regional Directorate of Education of the North Aegean. The action was a response to the events of Thursday 28th and Friday 29th of January in which Ippio secondary school in Mytilene was occupied by Greek parents and children to prevent migrant children accessing their classes. Teachers were verbally abused and obstructed from entering. Police were in attendance but did not issue a single fine for the people gathered. This incident followed a far-right online misinformation campaign designed to spread hate against migrant children, including claims migrant children were actually 25 years old. The counter-action was organised by the Antifascist Initiative of Lesbos and by teachers, in solidarity with refugee children and their right to education.

→ A joint statement signed by LCL regarding access to education for migrant children in Greece can be found [here](#).

No one alone against racism. All children at school.



➤ **28 February: Anti-fascist resistance to far-right actions in Lesvos marking the anniversary of the ‘MAT-invasion’ and recall to Athens**

The 28 February marked a year since the riot police – ‘MAT’, in Greek – were [recalled](#) from Lesvos and Chios by the Greek government. The special police forces had been [sent](#) from Athens to the two Aegean islands in order to quash demonstrations and to strong-arm local compliance with the construction of new detention centres for migrants, which had been [resisted by actors across the political spectrum](#) through repeated mass demonstrations, roadblocks and general strikes. To mark the occasion, the Antifascist Initiative of Lesvos alongside the occupation in Mpineo provided an alternative to the celebration of this event in fascist, anti-migrant terms – hanging 10-metre banners in Sapphus Square, Mytilene and on the regional road of Mytilene which the motor-rally called by far-right groups to commemorate the day on their terms passed underneath. The banners read:

NO CAMPS, NO CONTROLLED CENTRES, NO PRISONS. STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM AND SELF-DETERMINATION.

NO FIRE TO THE MIGRANTS, FIRE TO THEIR PRISONS.



➤ **17-21 March: 5 years of violence and misery under the EU-Turkey Deal**

The Legal Centre Lesvos was founded following the 18 March 2016 EU-Turkey statement – otherwise known as the EU-Turkey ‘deal’. Through this agreement of questionable legality, the European Union turned people seeking freedom, safety and dignity into commodities and bargaining chips: agreeing to pay billions of euros to Erdogan’s authoritarian regime in exchange for Turkey acting as a border guard to fortress Europe. The week of 17-21 March 2021 marked five years since the EU-Turkey deal turned the island of Lesvos, and other Aegean ‘hotspot’ islands, into open-air prisons for migrants. Each day of the week, Legal Centre Lesvos published a statement on one aspect of the legal consequences of the EU-Turkey Deal. The full text of these statements can be found here in [French](#) and [Greek](#), and linked below in English:

1. [Turkey is not a ‘Safe Third Country’](#)
2. [‘Admissibility’](#)
3. [New ‘controlled camp in Lesvos and the ‘new’ EU Migration and Asylum Pact](#)
4. [Systematic pushbacks in the Aegean](#)
5. [Nowruz reminds us that a different world is possible](#) (فار, ENG, ΕΛΛ, سنور, FR, عرب, KUR)

On Thursday 18 March, a small resistance action to mark the 5 year anniversary of the EU-Turkey deal was organised, despite the context of intense police repression on the island. Banners in Greek, English, Farsi, Arabic and French denouncing fortress Europe and its dirty deals were [unfurled at the statue of liberty](#) in Mytilene and [hung along fences](#), while stones painted with messages of solidarity were found throughout Mytilene and near the new camp.



➤ **29 March: Spring is the best time to tour Europe’s prison islands for migrants in a helicopter: Ylva Johansson visits Lesvos.**

On Monday 29 March 2021, Ylva Johansson, the EU Commissioner for Home Affairs, [visited Lesvos](#) with the clear purpose of continuing to push the European Commission’s agenda, as articulated in the EU’s proposed [new ‘Pact on Migration and Asylum’](#). If adopted, this Pact will see disastrous policies which have already been tried and failed in Lesvos rolled out all across the borders of fortress Europe, while expanding rich European states’ ability to violently deter, detain and deport people at arm’s length.

Johansson and her colleagues in the European Commission were careful in their use of language. Johansson’s statement explaining her visit to Lesvos was entitled “[Spring is the best time to prepare for winter](#)” – a bizarre invocation of the seasons which – just like her saying “[winter hardship in 2020-2021 was unfortunate](#)” – functions to make the systematic immiseration, suffering and deaths on the Aegean islands over the past 5 winters sound inevitable: obscuring the fact this forms part of a clear European policy of instrumentalising human suffering to deter migration at any human cost.

There is no ‘solidarity’ in the European Commission’s new Pact. Their vision is of a fortified, technocratic deportation machine whirring away on the borders of Europe, bankrolled by rich European nations ‘sponsoring’ poorer nations in the south of the EU and abroad to do the dirty work of detention and deportation for them. Rather than whitewashing the systematic violence perpetrated in the name of ‘border management’ under the false claim of ‘solidarity’, Johansson and her colleagues in the European Commission would do better to act in accordance with what solidarity really means: acting – in recognition of the fact that migration is both something people have always done and is a consequence of Europe’s historic and ongoing imperialist ventures – to defund, demilitarise and dismantle Europe’s border regime, and to immediately end the failed, violent policies trialled in the laboratory of Lesvos.

→ Read the full statement [here](#).

