

Amnesty International Report 2022/23; The State of the World's Human Rights; Cyprus 2022

Background

No progress was made towards the resumption of full negotiations between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders on the Cyprus issue (the continuing dispute over the administration of the island).

Refugees' and migrants' rights

The NGO KISA reported instances of violence and advocacy to hatred during two anti-migrant demonstrations held in January against Syrian refugees living in a residential complex in the village of Chlorakas, and a subsequent failure of the police to intervene. KISA also reported threats and racial slurs against KISA member Doros Polykarpou during the second demonstration. The outcome of an investigation into the incidents by the independent police complaints authority was not known at year's end.

In June, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) expressed concerns in relation to refugee, asylum-seeking and migrant children, including substandard living conditions in reception facilities and insufficient access to education and to healthcare. The CRC also expressed concerns about pushbacks and forced returns.

In August, human rights organizations denounced two new pushbacks to Lebanon, including that of 52 shipwreck survivors in July. Survivors reported that Cypriot authorities kept them in inhumane conditions and ill-treated them prior to returning them. In a case pending before the European Court of Human rights, two Syrian nationals reported several violations by the Cypriot authorities, including their summary return to Lebanon, with a risk of chain refoulement to Syria.

As of September, there were over 27,000 asylum applications pending at first instance compared to 16,994 at the end of 2021.

Impunity

In September, a report submitted to Cyprus's Attorney General found that the 2005 death of army conscript Athanasios Nikolaou was murder and identified serious flaws in the police investigation. In October, a new police investigation was ordered into the case. Athanasios Nikolaou's family expressed concerns that they were not given sufficient access to the report's findings or concerns about the progress of the new investigation. In 2020, Cyprus was found in breach of the European Convention on Human Rights for failing to effectively investigate the case.

Violence against women and girls

In January, Cyprus's Supreme Court overturned the 2019 conviction of a British student for an alleged false report of rape and found serious shortcomings in the investigation of the initial rape

complaint by the prosecuting authorities. After the Attorney General rejected a request to reopen the investigation, a complaint was filed with the European Court of Human Rights.

Enforced disappearances

Between 2006 and December 2022, the remains of 1,028 missing individuals – 736 Greek Cypriots and 292 Turkish Cypriots – were identified by the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus in its mission to establish the fate and whereabouts of people who were subjected to enforced disappearance during the inter-communal fighting of 1963-1964 and the events of 1974.