

World Report 2025 - Greece

Greece faces persistent rule of law challenges stemming from state actions that undermine democratic institutions and harm human rights, including interference with media freedom, state-ordered surveillance of journalists, and a hostile environment for human rights defenders. Violations of asylum seekers and migrants' rights persisted in 2024, with reports of pushbacks, poor detention conditions for migrants, and inadequate reception facilities for asylum seekers.

Freedom of Media

In February, the European Parliament adopted a landmark [resolution](#) expressing “grave concerns” about “very serious threats” to democracy, fundamental rights, and media freedom in Greece.

In October, a Greek court [dismissed](#) on substantive grounds a defamation lawsuit filed by Grigoris Dimitriadis, former general secretary in the prime minister's office, against journalists who exposed his alleged role in the Predator spyware scandal, a positive step for press freedom.

In July, two suspects in the 2021 [murder](#) of journalist Giorgos Karaivaz were [acquitted](#), sparking [criticism](#) from press freedom organizations at ongoing impunity for the killing.

Surveillance

The “Predatorgate” [spyware scandal](#), involving government-ordered surveillance of journalists and politicians—which was the subject of a European Parliament special [investigation](#)—continued to raise [rule of law concerns](#).

In July, a Supreme Court prosecutor [cleared](#) state agencies and officials of responsibility for the use of Predator spyware, despite [evidence](#) of state involvement from independent [investigations](#).

More positively, in April, Greece's highest court [ruled](#) unconstitutional a 2021 amendment blocking individuals from knowing they were subject to state surveillance.

The Hellenic Data Protection Authority [fined](#) the Ministry of Migration 175,000 Euros for running biometric and artificial intelligence-based [surveillance systems](#) in camps housing migrants without proper privacy and data protection safeguards.

Attacks on Civil Society

In April, the Greek National Commission for Human Rights [warned](#) of a pervasive climate of fear for migrant rights defenders, driven by smear campaigns, harassment, and threats of prosecution for providing humanitarian aid.

The [criminal case](#) against human rights defenders Panayote Dimitras and Tommy Olsen for exposing violations at Greece's borders remained pending at time of writing, with Dimitras still under a travel ban. In May, Dimitras and his wife [were questioned](#) in a separate investigation into alleged financial misconduct following a 2023 [asset freeze](#).

In January, 16 members of the nongovernmental group Emergency Response Centre International [were acquitted](#) of espionage and assisting a criminal organization, following years of [legal proceedings](#) related to their 2018 efforts to rescue migrants in the Aegean Sea.

Unfounded criminal charges [were dismissed](#) in April against 35 activists accused of facilitating irregular migration for assisting people on the move.

Poverty and Inequality

Greece had one of the highest risks of poverty and social exclusion in the EU, at [26 percent](#). The Institute of Labor's [annual report](#) emphasized high unemployment rates, particularly among young people and women, along with poor working conditions and declining real wages.

The Greek Network for Combating Poverty (GNCP) [documented](#) the burden of indirect taxes on low-income households and rising living costs. GNCP's research highlighted the disproportionate impact on children, unemployed people, and renters, underscoring the urgent need for a more progressive tax system and a stronger social security system.

Migrants and Asylum Seekers

By the end of November, [57,309 asylum seekers and migrants](#) had arrived in Greece by sea or across the land border with Türkiye, up from 43,166 in the same period in 2023.

A Greek [court acquitted](#) for lack of jurisdiction nine individuals accused of smuggling and causing the Pylos shipwreck, a [2023 deadly](#) incident where a vessel carrying around 750 migrants capsized off the coast of Greece, resulting in hundreds of deaths.

A criminal complaint [filed by survivors](#) in September 2023, alleging inadequate rescue measures by Greek authorities and implicating the Hellenic Coast Guard in the vessel's capsizing, remained pending at time of writing. Rights groups [have criticized](#) the slow pace of the investigation.

Reports from [Frontex's Fundamental Rights Office](#) in [December 2023](#) and the [European Ombudsman](#) in March raised serious concerns about Greece's handling of the shipwreck. The reports noted insufficient rescue efforts and a lack of cooperation from Greek authorities during the rescue with Frontex and in subsequent investigations.

In June, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) held a [public hearing](#) on two cases alleging pushbacks of migrants and asylum seekers by Greek authorities, including of unaccompanied children. The cases [highlight](#) Greece's [systematic and ongoing practice of pushbacks](#).

A [July report](#) from Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) documented poor conditions in immigration detention, including overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, inadequate healthcare, and allegations of ill-treatment, including in [EU-funded](#) centers.

Reception conditions for asylum seekers also [remained inadequate](#). A landmark ECtHR [ruling](#) in October found conditions in the Samos hotspot in 2020 breached the prohibition of ill-treatment under the European Convention on Human Rights. A Greek Ombudsman [report in April](#) [criticized](#) overcrowding, remote camp locations, and lack of basic services, with many residents in camps facing delays in cash assistance and food. Women and girls faced particular difficulties related to security, privacy, and accessing health care.

In October, the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) ruled on Greece's [designation](#) of Türkiye as a "safe third country" for certain nationalities under the [2016 EU-Turkey Statement](#). It held that EU countries cannot reject asylum applications as inadmissible based on the "safe third country" concept if the asylum seeker will be denied entry to that designated safe country. The ruling directly impacts the Greek authorities' [systematic rejection](#) of asylum seekers based on the "safe third country" concept, a practice that leaves them in legal limbo.

The September [death](#) of Pakistani migrant Muhammad Kamran Ashiq in an Athens police station under suspicious [circumstances](#) fueled further [concerns](#) about police brutality and ill-treatment of migrants in Greece.

Migrant Children

The [number of refugee and migrant children](#) arriving in Greece quadrupled in the first half of 2024 compared to the first half of 2023, with over 1,500 arriving unaccompanied. A [landmark court ruling](#) by the First Instance Administrative Court of Athens affirmed in May that individuals with disputed age must be treated as children until a final age assessment.

Racism and Intolerance

The Racist Violence Recording Network (RVRN) [reported](#) in April a sharp rise in racist violence in 2023, documenting 158 incidents, primarily targeting migrants and LGBT individuals.

In July, three men who acted as vigilantes and illegally detained 13 migrants during the 2023 Evros wildfires [received](#) lenient sentences, with the court dismissing racism as a motivation. A supreme court prosecutor [subsequently ordered a review](#) of the conviction.

In July, a Mytilene court [convicted](#) 17 individuals for a 2018 racist attack against asylum seekers and migrants, with racist motives recognized in sentencing for six.

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Greece [legalized same-sex marriage](#) in February.

However, discrimination against LGBT individuals persists, as [highlighted](#) in a survey by the European Union's Agency for Fundamental Rights in May, and other [reports of violence](#).

In July, the Mixed Jury Court of Appeal of Athens [unanimously convicted](#) two men over the killing of [33-year-old queer activist and human rights defender Zak Kostopoulos](#) in 2018, sentencing one defendant to six years in prison and the other to five years' house arrest, taking into account his older age. The men had initially been [sentenced](#) to 10-year prison terms.

Women's Rights

The April killing of Kyriaki Griva [outside an Athens police station](#), where she had sought protection from her abusive ex-boyfriend but was [turned away](#), sparked [protests](#) and [demands](#) for legal reforms to address femicide and [improved police response to domestic violence](#).

The ECtHR [ruled in January](#) that Greece violated the privacy of HIV-positive women by [publicizing their identities](#), photos, and HIV status after [forcibly testing them](#) in 2012. The regulation that had allowed HIV testing without informed consent was repealed in 2015.

In February, the United Nations [Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women](#) (CEDAW) and, in June, Greece's [National Commission for Human Rights](#), expressed concern about the high prevalence of gender-based violence in Greece. CEDAW urged Greece to criminalize femicide, strengthen support services, and improve investigations and prosecutions.