



Press Release

The ECHR grants interim measures putting an end to the detention of unaccompanied minors in police stations

Thursday, 10 October 2019

Today, on 10 October 2019, the European Court of Human Rights, issued a decision on interim measure, under rule 39 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) in which indicates to the Greek Government:

- to transfer the unaccompanied minors who applied to the Court and are detained at police stations, to suitable accommodation centres for unaccompanied minors
 - to ensure that their reception conditions are compatible with Article 3 of the Convention and the children's particular status
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Moreover, the ECtHR set the Greek Government a deadline by 11:00 hours tomorrow to provide responses:

- concerning the detention conditions of the unaccompanied minors who were transferred from the police stations to the Amygdaleza Pre-Removal Detention Centre and the impact of that detention on their physical and psychological integrity
- concerning the actions/measures taken by the Greek authorities for the transfer of the above-mentioned minors to an adequate shelter for minors as well as the time that the transfer is expected to take place.

Moreover, the ECtHR requests a response on what concrete measures have been taken concerning the appointment of a guardian for each of the minors/applicants to the Court, , while asking to ensure reception conditions for those minors according to Article 3 ECHR, including one child who was transferred to a "Safe zone" in the Reception Centre at Ritsona, Attica.

On 20 September 2019, the Intervention Team in Detention of ARSIS - Association for the Social Support of Youth, have found all those unaccompanied minors being detained at the Kolonos Police Station under conditions which constitute inhuman and degrading treatment. No guardian had been appointed for any of them. Until then none had been informed about the reason and the duration of their detention. ARSIS' lawyers informed the children for the reason of their detention, in particular 14, among them were detained under "protective custody" and 6 under deportation procedure.

ARSIS implements an intervention programme in Amygdaleza Pre-Removal Detention Centre and police stations, offering legal assistance and psychosocial support*. The team of ARSIS had immediately informed all the competent state authorities for the detention conditions of minors, and the need to put an end to their detention and to immediately transfer them to

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suitable accommodation shelters. However, by 4 October they had received no response. **The minors continued to be detained and instead of being transferred to suitable accommodation facilities, 9 of the minors detained at the Kolonos Police Station were transferred, for the continuation of their detention, to Amygdaleza Pre-Removal Detention Centre**

On 5 October 2019 Members of the legal team at ARSIS' Youth Support Centre have submitted an application and requested the intervention of the European Court of Human Rights, according to the procedure of interim measures, in order to put an immediate end to the violations of fundamental rights of the minors and to oblige the Greek state to take the necessary measures to protect them. The ECtHR accepted the application of interim measures with its Decision.

The present decision of the Court is of high importance since it highlight the unlawful detention of unaccompanied minors, now in police stations, under inhuman and degrading conditions, as a form of protective custody, in the absence of child protection structures.

[ARSIS is deeply concerned about the practice of detaining unaccompanied minors, beyond PRO.KE.KA Amygdaleza Pre-Removal Centre](#)**, now also in police stations. We remind that apart of the unaccompanied minors who are still detained in the Kolonos Police Department, many minors are also detained in other police stations, plus to the 70 unaccompanied minors who are, currently, detained in PROKEKA Amygdaleza.

Detaining minors breaches international, EU and national law and constitutes a violation of their fundamental rights.

ARSIS continues its interventions before all relevant public bodies for the ending of the unacceptable practice of detention of unaccompanied minors and for and their prompt accommodation in appropriate protective structures, as well as, for , suitable reception conditions including the appointment of a guardian, to safeguard their best interests.

Detaining unaccompanied minors is inhuman and degrading treatment and is an affront to the rule of law and our democracy.

* Detention Intervention Team of ARSIS – Youth Support Centre, is implemented by ARSIS - Association for the Social Support of Youth, funded by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees.

** ARSIS press release of 26 August 2019 on “Big number of unaccompanied minors detained at Amygdaleza Pre-Removal Centre in unacceptable conditions for long time”

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