



RACIST VIOLENCE RECORDING NETWORK

2015 ANNUAL REPORT

Introduction

Year 2015, due to the multilevel political crisis and the refugee crisis in Greece, presented major challenges for all actors involved in human rights protection. The Racist Violence Recording Network (RVRN) dealt with two parallel situations: the expansion of its activities under its ordinary operation and the need to proactively respond as effectively as possible to the challenges relating to the refugee crisis. In the context of its standard operation, the RVRN continued to record incidents of racist violence, but it was also invited to provide other actors and stakeholders, international and national, State authorities and private actors, with assistance in the field of racism and racist violence. However, the refugee crisis, especially the crisis related to the reception of refugees, generated the urgent need for the RVRN to review its tools in order to monitor sufficiently racist violence under the new circumstances. To this end, the RVRN adopted two additional goals: *firstly*, expanding its geographical scope by establishing ad hoc contact with actors operating at entry points of refugees and *secondly*, developing supplementary monitoring tools in order to promptly intervene in case of escalation of racist violence.

During 2015, the RVRN's capacity to record incidents of racist violence has been further strengthened mainly due to the members' persistent vigilance, but also through targeted programs. Recordings of incidents against groups traditionally less accessible by human rights defenders were increased. The rise in the RVRN recordings through the implementation of specific programs reflects the mutual empowerment between the RVRN and its members as independent and dynamic organizations. In other words, as the RVRN is strengthened through the empowerment of its members, the RVRN members' reliability is further reinforced due to their participation in the Network.

The RVRN has acquired an increasingly eloquent overview of racist violence in Greece through the thematic and geographical expansion of its activity. During 2015, recordings have increased compared to 2014. The following findings based on the RVRN recordings briefly describe the quantitative and qualitative data for 2015.

1. Recordings of attacks against refugees and immigrants have risen. A significant number of victims suffered injuries, which demonstrates the contrast – but also the coexistence within the same society – between the solidarity that a substantial part of the population expresses towards refugees and the violent behaviour of another part of the population. A significant number of incidents were perpetrated by groups of people, while the operation of organized groups at the neighbourhood level is still evident. Special mention should be made to the recordings revealing that refugees and immigrants are more vulnerable to serious attacks by their employers than other groups. It is an everyday phenomenon that refugees and immigrants are often the targets of verbal abuse based on strong stereotypes which may lead to further marginalisation. As to the refugee crisis, in the main entry points, seven incidents were recorded against newcomers mainly during August, from which it may be inferred that there was inadequate management by the authorities, without however establishing a general escalation of violence against newcomers or due to the refugee crisis. Nonetheless, the major difficulty in tracking and recording this kind of incidents should be noted.

2. There was an important rise in attacks against LGBTQI persons¹, believed to be mainly attributed to the enhancement of the RVRN recording capacity. It should be noted that while such attacks occurred in previous years, they remained undetected. These recordings reveal that the violence against persons due to their sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics is quite disseminated within the Greek society. LGBTQI persons may be targeted from the moment they reveal their sexual orientation or gender identity, even by their own family or social environment. The attacks against LGBTQI persons are violent and they are characterised by behaviours of intense contempt towards the victim. In 2015 incidents of shootings and “corrective” rape were recorded. For reasons related to the respect of their private life, the lack of legal gender recognition and the lack of confidence in the authorities, a significant number of victims do not wish to report the attack and file a complaint.

3. More and more activists and human rights defenders are targeted. It is noteworthy that the attacks against activists have increased during the discussion and voting of the civil partnership draft law by the Parliament. Moreover, volunteers at entry points of refugees or persons defending the rights of refugees and immigrants were also targeted.

¹ Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI). This term refers to the specific sub-groups of individuals with a diverse sexual orientation or gender identity discussed in the report. See UNHCR, *Protecting Persons with Diverse Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities. A Global Report on UNHCR's Efforts to Protect Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex Asylum-Seekers and Refugees*, 2015, 35 p. As to the term “queer”, it has become an academic term that is inclusive of people who are not heterosexual - includes lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and trans. Queer theory is challenging heteronormative social norms concerning gender and sexuality, and claims that gender roles are social constructions. For many LGBTI persons, the term "queer" has negative connotations as it was traditionally an abusive term, however many LGBTI persons are now comfortable with the term and have "reclaimed" it as a symbol of pride. See ILGA Europe-Glossary.

4. The involvement of law enforcement officials in incidents of racist violence remains alarming. Despite the progress in combating racist crime, at least by the Hellenic Police Department against Racist Violence in Athens, law enforcement officials still resort to practices indicative of their failure to fulfil their obligation to carry out their duty without bias. More serious cases demonstrate the need for training and ongoing supervision of persons involved in the management of refugee and migratory flows. Furthermore, in order to effectively combat racially motivated attacks, the State must take into account that the victims are unable to trust the police due to previous negative experiences and stereotypical reactions on the part of law enforcement officials.

5. Although statistically less important, special reference should be made to attacks by civil servants. 2015 recordings show that more victims were targeted by civil servants due to their sexual orientation or gender identity or sex characteristics, while the attacks by civil servants to refugees and immigrants were less. However, it should be reminded that this trend is solely based on the RVRN recordings and therefore, it is impossible to know whether refugees and immigrants choose not to report the incidents involving civil servants or prefer to keep silent about them.

6. The RVRN recorded the first incidents of racist violence against Roma children and against a member of the Muslim minority. All actors combatting racism at national and international level are concerned with the barriers in recording racist violence (as well as simple discrimination) against Roma.

7. The recording of anti-Semitic incidents, involving mostly desecration, shows that neo-Nazi organizations continue to operate in Greece, at least in this form.

I. Working Methods of the Racist Violence Recording Network

The present section aims to provide, for reasons of transparency and awareness raising, a concise and up-to-date overview of the working methods of the Racist Violence Recording Network.

A. Institutional Remarks

The present report is the fifth one published by the Network. Ever since October 2011 – the starting point of the recordings – the RVRN’s activity is constantly growing. It is to be noted that the initiative for the establishment of the Racist Violence Recording Network was taken in mid-2011 by the Greek National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Greece (UNHCR) following two major findings: a) the absence of an official and effective data collection system and b) the need for coordination among organizations which recorded, on their own initiative, incidents of racist violence against persons who recourse to their services.

For the purposes of the RVRN, incidents of racist violence are considered criminal acts, or violent activities, or behaviours against people that are targeted because of national or ethnic origin, colour, religious origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. There are also recorded criminal acts, or violent activities, or behaviours against *human rights defenders*, namely people who promote and protect human rights and are targeted because of that capacity.

The RVRN is comprised of actors offering medical, social and legal services or/and come in direct contact with victims of racist violence or victims of other hate-motivated violent attacks as well as of organizations established by members of the groups usually targeted by racist violence. In order to join the RVRN a necessary precondition is respect for human rights, diversity, multiculturalism, and freedom of religion as well as action in tackling discrimination and intolerance. Apart from the coordinators, the UNHCR and the NCHR, the RVRN is comprised of 36 Non-Governmental Organizations and civil society actors, as well as the Greek Ombudsman and the Migrants’ Integration Council of the Municipality of Athens as observers². The participating actors acknowledge and jointly pursue combating

² RVRN Membership during 2015: Act Up Hellas, Aitima, Amnesty International, Antigoni – Information and Documentation Centre on Racism, Arsis, Asante, Association of Afghans United In Greece, Association of Social Workers of Greece, “Babel” Day Center, Center for the Support of Repatriated and Migrants - Ecumenical Refugee Program, Colour Youth – LGBTQ Youth Community of Athens, Doctors of the World (MdM), Forum of Migrants in Crete, Generation 2.0 Red, Greek Council for Refugees, Greek Forum of Migrants, Greek Forum of Refugees, Greek Helsinki Monitor, Greek Transgender Support Association, Group of Lawyers for the Rights of Refugees and Migrants, Group of Lawyers for the Support of Refugee and Migrant Rights (Thessaloniki), Hellenic Action for Human Rights – Pleiades, Hellenic League for Human Rights, Hellenic Red Cross, Homosexual and Lesbian Community of Greece, Human Rights Commission of the Bar Association of Rhodes, Initiative for the Rights of Prisoners, LATHRA? – Solidarity

racist violence as well as all racially motivated acts on the grounds of race, colour, religion, descent, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, and disability.

With a view to pursuing the common goal, the RVRN: i) formulates recommendations to the Greek authorities in compliance with the Greek and international legislation in human rights' protection, ii) promotes the public's information and awareness raising as regards to combating racist violence, iii) undertakes consultation with various actors on issues concerning racist violence, iv) strengthens collaboration with other actors in pursuit of combating racist violence, v) organizes and participates in training programs held by civil society and other competent institutional bodies regarding issues that refer to the identification, recording, and combating of hate crimes.

B. Methodology

Due to the strict methodology of the RVRN, imposing that recordings are based exclusively on the victim's testimony, the quantity of recordings depends on the victims' wish to share their experience. All the members of the RVRN have adopted the consolidated recording form of the RVRN. Each organisation member of the RVRN appoints focal points to record the incidents, i.e. social workers, psychologists, lawyers, or volunteers, who are trained by the RVRN. The completion of the recording form is anonymous and used solely and exclusively by the RVRN on the purpose of combating racism and hate crimes.

During 2015 there has been a substantial increase of recordings of incidents against LGBTIQI persons targeted because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. The increase does not mean that during 2015 these incidents have actually increased or that in previous years no such incidents took place. The victims of the recorded incidents are mainly at a young age and demonstrate a dynamic approach of their experiences. The empowerment of our members, such as Colour Youth and Transgender Support Association, through their participation in the RVRN as well as the successful implementation of specific programs (e.g. "Talk to us" implemented by Colour Youth) partly explains the increase of the recordings in this area.

In contrast, the victims of attacks due to national origin, or/and religion or colour, do not resort with the same ease to the RVRN, especially in cases of "lighter" attacks. Even young people, children of immigrants and refugees, who were raised in Greece, sadly consider verbal abuse as part of their everyday life. As a result, these attacks are usually not recorded and when they are recorded they represent a very

Committee for Chios refugees, Medical Intervention, METAction, Action for Migration and Development, Network for the Support of Refugee and Migrant Rights (Patras), Network for the Social Support of Refugees and Migrants, Positive Voice, PRAKSIS, Rainbow Families, World Without War and Violence.

small proportion of the real numbers. Until 2014, most of the attacks against migrants and refugees have been recorded either when the victims asked for medical or social assistance from the members of the RVRN or in cases that the attacks were publicized and the RVRN members provided on their own initiative some sort of assistance to the victims.

In the case of refugees and migrants, it seems that living conditions define to a significant extent the number of recordings. Thus, despite the RVRN's efforts to spread within the refugee/migrant communities the possibility of anonymous recordings, refugees and migrants are hesitant to share their experience as this is perceived as potentially making their every day life more difficult. In 2015, thanks to a special program implemented by the Greek Forum of Migrants, incidents were recorded within the communities and with the assistance of intercultural mediators.

The documentation of racist violence in Greece by the RVRN led some institutions to fund special programs to reinforce the recordings. As a result, several members of the RVRN implement a number of programs, aiming at supporting the recordings or other supporting services to the victims of racist violence. Thus, while the RVRN remains a collective initiative with common operational rules and common goals, the individual activities of its members have a complementary and mutually empowering impact.

II. Findings

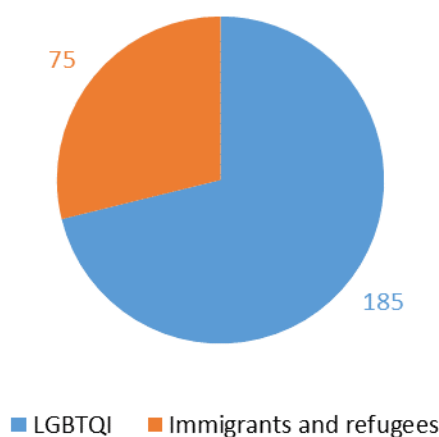
This section analyses the general characteristics of the incidents reported in 2015 (A). Subsequently follows a specific analysis per targeted group, namely refugees and immigrants (B), LGBTQI persons (C), anti-Semitic attacks (D), attacks against Roma and the Muslim minority (E) and finally attacks against human rights defenders (F). As in previous reports, specific reference is made to incidents involving law enforcement officials and civil servants (E).

A. General findings

During the period January-December 2015, the RVRN documented, through interviews with victims, **273 incidents** of racist violence with more than 300 victims. In **75 incidents immigrants or refugees** were targeted due to their national or ethnic origin, religion or colour. In **185 incidents LGBTQI persons** were targeted. In **4 of these incidents** the victims were **foreigners**, who were targeted due to their sexual orientation **and** their national or ethnic origin; in 2 of these incidents at least one of the victims was targeted **also due to his disability**, while in 1 incident the victim was targeted because of his sexual orientation and his religion. From the 185 incidents against LGBTQI people, in **10 incidents**, the victims have been targeted as **activists**. These incidents should be evaluated in combination with **5 incidents** in which **human rights defenders** were targeted either because of their action in favour of refugees or/and immigrants, or because of their anti-Semitic action. In **5 incidents sacred or symbolic spaces or spaces used by collectivities** were targeted. Finally,

for the first time **1 incident** against a **member of the Muslim community** and **2 incidents** against **Roma children** were documented. In **185 incidents** the perpetrators have targeted one person and in **83 incidents** more than one person was targeted.

Motivation of the attack according to victims



The main volume of the attacks against refugees and immigrants were recorded by the Greek Forum of Migrants. The majority of the homophobic and transphobic attacks were recorded by Colour Youth-LGBTQ Youth Community in Athens.

Geographical dispersion: **172 incidents** took place in **Athens, especially in areas of the city centre**, but incidents were recorded in areas such as Voula, Galatsi, Glyfada, Kavouri,

Marathonas, Megara and Xolargos. 25 incidents were recorded in Thessaloniki. The expansion of the RVRN recording capacity is noteworthy: incidents were recorded in Agrinio, Aigina, Alexandroupoli, Veria, Volos, Drama, Edessa, Hgoumenitsa, Iraklion and Rethymno-Crete (7 incidents), Thassos, Thiva, Istiaia, Ioannina, Kavala, Corfu, Kilkis, Komotini, Kos, Lesvos, Rhodes, Mykonos, Nafpaktos, , Paros, Patras (11 incidents), Pella, Pieria (Katerini), Posidi, Salamina, Trikala, Tripoli and Xanthi.

Sites: **11 incidents** occurred at school (2 incidents outside the school unit). **19 incidents** took place in shops and other workplaces of the victim or the perpetrator and **14 incidents** in the victim’s house. The majority of the cases, namely **120 incidents** took place in a public space (street, park), **28** in public transport and metro stations, **9** incidents in police stations, places of detention, **5 incidents** online, **4 incidents** over the phone.

Characteristics of the attacks: A significant number of the attacks resulted in causing personal injuries and other serious offenses. **5 severe personal injuries**, **2 rapes** (“corrective” and against minor by minors) and **1 attempted rape in combination with personal injuries**, 5 incidents of **sexual abuse**, 67 incidents of **physical injuries**, or combined with sexual abuse, arson, thefts, insults (verbal abuse) or property damage, **1 robbery**, 30 incidents with **threats, or in combination with insult (verbal abuse)** or other **type of harassment**, 5 incidents of **property damage** with insult or threats, 3 incidents of desecration, 139 **insults** (verbal abuse

with different alterations that are specialized in individual categories) were documented.

Victims: In **180 incidents**, the victims were **men**, of which **7 were trans men**, and in **82 incidents**, the victims were **women**, from which **44 were trans women**. In at least **6 incidents** the victims define themselves as **queer**. In **40 incidents** **minors** were targeted, while in **141 incidents** the victims belong to the age group of **19-30 years old**. In **79 incidents**, the victims were between **31-45 years old** and in at least **14 incidents** over **45 years old up to 65**. Apart from the incidents against individuals, 5 incidents of vandalism were recorded that targeted the Israeli Community and the party of the Muslim minority.

Perpetrators: In **225 incidents** the perpetrators were **men**, in **23 incidents** **women** and in **19 incidents** the attack came from **mixed groups**. In the rest of the cases the perpetrators were not visible by the victims (e.g. case of desecration of sacred spaces). In **25 incidents** the perpetrators were **minors**, in **110 incidents** they belonged to the age group of **19-30 years old**. In **98 incidents** the perpetrators were between 31-50 years old, while in a few incidents the perpetrators were older.

The perpetrators are in the **vast majority Greek citizens (235 incidents)**. There were also **6 attacks** registered by **mixed** ethnic groups with the participation of Greeks and **8 incidents** in which the perpetrators were foreigners. In the majority of the incidents, **attacks** were committed **by groups**. **146 attacks** were perpetrated **by groups of 2-10 people**, while in **123 attacks** **only one perpetrator** was reported.

B. Attacks against refugees and immigrants³

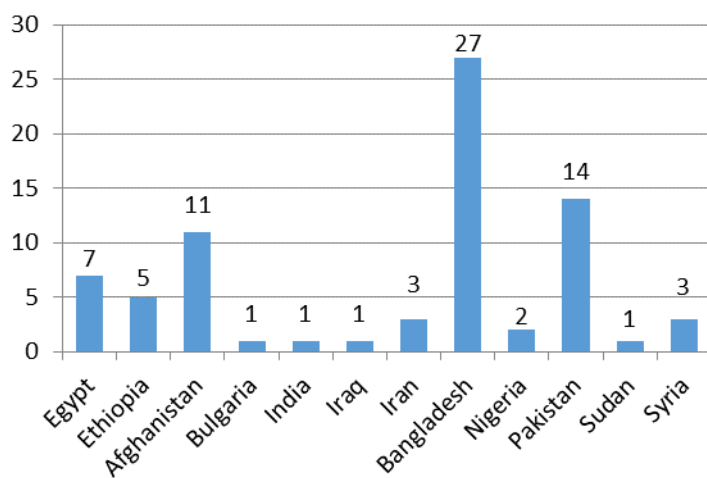
The attacks against refugees and immigrants present two, at first sight contradictory, characteristics. While the refugee crisis does not seem to have increased racist violence in 2015, the number of the recordings is more elevated than the number of 2014. Although, as explained above, this is largely due to the increase of the RVRN recording capacity, the attacks described in these records reflect a “commonplace” type of violence. In other words, the recordings corroborate the view expressed by the RVRN from the beginning of its operation, that they constitute the tip of the iceberg.

The trends of violence against refugees and immigrants reflected in the RVRN’s recordings include all kind of acts. Severe attacks were documented, some of which organized and inspired by extremist ideologies; as to the rest of the attacks, although they seem less severe since they did not cause physical pain or they did not require medical care, they reflect the perpetrator’s contempt against the victims and have long term significant negative impact on the victim and the community. Thus, while, e.g. throwing a fruit against a person may not physically hurt him/her, it constitutes a painful expression of the victim’s rejection by the perpetrator.

³ Attacks against foreigners and because of sexual orientation are analysed in the section "Attacks against LGBTIQI people."

The banality of contempt and rejection aims and results in making clear to the victim that he/she is not only unwelcome, but also unworthy of basic respect. As far as the pattern of verbal abuse is concerned, while the continuous harassments, by e.g. neighbours, are less frequent, refugees and immigrants are usually subjected to the reproduction of stereotypical views expressed in a contemptuous manner. Thus, for example they are linked to drug trafficking (“Sell drugs to pay your debts, since you can”) or the ‘filthiness’. One of the typical phrases addressed to refugees and immigrants in their daily life is the phrase: “Leave my country”.

Nationalities of victims who were immigrants or refugees



Victims: 70 incidents against men (in 8 the victims were 14-18 years old) and 5 against women. The victims of the incidents recorded during 2015 come from Egypt (7), Ethiopia (5), Afghanistan (11), Bulgaria (1), India (1), Iraq (1), Iran (3), Bangladesh (27), Nigeria (2), Pakistan (14), Sudan (1), Syria (3). **Legal status (at the time they were recorded by the RVRN):** 4 legal residence, 1 EU citizen, 12 asylum seekers, 2 recognized refugees, 7 newcomers from

which 6 were minors, 3 with no legal documents or were under deportation orders, 46 without declared status.

Perpetrators: mainly Greek citizens (71 incidents), men (66 incidents), women (6 incidents) or a joint group (3 incidents). The perpetrators were in 16 incidents between 18-30 years old; in 24 incidents 30-40 years old; in 19 incidents the perpetrators were 40-50 years old; and in 8 incidents over 50 years old. 32 attacks were made by several perpetrators and 43 incidents by one perpetrator. **Capacity or status:** Civil servants (2), guards (4), law enforcement officials (7), employees (3), members of extremist groups (8), civilians (49) (among which a professional driver, a security employee and the victim’s landlord).

Further actions: In 4 incidents the criminal proceedings have been initiated (see below Section “Complaints and authorities’ response”). In 14 incidents, the victim did not desire to take further action either because they wanted to leave from Greece (newcomers mainly), they were afraid and they did not trust the authorities, or because of their bad psychological condition and lack of basic goods. 3 incidents were reported to the police. In the majority of the incidents (47 incidents) the victim did not give any further information.

In the following subsections, more data will be presented on attacks against refugees and immigrants in relation to the specific motivation of the attack.

1. Foreigners / National origin

In **48** incidents out of the 75, victims stated that they were targeted because they were foreigners. The RVRN recorded **2 severe personal injuries, 16 personal injuries** (or in combination with threats, theft and insult), **25 verbal abuses** (insult, threats etc.), **3 incidents of property damage** and **2 assaults** (e.g. example of a person attacked by a passing driver who threw a fruit at his face and insulted him).

The pattern of organized attacks against foreigners has not disappeared. The description of an incident which occurred in May 2015 follows as an example:

“On May 6th at 23:00 my friend and I were near (...) Avenue, in a shop (...). When we left the shop, I saw a motorbike with two men. I thought they were law enforcement officials and that they would check our documents. I was scared because I only have the document issued by the Asylum Service testifying that my asylum application is pending. One of the two men got off the bike and came towards us. He was tall, about 1.83m, hefty, with (...) beard and (...) hair. Suddenly I saw that he was holding an iron bar; I did not have time to react or get back to my friend as he hit me strongly in the face with the iron bar. I fell down as I felt dizzy and the perpetrators left. After a while, I cannot estimate how much time exactly, I realized that I was with my friend in a taxi. The taxi took us to the Hippocratio Hospital at quarter to twelve. We stayed until the next day at 17.00. During our hospitalization we were told that a taxi driver found us and took us there. I do not know who the taxi driver is. I realized that my friend was also injured and I asked him what had happened. He said that there were eventually 2 motorbikes with four persons; one motorbike came from one side and hit me, while the other came from behind with an iron bar and hit my friend, who also felt dizzy and fell down. Then I called another friend of mine (...) and he came to the hospital. He is the one who called the police. The police came twice. My friend has an asylum seeker card. On both occasions, the police told us not to take further action because we do not have legal documents and we would be in trouble. At some point I heard them talking to a nurse and they told her that we probably had a fight between us and got injured. The perpetrators were dressed in black (...). My friend cannot sleep because of the head injury”.

Special mention should be made to an incident against a female domestic worker perpetrated by her employer jointly with two of his friends following an allegation for missing money from the house. The incident involves several crimes which caused well-founded fear for her life. As the incident was reported to the press, pictures of the victim demonstrate the intensity of the violence inflicted on her. In this kind of incidents, foreign origin and consequent vulnerability of the victim constitute the elements permitting or inciting the crime. Often a crime is perpetrated in unusually cruel ways so as to denote the absolute denigration of the victim's dignity because of his/her ethnic origin. Usually, the specific circumstances in which the crime is committed indicate that the same crime would not have been

committed against a person who does not bear the same characteristics (in this case, against a person who is a foreign domestic worker) or that even if the same crime was committed, it would not be as violent. As far as racist attacks against refugees and immigrants emanating from employers are concerned, it is worth mentioning that national origin, in conjunction with labour dependency seems to trigger the decision of employers to pass to violence by taking the law into their own hands. Even in case an employer has a legitimate claim against an employee, the reaction would not be as violent if the employee was not a refugee or a migrant.

2. Origin, religion and colour

In **22 incidents** out of the 75 against refugees and immigrants, the victims stated that they were targeted due to their origin in conjunction with their religion or colour and in **5 incidents** exclusively due to their colour. **1 severe personal injury, 6 personal injuries** (or in combination with insult) and **20 verbal abuses** (insults, threats, etc.) were recorded. These incidents reveal a common trend which consists of the intent on the part of the perpetrators to express their rejection of any possible co-existence with the victim, resulting therefore in the isolation and marginalization of the victim.

The incident of severe personal injuries took place at a bus station in Athens and reminds us of lurid descriptions from previous years:

«The victim was waiting at a bus stop. At first he was alone, but after a while other persons were coming, mainly women from the Philippines. Two young guys approached him and he thought that they would ask something. Suddenly one of them started beating him, while the other one stared. The victim fell down and asked: “Why are you hitting me?”. They did not respond and hit him again. They were probably wearing brass knuckles or they held stones. At least so it felt from the injuries».

Another case reads as follows:

«On 21.5.2015, at 9:30 p.m., I was near the church of Saint Lucas in (...) Avenue. I was talking on the phone, and suddenly 4 people appeared and started beating me. They were calling me “black and (...) “. All four of them were beating me. One of them pulled a knife but I begged him not to stab me. They continued to beat me hard and they told me “Return to your country” ».

The incidents of insults recorded by the RVRN include verbal abuses by a bus driver; by a taxi driver who refused to take the victim on board because of the big bag he was carrying and told him that “people from Bangladesh are filth and smell terrible”; as well as an insult by a grandmother in the presence of children conveying the message that “there are not enough positions in schools for Greek children”. Finally, an incident indicative of the vague boundaries between islamophobia and general bias against refugees and immigrants, is one against a person targeted as a terrorist due to his beard, who was accused that he is the cause for Greece “being

filthy,” whereas during the same period the beard is considered as an international fashion trend. The following incident indicates that the extremist groups with more or less organised structure and rules continue to operate within the neighbourhoods and still try to dominate public spaces:

«The victim was employed at a store. Around 20:30, 3 men came inside the store and started yelling at him. The perpetrators were shouting “We are from Golden Dawn, haven’t you heard about us? Why are you still in Greece and why haven’t you left yet for your own country? “. The victim did not respond and one of them kept threatening that they would beat him so that he leaves. Then, all 3 perpetrators approached the victim and beat him. They knocked him down and kept kicking him. The perpetrators left the store but they also attacked another person from Pakistan. Two police officers on patrol were passing outside the store. They asked the victim about the incident. In the meantime, other people were gathered outside the store. The policemen questioned both victims and then drove them to the police station in Omonoia. The police station of Omonoia arrested 2 out of the 3 perpetrators and asked from the victims to identify them. Later, legal proceedings were initiated and the victim was transferred to the hospital. Following the attack, the victim stopped working there as he was afraid of another attack »⁴.

3. Attacks in the context of the refugee crisis

In this sub-section, 7 incidents against newcomers in the context of the refugee crisis are presented. However, the RVRN stressed from the outset the difficulty of recording attacks against the newcomers; both the transitory character of their stay in Greece as well as the size of the refugee influxes, result in difficulties in identifying the victims, even in cases the attacks have left visible scars on them. Moreover, in these cases, the victims may not wish to report the incident as they fear this would slow down their trip or that it would cause them additional troubles.

Out of the 7 incidents, 5 incidents took place in **August** in Moria, Lesvos, 1 in the Police Department of Kos and 1 in Victoria Square last December. There are **4 cases of personal injuries** (or in conjunction with insults), **2 cases of property damage and insults** and **1 case of insult through behaviour**. The victims were **6 minors and 1 adult** (all men). The perpetrators were 2 law enforcement officials, 4 probationary guards, while 1 incident is attributed to an extremist group.

The majority of the incidents against minors reveal the mismanagement or the difficulty in handling these vulnerable cases. Minors were treated as prisoners and with particular suspicion. Two incidents should be highlighted, in which the attack was triggered due to the t-shirts with the print of the Turkish flag that the victims who had just arrived from Turkey wore. In both cases the perpetrators insulted the minors in a contemptuous manner and burned their shirts. Nonetheless, despite the increase of METAction’s presence which documented these particular incidents, no other incidents followed. The improvement of the general treatment of these cases by all actors possibly isolated that kind of behaviours.

⁴ See below the Sub-section III c) on Judgments and Decisions.

The following incident of December demonstrates the obstacles in recording attacks against newcomers. This particularly serious incident took place at Victoria square and was recorded in Idomeni by a UNHCR officer:

“The victim of Afghan origin was staying in a tent in central Athens-Victoria square during the last ten days of December. According to the victim, a group of people of Greek origin went to the square and began yelling at the people staying at the square to leave and evacuate the area. He mentioned that while the perpetrators were pushing and yelling at others they targeted his tent and put fire to it. The tent fell on him and he sustained second degree burns to the right side of his body (face, arm and leg). His wounds were not treated and according to the doctor from Praxis in Eidomeni they were infected, therefore he was given antibiotics. The victim seems very vulnerable and has difficulty in trusting anyone”.

The RVRN recorded as well an incident of a refugee trans woman from Syria who was attacked by another Syrian refugee on Kos island⁵. The victim was verbally attacked by the perpetrator who accused her for “offending her compatriots” because of her gender identity. The victim did not respond to the insults. Then the perpetrator threw a bottle on her and insulted her again. According to the victim, she was not involved in any other attacks since she came to Greece.

It is therefore clear that despite the RVRN’s efforts to adapt its tools to the present circumstances, either extraordinary or not, in order to provide to the fullest extent possible, the qualitative trends of the attacks, in these cases the victims are even more vulnerable and hesitant to share their experience. However, despite the low number of incidents compared to the number of persons having entered Greece in the context of the refugee crisis, the RVRN notes that we must remain constantly vigilant to the risks of an escalation of violence, even by isolated groups.

C. Attacks against LGBTQI persons

In the majority of the attacks recorded by the RVRN during 2015, LGBTQI persons were targeted due to their sexual orientation or/and their gender identity. In total **185 incidents** were recorded⁶, in which more **than 105 men of which 7 trans men, more than 75 women of which 45 trans women, and 9 queer** were targeted. In the majority the victims were attacked due to their sexual orientation (125 incidents), in 54 incidents due to their gender identity, while in some cases the victims were targeted because of both sexual orientation and gender identity.

The recordings against LGBTQI persons reveal almost every type of criminal act and reflect patterns of every possible variation. Severe attacks were recorded such as an incident of shootings that resulted in serious personal injuries, or rapes and sexual abuses aiming at the sexual contempt of the victim and as a means of “correcting” the victim’s sexual orientation; but also incidents of “trivial” verbal abuses that

⁵ This incident has been taken into account as an attack due to gender identity.

⁶ Attacks against activists during the discussion and voting of the civil partnership draft law by the Parliament were included under this section, since the victims identify themselves and were attacked as being LGBTQI.

substantiate the dissemination of violence within the Greek society and the severity of their impact on the daily life of the victims.

Special reference should be made to the incidents reporting domestic violence when the victims come out but also to incidents in school. In these cases, the parents stop being their child's guardians and become perpetrators, while the teachers usually have a significant role to play, either positive or negative.

It is moreover characteristic that LGBTQI people are targeted more than once during **a short period of time**. Often one incident may trigger a new one. As an example, a minor was subjected to domestic violence by his parents due to his sexual orientation and the next day the victim was attacked by his classmates. The perpetrators of the second incident started by mocking the victim for the abrasions and bruises attributing them to the fact that "his parents had found out" about his sexual orientation. In other words, the violence exerted by the parents triggered and perhaps "legitimized" in his classmates' eyes the use of violence by them.

The increase of incidents during the discussion and voting of the civil partnership draft law by the Parliament confirms that political actuality may trigger racist crimes. Therefore, public figures should take into account that political and public discourse, as conveyed by the media, may incite to prejudices and put in danger the safety of people targeted.

1. Attacks due to sexual orientation

Out of the 185 incidents against LGBTQI persons, in **125** the victims were targeted due to their **sexual orientation**. In **4 cases**, the perpetrators targeted the victims also due to their origin, disability, or religion.

Victims: In **93** cases men were targeted, of which 2 transgender; in 24 cases women were targeted; in 7 cases mixed groups were targeted (queer, men, women), while in 1 incident the victim defines itself as queer. **Age:** in **26 cases** the victims were **minors** (11-18 years old); in **89 cases** the victims were between **19 and 30 years old**; in **17 cases** among the victims were persons between **31-40 years old**; and in **2 cases** some of the victims **were over 40**.

Perpetrators: **mainly men (103 cases)**, of which **6 cases** were **exclusively perpetrated by minors or with the participation of minors**; 61 cases by men 19-30 years old; 19 cases by men 30-45 years old and 12 cases in which perpetrators were older (40-60 years old). 9 incidents with **female perpetrators aged mainly over 40 up to 60 years old**. **9 cases were perpetrated by mixed groups**. **3 incidents** were perpetrated by, exclusively or in association, the victim's **parents or other relatives**.

As to the **type of criminal acts**, the RVRN cannot but focus on the incidents of two **rapes** recorded in 2015. One of them was a "corrective rape" of a lesbian by men, while in the second one, both the victim and the perpetrators were minors. The

victim was targeted due to gender expression (namely the minor was targeted because it was considered that he did not express his gender according to stereotypes of masculinity). Both incidents occurred in small towns, which cause additional severe consequences for the victims. Quite revealing of this impact is the response of the victim's mother in the first incident according to her testimony:

«The victim returned home in a bad condition. She narrated the incident to her mother who hit the victim and blamed her for the incident (because of her sexual orientation). The mother asked the victim not to tell anything to her father and the neighbours, to avoid "shame". She also told her that she would get over it and she should "come to her senses" and "change her behaviour" or she would kill her because of the shame that their family could possibly go through».

The incident was not reported to the police because of the pressure exercised by the victim's mother. The victim could not be persuaded that the authorities would help her, given that she had lost her confidence in her family. In similar cases, recording the incident with the RVRN serves as the only possible way out, according to the victims.

The second incident reveals that violence between minors may be particularly harsh against children targeted because they are considered to be different. In that particularly severe incident, the perpetrators did not content themselves with just perpetrating the violent act, but they also taped the incident and made it public in order to further humiliate the victim. In this case, the parents' response was adequate and the authorities have dealt with the incident, but the victim faces the subsequent consequences in school. As a result, institutional questions arise about the appropriate treatment of such cases by the school community, especially in smaller regions.

In 2015, **4 cases of sexual abuse** were recorded. In one of these cases, the victim declared that he did not find the adequate response at the police station, and that he was humiliated by law enforcement officials due to his sexual orientation. It is a case of secondary victimization, since the victim was victimized again by the authorities. The victim left the police station and contacted the RVRN. A lawyer collaborating with an NGO in the same town took over the case.

The following case of sexual assault is also revealing of the witnesses' determining role:

«The victims were hugging at the square. Two young men passed by and insulted both of the victims due to alleged sexual orientation ("Look at the lesbians!"). The victims did not pay attention and remained on the spot. 3-4 minutes later, the same men came back with another two men (in total 4 people) and attacked the two girls. They grabbed the victims' hair, they slapped them, and they punched them and kicked them, while saying that "what the victims were doing is abnormal". The

youngest perpetrator abused sexually one of the girls⁷. The victims were asking for help but there was no traffic in the streets. At some point a couple appeared (man and woman, 30-35 years old) and as soon as the perpetrators saw them they ran away. The witnesses helped the victims to pull themselves together by giving them some water. The victims explained what had happened. The witnesses provided the victims with their contact details in case a criminal proceeding would follow. The 18year old victim was in a difficult psychological condition and was not able to report the incident to the police».

In **27 cases** out of 125, there were **personal injuries** (caused by beating, lighter assaults, throwing of object (rocks etc.) in combination with verbal abuses or/and threats.

Among these cases, some of the victims were targeted due to **sexual orientation and disability or national origin**. In case the victim tries to verbally defend oneself, it is observed that the perpetrators turn to physical violence. In the following example, the victim was a person with disabilities:

“While the victim who uses a quadruped walking stick with an elbow brace was passing by the square (...), a man started insulting him for his disability and his alleged sexual orientation. When the victim responded and told him that he didn’t have any right to speak in this tone, the perpetrator pushed the victim and as a result he fell on the ground. A man who was passing by helped the victim to get back on his feet and criticized the perpetrator for his action”.

There was a similar reaction on behalf of the perpetrators in the following example in which the victim was targeted firstly due to sexual orientation and subsequently due to his national origin:

“The victim was heading towards the mini market and passed by an internet café close to the Square. There were 4 young people outside the internet café and one of them insulted the victim due to sexual orientation. On his way back, the victim heard the same negative comments, he approached them and asked them to explain the reason why they offended him. Then the perpetrator insulted the victim again due to sexual orientation and his ethnic origin and he punched him in the face.

In **91 cases** the victims were verbally abused, many of which could be qualified as insults through behaviour since they were accompanied by actions aiming at humiliating the victims. In these cases, the perpetrators spit on their victims or throw different objects at them. Although this behaviour is often recorded against homosexual couples that e.g. walk hand in hand, similar attacks have been recorded as well against groups, when a member of them is targeted as a homosexual.

Further actions: The criminal procedure has been initiated in **6 cases**, while in **4 cases** the incident was reported to the police at the time of the recording. In **90 cases**,

⁷ The exact description of the attack is omitted in case it is considered possible to overburden psychologically the victim.

the victim does not want to lodge a complaint, either because they are afraid of the impact on their private life (often the parents' reaction) or because of lack of trust in the authorities. In **17** cases the victims wish to take further action and in **10** cases the victims seek for psychosocial support.

2. Attacks due to gender identity

In **60 incidents** out of the 185 incidents against LGBTIQI persons, the victims were targeted due to gender identity (in 2 incidents activists were targeted). In 42 incidents, the victims stated that they were previously subjected to violence on other occasions. The victims of this subgroup are targeted many times and later in life than other victims. The incidents due to gender identity are violent and physical violence is combined with other acts of humiliation as well as thefts. It is worth noting that more incidents against trans women are recorded; this fact should be taken into consideration by the State in designing and implementing policies of prevention of and combatting violence against women. In **14 incidents** the victims were targeted cumulatively due to sexual orientation and gender identity. The accumulation of more prejudices may focus on the same victim or the same group of victims. To make it clearer, in this subgroup falls the attack against a trans woman who was targeted both as a trans person and as a "homosexual man". In another case, more victims were targeted, either transgender people or their friends as homosexuals or lesbians.

Victims: trans women (45 incidents), queer (5 incidents), trans men (3 incidents), mixed group (7 incidents). **Age:** 16-19 years old (8 incidents), 21-30 years old (29 incidents), 31-40 years old (18 incidents), 42-50 years old (5 incidents). In 1 incident, one of the victims was 60 years old.

Perpetrators: **49 incidents** (men), in 1 of which the father of the victim, **7 incidents** (women), **2 incidents** (mixed group). In **7 incidents, minors were involved as perpetrators** (≥ 15 years old) (sexual abuse, personal injury, threats and insults). In 25 incidents the perpetrators were 20-30 years old. In 19 incidents the perpetrators were 35-60 years old. In 49 incidents mainly Greek citizens were involved according to the victims. In 41 incidents the perpetrators were citizens, in 2 incidents the perpetrators (or some of them) were suspected to belong to an extremist group. In 32 incidents the attacks were committed by a group of persons (at least 2 persons).

Further actions: At the time of the recording, the victims stated in **46 incidents** that they did not wish to lodge a complaint. The victims often mention that they do not report the attacks because of the lack of legal gender recognition. In **7 incidents** the attacks were reported to the police (see below the Section on trials and judgments). In **4 incidents** the victims seek psychosocial support.

Type of criminal acts: severe personal injury - shooting (1), sexual abuse (2), personal injuries (21), robbery (1), insults/threats (34), harassment (1).

In the following incident it is inferred from the verbal insult that preceded and from the specific target of the shot that the perpetrator targeted the victim due to gender identity.

“On 21.5.2015, around 6:00-6:10 in the morning, close to Larissa Station near Road Traffic Police Division and near the offices of Golden Dawn, a robust man aged 35-40 years as soon as he realized that he had before him a trans woman, he started insulting her and calling her “...”. She responded and tried to defend her human dignity. Then, everything happened so quickly; the man shot her on her legs, thighs and around the genitals, possibly using a shotgun. The trans woman managed to reach terrified and gory the police station entrance where a woman official tried to help her, gave her water and first aid and called an ambulance. According to the victim, the behaviour of the police was exemplary. She was transferred to the hospital and was admitted to the surgery clinic in order to remove all debris from the shots (...).”

In the previous incident, the victim tried to defend herself against verbal abuse before she got shot. In the following incident, the victim did not respond to the insult but she did not avoid physical violence:

“The victim was walking home when a group of young men walking behind her started criticizing her gender identity. The victim did not respond and tried to move faster so that she would not have to hear them. Then they ran, grabbed her and threw her on the ground. They insulted her, while one of them was punching her on the abdomen and the other man grabbed her purse, he opened it and emptied it throwing all the content on the victim, saying that “this is a woman’s purse”. The perpetrators stole 45 euros from the purse, her mobile phone and the charger and left. The victim has bruises and abrasions”.

In the above cases, the victims were brutally attacked by strangers. However, the RVRN recorded some incidents in which the victim was attacked in his/her social environment or neighbourhood, which demonstrate that the victims experience daily violent situations. In one of these incidents, the victim was targeted by a large group of young persons that harassed her either verbally or by throwing firecrackers at her apartment. The victim tried to talk to the director of the school in which the young persons are enrolled and to the Association of parents and guardians. In another case, the trans woman has been targeted by neighbours and she is often harassed and threatened in order to leave her house.

The violence that transgender persons have to deal with in their daily life is summarized in the following incident:

“The victim entered the bakery close to her home. The perpetrator put out a nail varnish, insulted the victim and threw the nail varnish on her clothes saying “How do you feel now (...) that you wear makeup?”

It is clear that transgender persons are at risk of accidental or continuing attacks, even within their neighbourhoods. Therefore, the RVRN wishes to stress that the legal gender recognition will be an important step for the protection of transgender

persons, as the GNCHR recommends⁸. Moreover, the authorities should issue a circular providing clear guidance to law enforcement officials on how to treat LGBTQI victims attacked due to gender identity, in order to avoid secondary victimization and facilitate the task of the police.

D. Anti-Semitic attacks

The RVRN recorded **4 incidents of desecration of places with religious and symbolic character**. Two incidents involve the desecration of cemeteries in Nikaia (Athens) and in Kavala with anti-Semitic slogans. The organization «Combat18 Hellas» claimed the responsibility for the first incident on the Internet by publishing a photo of the organization's "sign".

The third incident involves the desecration of a memorial for 1484 Jews from Kavala murdered in the camp of Treblinka, 11 days after the unveiling of the monument. In the fourth incident, there was the desecration of the memorial for 13.000 children murdered by Nazi at the playground of Pafou square.

The desecration of places with religious and symbolic character targets the Jewish community as a whole. The organizations assume the responsibility for these incidents in order to strengthen their reputation in the neo-Nazi field. At the same time, they are sending a message to the society, aiming at attracting more members or frightening these persons who do not share their ideology. Two of these incidents were reported to the police.

E. Attacks against Roma and members of the Muslim minority

The RVRN recorded for the first time **2 attacks against Roma minors**. The attacks took place in the context of an incident with racist characteristics in the school between college children. After the intervention of older children, one Roma child was injured. The victims' parents stated that there is tension between their community and the Pontian community and express concern about the dissemination of extremist ideologies in the area targeting Roma children that are often insulted verbally ("you came and messed up our school").

Victims: 2 minors (13 + 14 years old). **Perpetrators:** a minor of 14 years old and a mixed group of children (high-school undergraduates).

Moreover, the RVRN recorded **2 incidents against members of the Muslim minority in Thrace**, one against a person and one against a political party. In the first incident, the victim is the Chairman of a sports and cultural association. He was attacked verbally by a political figure active in the same region.

In the second incident, the premises of the political party DEB were targeted. The lock of the office and most of the windows were broken. The objects of the founder, who was killed in a car accident, would be exhibited in the party's premises but the main exhibit, his damaged vehicle was missing. There was an inscription on the

⁸ NCHR, *Reccommendations on Transgender persons and legal gender recognition*, (2015).

wall: “Guards of Thrace”. According to the party, this name could refer to an older far-right group that operated some decades ago, i.e. the “Hawks of Thrace”.

F. Attacks against human rights defenders

The RVRN records criminal acts or violent activities or behaviours against *human rights defenders*, namely persons who promote and protect human rights and are targeted because of that capacity⁹. These attacks have increased worldwide. Based on the communications received in 2015 from 80 States (among which we do not know if communications against Greece were included), the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders states in his annual report to the UN Human Rights Council:

“Defenders have been stigmatized, defamed and ostracized. They have been threatened, harassed and subjected to surveillance. They have been assaulted, raped, murdered and made to disappear. They are often subjected to arbitrary arrest and detention, accused and sentenced on false charges. They have been subject to laws and regulations that impinge on their rights, in particular their right to freedom of expression, association and movement.¹⁰”

The RVRN has incorporated in its recordings the attacks against human rights defenders for two basic reasons: *first*, the interconnection and solidarity among defenders strengthens both their own protection and the protection of victims of racist violence and *second*, recording the attacks against human rights defenders better reflects the situation with regard to targeted groups. In other words, an escalation against human rights defenders may be an alert for an escalation of attacks against the groups they defend.

During 2015, **15 incidents against human rights defenders** were recorded. In 10 incidents activists were targeted due to sexual orientation or gender identity (in one incident the victim was targeted also due to religion), in 1 incident due to his actions against anti-Semitism and in **4 incidents volunteers in the context of the refugee emergency on Kos**.

The majority of the incidents against activists in the field of LGBTQI rights took place during the discussion and voting of the civil partnership draft law by the Parliament. However, the RVRN recorded an incident against an activist in the context of the 1st Crete Pride, when a young man punched a volunteer and insulted him. The continuing character of the risk that human rights defenders face is demonstrated in the attack against a well-known activist in Patras who was targeted by a group of young men that recognised her because of her activity.

⁹ United Nations General Assembly, A/RES/53/144, “Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms”.

¹⁰ A/HRC/31/55, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders*, par. 26.

Out of the **4 incidents** recorded during the fact-finding mission undertaken by members of the RVRN on Kos island¹¹, in 3 incidents volunteers of “Kos Solidarity” were targeted (a Greek, a French and a German citizen). In the two following examples, we see that the volunteers for refugees’ rights were attacked and threatened. In the first incident, the victim was verbally and physically attacked:

«The victim went to Captain Elias to distribute shampoo to the refugees. A resident of the same area verbally attacked her: “You bring them here” and then he hit her hands. The incident was published in various media and the victim sent a personal letter to the perpetrator. During that period, the volunteers were targeted”.

Another recorded incident is more complicated and involves both threats against the physical integrity of the victim and indirect threats within the social environment.

A general tension was recorded and associated by volunteers with the national elections in September. During a protest by Kos inhabitants outside the Police Station where the identification of refugees was taking place, a member of “Kos Solidarity” was attacked in order to remove her camera. In the preceding 2-3 evenings, groups of inhabitants had gathered outside the police station and according to some testimonies they attacked the refugees.

Another incident involves a practice of eviction against newcomers from specific spots. This practice merits to be further examined, if it was indeed initiated or supported by institutional stakeholders and civil servants. The victim expressed her objection against this practice and subsequently was subjected to serious threats.

All the recordings against human rights defenders and activists demonstrate that these persons are exposed to particular risks in the context of their action or on their daily life. For this reason, they need to be protected by the authorities. The RVRN points out that a special circular should be issued by the Police on the treatment of such complaints. Moreover, a law should strengthen the protection of human rights defenders.

G. Attacks with the involvement of law enforcement officials and civil servants

1. Police Violence

The RVRN records from the beginning of its establishment incidents where police violence is linked to racist violence, namely where there is concrete evidence (verbal abuse, threats e.tc.), which demonstrates racist motives by law enforcement officials during violent incidents. In 2015, **16 incidents** were recorded in which the perpetrators were either only law enforcement officials or law enforcement officials

¹¹ Joint fact-finding mission by Greek Council for Refugees, Greek Forum of Refugees and Hellenic League for Human Rights.

along with other perpetrators. Out of these, in **11 incidents refugees and immigrants** were targeted, while in **5 incidents LGBTQI persons** were targeted. 8 incidents took place in public space, 7 in detention areas (police stations and identification centres), and 1 in a metro station.

In 7 incidents, the victims suffered personal injuries or/and in conjunction with threats and insults, in 2 incidents there was property damage and in the rest the victims were assaulted by derision and threats. In the majority of the cases against refugees and immigrants, law enforcement officials resorted to unjustified unlawful acts and violent practices during the exercise of their duties. These acts constitute arbitrary practices which reflect, in an objective manner, the degrading treatment of victims and the unnecessary overstepping of boundaries during the performance of their duties. Only in 2 cases out of 11, the victim wanted to report the incident at the moment of the recording. In the following case, the incident was reported with the legal assistance provided by the Greek Council for Refugees and demonstrates that unless impunity of police violence is not effectively eliminated, such cases that are not related to detention conditions will not be eliminated:

«The refugee went to the Police station of (...). The officer who was standing at the entrance and already knew him as he had arrested him recently said: “Give me your documents. Where have you been yesterday?” The refugee replied that he had no appointment the previous day with the Police. The officer stood up, looked at him angry, slapped him and said: “You are not to talk to me in that tone”. The refugee protested against this behaviour and asked why he was slapped. The police officer denied the fact that he had slapped him and all present officials were laughing agreeing with him. The police officer said: “I did not slap you, don’t you see that I am eating fruit; I would never get my hands dirty”. The refugee asked for the officer’s reference details and stated that his behaviour was incompatible with the code of ethics for police officers. The police officer laughed at him and told him to ask the chief officer for his reference details”.

In the incidents against LGBTQI persons, law enforcement officials embarrassed and insulted the victims who were passing by; in another case they attacked and threatened a victim during their night patrol. In **3 incidents** out of these, the victim reported the attack and thus the RVRN would follow-up the case.

2. Attacks by civil servants

In 2015, **6 incidents** were recorded in which the perpetrators were civil servants and they attacked the victims during the performance of their duties¹². In 4 incidents, LGBTQI persons were targeted and in 2 incidents refugees and immigrants were attacked. In 2 incidents, the victims were subjected to physical violence. 3 incidents took place in public transport and a metro station, 1 in a hospital, 1 in a school and

¹² In this category attacks by other employees are not included. The RVRN recorded an attack by a security agent and another by a hotel receptionist.

1 in a museum. A nurse's disproportionate reaction towards a same-sex couple led the victim to leave his partner alone during hospitalization.

In this category, **two school incidents against high-school students due to gender identity and sexual orientation**, in which teachers were involved or had a role, should be mentioned. In the first incident, the victim was verbally insulted and humiliated by the teacher in front of the classmates, while in the second, the teacher did not defend or protect the victim of a verbal attack in the class and expelled the victim in order to calm the class. In both cases, the teachers' behaviour reflect prejudice and lack of awareness. Besides the obvious consequences of these behaviours on the victims, it should be taken into account that the wrong message is given to the children and they do not promote tolerance and solidarity.

H. Witnesses' role

The RVRN has on many occasions pointed out the important role of eyewitnesses. The pacific intervention by witnesses may deter the perpetrators and protect the victim. In previous annual reports, the RVRN raised the tolerance or the fear demonstrated by the witnesses who were present during the attacks but they did not intervene in order to help the victims.

In 2015, two good examples are presented. In the first one, the victim was attacked and subjected to physical violence in the metro station but no one among the persons present on the spot or passing by, tried to help or stop the attack:

«The victim was heading towards the metro exit near the tickets office. On the escalators the victim was insulted but did not respond. The perpetrators passed by the victim and pushed him. The victim fell on the ground. The perpetrators approached the victim and started kicking him. The witnesses did not try to stop the perpetrators. The victim went to the closest hospital for medical care”.

On the contrary, the simplest intervention by the witnesses may stop the attack, as the following example reveals:

«On his way home, the victim was verbally insulted by a group of young men. The victim did not respond and walked faster. The perpetrators started chasing the victim. When they grabbed him, they removed his pants and pushed him to the ground. They kept insulting him for his appearance, his clothes and his “feminine” voice and they were spitting on him. A woman on a motorcycle stopped and shouted: “What are you doing? Leave the man alone”. The perpetrators fled”.

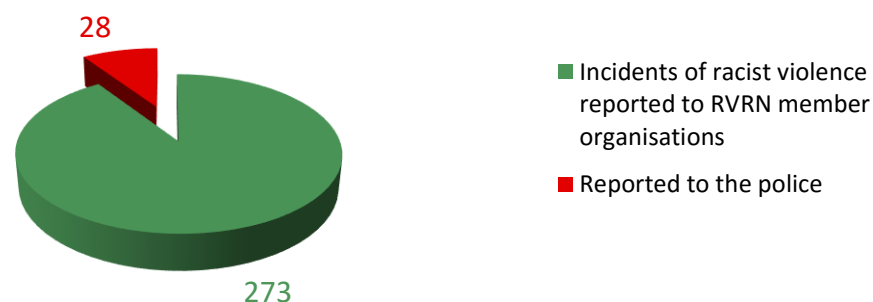
The witnesses' role is closely linked to the impact that the racist crime has on the society. As the violent expression of prejudices spreads the fear within the community that is targeted, so the violence and the fear are consolidated within the rest of the society. The inaction on the part of witnesses, even in cases of verbal attacks, strengthens the perpetrators and further destabilizes the victim.

III. Complaints and authorities' response

The RVRN monitors thoroughly the implementation of the legislation related to the elimination of racist crimes. Recent legislative measures facilitating the victims' access to police and justice and specifying the obligation of the police and prosecuting authorities to investigate the possible racial motivation of a crime were implemented during 2015. However, obstacles in the victims' access to justice have not been eliminated in practice, especially in cases taking place in other areas outside Athens. This section analyses the RVRN data on complaints (A) and on other information related to the police and judicial response to racist violence, including the measures adopted by the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights (B).

A. The RVRN data on complaints

At the time of the recording, **28 cases among 273 were reported to the police**. These were incidents in which members of all the aforementioned groups were targeted, namely refugees, immigrants, LGBTQI persons and members of the Israeli community, members of the Muslim community and human rights defenders. However, **16 incidents** out of 28 were reported by LGBTQI persons, which support the conclusion that reporting to the police remains higher in groups with Greek citizenship. Nevertheless, it should be recalled that one of the main obstacles faced by LGBTQI persons in reporting a racist crime is the fear of disclosure of sexual orientation to their family, the lack of legal gender recognition and previous negative experiences of contacts with the police.



According to the RVRN recordings and based on its members' experience of accompanying and supporting victims, at least in the cases brought at the General Hellenic Police Headquarters and the Department of Combating Racist Violence, the police provided the necessary assistance to the victim. The RVRN has stressed out that every indication of respect to the principle of legality may empower the victim to promptly take the necessary steps to help the investigatory authorities.

However, the RVRN recordings reveal some negative responses by the police. For example, in an incident against a LGBTQI person in a public transport bus, the victim called the police and provided a description of the perpetrators. According to the victim:

«The policeman that answered the call was helpful at first and suggested that a squad car records the incident. However, when the policeman realized that the perpetrators were gone he told the victim that this was no longer possible. Then, the same policeman started questioning the sincerity of the victim's testimony as the victim mentioned the bus station ("North Pole"). Finally, the policeman recorded the

incident and assured the victim that it would be forwarded to the squad car in order to be investigated but he noted that there was “zero possibility” of identifying the perpetrators as they could have already changed clothes, or hidden in a house etc. The policeman asked the victim if he wanted to file a complaint but he stressed that it would be meaningless. Then the policeman said that the incident had been recorded in the police log book as an emergency call. Nonetheless the complaint was not anonymous”.

In another incident in Thessaloniki with the involvement of law enforcement officials, the victims allege that they tried to report the attack to the police. According to their testimony, the policemen that responded the call were not co-operative and had a rather derisive tone.

Finally, in an incident that took place in January 2015, the victims were attacked at a square by 3 persons with iron bars. The perpetrators insulted then verbally so that the victims leave the square. According to their testimony, the police were present but did not intervene.

B. Authorities’ response to racist violence

The RVRN has pointed out that the State owes to guarantee the victims' substantive access to police and judicial authorities apart from the formal one. This would entail the obligation to support the victims at all stages on the basis of operational planning, by e.g. providing the possibility to communicate with the authorities in his/her native language or in a language he/she understands. In that context, the RVRN contacted the Department of Combating Racist Violence in order to build a bridge of cooperation between the police and the RVRN members. This initiative aims at supporting the victims and facilitating the reporting of racist crimes to the police. This practice has been quite successful, as victims are supported by NGOs and some practical gaps of the police, such as the lack of psychological support, are mitigated.

However, the recordings show that blind attacks against foreigners by groups operating during the night did not disappear during 2015. Despite the positive reaction of a passing taxi driver who transferred the victims of a similar incident to the hospital, it is worth noting that neither he nor the hospital called the police. Even more alarming are the victim’s allegations on how law enforcement officials deterred them from lodging a complaint. In any case, the Hellenic Police has the obligation to inform all policemen about the legislation in force providing for the protection of undocumented victims and essential witnesses of racist crimes from deportation during the trial, or to make clear that law enforcement officials have the obligation to investigate racist motivation in the cases prescribed by law and further explained by the police circular issued on 8.11.2014, entitled “Combating racism, xenophobia and discrimination in policing “. Even though in Athens, the Department of Combating Racist Violence in the General Hellenic Police Headquarters, seems to deal with these incidents regardless of the specific area of the crime, reasonable doubts are still raised as to whether all law enforcement

officials are aware of their responsibility to investigate racist motive without prejudice, as in the case of the above mentioned incident.

1. Statistical data from the Departments and Offices against Racist Violence in the Hellenic Police

According to the data communicated to the RVRN by the Hellenic Police, during the course of 2015, eighty (80) potentially racially motivated incidents were recorded and investigated nationwide by the competent Hellenic Police Services (Departments and Offices against Racist Violence). The 11414 call center received 1526 phone calls, among which 27 calls were related to potentially racially motivated incidents. On the electronic form, available at www.astynomia.gr, 100 complaints were recorded, among which 98 potentially racially motivated incidents (out of the 98 complaints, 86 concerned the same incident). These complaints were investigated and case-files were formed.

In detail, the police recorded:

- 27 incidents with the involvement of citizens.
- 17 incidents with the involvement of law enforcement officials.
- 2 incidents with the involvement of organized groups.
- 31 incidents with the involvement of unidentified perpetrators.
- 5 incidents with the involvement of citizens and unidentified perpetrators
- 2 incidents with the involvement of citizens and law enforcement officials.

The investigation revealed:

- In 41 incidents the potential racist motive was related to the victim's origin-colour-race.
- In 4 incidents the victim's religion.
- In 11 incidents the victim's sexual orientation.
- In 4 incidents the victim's gender identity.
- In 2 incidents, the victim's disability.
- In 3 incidents, the racist motive was not determined.
- In 19 incidents, the racist motive was not substantiated.

The Hellenic Police notes in its letter that all potentially racially motivated incidents reported to the police are *ex officio* investigated and the competent Prosecutor is immediately informed.

2. The response to racist crime by judicial authorities and the Ministry of Justice

a) The appointment of Special Prosecutors on racist crimes

Significant progress has been observed in the prosecution of racist crimes following the appointment of Special Prosecutor on racist crimes in Athens and in Piraeus, as the RVRN had recommended to the authorities since 2012¹³. Special Prosecutors are in direct contact with the police and the investigation of racist crimes was

¹³ RVRN Annual Report (2012), p. 5.

accelerated. Moreover, the Special Prosecutor in Athens who was appointed in September 2014 has taken several measures facilitating the follow-up of racist crimes and its combatting by the authorities. In previous years, the cases related to racist crimes, even if they were introduced to courts, were not recorded as such and thus their identification was extremely difficult. Therefore, neither the State nor any other stakeholder was in a position before to easily examine and evaluate the implementation of the relevant legislation by the courts. It is therefore considered that the appointment of a Special Prosecutor constitutes a good practice that should be further disseminated in other Prosecution Offices, such as in Thessaloniki, Patras, or Iraklion (Crete) where the number of racist incidents is steady, if not rising. The RVRN wishes to add that it would be even more effective if the Special Prosecutor was responsible exclusively for racist crimes or at least for racist crimes and for trafficking, to have the necessary time to delve into these special crimes.

b) Measures adopted by the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights

The Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights adopted several measures in 2015 in order to combat racist crime and racism. Among these measures, special reference should be made to the amendment of Article 81A Criminal Code and the establishment of the National Council against Racism and Intolerance. Moreover, the RVRN's recommendation about the creation of a unified official system for recording and monitoring racist crimes in cooperation with the police and the courts has been adopted.

1. Article 81A Criminal Code as amended

The RVRN recognises the difficulty in introducing the concept of racist crime into law and in drafting a penal provision on racially motivated crimes. In principle, the removal of subjective elements, such as hatred, that have given rise to reasonable objections is positive. Emphasizing the objective elements related to the victim may reduce the requirements related to the proof of feelings that are hard to prove in court. Article 81 A Criminal Code as amended is applied in cases where the perpetrator commits the crime against a victim due to the victim's characteristics. Thus, there is no longer the risk of requiring that the perpetrator's racist feelings already existed before the crime or were consciously expressed. Racist crimes are not only crimes of organized violence and their punishment should not depend on elements related to the perpetrator's convictions, but on the overall assessment of the facts.

Nonetheless, the RVRN wishes to point out that the phrase according to which "(...) the victim was chosen due to his/her characteristics (...)" may leave a margin of impunity of crimes of mixed motivation. In cases in which the perpetrators have multiple concurring motives, the proof of racial motivation is even more complicated. The present formulation of the provision may limit the scope of Article 81A Criminal Code¹⁴. The RVRN expresses its concern about the possible deterring

¹⁴ RVRN Annual Report (2013), p. 6.

effect this formulation may have on its application, thus, even if the criminal act is punished, its racial motivation may remain invisible and unpunished.

For these reasons, the RVRN suggested that a phrase is added clarifying that the crime may have multiple motives. *Indicatively*, it is suggested that the phrase “the choice of whom was made” is erased and that one of the two following phrases is introduced:

1. “...crime against a victim, *in whole or in part*, due to characteristics related to race, colour, national or ethnic origin, descent, religion, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity”¹⁵ or

2. “... at least one of the motives is racist, namely against a victim, due to characteristics related to race, colour, national or ethnic origin, descent, religion, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity”¹⁶.

The RVRN recalls that it is not required that racial motivation was the only and exclusive motive of the crime and thus the prosecution of mixed-motive crimes should be facilitated. It is for the court to decide, based on the facts of each particular case, the role of the racial motivation. In any case, the legislation should provide the courts with the adequate tools so that racial motivation is fully identified in mixed-motive crimes. This is the spirit of the recent judgment of the European Court of Human Rights:

“(…), the Court takes the view that not only acts based solely on a victim’s characteristics can be classified as hate crimes. For the Court, perpetrators may have mixed motives, being influenced by situational factors equally or stronger than by their biased attitude towards the group the victim belongs to. Therefore, it finds it difficult to share the prosecution’s concern about proving that the insult was “precisely” due to the applicant being a Roma”.

The RVRN has moreover found that in practice the suspension of penalties may have a very negative impact on the victim. The victim feels insecurity and fear and thus he/she is further victimized considering that the authorities deny in essence the damage he/she has suffered¹⁷. Keeping in mind that the suspension of penalties serves objectives compatible with the protection of human rights, the RVRN wishes to recall that in each case the court should strike a justified balance on the basis of all individual parameters, so that the suspension is provided under specific terms for the protection of the victim. Article 81A Criminal Code could include a phrase in this direction.

2. Article 361B Criminal Code

¹⁵ This model was adopted by the UK and the State of California.

¹⁶ The Belgian Criminal Code has introduced a similar formulation.

¹⁷ It is recalled that the risk of secondary and repeat victimisation, intimidation and retaliation inspires the provision of Directive 2012/29/EU of 25.10.2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA.

Article 361B Criminal Code introduces a substantive offence punishing the exclusion and the announcement of the exclusion from goods or services out of contempt for persons due to characteristics related to race, colour, national or ethnic origin, descent, religion, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity. It seems that this provision aims at punishing individual and collective practices manifestly racist, having a propagandist character and aiming at familiarising the society with the idea that people are divided in human and subhuman beings, and that the latter do not “deserve” access to goods and services. This interpretation is further supported by the addition of the term “contempt”, which may however impede the implementation of the provision.

Following these thoughts, the RVRN expressed the following *reservations* and invited the legislator to respond in clarity:

First, the RVRN raises the issue of the articulation of this provision with the rest of the legislation and especially article 16 Law 3304/2005. According to one view, article 361B Criminal Code demonstrates the qualitative difference that may arise between the prohibition of discrimination in the access and supply of goods and services, provided by article 16 Law 3304/2005 and the racist practice of exclusion and segregation whose aims exceed discrimination as a consequence.

Second, the introduction of the provision in the chapter of crime against honour raises a concern as the legal value protected is, under this chapter, the individual honour of a person.

Third, the RVRN expresses its concern about the effective implementation of criminal provisions combatting racist behaviours given their dispersion in different legislative texts. This risk is further enhanced by the imprecise title of laws. So, e.g. the law amending Article 81A Criminal Code and introducing the National Council against Racism and Intolerance is entitled “Civil Partnership, exercise of rights, criminal and other provisions” and no reference is made to its anti-racist content.

3. Working groups and National Council against Racism and Intolerance

The RVRN was invited by the General Secretariat of Transparency and Human Rights of the Ministry of Justice to a series of meetings with the participation of all competent actors in order to respond to problems related to the recording of racist crimes and incidents. In these meetings, practical gaps were established. The exchange of views between all actors had a positive impact on understanding hate crime in Greece.

The establishment of the National Council against Racism and Intolerance (“the Council”) is a very positive step. The necessity for a body devoted to combatting racism was recognised in practice by all actors and constitutes one of the specific recommendations of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance

(ECRI) of the Council of Europe addressed to the Greek State¹⁸. ECRI recommended the creation of a Task Force to develop a comprehensive national strategy to combat racism and intolerance with the participation of the National Human Rights Commission and the Ombudsman and NGOs, recognising, thus, the need for technical expertise on this matter. These two institutions can advise the State in the context of their statutory mission, provide documentation of all aspects of racism and recommend necessary measures for its elimination. On the other hand, the participation of NGOs ensures that the Council is also associated with the field and aware of the challenges faced by the victims.

In this context, the RVRN expresses its satisfaction for the recognition of its work by the State as it will be represented by two members in the composition of the Council. The RVRN is represented separately from the two RVRN coordinators, the GNCHR and the UNHCR, which serve broader mandates.

The RVRN's objective is to monitor the situation of racism and racist violence in Greece, to address specific proposals to the State and to follow-up their implementation. This is the reason the RVRN considers that its participation in the Council contributes to this goal. In other words, the RVRN's intention is to safeguard its objectivity within the Council without changing its goals or the nature of its activities.

Preventive and combatting policies against racism aim primarily at protecting the persons targeted due to their characteristics. At the same time, these policies contribute to the enhancement of social cohesion and democracy. Therefore these policies should not be presented solely as measures of protection of vulnerable groups but also as obligations of the State to the persons within its jurisdiction. Racism and racist violence do not only cause harm to the victim, but create also tensions within the society and increase insecurity and lack of stability.

It is positive that the obligations of the General Secretary of Transparency and Human Rights related to the organisation and the operation of the Council and the implementation of its decisions are provided by law. However, it would be appropriate to provide for a safety net solution, even of a procedural nature, as to the implementation of decisions that exceed the competence of the Ministry of Justice and require the involvement or the intervention of other ministries. In other words, while the Ministry of Justice and the General Secretary of Transparency and Human Rights are the most appropriate authorities for the management of the Council, they should not be understood as the only authorities having to abide by the policies combatting racism and related obligations.

c) Judgments and Decisions

On 24.3.2016 the European Court of Human Rights published its judgment in the case *Sakir v. Greece*. The Court, based on, among others, the findings of the RVRN,

¹⁸ ECRI Report on Greece (fifth monitoring cycle), (2015), par. 74.

found that Greece violated the obligation to conduct an effective investigation following the assault against the applicant. According to the Court, the police and judicial authorities had failed to make a connection between the assault against Mr Sakir and other similar incidents and drew attention to the general context of the case, and to the reports by Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, the Ombudsman and the RVRN, highlighting the phenomenon of racist violence in the centre of Athens, especially in the Aghios Panteleïmonas district, and serious omissions on the part of the police in investigating those attacks.

In 2015, a number of important court decisions were adopted or published by national courts in cases of, according to the RVRN, racially motivated crimes and incidents.

1. In the case of Solace Godwin Akpevwe, the doctor of Nigerian origin who was verbally insulted by a patient, the court found the defendant guilty but did not apply Article 81A Criminal Code accepting repentance on the account of the defendant as he apologized during the trial.
2. Decision no. 398/2014 of the Mixed Jury Court of Athens in the murder case of Shehzad Luqman confirmed the position adopted by the RVRN “that the criminal offences were motivated by hatred”. The Court’s reasoning underlined the qualitative elements and the special circumstances under which the crime was committed:

“numerical superiority of perpetrators – at midnight- attack against an individual unknown to them, who was targeted as a Pakistani migrant, with the use of knives, in an area frequented by migrants and the identification of the victim was easier, without any provocation by the victim, repeated stabs, escape by removing the evidence and hiding the distinctive features of the vehicle, moving ahead without fear of being traced and arrested (...)”.

As repeatedly highlighted by the Racist Violence Recording Network, these elements are some of those that distinguish classic racist crimes. Since the first Network’s recordings, a similar pattern of racist incidents has emerged. However, all courts, assessing a crime’s motive, should always rely their legal reasoning on the examination and cross-evaluation of the facts. Therefore, while the Court correctly notes that the evidence found in the house of one of the accused and the existence of extremist political beliefs do not substantiate as such the racist element of the criminal offences by either defendant, it should be pointed out that indications of connection of a suspect or a defendant to racist and neo-Nazi groups should always be investigated by the police and evaluated by the judicial authorities, as potential evidence of racist motive.

3. In the case of Walid Taleb, the Court found that Article 81 A Criminal Code recognizing the racial motivation of the defendants could not be applied, as at the moment of the criminal acts Article 79 par. 3 was applying. Article 79 par. 3 was

abolished and not replaced by Article 81A Criminal Code¹⁹. The defendants were convicted for the offences of grievous bodily harm, abduction and robbery. The court imposed the following sentences: 13 years and 2 months of imprisonment without parole to the former employer of the victim, 5 years' imprisonment (suspended) to his son, and 10 years on each of the two other accomplices. The appeal against this decision will be heard soon.

The RVRN points out that the examination of the potential racial motivation of a crime should always be examined by the courts, irrespective of the impact it may have on the punishment. In some cases, in order to examine whether the crime was racially motivated, it is required to take into account both clear and less obvious evidence. Hence, sometimes, patent evidence, such as the victim's ethnic origin, may not be sufficient. In other words, not any crime against a victim of another ethnic origin is a hate crime; nonetheless, the judicial authorities should always evaluate all the facts and fully justify their decision.

However, in some crimes, victims are targeted due to racism or prejudice in combination with other motives. Thus, although in some cases the perpetrator targets the victim mainly in order to steal his/her money, it is the victim's origin and vulnerability that permits or stimulates the crime. Often the circumstance under which the crime was committed substantiates the conclusion that the same would not have been committed against a victim without the same characteristics (e.g. against a person who is not a foreigner or a transgender) or it would never be committed in such an unusually cruel way.

4. The Court convicted the adult perpetrators of an incident that took place on 28.1.2011 following the parade by a group of perpetrators of 10 persons (5 persons were not arrested) against two women of Greek origin from Northern Epirus. This is the case of 2 minors and 3 adult perpetrators related to one of the "individual" offenses (approximately 60) associated with the file of Golden Dawn. The Court found that the adult defendants were guilty of robbery, grievous bodily harm and illegal carrying/use of weapons and sentenced them to imprisonment of 14 years, 10 years, and 15 years and 6 months respectively. The Court did not accept that the crimes were racially motivated due to ethnic origin of the victims, without reasoning its decision at least during the announcement. Nonetheless, the Court did not recognize a suspending effect to the appeals, implying eventually that the perpetrators were dangerous and committed the crimes in an inhuman and degrading manner.

5. On 24.9.2015, the Three-Member Misdemeanour Court in Thessaloniki heard the case of the attack against trans women in a cafeteria. The accused were convicted and sentenced to imprisonment of 17 months. It should be noted that the police and the Court addressed the victim and the witness using the gender which is consistent with their gender identity and not the gender marked on their identity card. During

¹⁹ See Article 10 Law 4285/2014 (Official Journal A' 191), replaced by Article 21 Law 4356/2015 (Official Journal A' 185), which currently applies.

the hearing, the racial motivation was examined but the publication of the decision is expected, in order to see if it was indeed taken into account.

6. On 16.10.2015, the appeal against the decision that convicted the public bus driver, P.K., for refusing to transport and for evicting two people of African descent, in combination with verbal abuse, was heard. The driver was convicted by the court of appeal to eight (8) months imprisonment and a fine of one thousand (1.000) euros.

7. On 15.12.2015, the Felonies Court of Appeal completed the trial of 3 persons accused of robbery, grievous bodily harm and carrying/using of weapons. The attacks against two men of Bangladeshi and Pakistani origin took place within 10 minutes by 3 perpetrators around Omonoia. The Court convicted the accused for the offences of dangerous bodily harm, and for carrying and using weapons, applying as well Article 81 A Criminal Code. The Court imposed 5 years and 5 months, and 1 month of imprisonment respectively.

Recommendations to the State

The Racist Violence Recording Network addresses the following recommendations to the State in order to combat racist crimes.

To the Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction

A. Combating racist crime

1. Adoption of a specific operational plan to prevent and tackle hate crimes, with special provisions for the regional police directorates and departments.
2. Strengthening of the Departments Combating Racist Violence: adequate staffing, refraining from changing the chiefs and the policemen serving in these departments with excessive frequency and simultaneously.
3. Conduct of a training program, with the assistance of international and European organizations with expertise and experience in the training of security and justice forces, for the employees serving in the Departments and Offices against Racist Violence, as well as the entire personnel of the Hellenic Police.
4. Information of the police regarding their obligation to assist the victims, to intervene for their rescue and to make sure that they are brought before the competent services.
5. Appropriate dissemination within the Police of the Circular “Combating racism, xenophobia and discrimination in policing” (8.11.2014). Explicit recognition of the Chiefs’ obligation to disseminate the content of the circular within their Police Station.
6. Cooperation of **all** police departments with governmental or non-governmental bodies and immigrant communities in order to provide medical and social assistance, legal assistance and interpretation to facilitate the victims’ access to the police.

7. Abstention from prosecution on the grounds of illegal entry and prohibition of arrest and administrative detention of a complaining witness for the period between filing a complaint and the issuance of the special prosecutor's act provided in Article 19A par. 1 (b) Law 4251/2014, as well as the witnesses of racist attacks and ensuring of their access to the authorities.

8. Adoption of a special circular on the decent treatment of LGBTQI persons aiming at providing law enforcement officials with clear guidance and avoiding secondary victimisation.

9. Protection of human rights defenders, namely all individuals and organisations promoting and protecting human rights.

B. Combating racially motivated police violence

1. Establishment of a truly independent and effective police complaints mechanism. In particular, this mechanism should have no structural or organizational connection with the police, in accordance with the recommendations formulated by international organizations.

2. Provision for a specific procedure in the framework of disciplinary control within Hellenic Police for faster processing of racially motivated arbitrary acts.

To the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights

1. Training of prosecuting and judicial authorities with regard to racist crime.

2. Expansion of the good practice of the appointment of a Special Prosecutor on racist crime in other regional prosecuting offices, and recognition of exclusive material competence.

3. Adoption of a legislative provision for the protection of human rights defenders.

4. Ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence²⁰.

5. Ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on cybercrime and the Additional Protocol concerning the criminalization of acts of a racist and xenophobic nature committed through computer systems.

6. Legal gender recognition given the fact that the lack of recognition contributes significantly to stereotypes and prevents victims from reporting racist crimes.

To the Ministry of Culture, Education and Religious Affairs

1. Preparation of a handbook for the school community on understanding and handling bias motivated incidents of violence.

2. Strengthening the framework of combating school hate-motivated violence with the explicit participation of teachers, students and parents' associations.

3. Establishment of a platform for the cooperation or the strengthening of the Observatory for the Prevention of School Violence and Bullying.

4. Promoting an intercultural and inter-religion dialogue in order to eradicate stereotypes and prejudice.

²⁰ Recommendation addressed jointly to the Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction.

To the Minister of State - General Secretariat of Information and Communication

1. Training and awareness of boards and journalists, editors and presenters of electronic, paper and television media, with regard to the coverage of racist crimes and to the elimination of negative stereotypes against certain groups, through special training activities and guidelines.

The RVRN stresses that the above recommendations for the effective response to racist violence, must be accompanied by policies aiming to improve the climate of security in neighbourhoods, to protect human rights and refugees' and immigrants' rights, to combat human trafficking, drug trafficking, prostitution and criminal networks by means of measures upgrading these areas and relieving population as a whole, while taking special measures for the inclusion of poor/homeless immigrants and refugees.