



Racist Violence
Recording Network

Annual Report
2019



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Introduction

Local, national, and European Parliament elections permeated the 2019 public landscape in Greece. Nationalist and incendiary rhetoric increased alongside gains from far-right political forces in Europe.

Simplistic approaches to complex identity and migration issues were proposed, and a political agenda was widely adopted focusing uniquely on matters of migration and law and order.

International and European polarization and often deadlocked policies on the issue of refugees and migrants combined with national and local factors in Greece, shaped political directions and balances in new parliaments across Europe, including Greece. Under these conditions, the racist rhetoric is normalized, and relevant institutional choices are legitimized while they contribute to the growing violent xenophobia and racism, observed since the beginning of 2020.

Last year also marked the end of the Golden Dawn party's parliamentary participation which began in 2012¹. Golden Dawn's influence among the country's electorate contracted drastically in elections but did not necessarily limit public far-right rhetoric. Golden Dawn voters seemed to abandon the party in favour of other parties that adopt xenophobic and racist rhetoric. However, the consequent exclusion of Golden Dawn from the Hellenic Parliament marks its further isolation from the political scene. This development is largely due to the criminal proceedings and seeming disintegration within the party, as well as the social and political pressure exerted on Golden Dawn in recent years by a broad democratic and anti-racist movement.

RVRN is following the Golden Dawn trial with great interest and has been called to testify on behalf of the legal team representing the "Egyptian fishermen case", an incident that the Network recorded in 2012. RVRN notes that the Golden Dawn's political and social influence and the broader developments on racist violence to be inextricably linked to the progress of the trial. In an announcement earlier this year, RVRN highlighted, that «not all recorded racist violence is related to the Golden Dawn, but the actions of the hit squads during the critical period 2009-2013 had common characteristics, which were identified also in court rulings – indiscriminate racist violence, perpetrators outnumbering the victims, spread of organized violence and fear amongst the public and domination of such groups in the neighbourhoods. In the international literature, these characteristics are linked to the activities of neo-Nazi and extremist groups, in which the Golden Dawn claimed a prominent position². The European Court of Human Rights ruling against Greece in the Sakir v. Greece case³ is also recalled, affirming retrospectively and conclusively the specific modus operandi and the lack of institutional action already recorded by RVRN during this period. The lack of legal protection and adequate access to justice for victims during this time, only increases the need for the competent authorities to defend the rule of law.

Incidents of organized violence have decreased since 2013. **However, in 2019 RVRN continued to record a significant number of attacks showing signs of structured organizations or committed by organized groups targeting refugees and migrants.** Organized groups attacked asylum-seekers and refugees in major urban centres but also in regional areas, especially where accommodation sites for asylum-seekers or unaccompanied children are located. In addition, attacks by far-right groups seemed to have occurred in places of worship or monuments associated with religious

communities of Greek citizens which, however, do not belong to the country's dominant religious identity (Muslim cemetery, Holocaust memorials). **These attacks highlighted once again the existence of organized or semi-informal anti-Semitic and anti-Islamic trends within the Greek society.** RVRN is aware of the aspects of anti-Semitism and anti-Islamism in Greece and for that remains vigilant, acknowledging the need for developing further alliances with the respective communities.

For 2019, in addition to the attacks by organized groups that were driven by extreme far-right beliefs, RVRN **found a trend in incidents of everyday racist violence.** By the term «everyday» we intended to describe the expression of racist behaviours or even racist violence, usually of low intensity, expressed by individuals in the context of everyday life: in public transport, at school, at work, in public services. **In the same context, RVRN also recorded in 2019, incidents against Greek citizens** targeted not as migrants or refugees, but as «less» Greeks, on grounds of ethnic origin. Those recordings, combined with the growing trend of incidents against refugees and migrants, highlighted the repugnance that part of Greek society shows towards diversity, which is largely linked to the serious lack of culture of tolerance and policies of actual integration and acceptance of diversity. **Racist rhetoric at central and local political levels played a key role in the development of such behaviours, and significantly contributed to the normalization of xenophobia and intolerance.** Another element evident in the behaviour of the perpetrators, according to testimonies from victims is their indifference of the consequences that their actions may have on the country's institutional framework – attacks have been carried out in public spaces in front of witnesses, in some cases police officers RVRN has observed that to a large extent the victims of such attacks have accepted their victimization as a «normal» feature of their daily lives and the perpetrators seem to be attacking with the perception that their act will go unpunished. **This painful context for communities affected by racist violence on grounds of nationality, ethnic origin, colour and/or religion is further aggravated when it is affected by institutional racism,** expressed either through policies that restrict access to basic rights, or through the inappropriate behaviour of public officials resulting in the exclusion of individuals of different ethnic, cultural, religious or linguistic backgrounds, from services and goods. It is no coincidence that asylum-seekers, refugees and migrants are the majority of victims in incidents involving law enforcement officials or civil servants.

These observations were also confirmed in attacks on LGBTQI+ individuals. **RVRN found once again that LGBTQI+ individuals were targeted by a wide range of perpetrators, including organized groups, neighbours, citizens, civil servants, law enforcement officials, and even family members.** In cases where racist behaviour was expressed through domestic violence, the victim's trauma was exacerbated as the space where the individual should first and foremost enjoy security and acceptance was affected. Incidents where the victims were children and the violence was expressed at schools (RVRN recorded such incidents in 2019), were particularly worrying. Schools essentially negate their role as a forerunner of an individual's integration into society -- towards the particular individual but also towards society – if they cannot adequately guarantee security from attacks or access to social acceptance and freedom of expression for an LGBTQI+ individual.

RVRN is also deeply concerned about the **tensions manifested in 2019 against human rights defenders,** both because of their association with refugees and migrants and their association with the LGBTQI+ community. Those incidents highlighted a growing trend for 2019 in targeting humanitarian organizations, and civil society organizations in general, due to their association with

defending human rights. The growing racist rhetoric in the public sphere often aims to discredit the work and services offered by these organizations, while the lack of special protection for human rights defenders -- which RVRN has already pointed out in its previous annual reports -- deteriorates the conditions in which organizations are called upon to operate.

Following the above introductory remarks and based on what RVRN has recorded so far, the following conclusions briefly describe the quantitative and qualitative picture of racist violence in the country in 2019:

1. RVRN continued to record attacks that either have features of structured organizations or are committed by organized groups, and saw a growing trend in the incidents of individual perpetrators (neighbours, property owners of the homes where refugees live, public transport employees, etc.)
2. RVRN recorded incidents against Greek citizens on grounds of ethnic origin, but also violent attacks on monuments or places of worship of Greek citizens with different religious identity. While anti-Semitic attacks seem to have decreased compared to 2018 (two incidents for 2019, nine incidents for 2018), the attack on a Muslim cemetery shows the anti-Islamic motive of the incident.
3. In comparison to 2018 the recorded attacks on LGBTQI+ individuals were on the rise which intensifies RVRN concern that homophobia and transphobia remained widespread.
4. The recorded incidents involving law enforcement officials and civil servants remained consistently high. Such incidents enhance institutional racism, exclude or delay victims from accessing goods and services to which they are entitled, and in their worst form contribute to a climate of insecurity and intimidation.
6. Attacks on human rights defenders remained alarming. The absence of a protection framework exacerbates RVRN's concern.

I. Working Methods of the Racist Violence Recording Network

Here follows a thorough description of RVRN working methods to promote awareness and transparency on RVRN's activities and their impact.

A. Institutional Observations

This is the ninth consecutive report published by RVRN. RVRN was established in mid-2011 on initiative by the Greek National Commission for Human Rights (GNCHR) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Greece (UNHCR) on the basis of two major findings: a) the identified absence of an official and effective data collection system on racist violence and b) the need to coordinate organisations which recorded, on their own initiative, incidents of racist violence against people who sought their services. Many improvements have been made since, such as the development of an official system for recording racist violence (for more information on the State response to racist violence, see page 19), but the recording of such incidents by RVRN continues to be deemed necessary as the data are complementary to the official recording. RVRN's data are the «tip of the iceberg.» Nevertheless, this data captures a clear picture of the quantitative and qualitative trends of racist violence in Greece. The organizations participating in RVRN only record incidents against individuals who sought their services. RVRN has consistently found that victims are reluctant to report incidents against them. Based on the qualitative data highlighted by RVRN's reports, victims of racist violence often believe that the authorities cannot or do not want to investigate such incidents, while at the same time RVRN observes that the victims feel apprehensive about approaching authorities, because that could lead to their re-exposure to racist behaviour. This perception seems to have a catalytic effect on victims about deciding to report the incident, even to a civil society actor. The sense of fear that the already traumatic experience they went through could lead to new conditions of fear and insecurity leads the victims to silence. Victims should be assisted once they decide to report and have the incident recorded. RVRN is comprised of actors offering medical, social, legal services or/and coming in direct contact with the victims of racist violence or victims of other hate- or bias-motivated violent attacks as well as organizations established by the groups that are usually targeted by racist violence themselves. To join RVRN, a necessary precondition is the respect for human rights, diversity, multiculturalism, and freedom of religion as well as the action in tackling discrimination and intolerance. Apart from the coordinators -- UNHCR and GNCHR -- RVRN is comprised of 47 Non-Governmental Organisations and civil society bodies, as well as the Greek Ombudsman and the Migrant Integration Council of the Municipality of Athens, as observers⁴. The participating actors acknowledge and jointly pursue

4. Aitima, Solidarity Now, Antigone -Information and Documentation Centre, University of Aegean Anti-Racist Observatory, Arsis, Doctors of the World (MdM), Amnesty International, Network for Children's Rights, Network for Social Support of Refugees and Immigrants, "Pleiades - Hellenic Action for Human Rights", Hellenic League for Human Rights, Hellenic Red Cross, Greek Council for Refugees, Greek Forum of Migrants, Greek Forum of Refugees, Human

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

For RVRN, “incidents of racist violence” include any criminal act, or violent act or behaviour against people targeted because of their national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, sex characteristics and disabilities. RVRN also records criminal acts or violent activities or behaviours against human rights defenders, namely against people who promote and protect human rights and are targeted because of that.

In pursuit of the common objective, RVRN: i) submits recommendations to the Greek authorities in compliance with Greek and international law on the protection of human rights, ii) promotes public information and awareness raising on combating racist violence, iii) consults with various actors on issues pertaining to 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 in relation to issues that refer to the identification, recording, and combating of hate crimes.

Since RVRN began operating in October 2011, its scope of activity has been constantly growing. RVRN engages in institutional initiatives for the improvement of the response to racist crime and seeks to raise awareness over racist crime in every possible way. The network responds to a variety of reporting requests from researchers, journalists, students. In addition, RVRN contributes to the dissemination of legislation against racism and racist crime through participation in seminars, trainings and public debates. Acknowledgement of RVRN role in combating racist crime is reflected in the frequent invitations that are received from international and European organizations, as well as other bodies, in order to present the network’s data but also to provide detailed information about its activities and to demonstrate its methodology.

B. Methodology

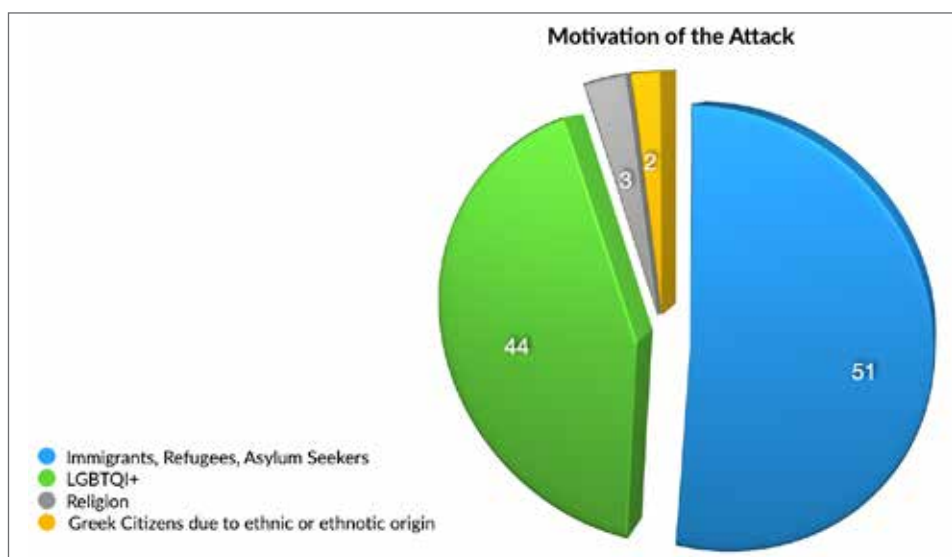
RVRN has been applying a strict methodology from the outset, recording incidents exclusively based on interviews conducted with the victims. Therefore, the victims’ willingness to come forward is a key factor for the number of incidents that are recorded. The rights and obligations of all RVRN participants are codified in a cooperation agreement and a uniform RVRN recording form is used. Each RVRN organisation member appoints focal points to record the incidents, i.e. social workers,

Rights Commission of the Bar Association of Rhodes, Positive Voice, Medical Intervention, Caritas Athens, Caritas Hellas, Centre for Research on Women’s Issues “Diotima”, Center for Life, “Babel” Day Centre, Centre for the Support of Repatriated and Migrants - Ecumenical Refugee Program, Network for the Support of Refugee and Migrant Rights (Patras), World Without War and Violence, LATHRA? - Solidarity Committee for Chios refugees, METAction, Rainbow Families, Group of Lawyers for the Rights of Refugees and Migrants, Group of Lawyers for the Support of Refugee and Migrant Rights (Thessaloniki), Homosexual and Lesbian Community of Greece, Association of Afghans United In Greece, Association of Social Workers of Greece, Greek Transgender Support Association, Faros tou kosmou, Forum of Migrants in Crete, Refugee Support Aegean, Act Up Hellas, ASANTE, Colour Youth - LGBTQ Youth Community of Athens, Generation 2.0 RED, HIAS in Greece, HumanRights360, Melissa Network, PRAKSIS, A21.

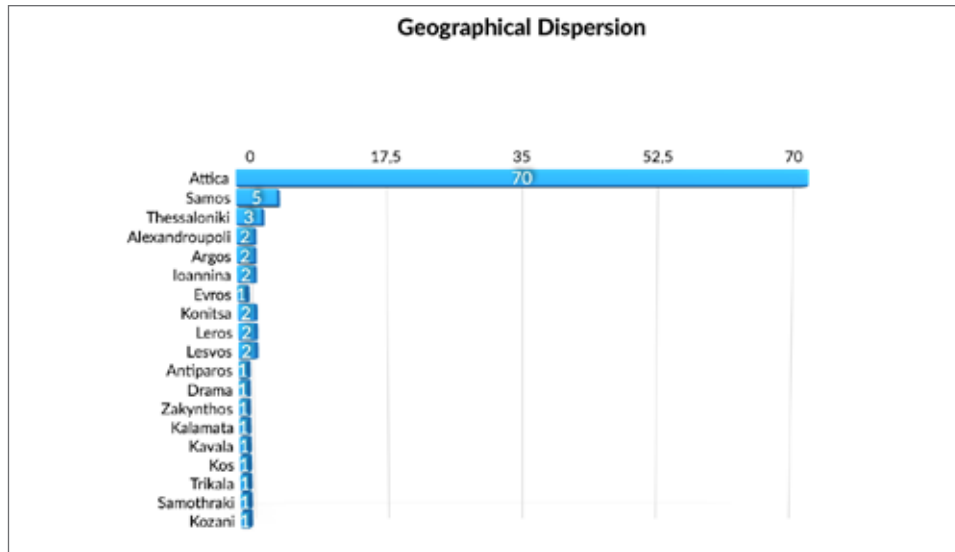
lawyers, or other professionals or volunteers, who are trained by RVRN. The appointed focal points are named and bear the responsibility of their recording. Recording forms are completed anonymously and used exclusively by RVRN for the purpose of combating racism and hate crimes.

The documentation of racist violence in Greece by RVRN has led some institutions to fund special programmes, in order to promote recording practices. As a result, several RVRN members are now implementing a series of programmes to support the recording procedures, while offering various other supporting services to the victims of racist violence. Thus, while RVRN remains a collective initiative with common operational rules and common objectives, the individual activities of its members are complementary and mutually empowering. Based on the experience gained through the implementation of these programmes, RVRN acknowledges the positive effects achieved in terms of broadening the use of RVRN tools and enabling the supporting bodies to address more situations.

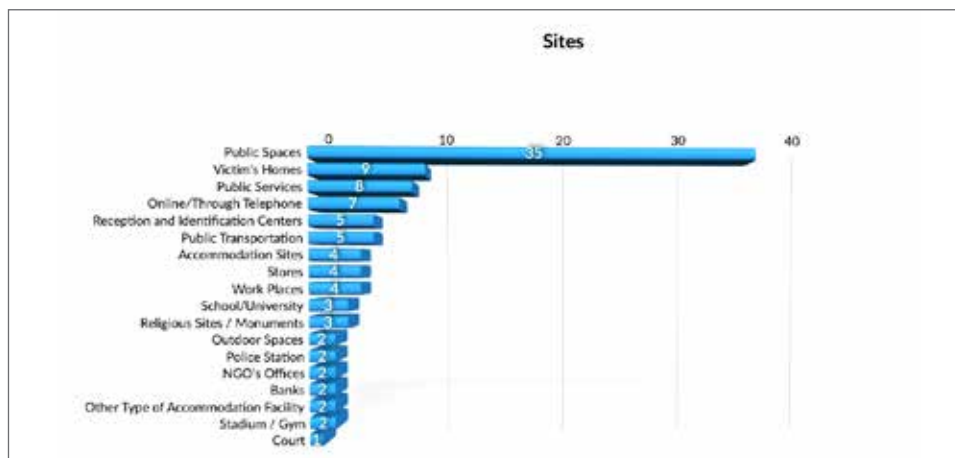
II. General findings of the recorded attacks



Between January and December 2019, RVRN recorded through interviews with victims, 100 incidents of racist violence, with more than 104 victims. In 51 incidents the targets were migrants, refugees or asylum-seekers on grounds of ethnic origin, religion and/or colour, human rights defenders due to their connection with refugees and migrants, as well as accommodation sites for unaccompanied children. In two incidents, the targets were Greek citizens on grounds of foreign or ethnic origin, while in three incidents, the targets were Jewish and Muslim sacred or symbolic sites. In 44 incidents, the targets were LGBTQI+ individuals and human rights defenders due to their association with LGBTQI+ groups (out of which one third-country national without legal documents/residence status). In 27 incidents the targets were more than one victim, whereas in 52 incidents the assault was committed by a group (of at least two persons).

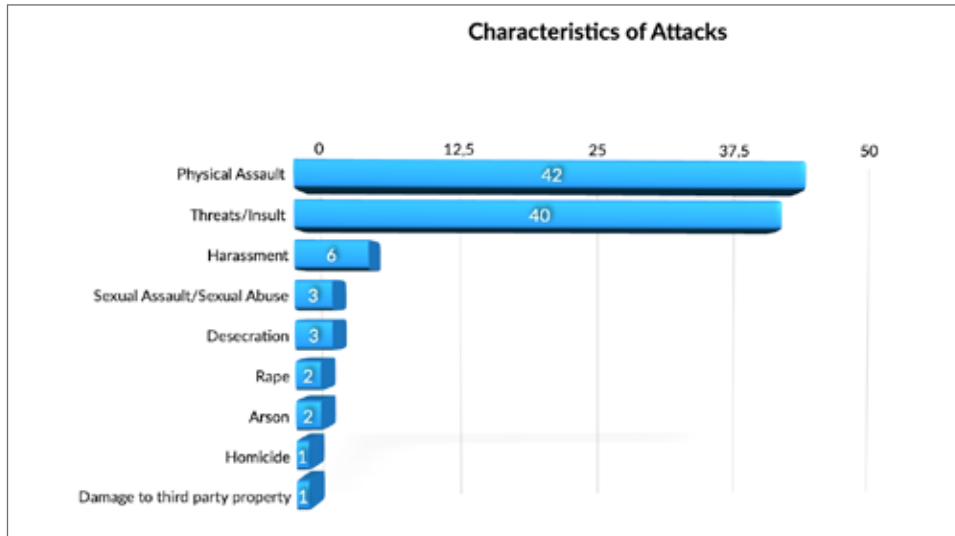


Geographical dispersion: 70 incidents took place in Athens, mainly close to the city centre, but some incidents were also recorded in other areas such as Piraeus, Aigaleo and Tavros. In the rest of the country, the incidents were geographically spread out. Specifically, five incidents were recorded in Samos, three incidents in Thessaloniki, two incidents each in Lesvos, Leros, Alexandroupoli, Konitsa, Argos, and Ioannina as well as one each at Kavala, Kalamata, Trikala, Kozani, Drama, Zakynthos, Antiparos, Samothrace, Kos, and in the area across Evros (Greek-Turkish land border).

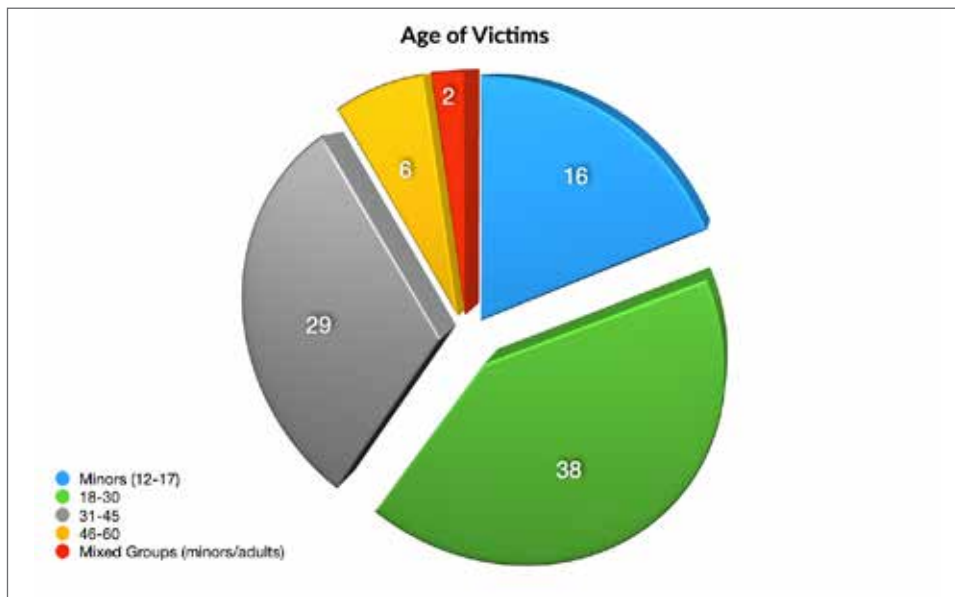


Sites: 35 incidents took place in public spaces (street, squares, parks, beaches, etc.), nine in the victim's or the perpetrator's home or in the apartment building in which victims and perpetrators live, as well as two in another type of accommodation (hotel, dormitory), five in public transportation, bus stops and stations, three in schools or universities, two in fields and outdoor spaces in villages, two in police stations, four in the victim's workplace, two in associations' and NGO's offices, four within accommodation sites, five in Reception and Identification Centres in the islands and Evros, four in shops, eight in public services (ministries, hospitals, courts, Citizen Service Centres(KEP) and

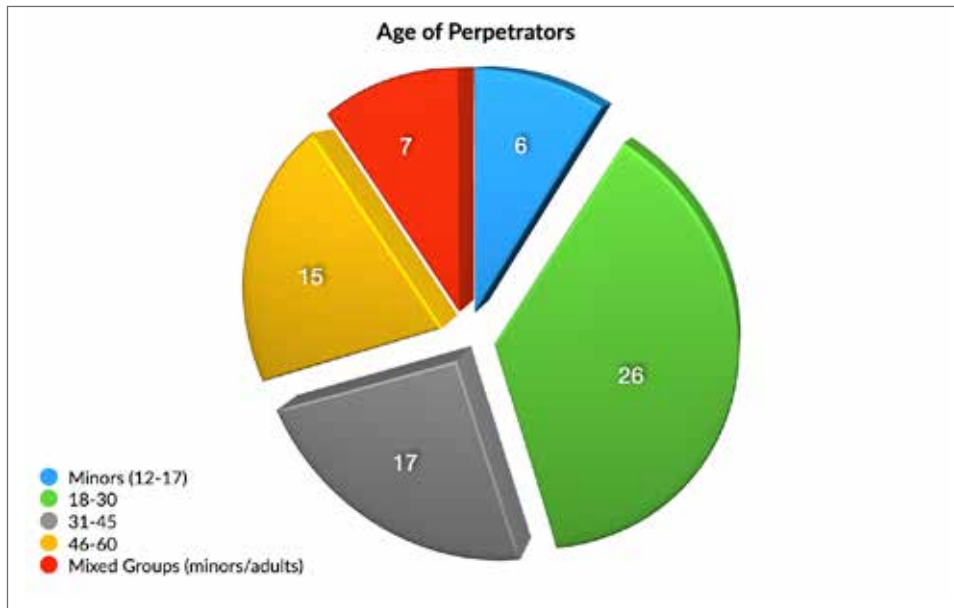
two in a bank, three in Jewish monuments and a Muslim cemetery, one in a court, two in a stadium and a gym, seven online and by telephone.



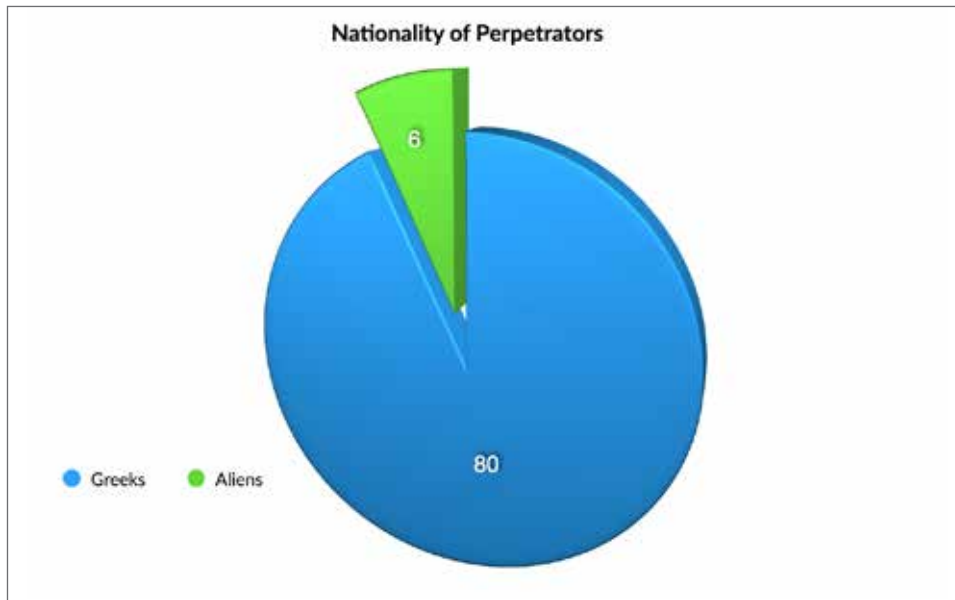
Characteristics of the attacks: A significant number of the attacks resulted in physical injuries and other serious offences. Among those, one homicide, two rapes, three incidents of sexual abuse and sexual assault were recorded, one of them in combination with threats and insults, 42 incidents with physical injuries or in combination with insults and threats, disturbance of domestic peace, labour exploitation, false allegation, theft and damages to third party property, 40 incidents of threats, insult, factual insult, three incidents of desecration, two incidents of arson, one of them in combination with threats, six incidents of verbal or other type of harassment, one incident of damage to third party property in combination with threats.



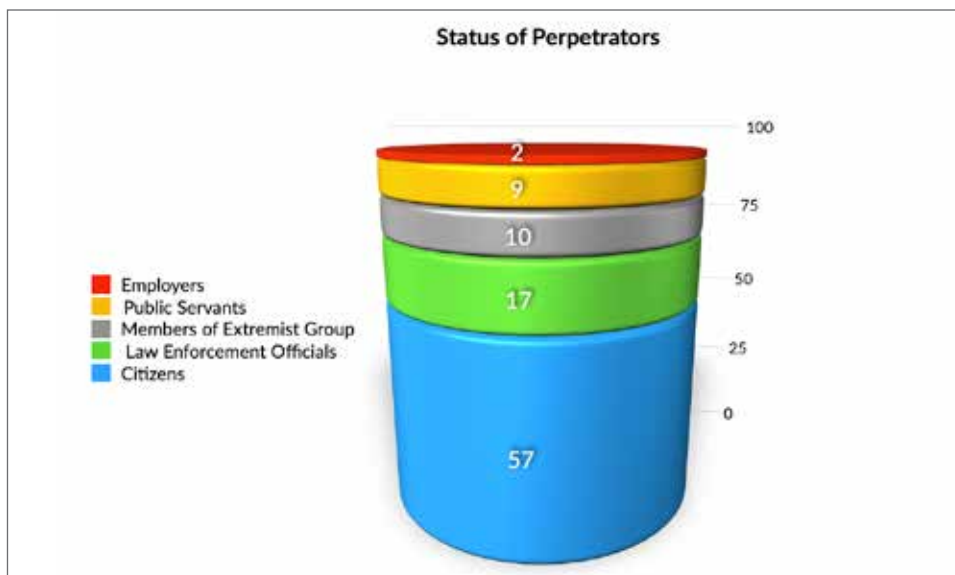
Victims: From the incidents where the targets were individuals - not sacred sites or monuments - the victims of 62 incidents who reached out to RVRN were men, eight of whom were transgender, while in 26 incidents they were women, 14 of whom were transgender. In five incidents, the victims identified themselves as queer, non-binary or asexual. In 16 incidents, minors 12-17 years old were targeted on grounds of foreign origin, religion, ethnic origin or sexual orientation, whereas in 38 incidents the victims were 18-30 years old. In 29 incidents, the victims were 31-45 years old, whereas in six incidents they were 46 -60 years old. In two incidents, the group of victims was of various ages, including minors and adults (15-20 years old).



Perpetrators: According to the testimony of the victims, in 75 incidents the perpetrators of the recorded attacks were men, in 13 incidents women and in seven incidents the attack came from mixed groups of men and women. In the rest of five incidents the victims did not see/spot the perpetrators (e.g. case of desecration of sacred sites). In six incidents the perpetrators were or were involving minors, in 26 incidents they were 18-30 years old. In 17 incidents the perpetrators were 31-45 years old, while in 15 recorded incidents the perpetrators were older (up to 80 years old). While in 29 incidents the age of the perpetrators could not be determined, in seven incidents, particularly those where racist violence is expressed within the family, the age range of the perpetrators varies.



According to victims, the vast majority of the perpetrators are Greek citizens (80 incidents). In six incidents the perpetrators were foreigners. In 52 attacks the perpetrators reported were groups of two to 30 people, while in 44 attacks only one perpetrator was reported. In 7 incidents, the victim stated that the perpetrator or perpetrators were involved in other attacks as well, in some cases against the same victim (multiple victimization). In 17 incidents the perpetrators were law enforcement officials, while in nine incidents the perpetrators were civil servants. In 57 incidents citizens were involved, in two incidents the perpetrators were employers, while in 10 incidents the victims of the attacks believe that the perpetrators are linked to extremist groups, a fact that emerges from the qualitative data recorded for the attacks. In such cases, the perpetrators act in organized groups, they are dressed in black clothing and military trousers and they hold flags with fascist symbols (the victim explicitly says that the perpetrators were holding red flags with black crosses) and/or makeshift weapons such as bats, batons and/or iron bars.



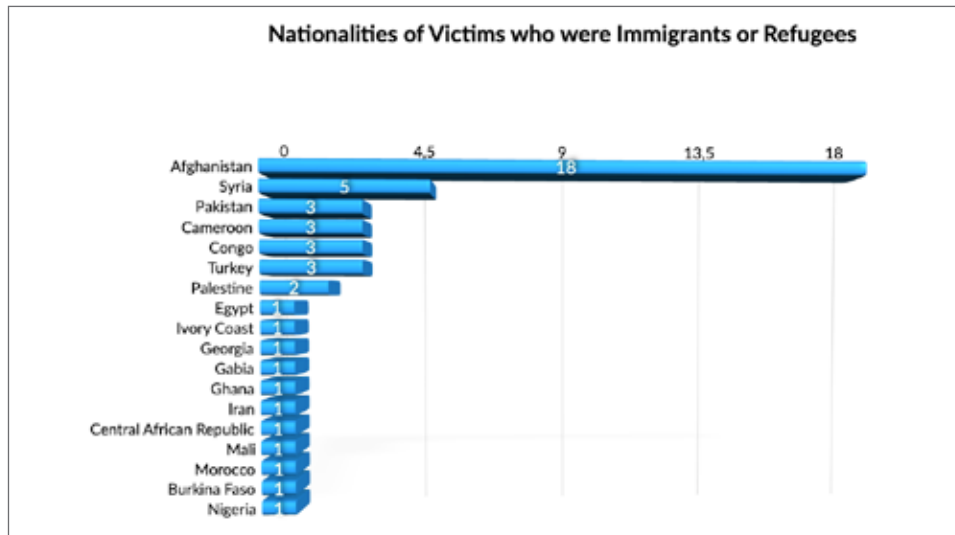
III. Analysis of the findings

This section analyses the attacks against refugees and migrants (A), against Greeks on grounds of national or ethnic origin or religion (B), against LGBTQI+ individuals and actors (C). As in previous reports, special reference is made to incidents where law enforcement officials and civil servants are involved (D).

A. Attacks against refugees and migrants

1. Quantitative data

The recorded assaults against refugees and migrants due to national origin, religion or colour, are as follows:



Victims: 42 incidents against men (in 16 incidents the victims were 13-20 years old), six incidents against women (23-32 years old), two incidents against NGO offices or facilities run by NGO that provide services to the said group. In the incidents recorded in 2019 the victims were from **Afghanistan (18), Syria (5), Cameroon (3), Congo (3), Turkey (3), Pakistan (3), Palestine (2), Egypt (1), Ivory Coast (1), Georgia (1), Gambia (1), Ghana (1), Iran (1), Central African Republic (1), Mali (1), Morocco (1), Burkina Faso (1), Nigeria (1)**. RVRN in 2019 observes a wider targeting of people from African origin, compared to previous years.

Legal status of the victims: 35 incidents against asylum-seekers, two against legal residents and nine against refugees, one against undocumented third country nationals.

Perpetrators: According to victims, the perpetrators were mainly Greek citizens (42 incidents) and men (36 incidents). In six incidents the perpetrators were women, while in three incidents

the perpetrators were foreigners. In 13 incidents the perpetrators were 17-30 years old, in five incidents 31-40 years old and in six incidents 41-60 years old.

2. Organized or semi-informal groups on a mission against refugees and migrants

RVRN findings in 2019 confirmed the activity of extreme, informal and formal xenophobic groups, both in Athens and in the regional area. RVRN recorded attacks that either have features of structured organizations or are committed by organized groups. These groups proudly state that they are infused with extreme xenophobic ideologies, they adopt the respective vocabulary, dress code and practices and they behave as if they believe they are on a mission.

In one incident where the victim was assaulted close to Omonoia square in Athens, he was attacked by three men wearing large red flags with black crosses on their backs: *“I was trampled. They were shouting <black> in Greek. I didn’t understand much, only that they were swearing at me as if I was a problem for Greece...”* said the victim. In other incidents, which occurred in Athens and were recorded by RVRN, the attack pattern was repeated with larger groups of perpetrators, reaching up to 20-30 people.

The perpetrators surprised the victims. Most – but not all – incidents began with verbal attacks escalating into violence causing serious injuries to the face and prominent parts of the body, so that the wounds work as an intimidation for the other members of the victim’s community. Racist violence and the ensuing fear work as a message imposed by these groups not only on the victims and the communities to which they belong, but also on society.

An Afghan national was attacked by a black-clad group on his way to the neighbourhood grocery store. A Gambian man was attacked while returning home from work. He *“sat at the bus stop, waiting. A young man showed up and abruptly told him to get up so that he could sit down. The victim denied. Then the young man called someone on the phone. After a while, a group of six or seven people showed up and attacked the victim. They surprised him [...], stopped him and started punching him in the face [...], kicking him in the head and body [...] The victim does not remember when they left. He remembers that they were young Greek men, with short hair, most of them in black clothing and they were all wearing military boots...”*

In 2019, violent attacks by organized groups against migrants, asylum-seekers, and refugees occurred both in large cities but also in the regional areas, especially where there are reception/accommodation sites for asylum-seekers or unaccompanied children. There were specific incidents of refugee children in two cities of western Greece, who were the victims of such attacks while playing with their peers at a football field near the area where they live.

“The victim reported that [...] he used to go to the football field almost every day to play with his peers. One night, while he was there with his friends, a group of men who were wearing hoods and were holding bats, attacked them.»

“... at the football field [...] at night, while seven children were playing [...], a group of four to seven people dressed in black and wearing hoods [...] holding bats, attacked the refugee children”.

In both incidents there was a recurring pattern of a surprise organized attack. The perpetrators

wore hoods, carried makeshift weapons and targeted the victims on purpose. The construal of such an incident is exacerbated by the fact that the attack harmed violently and unnecessarily the normalcy of a local community, as it took place during a daily and enjoyable activity for the refugee children. The everyday team activity at the local football field highlights the successful recovery of a normalcy that this population has been deprived of and certifies the process of substantial integration of refugee children into the local community.

Organized attacks were also recorded in which the perpetrators, while riding a vehicle, targeted the victim who was moving near a reception/accommodation site. Such an attack was recorded by RVRN on an Aegean island, where there is a Reception and Identification Centre. RVRN recalls that the surprise factor and the attacks by groups against refugees has already been identified and recorded in its Annual Reports since the beginning of its operation. Hence, it appears that this is a recurring practice, which is repeated whenever the circumstances so permit. In all the above-mentioned incidents, the fact that there is evidence indicating that these are organised attacks committed by groups, based on pre-meditated plans and with specific incentives, should raise particular concern.

Lastly, regarding the incidents that take place in the islands RVRN has observed a correlation between the rise in xenophobic and racist incidents and the worsening overcrowding at island reception centres for asylum-seekers, due to higher sea arrivals in 2019 and the continued policy of geographical restriction as a result of the EU-Turkey Statement, keeping thousands in dire conditions on a handful of islands for lengthy periods. Therefore, for humanitarian reasons and in order to prevent exacerbation of social tensions and far-right rhetoric, it is necessary to immediately proceed with the decongestion of the islands by implementing transfers to the mainland.

3. Everyday racism - Attacks against refugees, migrants and defenders

In addition to organized violence by groups infused with far-right beliefs, RVRN has recorded aggression against refugees in other aspects of everyday life as well. By analysing the incidents, we can distinguish the following main trends: In all incidents the perpetrator was an individual engaging in an activity or arrangement of a victim's issue in the context of managing everyday life matters. In the context of this activity or arrangement, the victim was sometimes attacked by an unknown person and sometimes by a person from their wider social circle. For the above, we can distinguish the incidents in those where the perpetrators were neighbours or property owners of the homes where refugees live and those where the perpetrators are unknown to the victims and attacked them in public spaces such as squares, playgrounds, open markets and in public transportation. Each of the following instances, was an incident that occurred under different circumstances, but eloquently depicts the breadth of stereotypes against refugees and migrants as well as the serious lack of a culture of substantial integration and acceptance for migrants and refugees:

“... Around 6.00 p.m. the lady was sitting on a bench in Victoria Square. Then a Greek kicked her, threw her off the bench, insulted her, telling her to go back to Afghanistan. The lady sat back on the bench again, without standing up.»

“Week after week, whenever he saw us outside, myself and my girlfriends, he was harassing us [...] we could understand that he was insulting us in Greek [...] before going into the apartment building, he saw me at the entrance and

pushed me back violently [...] to one of my girlfriends he pulled her headscarf to take it off [...] while I was waiting at the bus stop, he suddenly hit me on the head and told me "Muslim no good."

This testimony shows that an external feature of the victim associated with religious identity (e.g. the headscarf) was the element that allowed the perpetrator to locate the victim and attack, because of both the different ethnic origin and religion. In its annual report for 2019, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance pointed out that xenophobic nationalism is still expressed through various forms of Islamophobia, often depicting Islam as a religion which is foreign to national culture and the identity of many Member States. This rhetoric is often only the first step towards the exclusion [...] of Muslims and is in stark contrast to the universality of human rights. It also contributes in rendering Muslims with apparent signs of their religion, particularly vulnerable to intolerance, hate speech and even violence driven by hatred⁵.

"The victim was in the open market with his wife and their minor child [...] to do the shopping. A male Greek national approached the victim, speaking Greek and doing gestures for them to leave [...]. From the perpetrator's behaviour, (the victim) he understood that there was a racist motive. The perpetrator hit the victim on the head. Three police officers and citizens witnessed the incident. Three citizens started shouting at the perpetrator - the victim realized it was in his defence. The police officers didn't try to prevent the incident and didn't arrest anyone. On the contrary, after checking the victim's documents, they said that the incident was over and that he should leave."

The above incident shows the contrast - but also the coexistence within the same society - between the solidarity shown by a large part of the population to refugees, against the violent behaviour of another part of the population, as well as the reluctance of the Hellenic Police officials to proceed with the procedures prescribed by law (for more information on Complaints and authorities' response see page 20).

In 2019, RVRN also recorded two incidents where the victims were deprived of residence status in Greece. In the first, the perpetrator was a law enforcement official and in the second the perpetrator was a citizen. At this point, we would like to highlight that RVRN recordings show over time that the targets of the attacks are mainly asylum-seekers, migrants/people legally residing in Greece, but also undocumented third-country nationals. However, we are aware that there are specific recording programmes which, with the engagement of cultural mediators, can showcase the violence on legal migrants and refugees residing in Greece for a long time, but they don't have the possibility to report/record the racist violence they suffered. This is an aspect of the known issue in international literature of under-reporting of incidents of violence.

RVRN would like to point out an incident against a minor asylum-seeker working under undeclared working status, involving his employer. The minor complained about the working conditions and

5. European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), Annual Report on ECRI's Activities covering the period from 1 January to 31 December 2019, (March 2020). Available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-commission-against-racism-and-intolerance/annual-reports>

for not getting paid according to what had been agreed. The attack resulted in verbal abuse and physical injury of the minor.

“The minor complained of exploitation and said that he would call the police. Then his employer attacked and beat him. The minor shouted back but the employer threatened him and said that the police was already there but would not help him and pointed at a man who was present at the incident (implying he was a police officer). Many other employees were present at the incident and when another minor, who was the victim’s friend, tried to call the police, they snatched the phone from his hands.”

The specific conditions of this incident show and contribute to the conclusion that the attack would not have been committed against a person who does not have the same characteristics (in this case a field worker, a foreigner, a minor), and even if it had been committed, it would not have been done so blatantly. For the attacks committed by employers against foreign workers with or without documents, it is worth noting that “foreignness” combined with employment dependency seem to reinforce the employer’s decision to commit a criminal act, which they would probably not have committed if the employee had not been a foreigner.

RVRN is also seriously concerned about tensions targeting defenders of refugee rights in 2019. RVRN recorded two incidents of attacks against organizations and actors providing services in the context of refugee population management. These incidents highlight the lack of special protection for human rights defenders, which RVRN has pointed out in its annual reports. In 2020 while this report was still under development, RVRN recorded incidents of violent attacks against employees in organizations providing services to the refugee population residing in the Aegean islands. In particular, although further investigation is required, the first findings of these attacks show that the perpetrators are not individuals, but they work and attack in groups, which confirms RVRN’s strong concern about the aggravation of the type and frequency of attacks against organizations and actors promoting and protecting human rights, making the implementation of a legal provision for special protection of human rights defenders even more urgent.

B. Attacks against Greek citizens on grounds of ethnic origin or religion

In 2019, RVRN recorded two incidents against Greek citizens on grounds of ethnic origin and three attacks on grounds of religion.

1. Incidents against Greek citizens on grounds of ethnic origin

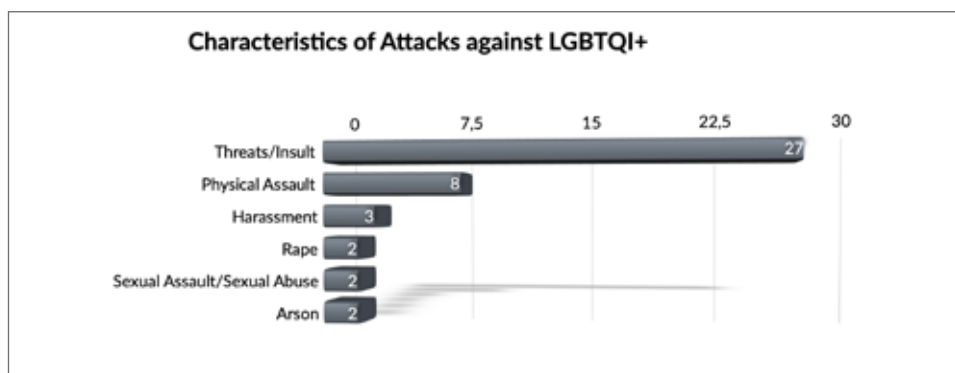
In 2019, RVRN recorded incidents against individuals who have Greek citizenship and are not targeted as migrants or refugees, but as «less» Greeks - on grounds of ethnic origin. Specifically, in the two incidents recorded in 2019, the victims said that they were attacked on grounds of ethnic origin. In the first case the perpetrators were law enforcement officials, while in the second case, the victim had been attacked again in the past.

2. Attacks on sacred sites or monuments

In 2019, three attacks were recorded on sacred sites and monuments associated with the religious identity of Greek citizens, who, however, do not belong to the dominant religious community in Greece. RVRN recorded two incidents of desecration of Holocaust memorials in Thessaloniki and Trikala, as well as an incident of an attack and desecration of a Muslim cemetery in Alexandroupoli.

The peculiarity of these incidents lies in the fact that the targets are not specific individuals of the Jewish or Muslim community, but through the desecrations a message is sent to the whole community. However, the imprint of the attacks is broader and goes beyond the Jewish or Muslim community, as it concerns any community with different features which, however, is part of a society. A case in point was the statement of Marija Pejčinović Burić, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, who said that Europe is facing a shocking reality, where anti-Semitic, anti-Muslim and other racist hate crimes are increasing at an alarming rate⁶. In the case of desecration of the Muslim cemetery, the perpetrators had left flyers of the Golden Dawn, while they had spray-painted symbols of the organization, such as the «Target» and the ancient Greek meander. These incidents constitute one more evidence of the actions of organized extremist groups. In fact, the organizations, by assuming responsibility seek to strengthen their presence in the neo-Nazi field and to send a message to society about their actions, either to attract new members or to intimidate those who do not embrace their ideology.

C. Assaults against LGBTQI+ individuals and actors



In 2019, RVRN recorded 44 incidents of attacks on LGBTQI+ individuals (25 on grounds of gender identity, 16 on grounds of sexual orientation and three incidents on grounds of sexual orientation/gender identity). The recorded attacks against LGBTQI+ individuals include verbal attacks and physical assaults in patterns of all possible intensity.

6 CoE, Ultra-nationalism, antisemitism, anti-Muslim hatred: Council of Europe’s anti-racism commission raises alarm over the situation in Europe (February 2020). Available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/-/ultra-nationalism-anti-semitism-anti-muslim-hatred-anti-racism-commission-raises-alarm-over-situation-in-europe>

1. Assaults on grounds of sexual orientation

In 16 out of the 44 incidents against LGBTQI+ individuals, the victims were targeted on grounds of sexual orientation.

Victims: Eight incidents against men, five against women, one against a non-binary person and one against an individual who is self-identified as a queer. Lastly, one incident took place against defenders of the rights of LGBTQI+ individuals. Age of the victims: in three incidents the victims were 14-18 years old, in seven incidents the victims were between 19 and 31 years old, in five incidents they were 31-56 years old. The attacks mainly include verbal threats/insults but also physical violence, while in eight incidents the victims said that they had been attacked again in the past.

Perpetrators: In 12 incidents the perpetrators were men, out of which one was a minor, in one incident the perpetrator was a woman, while in three incidents the perpetrators were both men and women, plus one minor girl. Also, the perpetrators' ages varied, ranging from 16 to 60 years old.

Based on the recorded incidents, RVRN pointed out that any confrontation or tension may end up as a racist crime, even if it does not begin as such. In an incident recorded in 2019, the quarrel had started over a parking space. The victim's employee car was parked in a parking space owned by his neighbour and ended up in a homophobic attack by the neighbour, a trend that had been seen in previous RVRN recordings as well.

Among the reported attacks, special mention should be made of domestic violence incidents that usually occur when the child discloses its sexual preferences or gender identity to the parents. In those cases, the parents turn from protectors to perpetrators. Among the incidents recorded in 2019, there were also attacks that took place either in schools or universities, with the perpetrators being the victims' either classmates or teachers (for more information on attacks involving civil servants, see page 18). The latest findings increase RVRN concerns, given that families and schools are social structures within which any individual should enjoy acceptance and safety.

Also, RVRN found that the attacks against individuals on grounds of sexual orientation occurred in various public spaces. There have been recorded attacks on social media as well as on the street, in restaurants or outside nightclubs, on the beach and in supermarkets. The victims, while engaging in their daily activities either alone or with their friends or partners, were initially attacked verbally, with homophobic vocabulary and phrases, which often end up being physical attacks. A case in point is of a same-sex couple, who were walking on a busy street in Athens and in their words were first verbally and then physically attacked by two law enforcement officials. After that, the couple called the police to report the incident.

In 2019, online attacks against Colour Youth organization continued. For instance, in response to a post of a photo from the pride parade on the Colour Youth webpage, a minor individual posted photos of people trampling on and burning rainbow flags, as well as a photo of a seriously injured man, with the perpetrators around him smiling. The picture had the caption:

“Our Orthodox brothers⁷ know what they are doing, only here we’ve let them get cocky.”

RVRN highlights that the attacks on human rights defenders show that perpetrators identify them with those who they defend. Although the defenders of LGBTQI+ people are not always part of that social group, the targeted organisations do consist of members of the LGBTQI+ community, which is why the assaults have a high impact.

2. Attacks due to gender identity

In 2019, some 25 incidents of attacks on grounds of gender identity were recorded.

Victims: 14 incidents against women 23-52 years and eight incidents against men 12-32 years, as well as two incidents against non-binary individuals and one case against an asexual individual.

In 2019, 17 incidents of verbal violence, two incidents of physical violence, combined with insults or threats, two incidents of sexual abuse and sexual assault, and two incidents of rape (one case involving a minor) were recorded.

Perpetrators: In 18 incidents, the perpetrators were men, mainly 13-80 years old. In five incidents they were women 12 to 55 years old, while in two incidents the perpetrators were both women and men.

As pointed out in previous reports, victims of violence on grounds of gender identity, often suffer multiple assaults inside their homes, while they are also targeted by their neighbours, people from their workplace or unknown individuals. In 2019, a trend of behaviours was recorded, which involve problematic and highly harassing behaviour against transgender individuals by family, classmates, employers and colleagues, civil servants, but also ordinary citizens, challenging the self-determination of the individual. A case in point is the testimony of a trans woman, who under the threat of her physical integrity by her own brother, was forced to burn her clothes because «they were not for men». RVRN would like to recall the still relevant finding from an earlier statement of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Nils Muižnieks, that while LGBTQI+ individuals enjoy greater protection in many European countries than ever before, they are still struggling to enjoy fundamental freedoms and rights in environments where homophobia and transphobia are widespread⁸.

In addition to harassing behaviours expressed by civil servants against trans individuals, which will be elaborated in the relevant sections (for more information on attacks involving civil servants, see page 18), RVRN wishes to focus on the verbal attacks against transgender people at the time of their transition. The recorded incidents show that transgender people suffer verbal abuse, almost daily, which escalates as their transition progresses⁹ and becomes more visible. As a victim of

7. According to the testimony, the perpetrators of the incident in the photo were Russians.

8. Commissioner for Human Rights, The long march against homophobia and transphobia (August 2017). Available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/-/the-long-march-against-homophobia-and-transphobia?inheritRedirect=true&redirect=%2Fen%2Fweb%2Fcommissioner%2Fthematic-work%2F LGBTI>

9. Transitioning is the process of changing an individual’s gender identification on a social and/or medical and

such attacks noted a very common form of such incidents against trans people, is the deliberate reference in the wrong gender (misgendering).

“Referring intentionally and deliberately in the wrong gender, stigmatizes, abuses and is an appalling type of violence on grounds of gender identity, because it challenges the identity of trans people and jeopardizes protection of their personality, as gender identity is an integral part of the personality of trans individuals.”

At the same time, RVRN finds that in a significant number of incidents of sexual assault, the perpetrators are individuals from the victim’s workplace. A case in point is of a trans woman who was sexually harassed and sexually attacked by an individual from her employer’s environment. That fact contributed in losing her job. In another case, a trans woman who was a sex worker, suffered stoning while working, by unknown perpetrators. Additionally, as mentioned above, transgender individuals face great challenges in terms of acceptance in the school or university environment. Challenges for which even teachers themselves are responsible, either as perpetrators or due to their reluctance to protect the victim.

As for the type of criminal acts, RVRN is focusing on two rape incidents recorded in 2019. The first incident concerns a trans woman from Pakistan, who was raped by a group of men in the area around the accommodation site in Skaramagas.

“The victim used to live in a house with her countrymen, from where she left after being sexually harassed by her roommates. She went to the reception centre in Skaramagas. She decided to stay outside the camp (she was not accepted inside), where other people with no permanent residence also stay.”

At first, the victim said that she was verbally attacked by three men, probably of a foreign origin. Then they started beating her and two out of the three perpetrators raped her. The fact that the victim didn’t have a legal residence status in Greece deteriorated her position as she couldn’t have access to a safe place to stay and so she continued being homeless, living at the same place where the incident had occurred. RVRN would like to recall that the amendments to the institutional framework in order to protect victims of racist crime who are deprived of residence status in Greece, such as a residence permit for humanitarian reasons in accordance with Article 19A of Law 4251/2014, as amended by Law 4332/2015, are moving in the right direction. However, such provisions that are of highest importance for the protection of victims, should be part of a broader framework of information and supporting services.

The second incident of rape, against a minor, shows that violence between minors can be expressed in particularly cruel ways against children who are targeted because they are considered different. In this cruel incident, the fact that the school headmaster, when informed, did not immediately report the incident, but instead asked for some time to reflect on his next actions, raises institutional

/or legal level. On a social level by following the norms and behaviours that constitute the desired social gender, on a medical level through transgender hormone therapy, sex reassignment surgery * etc and on a legal level by changing the gender in official documentation. This procedure may vary considerably among individuals. Available at: <https://www.colouryouth.gr/terms/>

questions about the timely and appropriate management of such incidents by the school community as a whole. RVRN has already reached a similar finding since 2015, in its Annual Report, based on related incidents of violence¹⁰.

D. Incidents involving law enforcement officials and civil servants

RVRN analyses the cases involving law enforcement officials and civil servants in a different section, because of their added value.

1. Police violence

RVRN has recorded incidents in which police violence is linked to racist violence, namely where there are specific qualitative characteristics (insults, threats e.tc.) showing racist motives during violent incidents, where the perpetrators were law enforcement officials. Specifically, in 2019, in 17 recorded incidents the perpetrators were law enforcement officials, when in 2018 the corresponding number was 22 incidents, which was particularly increased compared to the 10 incidents recorded in 2017.

The victims of these attacks were mainly asylum-seekers, refugees and migrants, either with a residence permit or without legal documents (14 incidents), but also Greek citizens, who suffered violence due to ethnic origin (one incident), sexual orientation (the victims were a homosexual couple), as well as gender identity (the victim was a trans woman).

As regards the qualitative characteristic of these attacks, they all involved disagreeable behaviour demonstrated by law enforcement officials during routine or non-routine police control operations. In most of these incidents, the victims reported that they suffered physical violence in public spaces, inside police departments in Athens and in reception or detention centres.

According to the testimonies of unaccompanied minors, we conclude that there is pattern of stereotyped violence against minors 15-17 years old in the detention or reception centres, where they reside until their transfer to accommodation centres. The shortcomings in managing similar matters are evident in the words of the perpetrators. In one incident, police officers, while beating the minor for about 15 minutes, were making at the same time abusive and insulting comments to his parents, threatening to return him to their country of origin. In another incident, inside a reception and identification centre on an Aegean island and based on the victim's testimony, police officers used to enter the container for three nights in a row, most of them were drunk, and beat them for no reason, making abusive and racist comments. They pulled them out of their beds and started punching and hitting them with batons, saying:

“You are in my country [...] leave my country”.

At this point, RVRN would like to recall that, as the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial

10. RVRN Annual Report 2015, p. 16.

Discrimination points out, individuals targeted by law enforcement officials, tend to show less confidence in those authorities and, therefore, are less willing to cooperate with the police, thus possibly limiting the effectiveness of the latter. That sense of injustice, humiliation and loss of confidence in the police and other authorities may lead, inter alia, to a reduced report of crimes¹¹.

It is also found again¹², based on incident reported in the wider area of Evros (Greek-Turkish land border) that border control as well as migrant and refugee flow management, intensify the stereotypes about law enforcement officials, who under certain conditions consider the exercise of violence to be part of their operational mission. However, these procedures foster distancing of the authorities' practices from legality, as well as de-humanization of the targeted groups and ultimately of the authorities involved. Based on the testimony of an asylum seeker from Turkey, when he entered Greece and while he was in the border area of Evros, the police authorities who located him, stripped him, removing all his clothes, in order to put him under physical control.

Finally, RVRN recorded the death of a man from Nigeria inside a police station. On 8 February 2019, the man was taken to the Omonia Police Station for identification, where he died. The incident was widely covered by media and prompted police to issue two public statements on the matter. RVRN has not received further information on the outcome of that case.

2. Incidents involving civil servants

In nine incidents the perpetrators were civil servants. By categorizing all incidents per reason for targeting, it becomes evident that all targeted groups face problems when dealing with the public sector. Specifically, three incidents against asylum-seekers were recorded, two incidents against recognized refugees and four incidents against Greek citizens on grounds of sexual orientation (one incident) and gender identity (three incidents).

The incidents recorded by RVRN, show the lack of tolerance for diversity, the development of a culture of harassment for refugees and asylum-seekers, as well as for LGBTQI+ individuals. For asylum-seekers, most of the incidents took place within public services, to which the victim is referring to conclude administrative procedures, while the civil servant raised obstacles, in addition to the provisions of the relevant institutional framework, and sometimes also attacked the victim. A case in point is of two victims who were recognized refugees and addressed to the Tax Office of the area they live in, to declare their new residential address.

“... The victim who speaks very good Greek, went with a friend [...] at the Tax Office of Nikaia to declare their new residential address [...] The employee [...] asked for their IDs and they showed them. As soon as the employee realized that they are foreigners, she started shouting that they were illegal and that they cannot stay in Athens. One of the victims replied that they stay in Athens legally and they have all the necessary documents. The employee then dropped

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11. UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), Draft General Recommendation n° 36 on preventing and combating racial profiling (May 2019). Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CERD/Pages/GC36.aspx>
 12. RVRN Annual Report 2018, p. 21.

the lease to the ground and another male employee asked his colleague “How long has he been living here (in Greece)?”. The employee saw that the Residence permit¹³ was issued in 2018 and said “you are lying, you cannot be only 2.5 years in Greece and speak Greek so well. I am sure you have been at least 10 years in Greece, and you were illegal.” Then the employee told him that they should go to the Asylum Service and change their address there. The victim replied that he had already spoken to the Director of the Asylum Service in Patras and he was told that anyone with a VAT number and the necessary documents could stay wherever they wanted in Greece and could go to the Tax Office to declare their address. However, the employee kept on refusing to advance with the procedure. The victim told her that the employees were there to serve the public, and that he had the right to request the declaration of his new address, adding that he was legally living in Greece and had submitted his tax return. The employee then said, “I will log into the system to see what you have paid” and turned her computer screen to all the citizens who were waiting in the line, saying “look what he has paid.” The victim said that there was no reason for everyone to see what he had paid and then, another Greek woman who was waiting in the line intervened and said “she is telling you that you can’t go any further with the procedure, don’t you hear that, don’t you understand?” and added, “do you think we are here to serve you (i.e. foreigners)? You all hid your passports in your pockets, and you are now seeking asylum here. How did you get a residence permit here?” The victim said that his friend had also received a positive refugee status recognition decision, but his residence permit had not yet been issued and then the employee said, “Forget papers now. Things have changed. You are not getting any papers.” Then all the employees of the Tax Office stood up shouting at the victims and the employee told them “Will you go out or should I call the Police?” She also threatened the victim that she would log into the system and “spoil” his tax return and the data he had entered. Shortly afterwards, the head of the Tax Office approached the victim and after stating her title, told them that they could not proceed with the change of address and urged them to leave. Before leaving, the victim asked the male employee if his friend, who had health issues, could return and declare the address to the Tax Office as soon as he received the residence permit. Then the other employee intervened, saying “He won’t get papers, how will he get papers?” After that, the victim and his friend left.” During the recording, the victims said that they wanted to report the incident and they have already submitted a report to the Greek Ombudsman.

The same pattern of denial of service and verbal abuse with a racist background by civil servants can also be seen in incidents where the victims are LGBTQI+ individuals. In this context, RVRN

13. The Residence permit for beneficiaries of international protection is the document that certifies the legal status of the beneficiary of international protection (recognized refugees / beneficiaries of subsidiary protection) and bears the identification details of its holder.

recalls that it welcomed the initiative for the legal recognition of gender identity according to L. 4491/2017 (Government Gazette A152). However, the process of legal recognition of gender identity entails risks, because of the need for privacy and non-exposure to further targeting has not yet been well established. In other recorded incidents, the perpetrators were teachers. This shows the great need to strengthen the regulatory framework for combating racist, homophobic and transphobic violence in schools, with the effective involvement of teachers, students and parents' associations.

Lastly, in relation to the attacks by law enforcement officials and civil servants, RVRN recalls that the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance had pointed out that the stigmatization of people of different origins by acts or omissions of public authorities, institutions, the media, political parties or national or local organizations is not only an act of racial discrimination but could also incite the recurrence of such acts, thereby resulting in the creation of a vicious circle that reinforces racist attitudes and prejudices and requires universal condemnation¹⁴.

IV. Complaints and authorities' response

RVRN monitors closely the implementation of the legislation for combating racist crimes as well as the practices of all actors involved. RVRN aims to identify and point out the legal and practical obstacles regarding the victims' access to justice. This section analyses RVRN's data on complaints (A) and other information related to police and judicial response to racist violence, including measures adopted by the Ministry of Justice (B).

A. Analysis of RVRN data

At the time of the recordings by RVRN organizations, 19 incidents out of 100 had been reported to the police. Ten of those incidents were related to attacks against refugees and migrants, two against defenders, one was related to anti-Semitic desecrations and vandalisms, while six were related to serious attacks against LGBTQI+ individuals. In 17 incidents, the victims said that they had not reported the incident to the police but intended to do so. In 37 incidents, the victims said that they would not take further actions due to fear, lack of trust in the authorities, as well as due to bureaucracy. A case in point is of a Greek woman who was attacked on grounds of ethnic origin, who said that she did not wish to file a complaint because «this is how it is.» In incidents where a minor was targeted on grounds of sexual orientation and/or gender identity, the victim was discouraged by her parents to file a complaint.

Most of the incidents were against refugees and migrants. Nevertheless, the number of incidents seems only to be part of a broader reality, as the victims' testimonies show that there is a lack of trust in the system. In fact, there are incidents of asylum-seekers who are afraid that if they file

14. A/74/253 (2019), *Contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance*, par. 54. Available at: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3826582?ln=en#record-files-collapse-header>

a complaint, their asylum or accommodation procedures could eventually be affected. This is a common pattern¹⁵ of victims' response that highlights a key aspect of the effects of institutional racism, which often contributes significantly to concealing the racist side of a crime. A case in point is of a minor asylum-seeker who said that he does not wish to take further action, as he fears that once he goes to the Police Station he will not be allowed to leave, and will be subjected to protective custody, while detention conditions will not be safe and he will be deprived of his freedom. RVRN recalls that the UN Special Rapporteur on modern forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance emphasized that Article 6 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination further states that victims of racial discrimination must also have the right to seek adequate reparation or satisfaction for any discrimination they experience¹⁶.

B. State response to racist violence

RVRN constantly pursues the best possible cooperation with the police and prosecuting authorities. As previously stated, cooperation between civil society and the police against racist crime has been deemed successful, since, besides supporting the victim, it also allows for some police shortcomings to be rectified.

1. Recording and response by the Authorities

According to statistics on cases of racist violence reported to RVRN by the Hellenic Police, in 2019, a total of 282 cases were recorded by the competent Services. Out of the 282 incidents, in 232 the police authorities took charge and conducted preliminary investigations either ex officio or following a complaint, whereas in the remaining 50 incidents the police authorities took charge based on instructions by the prosecution authorities ordering a preliminary investigation.

TYPE OF COMPETENT SERVICE	
POLICE DEPARTMENTS COMBATING RACIST VIOLENCE	208
POLICE DEPARTMENTS AND SECURITY DEPARTMENTS	52
DIVISION OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS	9
SECURITY SUB-DIRECTORATE OF ATTICA	13
TOTAL	282

15. European Network Against Racism, Racist Crime & institutional Racism in Europe - ENAR Shadow Report 2014-2018. Available at: file:///C:/Users/30694/Downloads/shadowreport2018_final-embargoed_12-09-2019.pdf

16. A/74/253 (2019), Contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, par. 56. Available at: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3826582?ln=en#record-files-collapse-header>

CASES PER CATEGORY OF PERPETRATORS	
CITIZENS	167
CITIZENS AND POLICE OFFICERS	12
CITIZENS AND UNKNOWN PERPETRATORS	6
POLICE OFFICERS	19
ORGANISED GROUPS	2
UNKNOWN PERPETRATORS	73
UNKNOWN PERPETRATORS AND POLICE OFFICERS	3
TOTAL OF RECORDED CASES	282

POSSIBLE RACIST MOTIVE	
NATIONAL OR ETHNIC ORIGIN	178
DESCENT	2
COLOUR	9
RACE	10
RELIGION	36
SEXUAL ORIENTATION	20
GENDER IDENTITY	12
DISABILITIES	34
UNIDENTIFIED/OTHER	1

VICTIMS PER GENDER	%
MEN	74
WOMEN	26

OFFENCE	
INCITEMENT TO COMMIT CRIME	2
THREAT	6
N. ON EQUAL TREATMENT	4
DENIAL OF SERVICE	5
TORTURE	1
DISTINCT CASES OF DAMAGE	8
DISSEMINATION OF FALSE INFORMATION	6
MALICIOUS BLASPHEMY	1
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFENSE	3
THEFT	1
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	1
INSULT	54
LIFE THREATENING PHYSICAL INJURIES	8
DAMAGE TO THIRD-PARTY PROPERTY	4
MALICIOUS REFUSAL TO ACKNOWLEDGE CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY	2
THEFT	4
BREACH OF DUTY	16
INJURIES	30
HATE SPEECH	92
DEFAMATION	3
EXTORTION	1
DISTURBANCE OF DOMESTIC PEACE	1
COMPLAINTS FILED TO THE PROSECUTORS WITHOUT LEGAL CLASSIFICATION OF THE OFFENSE	29
TOTAL	282

VICTIMS PER CITIZENSHIP	
EGYPT	2
ALBANIA	13
AFGHANISTAN	20
GEORGIA	2
GAMBIA	1
GUINEA	1
GREECE	45
JORDAN	2
IRAQ	2
IRAN	2
CHINA	1
CONGO	2
CYPRUS	1
MOROCCO	2
MYANMAR	1
BANGLADES	2
BAHAMAS	1
BAHRAIN	1
NIGERIA	2
UKRAINE	1
PAKISTAN	16
PALESTINE	1
ROMANIA	2
SAUDI ARABIA	1
SENEGAL	1
SUDAN	1
SYRIA	10
THAILAND	1

RVRN cites the above data in order to provide a better understanding of racist crimes in Greece, through the comparative analysis of the data collected by the Hellenic Police and those collected by the civil society. This process will be greatly facilitated if the State discloses the qualitative analysis of the above data, in order to clarify the trends and match the type of crime with the targeted groups. At this point, RVRN would like to emphasize that publicizing the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the recorded incidents of racist violence, as well as their development, not only highlights the trends that need to be considered in order to effectively combat the aspects of racist crime, but it also enhances the transparency of procedures and trust in the authorities and a unified and effective mechanism for recording incidents of racist violence. The parameter of trust in a unified and effective system for recording incidents of racist violence and the protection and provision of assistance to the victims, remains a key aim, despite the already positive developments in this area.

2. National Council Against Racism and Intolerance (NCRI) - National Action Plan Against Racism

In 2019, RVRN participated in NCRI sittings with two representatives (and their deputies). In 2019, due to the national elections, there was a change in the terms of office in NCRI, but RVRN consistently a) supported the work of the National Action Plan against Racism on the basis of consultation of the members of the Council and other special bodies or experts on specific issues, b) submitted recommendations to the competent authorities and proposals for specific actions and c) sought the updating of the table of actions submitted by the individual Ministries in the context of change in the terms of office in NCRI, to contribute to the effective update of their planned actions. RVRN highlights the need to complete the National Action Plan against Racism, because of the institutional, political and social impact its implementation entails, and also the particular significance of NCRI operation, which should carry out its works consistently and on a steady basis, to meet the requirements of social developments. RVRN would like to emphasize the importance of updating and re-releasing the guidelines produced by NCRI to the Public Services, for understanding the obligation to respect each individual regardless of race, colour, national or ethnic origin, descent, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics, as well as for monitoring and evaluating the course of this action.

V. Recommendations to the State

RVRN addresses the following recommendations to the State to combat racist crimes.

Recommendations to the Ministry of Citizen Protection

A. Combating racist crime

- 1. Reinforcement and proper staffing of the Hellenic Police Services against Racist Violence.**
- 2. Continuous training, with the assistance of international and European organizations with**

expertise and experience in training law enforcement officials and judicial bodies, for the entire personnel of the Hellenic Police.

3. *Continuous guidance to all police officers regarding their obligation to assist the victims, to intervene for their rescue and to make sure that the victims are referred to the competent services.*
4. *Provision of specialised information on the existing victim support structures in each region, on a case-by-case basis (removal from the victimising environment, upon victim's consent).*
5. *Training of a special task force per region, on how to inform victims of racist crimes of their rights and how to handle their initial contact with the victims, ensuring that the provision of information by specialised staff is not replaced by the brochures in a language that the victim understands.*
6. *Constant communication and cooperation between police departments nationwide, governmental or non-governmental organisations and migrant communities, for the provision of medical, social and legal assistance, as well as interpretation services to facilitate the victims' access to the police (Law. 4478/2017).*
7. *Continuous evaluation of police response to ensure compliance with the circular entitled «Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination in Policing» (8.11.2014).*
8. *Effective dissemination of the knowledge on the prohibition of expulsion or return of third country nationals who are either victims or key witnesses of racist crimes or hate speech (Law 927/1979) and express their intention of filing a complaint or reporting an incident to the competent police authorities (Article 41 Law 3907/2011).*
9. *Speeding up the identification procedure of undocumented third-country nationals who are victims of racist violence or material witnesses, to minimize restrictions to their freedom.*
10. *Adoption of a special circular on the appropriate treatment of LGBTQI+ individuals to provide police officers with clear guidance and avoid secondary victimisation.*
11. *Protection of human rights defenders and ensure the safety of humanitarian workers and members of civil society.*
12. *Exploring the possibility of evaluating the data on racist crimes together with civil society, while respecting the protection of personal data.*
13. *Publication of the qualitative analysis of the data collected and processed by the Hellenic Police regarding racist crimes.*

B. Combating racially motivated police violence

1. *Introduction of a specific procedure in the framework of disciplinary control within the Hellenic Police Force for faster processing of racially motivated arbitrary acts.*
2. *Implementation of special training programmes and publication of relevant data, particularly regarding the course of complaints, in order to further enhance transparency and confidence of victims in the Hellenic Police.*

Recommendations to the Ministry of Justice and the Prosecution and Judicial Authorities

1. *Convergence of the National Council against Racism and Intolerance on a steady and frequent basis, to have an targeted and decisive intervention towards supervision of the implementation of legislation against racism and intolerance, especially in cases of its violation with the involvement of public officials, designing policies to prevent and combat racism and intolerance, as well as coordination among the involved actors.*
2. *Publication of qualitative and quantitative trends regarding incidents of racist violence, based on the findings of the national mechanism for recording of racist violence incidents, as well as the developments of the incidents at the level of the prosecutors and the courts.*
3. *Recommencement of the works of the Working Group set up following the agreement with ODIHR (OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights) to coordinate actions to address racist crimes.*
4. *Provision of information on the coordination of supportive services for victims of racist violence according to Law 4478/2017.*
5. *Adoption of a legislative provision for the protection of human rights defenders.*
6. *Ensuring the prompt referral of juvenile victims to the Juvenile Support and Social Care Services of the Ministry of Justice considering the serious risk involved in terms of secondary or repeated victimisation.*
7. *Ensuring the appointment of an interpreter, preferably selected among the persons who are familiar with communicating with deaf or mute victims.*
8. *Adoption of measures to protect interpreters and prevent their victimisation.*
9. *Special training programme for the individuals called to examine victims of sexual assault, victims of violence on grounds of gender identity and victims of domestic violence.*
10. *Appointment of a specific individual to keep the victim informed throughout the penal procedure.*
11. *Prevention of abusive withdrawals of the information requests by a victim (Article 59 (3) L. 4478/2017).*
12. *In cooperation with the judicial authorities, adoption of special measures to ensure the victim's safety (entry/exit from courts and prosecution offices, keeping victims at a safe distance from defendants, etc.)*
13. *In-depth study and discussion among scientific and professional bodies on how to adapt restorative justice to racist crimes (Article 63 of Law 4478/2017).*
14. *Enhancement and extension of the appointment of Special Prosecutors for racist crime, for addressing hate crime more effectively.*

15. *Provision of information regarding the implementation of the Circular of the Supreme Court for data collection and racist crime management by the Prosecutors.*
16. *Ensuring effective implementation of Article 82 of the Penal Code for crimes with racist characteristics, as a general aggravating circumstance and not only during the preliminary examination, but also at the pre-trial stage.*

Recommendations to the Ministry of Health and the Medical Associations

1. *Ensuring equal and non-discriminatory access to the public health system.*
2. *Cooperation with the Ministry of Justice on the implementation of Law 4478/2017, particularly on performing medical tests as per Article 66 (c) of 4478/2017.*
3. *Provision of information and training to medical staff on the cultural aspects of their interaction with victims of racist violence and on the special conditions pertaining to LGBTQI+ victims.*
4. *Training and sensitization of mental health specialists on issues of gender identity and sexual orientation, as there are still reports of abusive behaviour against LGBTQI+ persons, in violation of the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD) of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, (DSM) of the American Psychiatric Association (APA).*
5. *Compliance with the principle that medical tests should be performed by individuals who share the same sex as the victim, while the burden of choice should be shifted to the victim only in exceptional cases of limited capacity in medical staff, in accordance with Article 69 (1) (d) of Law 4478/2017.*

Recommendations to the Ministry of Migration and Asylum

Additional initiatives and measures which can contribute to reducing tensions among refugees, relieving pressure from local communities (especially on islands-entry points), and preventing or limiting social tensions, which in turn become a breeding ground for xenophobic reactions and racist behaviours. Such measures may include the following:

1. *Significant improvement of the reception conditions, especially for vulnerable individuals, as well as creating the conditions for greater safety in all reception sites, Reception and Identification Centres and reception facilities in the mainland.*
2. *More efficient registration and fair management of asylum applications for all nationalities, in compliance with the international protection guarantees.*
3. *Standardization and acceleration of the registration and reception procedures for unaccompanied minors, under appropriate care and referral procedures*

4. *Reassessment of the geographic restrictions on the islands.*
5. *A holistic approach to issues related to migrants and refugees, with long-term planning across the country, aiming at the smooth integration of refugees and migrants into the Greek society.*
6. *Adoption of preventive measures to avoid victimization of refugees leaving the supportive network of the reception facilities (e.g. ESTIA programme) without being able to receive support under another framework.*
7. *Adoption of legislation on the issuance of residence permits for humanitarian reasons to unaccompanied minors whose application for international protection is ultimately rejected, as a means of protecting the minority.*

Recommendations to the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs

1. *Development of a comprehensive handbook for school communities on understanding and addressing racial, homophobic, transphobic-motivated incidents of violence, and interconnection with experienced civil society actors implementing specific programmes.*
2. *Strengthening the framework for combating hate-motivated violence in schools, with the effective engagement of teachers, students and parent associations.*
3. *Introduction of a sexual education course in primary and secondary education, to address stereotypes and prejudices about gender identity and sexual orientation, and to create an inclusive and safe school environment.*
4. *Promotion of an intercultural and inter-religion dialogue to address stereotypes and prejudice.*

Recommendations to the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transports

1. *Development of guidelines for the staff working in public transportation (including buses), for understanding the obligations to respect all passengers regardless of race, colour, ethnicity or ethnic origin, descent, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics.*
2. *Provision of special clauses related to the above obligations in contracts of concession.*
3. *Investigation of the cases involving employees.*
4. *Provision of proportional sanctions for non-compliance with the obligation to respect all passengers regardless of race, colour, national or ethnic origin, descent, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics.*

Recommendations to the General Secretariat of Information and Communication


Training and awareness raising of the management boards and journalists, editors and newscasters in the electronic media, press and TV, regarding the coverage of racist crimes, the protection of human rights and the termination of (re)production of negative stereotypes against certain groups, by organising special training seminars and drafting guidelines.

Regarding the National Council for Radio and Television (NCRTV), effective strengthening of its mechanisms for identifying media hate speech, which may lead to the manifestation of hate crime, as well as the imposition of relevant sanctions.

RVRN points out that the above recommendations to effectively address racist violence, must be combined with a thorough evaluation of the aspects of racism in Greece, with policies that improve security, protect human rights, as well as with targeted measures to address challenges for the whole population. RVRN calls on State and local government representatives, as well as media representatives, to refrain from the racist rhetoric that normalizes and encourages xenophobic reactions and affects social peace and cohesion.

The background of the page features a dark purple color with a white diagonal stripe. Silhouettes of various people, including a woman, a child, and a man, are scattered across the page, some appearing to walk or move. The text is centered within a white rectangular area.

Racist Violence Recording Network

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