

URGENT ANNOUNCEMENT

Over the past 25 days the Aliens' Department of Athens has closed its doors and does no longer accept new asylum applications. Hundreds of asylum-seekers living in the area of Athens are thereby denied access to the asylum procedure and are at risk of being arrested and expelled any moment. While queuing up outside the Aliens' Department at Petrou Ralli Street in Athens seeking in vain the protection of the Greek State, they risk being arrested on grounds of unlawful residence.

This practice is part of the Greek Government's general policy towards asylum-seekers, refugees and persons who are entitled to international protection: arrests and expulsions of asylum-seekers, no access to the asylum procedure, unfair procedures when assessing asylum claims, zero percent of success of recognition of refugee status, total lack of social welfare, police brutality- a policy that leads to suppression and denial of their rights.

We denounce this practice of the Greek Police as being arbitrary and in breach of the international obligations that the Greek Government has undertaken, among others under the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, the European Convention of Human Rights, the UN Convention against Torture and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

We urgently ask for respect for and efficient protection of the rights of refugees.

GROUP OF LAWYERS FOR THE RIGHTS OF REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

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