



Greece Country Report October 2023

[Eleven percent](#) of Greeks are immigrants. Albanians make up [about 52%](#) of these immigrants. Greece has become a transit country into Europe for Syrian, Kurdish, Afghan, and Asian immigrants. Greece is the nearest entry route into the Schengen zone of the European Union from Asia. Turkey has facilitated transit of immigrants into Greece. To reach Greece, immigrants often pay smugglers [\\$4000 or more](#) per person. Indeed, in 2022, a reported [18,780 immigrants](#) entered Greece, a 105.9% increase from 2021.

The immigration surge has fueled backlash from the Greek government and citizenry. Greek border forces enforce a [‘push-back’](#) policy, whereby migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers are detained and deported from Greece without any assessment of their claims for asylum, [breaking local and international law](#). This policy has been condemned by the [European Court of Human Rights](#). In June 2023 a Greek fishing boat loaded with up to 750 migrants capsized in the presence of a Greek Coast Guard vessel. [Over 300 drowned](#). Greece legally recognizes Turkey as a [third country safe haven](#), meaning that Greek officials reject asylum applicants who have come through Turkey even though Turkey bars their reentry.

Greek security services systematically [extort migrants](#), detain them, and force them to participate in push-back operations. Refugees [cannot access basic healthcare](#). Greek detention centers are unsafe for [unaccompanied children](#). Only [30.9%](#) of unaccompanied children succeed on their first application to obtain asylum. The Greek government does not offer unsuccessful applicants a residence permit, leaving them unable to work, without access to [education](#), and vulnerable to exploitation.

NGOs that focus on helping migrants face harassment and governmental discrimination. NGO employees have even faced [criminal charges](#), including for human trafficking. The Greek government [bars reporters](#) from refugee camps, part of its wider crackdown on [media freedom](#).

Greek politicians have [scapegoated](#) migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees for recent forest fires. Greek residents in Evros claim that migrants want to [destroy them](#) and have formed [anti-migrant militias](#). Ukrainian refugees who come to Greece are welcomed warmly by the government. The government uses [polarizing rhetoric](#) that paints Ukrainian refugees as fellow Orthodox Christians who belong in Greece, in contrast to Middle Eastern Muslims. This classification has created a [two-tier refugee](#) system.

Femicide has grown annually in Greece. [A woman is murdered every month](#). The government responded by introducing a national [‘Speak Up’](#) campaign, but it has not reduced impunity for crimes of domestic violence. Greece amended its [child custody laws](#), forcing victims to share custody with abusers.

Due to the Greek government’s discriminatory anti-immigrant policies and its patriarchal laws on domestic violence and child custody, Genocide Watch considers Greece to be at **Stage 1: Classification, Stage 3: Discrimination, Stage 4: Dehumanization, and Stage 8: Persecution**.

Genocide Watch recommends that the government of Greece:

- Stop recognizing Turkey as a third country safe haven for refugees and asylum seekers.
- Allow migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers to apply for asylum in Greece.
- Stop applying the ‘push back’ policy and provide asylum seekers with prompt adjudications.
- Stop harassing and prosecuting NGO staff who assist migrants.
- Allow reporting on refugee issues and give reporters access to refugee camps.
- Amend the child custody law so it will protect abused women and children.