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MODERN SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING OF FORCIBLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN GREECE AND TÜRKIYE



STOP THE TRAFFIK.
PEOPLE SHOULDN'T BE BOUGHT & SOLD



Traffik Analysis Hub



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List of acronyms

| | |
|---------|---|
| CoE | Council of Europe |
| CCAC | Closed Controlled Access Centres of Islands (Greece) |
| DGMM | Directorate General of Migration Management (Türkiye) |
| EKKA | National Centre for Social Solidarity (Greece) |
| EODY | National Public Health Organization (Greece) |
| ESTIA | Emergency Support to Integration and Accommodation Program (Greece) |
| EU | European Union |
| GRETA | Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings of the Council of Europe |
| IOM | International Organization for Migrants |
| LFIP | Law on Foreigners and International Protection (Türkiye) |
| MSHT | Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking |
| NRM | National Referral Mechanism for survivors of trafficking (Greece) |
| PMM | Ministry of the Interior's Presidency on Migration Management (Türkiye) |
| RIC | Reception and Identification Centre (Greece) |
| RIS | Reception and Identification Service (Greece) |
| SOGIESC | Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics |
| STTG | Stop the Traffick Group |
| TIP | Trafficking in Persons Report of the United States Department of State |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| UNODC | United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime |

Executive summary

As of June 2023, there are more than 110 million forcibly displaced persons worldwide, the highest number since World War II. Greece and Türkiye, due to their strategic geographical location in the Eastern Mediterranean, host a critical number of displaced people. In addition, both countries receive many people who are already survivors of modern slavery (where exploitation occurred in the country of origin or another third country) or who are at exceptionally high risk of exploitation due to a range of enabling factors. This situation poses significant challenges to the Greek and Turkish governments in the identification and protection of survivors of trafficking and modern slavery.

More than seven years after the EU-Turkey Statement, the relationship between the European Union, in particular Greece, and Türkiye continues to be unstable and fails to create durable solutions for migration between both countries. This report provides an overview of the legal framework for survivors of modern slavery and human trafficking and the obstacles they face in accessing protection in Greece and Türkiye, with a particular focus on survivors who are asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection. It also provides recommendations to stakeholders in order to improve the access of survivors of modern slavery and human trafficking to their rights in the view of the two signatory organisations.

First, border tensions between Greece and Türkiye result in a lack of cooperation between the two countries to prevent, identify and disrupt human trafficking. They further increase the use of unsafe routes due to increasingly dangerous options and the reliance of asylum seekers on smuggling and even trafficking networks to cross borders.

Second, both countries have struggled to respond to the growth of the number of people seeking protection in their countries, such as through the provision of accommodation, access to public services, financial support and legal status, exacerbating the challenges which displaced people face in their daily lives and increasing their risk of exploitation.

Third, despite some improvements in the legal framework and mechanisms to address human trafficking and to provide protection measures to its survivors, many obstacles and limitations still remain in practice, especially in the identification and provision of support to survivors of human trafficking. Furthermore, certain forms of human trafficking and modern slavery go unacknowledged, including labour exploitation and organ trafficking.

In the current situation, with an increase in the number of people reaching both Greece and Türkiye, both countries must step up their efforts in accordance with their own international and national obligations towards survivors of modern slavery and human trafficking, and to protect persons at risk. Early identification, training of officials who have direct contact with survivors or persons at risk, and ensuring that they have access to their rights, including access to adequate

medical care, housing and inclusion measures, are essential to guarantee the protection of survivors of modern slavery and human trafficking.

Introduction

At the end of 2022, 108.4 million persons were forcibly displaced around the world due to persecution, conflict, violence, and human rights violations.¹ As key countries on the Eastern Mediterranean migration route, Greece and Türkiye host a large number of displaced people. Forcibly displaced persons from the Middle East and South Asia, particularly from Syria and Afghanistan, arrive or transit through both countries every year, and Türkiye is considered the world's largest refugee-hosting country.²

At the same time, according to Tomoya Obokata, the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, forcibly displaced persons are especially vulnerable to contemporary forms of slavery.³ Without exception, persons seeking protection in Greece and Türkiye are at a particularly high risk of modern slavery and human trafficking due to financial distress, limited access to job opportunities, and lack of social connections in a new country. These are all key risk factors for trafficking. They are also at a heightened risk of having experienced modern slavery or human trafficking in their countries of origin or in a third country.

This report provides an outline of the trafficking risks faced by asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection and offers an overview of the legal framework and mechanisms to identify and support survivors of modern slavery and human trafficking. It highlights the main gaps in counter human trafficking efforts in Greece and Türkiye and provides policy recommendations for stakeholders.

1.1. About Fenix Humanitarian Legal Aid and STOP THE TRAFFIK Group

Fenix Humanitarian Legal Aid (Fenix) is a non-governmental organisation that aims to empower asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection and remove barriers that prevent them from having real and effective access to the right to seek refuge in Europe. Fenix's mission is twofold: (i) provide a unique service that includes the interdisciplinary collaboration of lawyers, psychologists and protection officers in one case to address the legal, medical, mental health, material and social needs of our clients in a holistic way, focused on dignity, empowerment and accessing rights; (ii) advocate for a fairer and more equitable asylum system through capacity building of NGOs and refugee communities, advocacy efforts, monitoring and reporting rights violations and strategic litigation in Greece and the European Union. Fenix has three interconnected projects to achieve its mission: Holistic Legal Aid project, Advocacy and Strategic Litigation, and Capacity Bridging and Community Engagement.

STOP THE TRAFFIK Group (STTG) is a pioneer organisation in the prevention of modern slavery and human trafficking and is based in the UK. STTG works to unite people around the world by

¹ UNHCR, *Refugee Data Finder*, last update 14 June 2023, available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/>.

² UNHCR, *Refugee Data Finder*, last update 14 June 2023, available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/>.

³ OHCHR, *Save displaced people from slavery by granting right to work, urges UN expert*, 17 September 2021, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2021/09/save-displaced-people-slavery-granting-right-work-urges-un-expert>.

inspiring, informing, equipping, and mobilising communities to know what human trafficking is, know how to identify it and know how to respond if they see it.

Utilising the power of people and technology, STTG is working to prevent human trafficking globally through an innovative intelligence-led and data-driven approach. To achieve this mission, Traffik Analysis Hub was founded by STTG and is currently the largest collection of trafficking cases and survivor stories, bringing partners together within a shared ownership and governance model and facilitating the sharing of data and information in the spirit of greater trust and collaboration.

This report was developed by STTG's Aman Safety project team. Aman Safety is a 5-year project which has been running since 2020 and is funded by Comic Relief through its "Across Borders: Routes to Safety for Refugees" program. Through this project, the Aman Safety team seeks to raise awareness and prevent the human trafficking of refugees and asylum seekers as they seek sanctuary in Greece, Türkiye and Cyprus. They provide vital safety information to people on the move in their language and connect them with support organisations on the ground.

1.2. Methodology

1.2.1. Primary Sources

This report draws on primary data collected by STTG through its prevention campaigns, intelligence work and the Traffik Analysis Hub. As part of the Aman Safety Project's geo-targeted prevention campaigns on Facebook and Instagram, surveys were launched through social media, targeting refugees and asylum seekers in Greece and Türkiye. The audience completed anonymous surveys, providing the team with insights on their experiences and knowledge of exploitation. Anonymised case studies included in this report are based on messages received during the campaigns from forcibly displaced people. Data included in this report was collected through social media prevention campaigns targeting unaccompanied minors in Greece (2021-2022) and targeting forcibly displaced persons in Istanbul (2022).

The Aman Safety team also conducted 'Power of 10' data sharing projects in Greece in 2022 and 2023, in which partner organisations supporting refugees and asylum seekers on the ground shared anonymised survivor stories of people they supported who had experienced trafficking. The idea of the project is to inspire ten organisations to each share ten survivor stories in order to create a new dataset shining a light on trafficking trends in Greece, Türkiye and beyond. The data gathered through these projects was used to inform this report.

Fenix data provided in this report was collected from casework in direct legal representation of asylum seekers from twelve different countries who are survivors of modern slavery and human trafficking. This data was collected from clients represented both on Lesbos and in Athens between 2021 to the first six months of 2023.

1.2.2. Secondary Sources

Reports

This report draws on a number of secondary sources outlining trafficking trends and state responses, including the reports by the US State Department's Trafficking in Persons (TIP) and by the Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA).

The Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report analyses anti-trafficking efforts by different governments and is a comprehensive guide to trafficking prevention methods in each country worldwide. It provides an overview of human trafficking trends and statistics, and analyses government anti-trafficking policies and practices, highlighting the main gaps. However, the report has some limitations. For example, one recent academic paper notes that the TIP report should incorporate more trafficking risk factors into the analysis⁴. Furthermore, some note that the methodology is determined solely by the American government and that the report should instead use metrics widely accepted by international bodies and governments⁵. Some critics also note that the TIP report does not account for cultural or social differences that impact how police and embassies in different countries classify and prosecute trafficking cases⁶.

The Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by the Parties.⁷ GRETA meets three times a year and publishes country reports evaluating legislative and other measures based on the Convention provisions. GRETA members are selected among nationals of States Parties for four-year terms to the Convention and are required to be independent and impartial in the exercise of their functions.⁸

Government statistics

Official Greek and Turkish government trafficking statistics have also been used in this report. However, while these statistics can reveal some patterns in trafficking trends, it should be noted that as they only capture statistics of formally identified victims of trafficking, they therefore likely underestimate the true numbers. These statistics have been criticised by experts as 'rudimentary' and 'erratic'.⁹ Furthermore, as Greece only recognises victims of trafficking who were exploited in Greece, the numbers do not capture those who were trafficked and exploited in a third country or in their countries of origin.

⁴ Horning et al, *The Trafficking in Persons Report: A Game of Risk*, 2013, available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01924036.2013.861355>.

⁵ Gallagher, A, *Improving the Effectiveness of the International Law of Human Trafficking: A Vision for the Future of the US Trafficking in Persons Reports*, 2010, available at: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12142-010-0183-6>.

⁶ The Guardian, *The Shadowy World Of Sex Across Borders*, 2008, available at:

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2008/nov/19/humantrafficking-prostitution>; US State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, *TIP-ping the Scales: Bias in the Trafficking in Persons Report?*, 29 November 2022, available at: <https://humantraffickingsearch.org/tip-ping-the-scales-bias-in-the-trafficking-in-persons-report/>.

⁷ Council of Europe, *GRETA*, available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/anti-human-trafficking/greta>.

⁸ Council of Europe, *GRETA*, available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/anti-human-trafficking/greta>.

⁹ G. Papanicolaou and A. Boukli, *Human Trafficking in Greece* in J. Winterdyk and J. Jones (eds.), *The Palgrave International Handbook of Human Trafficking*, 2020, 1098.

1.2.3. Limitations

The data collected by STTG and Fenix is not a representative sample of the population living in Greece and Türkiye who are survivors of modern slavery and human trafficking or are at risk of it. Rather, STTG's data was collected through prevention campaigns, intelligence work and the Traffik Analysis Hub as aforementioned, while Fenix's data is based on the information acquired through the provision of legal representation, protection and mental health services to asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection on Lesvos and Athens.

Additionally, while some chapters refer to general modern slavery and human trafficking trends in Greece and Türkiye, this report focuses especially on experiences and risks of forcibly displaced persons in both countries.

1.3. Terminology

1.3.1. Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

The term 'modern slavery' refers to situations of exploitation in which a person cannot refuse or leave because of threats, violence, coercion, deception, or abuse of power. It is an umbrella term which covers different human rights abuses, including human trafficking.

'Human trafficking' involves the movement of people for the purpose of exploitation, and is defined in the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons as:

'the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.

Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs'¹⁰

There are three core elements required for a situation to be defined as 'trafficking', which are outlined in the diagram below:

¹⁰ UNODC, *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*, 2021, available at: <https://www.unodc.org/res/human-trafficking/2021the-protocol-tip.html/TIP.pdf>.

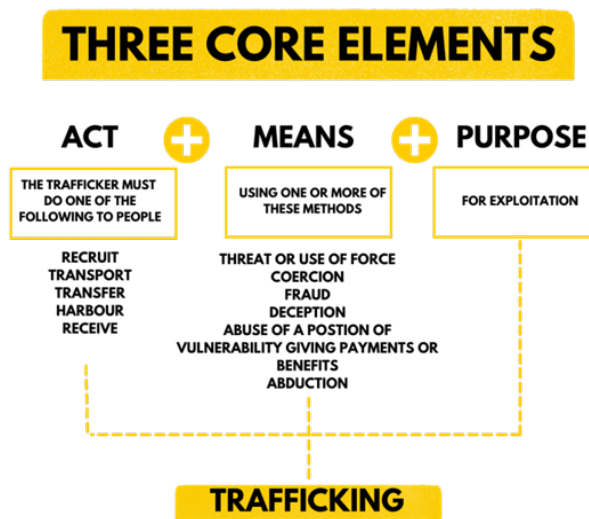


Image 1 - Three core elements of human trafficking

The definition for child trafficking differs somewhat, as no ‘means’ needs to be identified. Rather, any child who is recruited, transported, transferred or harboured for an exploitative reason is a victim of trafficking.

Common recruitment methods used by traffickers include grooming or the ‘lover boy’ tactic, in which the victim is deceived through false offers of love or friendship, face-to-face or online job offers through which victims believe that they will be given legitimate work, and the offer of help in return for payment later which often results in a situation of debt bondage.

Control methods used by traffickers to keep victims in exploitative situations include violence or threats of violence and abuse, threats of prison or deportation, confiscating important documents such as passports, and threatening their family.

1.3.2. Types of exploitation in human trafficking

It is imperative to recognise that human trafficking is a multifaceted phenomenon that takes various forms, including labour exploitation, domestic servitude, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, forced criminality, and organ trafficking:

Labour exploitation refers to situations where people are coerced to work for little or no pay, often under threat of punishment. Labour exploitation can be understood as a scale from forced labour to labour under poor conditions and for little pay due to a lack of alternative options. All types of labour, within every industry, are susceptible to labour exploitation. Some common sectors and industries that are identified as vulnerable include:

- Manufacturing
- Factory work
- Hospitality

- Construction
- Agriculture
- Fishing
- Car washes
- Nail bars

Domestic Servitude is a form of labour exploitation. It is the practice of exploiting and exercising undue control over another to coerce them into performing services of a domestic nature in unacceptable conditions.

Sexual exploitation is when someone is deceived, coerced or forced to take part in sexual activities. It might be in exchange for necessities, travel or transportation, paying back a perceived debt, or in exchange for nothing at all. It can involve sex trafficking for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation. Sexual exploitation can also take place online.

Forced marriage occurs when one or both people do not or cannot freely consent to the marriage. Survivors are often subjected to pressure, abuse or coercion. It can happen to both adults and children. Survivors are also often subjected to further types of modern slavery and human trafficking, including sexual exploitation and domestic servitude.

Forced Criminality occurs when an individual is being forced to work under the control of organised criminals in activities such as forced begging, shoplifting and pickpocketing, cannabis cultivation, drug dealing, and financial exploitation. Forcing others to undertake criminal activities is a lucrative and low-risk enterprise for traffickers. Treating survivors of trafficking as criminals, rather than protecting them, perpetuates the crime and guarantees impunity for traffickers.

Organ trafficking is defined as 'the practice of using exploitation, coercion, or fraud to steal or illegally purchase or sell organs'¹¹. The industry is driven by a global organ shortage and relies on the exploitation of people in financial distress and wealthy foreign recipients able to purchase organs. Brokers, including travel and insurance agents, are involved in the illegal organ trade, which relies on the participation of individuals and institutions in the medical field¹².

1.3.3. Who can be trafficked?

Anyone can be trafficked, but some people are far more vulnerable than others because they are in greater need. Traffickers target vulnerability. Vulnerable populations include those living in poverty or in unstable housing situations, as well as people with a history of trauma or addiction. In Greece and Türkiye, forcibly displaced persons are an especially vulnerable group.

¹¹ Meshelemiah, J.C.A., and Lynch, R.E. (2019), *The cause and consequence of human trafficking: Human rights violations*. Columbus, Ohio: The Ohio State University Pressbook

¹² Meshelemiah, J.C.A., and Lynch, R.E. (2019), *The cause and consequence of human trafficking: Human rights violations*. Columbus, Ohio: The Ohio State University Pressbook

1.3.4. Who can be a trafficker?

Traffickers come from all genders, races, ethnicities, and walks of life. Traffickers can be lone individuals or part of an extensive criminal network, with the common thread of exploiting people for profit. For example, in cases of sexual exploitation, traffickers may be intimate partners or spouses of the victims, family members, friends or benefactors, business acquaintances or employers. In cases of labour exploitation, traffickers can be business owners, employers, or other workers with a managerial role in a formal business. Traffickers can also be families or legal guardians, including parents, spouses, and intimate partners.

1.3.5. Difference between trafficking and smuggling

Human trafficking and human smuggling are often confused, and the terms are sometimes used interchangeably.

Human Smuggling is defined in the UN Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air as "... the procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a state party of which the person is not a national".

Unlike trafficking, the crime of smuggling is limited to a financial transaction in exchange for irregular entry into a country. When the smuggled person has arrived at the destination, they should be free to go. Smuggling is therefore a service which a person has requested, while trafficking involves either forcing a person to travel or deceiving a person into travelling under false promises for the purpose of exploiting them. It is therefore vital to maintain the distinction between smuggling and trafficking, although in practice there are crossovers in which smugglers can sometimes also be involved in trafficking or exploiting the people seeking to use their services.

The table below further illustrates the difference between the two:

| | TRAFFICKING | SMUGGLING |
|--------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| CRIME | against individual | against state |
| RELATIONSHIP | exploited as commodity | provides service |
| LENGTH | longer-term exploitative | voluntary short-term |
| PROFIT | ongoing appropriation | one-off payment |
| BORDERS | can be internal | always across borders |

Image 2: Differences between trafficking and smuggling

1.3.6. Forcibly displaced Persons

Throughout this report, the term forcibly displaced persons is used to describe the population under study. This concept refers to anyone who has been forced to leave their country of origin or habitual residence to seek safety due to natural or human-made causes, regardless of their legal status in the receiving country. The concept is therefore an umbrella concept that includes refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons, and other persons in need of international protection.

Chapter 2: Migration and Asylum in Greece and Türkiye

Important migration routes have always run through Greece and Türkiye. However, since the Syrian civil war began in 2011, forced displacement numbers have grown exponentially in the region; consequently, the number of people seeking international protection in Greece and Türkiye has increased significantly.¹³

Türkiye is currently hosting the world's largest displaced population for the eighth consecutive year. Türkiye officially hosted approximately 4 million forcibly displaced persons in 2022.¹⁴ At the end of 2022, of the 4 million displaced people in Türkiye, 3.536 million were Syrians under temporary protection, and 308,000 were non-Syrians applying for or holding international protection status, the majority of whom were from Afghanistan and Iraq.¹⁵

Türkiye is a signatory to the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. However, Türkiye only grants official asylum status to people from European countries.¹⁶ Türkiye does offer international protection to other asylum seekers in the form of a conditional refugee status if they meet the Convention's refugee definition or offers other forms of protection such as Temporary Protection status.¹⁷

Close to one million asylum seekers arrived in Greece in 2015 alone.¹⁸ After a decline in arrivals in recent years, in large part because of widespread pushbacks, arrivals once again doubled in 2022.¹⁹ In 2022, Greece hosted approximately 60,270 refugees,²⁰ and a total of 37,362 asylum applications were lodged.²¹ The main nationalities of asylum applicants continue to be Afghans (5624), Syrians (5050), Pakistanis (4572), and Palestinians (2907).²²

¹³ International Organization for Migration (IOM), *Irregular Migrant, Refugee Arrivals in Europe Top One Million in 2015*: IOM, December 2015, available at: <https://www.iom.int/news/irregular-migrant-refugee-arrivals-europe-top-one-million-2015-iom>.

¹⁴ UNHCR, *Annual Results Report 2022*, Türkiye, 28 April 2023, p 3, available at: <https://reporting.unhcr.org/files/2023-06/EU%20-%20Tu%CC%88rkiye.pdf>.

¹⁵ UNHCR, *Annual Results Report 2022*, Türkiye, 28 April 2023, p 3, available at: <https://reporting.unhcr.org/files/2023-06/EU%20-%20Tu%CC%88rkiye.pdf>.

¹⁶ 'The following States adopted alternative (a), the geographical limitation: Congo, Madagascar, Monaco and Türkiye. Türkiye expressly maintained its declaration of geographical limitation upon acceding to the 1967 Protocol. Madagascar and Monaco have not yet adhered to the Protocol.' UNHCR, *States Parties to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and 1967 Protocol*, Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/4d934f5f9.pdf>, p 5.

¹⁷ Articles 61, 62 and 91 of the Law on Foreigners and International Protection, available at: https://www.unhcr.org/tr/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2017/04/LoFIP_ENG_DGMM_revised-2017.pdf; AIDA, *Country Report: Türkiye*, December 2015, available at: https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/report-download_aida_tr_update.i.pdf.

¹⁸ UNHCR, *Operational Data Portal - Refugee Situations: Greece*, July 2023, <https://data.unhcr.org>.

¹⁹ Greek Council for Refugees (GCR), *GCR and HLHR Appeal: Safeguard the Rule of Law in Greece*, March 2023, available at: <https://gcr.gr/en/news/press-releases-announcements/item/2124-gcr-and-hlhr-appeal-safeguard-the-rule-of-law-in-greece>.

²⁰ UNHCR, *Refugee Data Finder*, 2023, available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/download/?url=Zul4t5>.

²¹ Refugee Support Aegean (RSA), *The Greek asylum procedure in figures in 2022, 2023*, available at: https://rsaegean.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/2023-03_RSA_AsylumStatistics2022_EN.pdf.

²² Refugee Support Aegean, *The Greek asylum procedure in figures in 2022, 2023*, available at: https://rsaegean.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/2023-03_RSA_AsylumStatistics2022_EN.pdf.

Greece is a signatory to the 1951 Geneva Convention.²³ As one of the EU's border states, Greece is a country of first entry under the Dublin system, and, as a member of the EU, the country recognises two types of international protection: refugee status and subsidiary protection.²⁴ Since 2022, Greece recognises Ukrainian nationals or third-country nationals with residency in Ukraine as eligible for temporary protection.²⁵

Many forcibly displaced persons cross into Greece from Türkiye, with the vast majority of arrivals in Greece using Türkiye as a transit country. Since 2015, the significant increase in the number of people arriving in Greece, especially from Türkiye through the Eastern Aegean Islands, has been accompanied by increasingly negative media narratives towards people on the move. As a result, public opinion and political attention shifted, worsening anti-migration and anti-asylum sentiment.²⁶

With the deterioration of political relationships between EU Member States around migration management, Member States shifted focus to Türkiye and increased the pressure on the country to control departures further.²⁷ Thus, on 8 March 2016, the Heads of State or Government of the EU Member States and the Turkish Prime Minister published a Statement indicating that they were progressing with the implementation of the Joint Action Plan of 29 November 2015.²⁸ This 'deal' aimed at stopping irregular migration from Türkiye to the EU, especially through Greece, and strengthening cooperation between the EU and Türkiye.²⁹ The Statement also theoretically sought to undercut smuggling networks by offering migrants an alternative to these routes.³⁰ However, this intergovernmental 'deal' has resulted in inhumane and degrading conditions for asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection on the Eastern Aegean islands.³¹ After seven years of the EU-Türkiye Statement, the EU and its Member States continue to pursue

²³ UNHCR, States Parties to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and 1967 Protocol, page 2, available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/4d934f5f9.pdf>.

²⁴ Asylum Information Database (AIDA), *Country Report: Greece, 2022 Update*, June 2023, available at: https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/AIDA-GR_2022-Update.pdf.

²⁵ Asylum Information Database (AIDA), *Country Report: Greece, 2022 Update*, June 2023, available at: https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/AIDA-GR_2022-Update.pdf.

²⁶ Fenix, *Five years of the EU – Türkiye Statement: Past, present and future*, March 2021, available at: <https://www.fenixaid.org/articles/five-years-of-the-eu-turkey-statement-past-present-and-future>.

²⁷ Fenix, *Five years of the EU – Türkiye Statement: Past, present and future*, March 2021, available at: <https://www.fenixaid.org/articles/five-years-of-the-eu-turkey-statement-past-present-and-future>.

²⁸ European Council [18 March 2016], *EU-Türkiye Statement*, 18 March 2016, Press release No 144/16, Available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/18/eu-turkey-statement/>.

²⁹ At the core of the Statement is a mechanism that allows Greece to send back irregular migrants arriving from Türkiye. In exchange, the EU agreed to resettle asylum seekers from Türkiye, and promised visa-free travel for Turkish nationals. European Parliament, *EU-Türkiye Statement and Action Plan*, 2019, available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/theme-towards-a-new-policy-on-migration/file-eu-turkey-statement-action-plan>.

³⁰ The EU adopts externalisation agreements in order to address people-smuggling and to prevent migrants from making these dangerous journeys; however, these deals have come under scrutiny as mechanisms for the EU to skirt its own human rights obligations. See DW, *EU border pushbacks: A 'shadow' migration policy?*, July 2023, available at: <https://www.dw.com/en/eu-border-pushbacks/a-66259471?maca=en-Twitter-sharing>.

³¹ Amnesty International, *EU: Anniversary of Turkey deal offers warning against further dangerous migration deals*, March 2021, available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/press-release/2021/03/eu-anniversary-of-turkey-deal-offers-warning-against-further-dangerous-migration-deals/>.

the externalisation of their international obligations and the confinement of people seeking international protection. These externalisation agreements can be, and often are, instrumentalised by non-democratic regimes to achieve political objectives.³²

2.1. The Greek-Turkish Border

Forcibly displaced persons transiting from Türkiye to Greece primarily cross the border by sea, arriving at the Eastern Aegean islands, or through the Greek-Turkish land border at the Evros river.³³ Due to the lack of humanitarian pathways for seeking asylum, most of them cross the borders using the assistance of smugglers.³⁴

Greece and Türkiye's relationship has been marred by tensions which complicate efforts to collaborate on modern slavery and human trafficking.³⁵ Contentions around sovereignty over maritime or land borders are one such significant point of discord between the two countries. Each state disputes the other's claims regarding ownership of islands, territorial waters, air control and exploitation rights over maritime boundaries in this area.³⁶ These disputes in the Aegean Sea partially stem from a decades-long history of precarious relations following the war in Cyprus.³⁷ The tensions reached a climax in 2020 when a frigate from each navy collided.³⁸ While both parties pulled back, the maritime situation remains one of brinkmanship, especially as Türkiye has continued lodging claims over Eastern Mediterranean waters and Greece has strengthened ties with regional partners as a deterrence mechanism aimed at Türkiye.³⁹ Indeed,

³² In the Spring of 2020, Türkiye allowed thousands of migrants to pass through the Greek border. Fenix Humanitarian Legal Aid, *Two sides of the same coin: Instrumentalisation and militarisation in Greece*, 2022, available at: <https://www.fenixaid.org/articles/two-sides-of-the-same-coin-instrumentalisation-and-militarisation-in-greece>.

³³ Most asylum seekers transit by sea. In 2022 the number of sea arrivals was more than double that of land arrivals. UNHCR, *Operational Data Portal: Refugee Situations: Greece*, July 2023, available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean/location/5179>.

³⁴ "Delays and inefficiencies in the legal paths to migration that continue to force migrants to live in risky and untenable conditions for extended periods of time have led to an increase in the demand for smugglers to facilitate passage to other countries. In 2015, over 90 percent of all migrants reaching the EU used the services of the smuggling network." FXB Center for Health and Human Rights at Harvard University, *Emergency within an Emergency: The Growing Epidemic of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Migrant Children in Greece*, 2017, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/greece/emergency-within-emergency-growing-epidemic-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse-migrant>.

³⁵ Alper Coşkun, *Rapprochement Between Greece and Türkiye: Seemingly Impossible, Yet Not Unimaginable*, in Georgetown University Journal of International Affairs, 2023, available at: <https://gjia.georgetown.edu/2023/05/13/rapprochement-between-greece-and-turkiye-seemingly-impossible-yet-not-unimaginable/>.

³⁶ Brookings Institute, *Türkiye, Europe, and the Eastern Mediterranean: Charting a way out of the current deadlock*, 2021, available at: <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/turkey-europe-and-the-eastern-mediterranean-charting-a-way-out-of-the-current-deadlock/>.

³⁷ Alper Coşkun, *Rapprochement Between Greece and Türkiye: Seemingly Impossible, Yet Not Unimaginable*, in Georgetown University Journal of International Affairs, 2023, available at: <https://gjia.georgetown.edu/2023/05/13/rapprochement-between-greece-and-turkiye-seemingly-impossible-yet-not-unimaginable/>.

³⁸ The Arab Weekly, *Warship 'mini-collision' highlights risk of Greek-Turkish confrontation*, 2020, available at: <https://thearabweekly.com/warship-mini-collision-highlights-risk-greek-turkish-confrontation>.

³⁹ International Crisis Group, *Türkiye-Greece: From Maritime Brinkmanship to Dialogue*, 2021, p. i, available at: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/western-europemediterranean-turkiye-cyprus/turkey-greece-maritime-brinkmanship>.

a series of economic and military incidents have led to increased militarisation of maritime borders since 2020.⁴⁰

Further tensions arise at the land border between the two countries, which is almost entirely formed by the Evros River; this border has long been a key crossing point for irregular migration from Türkiye into Greece. In 2020, following the announcement of the 'open door policy' by Türkiye,⁴¹ thousands of migrants arrived at the border along the Evros River reportedly aided by the Turkish Armed Forces.⁴² The Greek Prime Minister ultimately closed the border due to security concerns and installed a significant military presence in the region.⁴³ Since it is barred as a military zone, NGOs are not permitted in the area, and migrants who enter here thus cannot receive any assistance from NGOs.⁴⁴ In 2023, Greece announced plans to seal off its land borders with Türkiye by tripling the size of the pre-existing fence in the region.⁴⁵

Border tensions between Greece and Türkiye present two major issues in the context of addressing modern slavery and human trafficking. First, this discord hinders bilateral cooperation between the two countries in responding to cross-border instances of modern slavery and human trafficking. Second, the increasing militarisation and securitisation of the border forces persons seeking protection to try to reach the EU through increasingly unsafe routes,⁴⁶ boosting the possibility that they end up in the hands of smuggling and trafficking networks and placing their lives at risk.⁴⁷ Indeed, the UNHCR has expressed concerns that tougher border controls, restrictive policies, and a lack of legal pathways for asylum seekers to travel to Greece result in them using more dangerous routes to cross borders, putting themselves at greater risk and resulting in further deaths.⁴⁸ The two countries' methods, and potential new approaches, of addressing modern slavery and human trafficking among asylum seekers thus operate within, and must contend with, this dispute context.

⁴⁰ International Crisis Group, *Türkiye-Greece: From Maritime Brinkmanship to Dialogue*, 2021, p. 26, available at: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/western-europemediterranean-turkiye-cyprus/turkey-greece-maritime-brinkmanship>.

⁴¹Matina Stevis-Gridneff and Patrick Kingsley, *Türkiye Steps Back From Confrontation at Greek Border*, 2020, available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/13/world/europe/turkey-greece-border-migrants.html>.

⁴² John Psaropoulos, *Greece on the defensive as Türkiye opens border to refugees*, 2020, available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/3/1/greece-on-the-defensive-as-turkey-opens-border-to-refugees>.

⁴³ InfoMigrants, *Evros frontier: A militarized no-man's land where 'no one can access migrants'*, 2021, available at: <https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/35657/evros-frontier-a-militarized-nomans-land-where-no-one-can-access-migrants>.

⁴⁴ InfoMigrants, *Evros frontier: A militarized no-man's land where 'no one can access migrants'*, 2021, available at: <https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/35657/evros-frontier-a-militarized-nomans-land-where-no-one-can-access-migrants>.

⁴⁵Voice of America, *Greece Presses Ahead With Plans to Fence Its Land Borders With Türkiye*, 2023, available at: <https://www.voanews.com/a/greece-presses-ahead-with-plans-to-fence-its-land-borders-with-turkey-/6919243.html>.

⁴⁶ See Border Monitoring, *Incarcerating the Marginalized: The Fight Against Alleged Smugglers on the Greek Hotspot Islands*. November 2020, p. 40 (stating "for those who want to claim asylum in the EU, border policies create the need for smuggling in the first place").

⁴⁷ People who are forced into situations of smuggling because of the absence of humanitarian pathways to seek international protection are "forced into situations of vulnerability in which they can easily become victims of human trafficking." Border Monitoring, *Incarcerating the Marginalized: The Fight Against Alleged Smugglers on the Greek Hotspot Islands*. November 2020, p. 39.

⁴⁸ UNHCR, *Border management and respect for human rights are compatible*, February 2023, available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/gr/en/31161-border-management-and-respect-for-human-rights-are-compatible.html>.

Chapter 3: Modern slavery and human trafficking trends in Greece and Türkiye

Forcibly displaced persons, including those seeking protection in Greece and Türkiye, are vulnerable to modern slavery and human trafficking at various stages of their journeys, including in their countries of origin, while they are in transit, and in their countries of destination.

In this section, we outline key forms of modern slavery and human trafficking that forcibly displaced persons face and illustrate these with official statistics and our own findings. However, this does not represent a complete picture of the situation, as available official statistics and case studies only represent a small proportion of actual cases, and only survivors of a narrow definition of human trafficking are recognised by authorities, as further detailed in Chapter 4 of this report.

3.1. General Trends in Greece

In Greece, the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) publishes yearly statistics on identified cases of human trafficking. In 2020, the NRM identified 167 possible survivors of human trafficking (113 female; 54 male),⁴⁹ while in 2021, the NRM identified 157 cases of human trafficking.⁵⁰ Finally, in 2022, the number of cases referred increased to 358 cases, of which 293 concerned women and girls.⁵¹ The majority of the persons (245 adult asylum seekers and 42 minor asylum seekers) referred to the NRM had applied for asylum and were in the asylum process.⁵²

These statistics align with Fenix’s findings from client casework in the field between 2021 and the first six months of 2023 regarding modern slavery and human trafficking among asylum seekers whom Fenix supported. The majority of Fenix’s cases concerned female survivors — approximately 77% of identified cases involved women and girls. They were primarily subjected to forced and early marriage, or forms of sexual exploitation. In the first six months of 2023, one-third of the Fenix’s clients who reported being survivors of modern slavery reported that they were subject to it as minors. Importantly, approximately 40% of Fenix’s clients overall were survivors of some form of modern slavery, indicating the prevalence of experiences of modern slavery among asylum seekers in Greece and the heightened vulnerability of survivors.

About one in three incidents (37%) of modern slavery, including human trafficking, among Fenix’s clients occurred while in transit — this statistic underscores that forcibly displaced persons are especially vulnerable to enduring instances of human trafficking and other types of modern slavery while on the move. Of the incidents of modern slavery that occurred in a third country, 44% occurred in Türkiye, and 26% of the incidents occurred in Iran. Instances of modern slavery

⁴⁹ NRM, *Annual Report 2020, 2021*, available at:

https://ekka.org.gr/images/KOINONIKON-PAREMBASEON/%CE%95%CE%9C%CE%91/NRM_REPORT_2020_fin.doc.pdf.

⁵⁰ NRM, *Annual Report 2021, 2022*, available at:

https://ekka.org.gr/images/KOINONIKON-PAREMBASEON/%CE%95%CE%9C%CE%91/NRM_REPORT_2021_eng.pdf.

⁵¹ NRM, *Annual Report 2022, 2023*, p 11-21, available at:

https://ekka.org.gr/images/KOINONIKON-PAREMBASEON/%CE%95%CE%9C%CE%91/NRM_REPORT_2022.pdf.

⁵² NRM, *Annual Report 2022, 2023*, p 11-21, available at:

https://ekka.org.gr/images/KOINONIKON-PAREMBASEON/%CE%95%CE%9C%CE%91/NRM_REPORT_2022.pdf.

in third countries also occurred along migration routes through Africa (Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, and Sudan) and Asia (Iraq, Kuwait, and Lebanon).

3.2. General Trends in Türkiye

In Türkiye, statistics on human trafficking are published by the government. In 2022, Türkiye identified 345 victims of trafficking. In 2021 they identified 402 victims, and in 2020 they identified 282.⁵³ The majority of cases identified were female victims of sex trafficking. In 2022, of 345 identified victims⁵⁴:

- 161 were survivors of sex trafficking;
- 123 were survivors of forced labour;
- 284 identified survivors were female, 62 were male, and 45 were of unknown gender. Of these, 72 were children;
- The vast majority, 213, were not Turkish citizens. 108 were Syrian, 57 were Uzbek, 33 were Afghan, and 15 Kyrgyz.

The statistics were similar in 2021, with the majority of identified victims being victims of sex trafficking, female, and Syrian.

3.3. Types of exploitation

3.3.1. Sexual Exploitation and Sex Trafficking

In both Greece and Türkiye, the majority of identified human trafficking survivors are female and survivors of sex trafficking and sexual exploitation. In the case of forcibly displaced persons, sexual exploitation takes many forms. Some survivors have been brought into the host country by traffickers and are forced into exploitation upon arrival.⁵⁵ Others have turned to so-called 'survival sex' to survive or are groomed or exploited upon arrival in a host country.

Greece

Through a prevention campaign run by STTG in Greece in 2021, many minors reported being targeted for sexual exploitation upon arrival in Greece⁵⁶. For example, a 17-year-old refugee who saw the STTG campaign on Instagram wrote:

'I saw it with my own eyes [...] Young girls were forced into prostitution and sexually exploited, because of poverty. This is true of boys as well. Most of the refugees who come to Europe think they are in a safe place, unaware of the problems they [will] face.'

⁵³ Republic of Türkiye, *Victims of Human Trafficking*, 2019, available at: <https://en.goc.gov.tr/victims-of-human-trafficking2019>.

⁵⁴ US State Department, *Trafficking in Persons Report 2022: Türkiye*, available at: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-trafficking-in-persons-report/Turkey>.

⁵⁵ US State Department, *Trafficking in Persons Report 2022: Türkiye*, available at: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-trafficking-in-persons-report/Turkey/>.

⁵⁶ Stop the Traffik Group, *Aman Safety: Seeking Sanctuary in Greece: Campaign Report 2022*, 2022, available at: <https://www.stopthetraffik.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Aman-Safety-Seeking-Sanctuary-Report-2022.pdf>.

In 2020, the Greek NRM reported that 44% of all cases (75 in total) concerned sexual exploitation; in 2021, 45% of all cases involved sexual exploitation.⁵⁷ Unaccompanied minors are especially vulnerable to sex trafficking. Unaccompanied minors have an increased risk of sexual exploitation because detention facilities mix children of different ages and cultural backgrounds together, resulting in sexual violence being used as a method of power assertion.⁵⁸ Few structures exist inside camps to protect children from the risk of sexual exploitation and instances of sexual assault of children have been documented in many camps around Greece.⁵⁹ Financial insecurity compounds the sexual exploitation of children as the lack of accessible income-generating activities pushes children towards activities such as transactional and survival sex—the risks of child commercial sexual exploitation in Greece are high.⁶⁰

Survivors of sexual exploitation in Greece come from other European countries and third countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East.⁶¹ Moreover, as a consequence of lengthy procedures and the lack of clarity around onward travel and family reunification, many children irregularly leave Greece, increasing their susceptibility to abuse and exploitation by smugglers and traffickers.⁶²

Fenix's data also shows that sexual exploitation is a common form of modern slavery and human trafficking as one in five of Fenix's clients (approximately 22%) who faced modern slavery and human trafficking was subjected to sexual exploitation.

Türkiye

There are also high levels of sex trafficking and sexual exploitation of forcibly displaced people in Türkiye. Türkiye is a country of origin, transit and destination for commercial sexual exploitation of men, women and children. Victims of sex trafficking come from all over the world, with particularly high numbers coming from Russia and Ukraine, Sub-Saharan African countries including Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria and Zimbabwe, and Central Asian countries.⁶³

Through STTG's Power of 10 data-sharing projects, Greek NGOs shared many cases in which asylum seekers and refugees in Greece were trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation

⁵⁷ Council of Europe, *Reply from Greece to the Questionnaire for the evaluation of the implementation of the CoE Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by the Parties*, 2022, available at: <https://rm.coe.int/reply-from-greece-to-the-questionnaire-for-the-evaluation-of-the-imple/1680a59b5a>.

⁵⁸ Harvard University, *Emergency within an emergency: The growing epidemic of sexual exploitation and abuse of migrant children in Greece*, 2017, pp. 19-20.

⁵⁹ Harvard University, *Emergency within an emergency: The growing epidemic of sexual exploitation and abuse of migrant children in Greece*, 2017, p. 22-23.

⁶⁰ Harvard University, *Emergency within an emergency: The growing epidemic of sexual exploitation and abuse of migrant children in Greece*, 2017, p. 22-23.

⁶¹ US State Department, *Trafficking in Persons Report 2021: Greece*, available at: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-trafficking-in-persons-report/greece/>.

⁶² UNICEF, *Children on the Move in Italy and Greece*, June 2017, p. 5, available at: <https://www.unicef.org/eca/media/921/file/REACH%20report%202017.pdf>.

⁶³ US State Department, *Trafficking in Persons Report 2021: Türkiye*, available at: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-trafficking-in-persons-report/Turkey/>.

from their countries of origin to Türkiye. The majority of these were women and minors from Sub-Saharan African countries including Cameroon, DRC, Sierra Leone and Somalia. In the majority of cases, they were recruited through false job offers, promises of help, or promises of a better life in Türkiye. In others, they were kidnapped or sold to traffickers by family members or acquaintances. Typically, the trafficker would pay for their flight to Türkiye as well as their passports and visas, and upon arrival, they would be forced into commercial sexual exploitation. The prevalence of such cases in the Power of 10 datasets suggests that this practice is widespread.

Asylum seekers in Türkiye, Syrians in particular, are also vulnerable to sexual exploitation. The financial distress experienced by Syrian beneficiaries of temporary protection in Türkiye makes them vulnerable to sex trafficking and sexual exploitation. Most commonly, survivors are exploited by family members, acquaintances, and neighbours for reasons of economic desperation, for example in exchange for rent or work.⁶⁴ Sexual exploitation is reportedly particularly prominent in Turkish provinces bordering Syria, including Sanlıurfa, which borders Northeast Syria. Criminal networks operating in border areas and in camps reportedly pressure Syrian women and children to engage in sex work.⁶⁵ According to one report, child refugees are sometimes exploited by employees and volunteers working in refugee camps, including in Sanlıurfa where two camp officials were fired following accusations that they had been working with prostitution rings.⁶⁶ In the province of Gaziantep, camp officials have reportedly collaborated with prostitution gangs to force girls into sex trafficking, 'allowing agents to enter camps and take girls under the pretext of labour before then forcing them into prostitution'.⁶⁷ Men reportedly travel from other Turkish cities to border regions in order to buy women from camps to be exploited in commercial sex work, in exchange for money for their families who believe they will be married.⁶⁸

Child sexual exploitation is also common. A NGO study found that underage Syrian girls are exploited in prostitution in Türkiye.⁶⁹ Children are also reportedly regularly smuggled into Türkiye from other countries, including Iraq and Syria, to be sold for the purpose of child sexual exploitation.⁷⁰ Organised trafficking networks, smuggling children across the border for the

⁶⁴ International Centre for Migration Policy Development (CMPD), available at: <http://www.icmpd.org/publications/publications/>.

⁶⁵ US State Department, *Trafficking in Persons Report 2021: Türkiye*, available at: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-trafficking-in-persons-report/Turkey/>.

⁶⁶ Every Child Protected Against Trafficking (ECPAT), *ECPAT Country Overview Report: Sexual Exploitation of Children in Türkiye*, July 2022, <https://ecpat.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/ECPAT-Country-Overview-Report-Sexual-Exploitation-of-Children-in-Turkey-July-2020-ENGLISH.pdf>.

⁶⁷ Stockholm Center for Freedom, *Report: Syrian Women in Türkiye's refugee camp forced in prostitution*, available at: <https://stockholmcf.org/report-syrian-women-in-turkeys-refugee-camps-forced-into-prostitution/>.

⁶⁸ Stockholm Center for Freedom, *Report: Syrian Women in Türkiye's refugee camp forced in prostitution*, available at: <https://stockholmcf.org/report-syrian-women-in-turkeys-refugee-camps-forced-into-prostitution/>.

⁶⁹ Every Child Protected Against Trafficking (ECPAT), *ECPAT Country Overview Report: Sexual Exploitation of Children in Türkiye*, July 2022, available at: <https://ecpat.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/ECPAT-Country-Overview-Report-Sexual-Exploitation-of-Children-inturkey-July-2020-ENGLISH.pdf>.

⁷⁰ Every Child Protected Against Trafficking (ECPAT), *ECPAT Country Overview Report: Sexual Exploitation of Children in Türkiye*, July 2022, available at:

purpose of sex trafficking, pay parents a 'bride price' to smuggle their daughters across the border with the promise of a better life.⁷¹

3.3.2. Forced Labour and Labour Exploitation

In both Greece and Türkiye, forcibly displaced persons are highly vulnerable to forced labour and labour exploitation, and many will have experienced labour exploitation prior to their arrival in their countries of destination.

Greece

Forced labour and labour exploitation is the second most common form of modern slavery and human trafficking among displaced persons in Greece.⁷² They, like vulnerable Greek populations, face various labour exploitation practices, including illegal terms of employment, being paid significantly less than minimum wage, and being denied social security benefits. In addition, some end up in a situation of forced labour due to debt bondage.⁷³ Like with sexual exploitation, children are also particularly vulnerable to forced labour, especially to different forms of forced begging.⁷⁴

Experts consider the Greek economy especially prone to labour exploitation.⁷⁵ Since the 90s, the Greek economy has faced a lot of pressure due to international competition. Cheap migrant labour was considered an important means to improve the competitiveness of Greek enterprises.⁷⁶ In addition, Greece has an extensive informal economy. According to estimates, between 25% and 30% of the Greek GDP either goes unreported or is illegal.⁷⁷ It is these informal sectors that are known to put migrants and refugees to work, including in situations of forced labour.

According to NRM data, survivors of forced labour are often exploited in the agricultural sector. However, cases are also known in domestic work, services, industrial manufacturing, construction

<https://ecpat.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/ECPAT-Country-Overview-Report-Sexual-Exploitation-of-Children-inturkey-July-2020-ENGLISH.pdf>.

⁷¹ CRISE International, *Sexual Exploitation- A growing Risk for Refugees*, available at: <https://www.crise-intl.org/human-trafficking-sexual-exploitation/>.

⁷² 48 cases were reported in 2021. NRM, *Report 2021: National Referral Mechanism for the Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking*, 2022, p 10, available at: https://ekka.org.gr/images/KOINONIKON-PAREMBASEON/%CE%95%CE%9C%CE%91/NRM_REPORT_2021_eng.pdf.

⁷³ US State Department, *Trafficking in Persons Report 2022: Greece*, available at: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-trafficking-in-persons-report/greece/>.

⁷⁴ Among child survivors of forced labour, the majority were boys who were exploited through begging (14 cases). NRM, *Report 2021: National Referral Mechanism for the Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking*, 2022, p 25, available at: https://ekka.org.gr/images/KOINONIKON-PAREMBASEON/%CE%95%CE%9C%CE%91/NRM_REPORT_2021_eng.pdf.

⁷⁵ G Papanicolaou and G A Antonopoulos, *Migration, Trafficking, and the Greek Economy: A comment on "the trafficker next-door"*, *Anti-Trafficking Review*, issue 18, 2022, p. 176.

⁷⁶ G Papanicolaou and G A Antonopoulos, *Migration, Trafficking, and the Greek Economy: A comment on "the trafficker next-door"*, *Anti-Trafficking Review*, issue 18, 2022, p. 176.

⁷⁷ M Baldwin-Edwards, *Southern European Labour Markets and Immigration: A structural and functional analysis*, MMO Working Paper 5, Panteion University, Athens, 2002.

sites and entertainment (bars, nightclubs).⁷⁸ Data shared by Greek NGOs through the STTG Power of 10 project included many cases of labour exploitation and forced labour in Greece, including minors from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sierra Leone who were subjected to forced labour in agriculture under terrible conditions; minors from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and DRC who were exploited or forced to work in factories in Athens, including bread, shoe, clothing and fruit-conserving factories; and labour exploitation in hotels and in construction. Survivors were often controlled through debt bondage, wage withholding, physical violence, or threats of deportation.

Due to these circumstances, the profile of perpetrators can be very diverse. In the STTG Power of 10 dataset, the known perpetrators were Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Greek. Police data shows that perpetrators are just as often Greeks as foreign nationals. Greek nationals often participate in the front end of the trafficking scheme. Research indicates that some of these perpetrators rationalise their activities, by looking at them as if they are providing services to workers.⁷⁹

In the case of MSHT incidents among Fenix's clients, 24% of clients between 2021-2022 and nearly 50% of clients in the first six months of 2023 survived some form of forced labour, including child labour and serfdom or servitude outside of Greece. For those incidents that occurred outside of the country of origin, 26% of them constituted forced labour and serfdom.

Türkiye

Through STTG's pre-campaign surveys in Istanbul, it was found that approximately 40% of survey respondents had experienced labour exploitation, reporting either that they had been forced to work for little or no pay or that they had been approached by someone with a job offer which had turned out to be exploitative. This demonstrates how widespread labour exploitation is in Türkiye and that displaced people are particularly vulnerable to this form of exploitation due to their desperation for work and income.

Forcibly displaced persons, especially those without legal status, are particularly vulnerable as they lack the right to work and therefore cannot gain legitimate employment. They also lack legal protection in the case of workplace accidents or disputes. For example, during STTG's prevention campaigns in Türkiye, the team was contacted by an asylum seeker who worked informally as a carpenter and sustained a work injury due to the poor working conditions. The accident resulted in the amputation of two fingers, leaving him disabled, unable to work, and unaware of how to access legal support.

⁷⁸ Council of Europe, *Reply from Greece to the Questionnaire for the evaluation of the implementation of the CoE Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by the Parties*, 2022, available at:

<https://rm.coe.int/reply-from-greece-to-the-questionnaire-for-the-evaluation-of-the-imple/1680a59b5a>.

⁷⁹ J A Winterdyk and G A Antonopoulos, *Techniques of Neutralizing the Trafficking of Women: A case study of an active trafficker in Greece*, *European Journal of Crime, Criminal Law & Criminal Justice*, vol. 13, no. 2, 2005, p. 136–147, <https://doi.org/10.1163/1571817054300602>.

Data shared through STTG's Power of 10 projects also included several cases of labour exploitation and forced labour in Türkiye. Like victims of sex trafficking, there was a pattern of people recruited from Sub-Saharan African countries and brought to Türkiye under false promises. For example, there were several cases of teenage boys from Sierra Leone, DRC and Gambia who were promised football careers in Türkiye or Europe. Upon arrival, they were exploited for domestic servitude and other forms of forced labour in construction, factories and drug dealing.

Like in Greece, labour exploitation is difficult to tackle in Türkiye due to the large proportion of informal labour in the country affecting Turkish and foreign nationals. Findings of the TIP and GRETA reports on trafficking in Türkiye identify a range of sectors in which migrants and refugees are exploited for labour. Industries with a high risk of forced labour or labour exploitation include agriculture, textile factories, construction, and hospitality. Agricultural workers are particularly vulnerable to forced labour and are subjected to low wages, wage withholding, long hours and dangerous working conditions, with hazelnut farming being of particular concern.⁸⁰ Syrians, including children, are vulnerable to forced labour in agriculture, restaurants, textile factories, and in markets and shops. For example, Syrian children are reportedly exploited in textile factories which are subcontracted by foreign fashion brands.⁸¹ Afghan boys and men are particularly subjected to forced labour and debt bondage in the agriculture and construction industries in Türkiye, with their fear of deportation making them less likely to report exploitation.⁸²

Domestic servitude is also a common form of forced labour in Türkiye, often overlapping with sexual exploitation. Recruiters for domestic servitude particularly use online platforms, including social media, dating sites and online job search platforms, to recruit potential victims.⁸³

3.3.3. Organ Trafficking

Organ trafficking cases have not been captured by official trafficking statistics. However, STTG's geo-targeted prevention campaigns identified organ trafficking as a major risk facing forcibly displaced persons in Türkiye.

Greece

During the 2021 Seeking Sanctuary in Greece campaign, STTG supported a young refugee from Afghanistan who was living in a camp on Lesbos. He feared deportation and was told he had to pay for a lawyer. After STTG had helped him find a local organisation to support him, he told

⁸⁰ US State Department, *Trafficking in Persons Report 2021: Turkey*, available at: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-trafficking-in-persons-report/turkey/>.

⁸¹ GRETA, *Report Concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in human Beings by Türkiye*, 2019, available at: <https://rm.coe.int/report-concerning-the-implementation-of-the-council-of-europe-convention/1680981563>.

⁸² US State Department, *Trafficking in Persons Report 2021: Turkey*, available at: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-trafficking-in-persons-report/turkey/>.

⁸³ US State Department, *Trafficking in Persons Report 2021: Turkey*, available at: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-trafficking-in-persons-report/turkey/>.

representatives from the organisation, 'I had many problems. I was considering selling one of my organs to solve my problems in Greece. Now I have good living conditions.'⁸⁴

While it is unlikely that refugees in Greece are regularly being targeted to sell their organs, a small proportion of asylum-seekers arriving in Greece might be expected to have previously sold their organs to traffickers in order to finance their onward journeys, in locations including Türkiye, Egypt and Libya.

Türkiye

Due to its high level of medical and transplant tourism, Türkiye is a global organ trafficking hotspot.⁸⁵ The Turkish government has made several high-profile arrests of organ traffickers, but the majority of cases are never prosecuted.

There have been several reported cases of organ trafficking in Türkiye in recent years. For example, in April 2022, four people were arrested in Morocco under suspicion of being involved as intermediaries in an organ trafficking network operating between Morocco and Türkiye.⁸⁶ In March 2022, Interpol carried out Operation Storm Makers in which, of 121 arrests made, four people were arrested in Türkiye who were suspected of being part of an international organ trafficking ring;⁸⁷ and in December 2021, ringleaders of an organ trade network run by Jordanians and Palestinians in Istanbul were arrested in Türkiye.⁸⁸

Displaced Syrians appear to be particularly vulnerable to this form of trafficking. In 2020, reports circulated that Syrian nationals in desperate financial situations were selling their organs on the black market while organ brokers used social media platforms, especially Facebook, to recruit them to sell their livers or kidneys. One such victim who was featured in a documentary reported that he was paid only half of the promised USD 10,000 for one of his kidneys, was given no aftercare and was often in pain, and that the organ broker then disappeared and disconnected the phone line they had been using.⁸⁹

⁸⁴ Stop the Traffick Group, *Aman Safety: Seeking Sanctuary in Greece: Campaign Report 2022*, 2022, available at: <https://www.stopthetraffik.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Aman-Safety-Seeking-Sanctuary-Report-2022.pdf>.

⁸⁵ Stop the Traffick Group, *Organ Trafficking in Türkiye*, available at: https://www.traffikanalysis.org/files/ugd/dfe11e_acbf66d30a5945ca95ecff5bb62e7481.pdf.

⁸⁶ Arabnews, *Four Held In Morocco over Türkiye-linked Organ Trafficking*, April 2022, available at: <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2057511/middle-east>.

⁸⁷ Interpol, *121 Arrests in operation against rant smuggling and trafficking*, 2022, available at: <https://www.interpol.int/News-and-Events/News/2022/121-arrests-in-operation-against-migrant-smuggling-and-human-trafficking-INTERPOL#:~:text=Operation%20Storm%20Makers%20busts%20criminal%20networks%20profiting%20from.arrests%20across%2025%20countries%2C%20prompting%20193%20new%20investigations>.

⁸⁸ Arabnews, *Illegal Organ Transplant Network busted in Istanbul*, December 2021, available at: https://www.arabnews.jp/en/middle-east/article_61362/.

⁸⁹ CBS News, *Desperate Syrian Refugees Selling Organs to Survive*, 19 May 2020, available at: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/desperate-syrian-refugees-selling-organs-to-survive/>.

STTG ran an organ trafficking prevention campaign in two areas of Istanbul between October and December 2022, targeting two high-risk city districts where organ trafficking cases have previously been identified: Bağcılar and Esenyurt.

Through the campaign, it was found that Arabic speakers are particularly targeted through online advertisements to sell their organs, especially on Facebook. Of approximately 200 Arabic-speaking survey respondents who responded to the pre-campaign survey:

- 10% (20 people) had seen such advertisements online;
- 13 people further claimed that someone had suggested to them that they sell one of their organs to solve their financial problems;
- 6 people knew others who had received offers to sell their organs;
- 5 people had received offers to sell their organs online;
- 4 people had received face-to-face offers to sell their organs.

A further 9 Arabic speakers who responded to the sexual exploitation campaign survey said that they had received offers to sell their organs. This suggests that organ traffickers are actively targeting Syrians in Istanbul to sell their organs. To a lesser extent, several Farsi, Pashto and French speakers also indicated that they had received or seen offers to sell their organs online or in person.

These findings were confirmed following the launch of the main campaign on Facebook. STTG received comments and messages from many people who were thinking about or seeking to sell their organs. People especially mentioned wanting to sell their kidneys and their testicles. People also commented on STTG's campaign posts offering to buy people's organs, confirming the prevalence of Facebook as a recruitment platform for the illegal organ trade. While some of the comments and messages may have been made in jest, the high number of such messages received suggest that, indeed, Arabic-speaking displaced persons in Istanbul are regularly targeted by organ traffickers seeking to exploit their situations of financial hardship.

3.3.4. Child, Early and Forced Marriage

While survivors of child, early and forced marriage are underrepresented in official statistics regarding trafficking in Greece and Türkiye, reports and findings in the field suggest that this form of modern slavery is prevalent among forcibly displaced populations in both countries.

Greece

Asylum seekers who arrive in Greece are at a heightened risk of having been subjected to forced or child marriage in the past or being subjected to it after arrival.⁹⁰ One in five girls interviewed from countries in West Africa and the Horn of Africa who escaped to Greece left because they

⁹⁰ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), *Addressing Forced Marriage in the EU: Legal Provisions and Promising Practices*, available at: <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/addressing-forced-marriage-eu-legal-provisions-and-promising-practices>.

had experienced or feared forced marriage.⁹¹ Approximately 56% of Fenix's clients who experienced modern slavery or human trafficking were forced into marriage or were sold to be a wife, either as a child or an adult.

Türkiye

Child, early and forced marriage is a significant concern in Türkiye, particularly child marriage of forcibly displaced populations. Under Article 124 of the Turkish Civil Code, the minimum legal age of marriage is 18 years for men and women (17 with parental consent). However, child marriages are still common in Türkiye, with most not formally registered by the Turkish courts.⁹²

Syrian girls in Türkiye are at a heightened risk of child marriage. As of 2018, 45% of Syrian girls in Türkiye were married before the age of 18, and 9% before the age of 15- over three times the rate of Turkish women.⁹³ Many Syrian national families in Türkiye marry their daughters to Turkish men for money to stay afloat and pay rent.⁹⁴ Some Syrian girls are sold to landlords, and subsequently exploited for labour or sex.⁹⁵ Child marriage of Syrians is rarely reported as marriages often occur through religious ceremonies and are not registered with the Turkish government.⁹⁶

3.3.5. Forced Criminality

Survivors of forced criminality are also often not identified by authorities in Greece and Türkiye and, if discovered, are therefore prosecuted for the crimes they were forced to conduct by their traffickers.⁹⁷ The most common manifestations of forced criminality of displaced persons in Greece and Türkiye include forced begging and crimes involving illegal drug cultivation and distribution.

Greece

Forced begging or working as street traders are prevalent kinds of forced labour that primarily affect children in Greece. Forced begging can also be qualified as forced criminality; almost half of all cases of trafficking reported through the NRM in 2020 involved the practice.⁹⁸ Those

⁹¹ UNICEF, *Children on the Move in Italy and Greece*, June 2017, available at: <https://www.unicef.org/eca/reports/children-move-italy-and-greece>.

⁹² Every Child Protected Against Trafficking (ECPAT), *ECPAT Country Overview*, June 2022, available at: <https://ecpat.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/ECPAT-Country-Overview-Report-Sexual-Exploitation-of-Children-inturkey-July-2020-ENGLISH.pdf>.

⁹³ Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), *Turkey 2018 Final Report*, 2018, available at: <https://www.dhsprogram.com/methodology/survey/survey-display-548.cfm>.

⁹⁴ Every Child Protected Against Trafficking (ECPAT), *Syrian Refugees in Türkiye particularly at risk of sexual exploitation*, 2020, available at: <https://ecpat.org/story/syrian-refugees-in-turkey-particularly-at-risk-of-sexual-exploitation/>.

⁹⁵ Global Citizens, *Child Marriage is on the rise in Türkiye as Syrian Refugees struggle during COVID-19*, 2020, available at: <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/child-marriage-syrian-refugees-turkey-covid-19/>.

⁹⁶ The Independent, *Syrian families in Türkiye marrying off 'underage daughters for money amid coronavirus crisis', campaigners warn*, 2020, available at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/syria-underage-daughters-marriage-coronavirus-turkish-men-a9606706.html>.

⁹⁷ GRETA, *Report Concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in human Beings by Türkiye*, 2019, available at: <https://rm.coe.int/report-concerning-the-implementation-of-the-council-of-europe-conventi/1680981563>.

⁹⁸ EKKA, *National Referral Mechanism for the Protection of Human Trafficking Victims Annual Report 2020*, 2021, p. 21, available at: https://www.ekka.org.gr/images/KOINONIKON-PAREMBAEON/%CE%95%CE%9C%CE%91/NRM_REPORT_2020_fin.doc.pdf.

affected by it were almost all children; indeed, forced begging is also the predominant form of exploitation of children. However, there have also been reports that individuals with a disability are another typical target of this practice.⁹⁹ According to the NRM, the majority of these children were nationals of EU member states (Bulgaria, Romania or Greece), or neighbouring Balkan states.¹⁰⁰ However, the NRM statistics also included three unaccompanied minors and two children with an unidentified migration status.

Türkiye

Several cases of forced criminality were reported through STTG's Power of 10 data-sharing project. In three cases, minors were forced to deal drugs in Izmir. In one case the minor was forced to thief as well as deal drugs, and in another case, a minor was forced to beg and clean shoes.

Child begging is a significant concern in Türkiye, especially in Istanbul.¹⁰¹ Istanbul currently hosts approximately 150,000 Syrian children. High prices and unemployment rates make it particularly difficult to survive, and so some Syrian children forgo education and work in the streets, particularly in the area on Istiklal street near Taksim square. In 2021, Turkish prosecutors indicted 27 suspects who took Syrian children from their families on the pretext of work in Türkiye and forced them to beg in Istanbul's streets.¹⁰² Police in Istanbul have recently intensified their response to street begging. If a child caught begging is a non-Turkish national, both the child and the family will be deported.¹⁰³

Reports suggest that asylum seekers crossing the Mediterranean Sea from Türkiye to Greece are regularly forced to drive the boat.¹⁰⁴ For example, one Somali refugee convicted for smuggling in Greece told his story in an interview with The Guardian: "It was a terrible night [...] I was sitting right next to the smuggler when he threatened me, saying 'you drive'. I now realise that if I hadn't we would all have drowned."¹⁰⁵ These people often have little to no experience steering boats, and are not trained on how to do it prior to boarding.¹⁰⁶ This not only constitutes labour exploitation, but also is dangerous to all the people being smuggled. Since 2014, over 25,000

⁹⁹ Georgios Papanicolaou and Avi Boukli, *Human Trafficking in Greece*, 2020, p. 1102.

¹⁰⁰ US State Department, *Trafficking in Persons Report 2021: Greece*, available at: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-trafficking-in-persons-report/greece/>.

¹⁰¹ Under Turkish penal code 299, begging is illegal.

¹⁰² Hurriyetdailynews, *Jail Time Sought for Gang Forcing Syrian Kids Into Begging*, 2021, available at: <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/jail-time-sought-for-gang-forcing-syrian-kids-into-begging-163345>.

¹⁰³ Hurriyetdailynews, *Police launch inspections targeting beggars in Istanbul*, 2023, available at: <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/police-launch-inspections-targeting-beggars-in-istanbul-185370>.

¹⁰⁴ The New Humanitarian, *How European courts are wrongfully prosecuting asylum seekers as smugglers*, 2022, available at: <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/investigation/2022/09/01/European-courts-prosecution-asylum-seekers>.

¹⁰⁵ The Guardian, *Refugees convicted of steering boats to Greece to appeal against life sentences*, 18 March 2022, available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/mar/18/greek-court-to-hear-appeals-on-life-sentences-for-refugees-accused-of-steering-dinghies>.

¹⁰⁶ Sky News, *Packed in a dinghy with Syria's refugees*, September 2015, available at: <https://news.sky.com/story/packed-in-a-dinghy-with-syrias-refugees-10346669>.

people have died trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea.¹⁰⁷ Many of those being forced or coerced into steering the boats, who are people seeking asylum themselves, are arrested for smuggling by Greek police and receive life sentences in prison.¹⁰⁸

3.3.6. Child Soldiering

Child Soldiering is also an under-identified form of modern slavery and human trafficking but affects forcibly displaced populations arriving in both Greece and Türkiye, especially those fleeing conflict in regions where child soldiers are recruited by state or non-state armed forces.

Greece

Among Fenix's clients who survived MSHT, 12.5% of cases related to forced conscription in armed conflict, the vast majority of which occurred among children. This indicates that refugees, especially children, arriving in Greece are at increased risk of having been victims of child soldiering.

Türkiye

The United States added Türkiye to the list of countries using child soldiers in 2021.¹⁰⁹ Türkiye was using child soldiers for the Sultan Murad division in the Syrian civil war. This was the first time a NATO country was listed as using child soldiers in the report. The Turkish government rejected these claims. A United Nations Human Rights Commission report also claims that Türkiye recruited Syrian children aged 15 to 18 to fight for the Government of National Accord (GNA), which is allied with Türkiye, against the Libyan National Army (LNA) in Libya for payment.¹¹⁰

3.4. The Greek-Turkish border

Trafficking prevention efforts in Greece and Türkiye should consider the significance of the border area between the two countries. Many of the people seeking international protection in Türkiye attempt to cross into Greece. They either cross over land at the land border at Evros or try to reach the Greek Eastern Aegean islands by boat.

Over the last few years, Greece and Türkiye have ramped up the militarisation of their borders. For example, Greece continues to expand a fence at the part of the border that is not set by the Evros river.¹¹¹ In addition, the use of surveillance to control the borders has increased,¹¹² and

¹⁰⁷ Human Rights Watch, *Endless tragedies at Sea*, September 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/09/13/endless-tragedies-mediterranean-sea>.

¹⁰⁸ Times of India, *Afghan Refugees wrongly imprisoned in Greece awarded damages*, 5 September 2023, available at: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/south-asia/afghan-refugee-wrongly-imprisoned-in-greece-awarded-damages/articleshow/103404549.cms?from=mdr>.

¹⁰⁹ Reuters, *US Adds Türkiye to the List of Countries Implicated in Use of Child Soldiers*, July 2021, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/us-adds-turkey-list-countries-implicated-use-child-soldiers-2021-07-01/>.

¹¹⁰ OHCHR, *Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya*, 2023, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/libya/index>

¹¹¹ Deutsche Welle, *Greece expands fence along border with Türkiye*, 21 January 2023, available at: <https://www.dw.com/en/greece-expands-fence-along-border-with-turkey/a-64477858>.

¹¹² Euronews, *'Mass surveillance, automated suspicion, extreme power': How tech is shaping EU borders*, 6 April 2023, available at: <https://www.euronews.com/next/2023/04/06/mass-surveillance-automated-suspicion-extreme-power-how-tech-is-shaping-the-eu-borders>.

push and pullbacks have become systematic.¹¹³ Different organisations and institutions, including the GRETA, have shared their concern that push- and pullbacks not only make it increasingly difficult for asylum seekers who have been subjected to modern slavery and human trafficking to access asylum, but that survivors are being returned without first assessing the risks of them being re-subjected to exploitation in Türkiye.¹¹⁴

Crucially, these efforts to make the border impenetrable might also have other effects when considering the effort to tackle modern slavery and human trafficking. Increased border controls might drive persons seeking international protection towards more desperate means, making them vulnerable to human trafficking attempts. This risk is illustrated through a case study from STTG's 2022 prevention campaign in Istanbul. Nabil¹¹⁵ messaged STTG after seeing the campaign advertisement on Facebook. He explained that after multiple failed attempts to register in Türkiye and enrol in an educational institution, he decided to take the dangerous route to Greece. Because he did not have the money to pay a smuggler, Nabil made an agreement with someone online. This person told him that he would take him to Greece where he would arrange a job for him to work and pay back the money owed for the trip. Nabil knew that this could result in a situation of debt bondage and labour exploitation, but he thought that this was his only option. He wrote:

"I knew the risks that could happen later, but I had no choice."

In the attempt to cross the border at Evros, they were caught by the Greek authorities and pushed back to Türkiye:

"We spent a whole day in the river in the extreme cold and the rain, we were cut up by the river with a light rubber boat that was caught by the Greek police. They took all our supplies, phones and food. They took our clothes and shoes and returned us barefoot to the Turkish side by throwing us in the middle of the river."

This case study illustrates the risks across the Greek-Turkish border. Desperate forcibly displaced persons in Türkiye who cannot access services and fear deportation seek to improve their situation by crossing into Europe. 25% of anonymous respondents to STTG's pre-campaign surveys in Istanbul indicated that they were seeking to travel to another country. Those who cannot afford to pay for smugglers, like Nabil, are vulnerable to being exploited by traffickers who offer smuggling services in exchange for debt bonds.

¹¹³ Médecins Sans Frontières, *Pushbacks, detention and violence towards migrants on Lesbos*, 25 May 2023, available at: <https://www.msf.org/greece-pushbacks-detention-and-violence-towards-migrants-lesbos>; Infomigrants, *92 migrants found naked and bruised at Greece-Türkiye border*, 17 October 2022, available at: <https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/44041/92-migrants-found-naked-and-bruised-at-greeceturkey-border>.

¹¹⁴ GRETA, *Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Greece*, GRETA(2023)03, March 2023, para 135-138 and 208, available at: <https://rm.coe.int/greta-evaluation-report-on-greece-2nd-evaluation-round/1680aaa70a>.

¹¹⁵ Not his real name.

STTG's Power of 10 data-sharing projects in 2022 and 2023 also provided evidence of the prevalence of trafficking across the Greek-Turkish border in which a number of cases indicated that survivors were trafficked from Türkiye to Greece. The most significant finding regarded survivors of trafficking from Sub-Saharan African countries, particularly Cameroon, DRC, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Gambia, and Ghana, who were trafficked from their countries of origin to Türkiye. These cases comprised 58% of the total cases shared through the project. 77% of the survivors were women, and 49% were minors. The majority (70%) were survivors of sex trafficking and sexual exploitation. Most commonly, survivors were recruited in their countries of origin through false promises of legitimate jobs in Türkiye or Europe or through false offers of help. Typically, the trafficker would arrange passports and flights to Türkiye where the survivor would be picked up at the airport, have their passport confiscated, and be taken to a house where they would be forced into commercial sexual exploitation.

The survivors would eventually be trafficked onward to Greece where they would be further sexually exploited or would escape and make their own way to Greece, presumably using the services of smugglers. However, Power of 10 data included several cases where women who escaped to Greece met their traffickers again upon arrival in Greece and continued to be exploited there. For example, in one case a woman had escaped from her traffickers in Türkiye and travelled to Samos. Once there, she met her traffickers from Türkiye again, who kidnapped her and took her to a house where she was kept with several other women, all of whom were sexually exploited and abused.

While most asylum seekers and refugees make the journey from Türkiye to Greece using smugglers by paying a one-time payment, the cases described above suggest that forcibly displaced persons are sometimes trafficked across the border for the purpose of sexual exploitation and labour exploitation, using control methods such as debt bondage.

Chapter 4: Enabling factors

Both Greece and Türkiye have struggled to cope with large populations of forcibly displaced persons, exacerbating the significant challenges that displaced people face in their daily lives. These challenges are enabling factors which increase their vulnerability to modern slavery and human trafficking in their host countries.

4.1. Housing and accommodation

“I lived in Camp Moria for a year and four months. Every night there were fights, every night someone would get killed in a fight. Hungry, with no money and no future, everyone there had lost their minds. I was depressed and had trouble breathing myself. I had gone mad.” - *A young Afghan refugee STTG supported in Greece during the 2021 Seeking Sanctuary in Greece campaign*¹¹⁶

A difficult challenge that Greece and Türkiye have faced is providing forcibly displaced persons with adequate accommodation and housing. In Greece, asylum seekers are frequently held in detention-like camps, in conditions that have been found to systematically violate human rights.¹¹⁷ Newly constructed and European Union-funded facilities on the islands — called Closed Control Access Centres (CCAC) — have limited access to basic services due to their remote locations, are surrounded by barbed wire and monitored by 24/7 CCTV surveillance.¹¹⁸ Many of the accommodation facilities on both the islands and the mainland face a lack of equipment along with frequent electricity shortages.¹¹⁹ These camps are especially risky for vulnerable populations like unaccompanied minors, women, and survivors of abuse since many lack safe spaces for such groups.¹²⁰

Additionally, since the closure of the ESTIA program — an alternative accommodation scheme in urban areas primarily for vulnerable asylum seekers — vulnerable groups have even fewer options for safe and adequate shelter.¹²¹

¹¹⁶ Stop the Traffik Group, *The Story of a Young Afghan Asylum Seeker, Through His Words*, 2022, available at: <https://www.stopthetraffik.org/story-young-afghan-asylum-seeker-words/>.

¹¹⁷ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2022: Greece*, 2022, available at: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2022/country-chapters/greece>; see also Fenix Humanitarian Legal Aid, *European Court of Human Rights Grants Interim Measures for Three Fenix Clients*, July 2021, available at: <https://www.fenixaid.org/articles/interim-measures-for-three-clients>.

¹¹⁸ International Rescue Committee, *One year since Greece opened new “prison-like” refugee camps, NGOs call for a more humane approach*, 2022, available at: <https://www.rescue.org/eu/statement/one-year-greece-opened-new-prison-refugee-camps-ngos-call-more-humane-approach>.

¹¹⁹ Asylum Information Database (AIDA), *Conditions in Reception Facilities, Greece*, 2023, available at: <https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/greece/reception-conditions/housing/conditions-reception-facilities/>.

¹²⁰ Harvard University, *Emergency within an emergency: The growing epidemic of sexual exploitation and abuse of migrant children in Greece*, 2017, available at: <https://www.fenixaid.org/articles/closure-of-estia-ii-thousands-of-extremely-vulnerable-asylum-seekers-to-be-left-without-humane-and-adequate-accommodation-and-proper-care>.

¹²¹ Fenix, *Closure of ESTIA II: thousands of extremely vulnerable asylum seekers to be left without humane and adequate accommodation and proper care*, October 2022, available at: <https://www.fenixaid.org/articles/closure-of-estia-ii-thousands-of-extremely-vulnerable-asylum-seekers-to-be-left-without-humane-and-adequate-accommodation-and-proper-care>.

Individuals who have received international protection also have limited access to appropriate housing since governing policy dictates that these individuals must leave the facility where they are living within 30 days of receiving their positive decision (enforced to varying degrees depending on the camp), and they are also restricted from accessing social housing or other social benefits from the Greek state.¹²² Furthermore, bureaucratic delays prevent beneficiaries of international protection from obtaining necessary documentation for finding a job (as elaborated below), and thus are systematically subject to situations of destitution or homelessness, unable to live in camps and unable to access adequate accommodation due to lack of resources.¹²³

In Türkiye, over 3.7 million forcibly displaced persons live outside of formal camps and instead are spread across many of the Turkish provinces. As such, only 50,293 Syrians live in seven formal camps, the majority of which are located close to the Syrian border.¹²⁴ The Turkish government has attempted to deconcentrate displaced populations throughout Türkiye. Since May 2022, it is against the law for any region or area in Türkiye to have a population of foreign nationals that is more than one-quarter of the total population. Accordingly, 781 neighbourhoods in different provinces are now closed to foreign nationals seeking address registrations for temporary protection, international protection, and residence permits, as well as changes to their city of residence if they are foreign nationals with residence permits or are under temporary or international protection, with the exception of new borns and instances of nuclear family reunification.¹²⁵ Adana, Ankara, İstanbul, İzmir, Muğla, and Antalya are some of the cities that fall into this category, along with a great number of others. This means that refugees and asylum seekers are excluded from major cities with more work opportunities and instead are left with the option of settling in remote areas where integration is significantly more difficult.

4.2. Access to public services

In both countries, forcibly displaced persons live in precarious conditions. In Greece, these groups are entitled to healthcare¹²⁶ and education¹²⁷. In practice, however, access to healthcare is very limited due to shortages in the Greek national health system that affect both Greek and third-country nationals. For third-country nationals, these issues are compounded by a lack of interpreters and cultural mediators, lack of health and mental health services within the Reception and Identification Centres (RIC) and CCACs, and systematic obstacles to receiving the Social

¹²² Refugees International, *Blocked at Every Pass: How Greece's Policy of Exclusion Harms Asylum Seekers and Refugees*, November 2020, available at: <https://www.refugeesinternational.org/reports-briefs/blocked-at-every-pass-how-greeces-policy-of-exclusion-harms-asylum-seekers-and-refugees/>; Refugee Support Aegean, *Beneficiaries of international protection in Greece: Access to documents and socio-economic rights*, 2023, available at: <https://rsaagean.org/en/report-bip-2023/>.

¹²³ Refugee Support Aegean, *Beneficiaries of international protection in Greece: Access to documents and socio-economic rights*, 2023, p. 5-6, 16-21, available at: <https://rsaagean.org/en/report-bip-2023/>.

¹²⁴ IOM, MPM Türkiye, June 2022, available at: https://turkiye.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl1061/files/documents/turkiye_compilation_06_june_22.pdf.

¹²⁵ European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), *AIDS 2021 Update: Türkiye Update*, July 2022, available at: <https://ecre.org/aida-2021-update-turkiye/>.

¹²⁶ For asylum seekers Article 33 of Law 4368/2016, as amended by Article 38(1) of Law 4865/2021, Article 59(2) of Law 4939/2022, and Articles 1(3), 2(1), 3, 6(1)(2) of Ministerial Decision of 605869/202. For beneficiaries of international protection Article 30 of Law 4939/2022.

¹²⁷ For asylum seekers Article 55 of Law 4939/2022, Joint Ministerial Decision 139654/ΓΔ4 (B' 2985/30.08.2017). For beneficiaries of international protection Article 27 of Law 4939/2022.

Security Number (AMKA) and the Temporary Insurance and Health Coverage Number (PAAYPA).¹²⁸

With regard to education, despite some improvements since 2021, shortcomings are still frequently observed. These include: disparity between the number of enrolled children and the number of eligible children, limited school capacity, the distance of the place of residence from the school (especially after the closing of the ESTIA accommodation program), language constraints, and lack of staff in schools, including teacher shortages, all of which lead to delays in displaced children starting education.¹²⁹ Finally, restrictions to accessing other basic rights, such as food, impede student success in the classroom, limiting students' concentration and causing other mental health conditions that impact learning.

Since 2020, a six-month time restriction which prevents asylum seekers from accessing the labour market has been imposed.¹³⁰ In other words, asylum seekers can only work in Greece after six months after lodging their asylum application. Asylum seekers face further obstacles due to ongoing unfavourable economic conditions in Greece, administrative obstacles to obtain the necessary documents to work in Greece legally, obstacles to opening a bank account, isolated accommodation locations, delays in the registration of asylum applications, restriction of movement, the language barriers,¹³¹ and they are often exposed to exploitative conditions.¹³²

Beneficiaries of international protection are allowed to work, but many face barriers to accessing the labour market and social benefits including endemic delays in the issuance of residence permits, along with travel documents, a taxpayer ID and a bank account limit or prevent recognised beneficiaries of international protection from accessing the labour market and social benefits for long periods of time.¹³³ Compounded by the devastating impacts of the economic crisis in Greece on labour market conditions and the general standard of living, even recognised beneficiaries of international protection face significant financial insecurity.¹³⁴ Displaced persons, who are employed predominantly in low-status jobs, will be more easily affected by this deterioration. Extensive research has shown how the working and living conditions of communities of displaced persons have gotten worse, especially in urban centres like Athens and Thessaloniki.¹³⁵

¹²⁸ Asylum Information Database (AIDA), Country Report: Greece, 2022 Update, June 2023, p 192-193, available at: https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/AIDA-GR_2022-Update.pdf.

¹²⁹ Asylum Information Database (AIDA), Country Report: Greece, 2022 Update, June 2023, p 187-191, available at: https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/AIDA-GR_2022-Update.pdf.

¹³⁰ Article 57 of Law 4939/2022

¹³¹ Asylum Information Database (AIDA), Country Report: Greece, 2022 Update, June 2023, p 183-187, available at: https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/AIDA-GR_2022-Update.pdf.

¹³² See for example Council of Europe, Mass shooting of strawberry pickers leads to ongoing reforms, 2017, available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/impact-convention-human-rights/-/mass-shooting-of-strawberry-pickers-leads-to-ongoing-reforms>.

¹³³ Refugee Support Aegean, *Beneficiaries of international protection in Greece: Access to documents and socio-economic rights*, 2023, p. 5-6, 16-21, available at: <https://rsaegean.org/en/report-bip-2023/>.

¹³⁴ Gorgeous Panaicolaou and Avi Boukli, *Human Trafficking in Greece*, 2020, p. 1096-1097.

¹³⁵ Gabriella Lazaridis and Iordanis Psimmenos, *Migrant Flows from Albania to Greece: Economic, Social and Spatial Exclusion*, 2000; Gabriella Lazaridis and Krystyna Romaniszyn, *Albanian and Polish Undocumented Workers in Greece: A Comparative Analysis*, 1998

In Türkiye, Syrians are the only group of displaced persons to receive the official government status of temporary protection which affords individuals certain rights such as access to health and education.¹³⁶ However, because most Syrians are not legally employed and thus work informally, they remain extremely vulnerable to exploitation. Furthermore, the large population of other forcibly displaced persons in Türkiye, which includes many Afghans, have no access to public services such as health and education at all. They also lack the right to work and therefore cannot be employed legitimately, meaning that they have no job security, often earn well below minimum wage, and work under very harsh conditions. Through STTG's 2022 campaigns in Türkiye, the organisation was contacted by many people desperate for healthcare, including pregnant women. Desperate circumstances combined with the lack of available support increase people's vulnerability to exploitation and trafficking.

4.3. Financial distress

Forcibly displaced persons also receive limited to no financial support. This is problematic, as asylum seekers in both Greece and Türkiye are often already under serious financial pressure. Many have accumulated debt in order to migrate, have to send money to their families and communities, or have to raise money to pay or pay back smugglers.¹³⁷ This combination puts them at a higher risk of ending up in situations of destitution or homelessness, and makes them particularly vulnerable to exploitation, trafficking, and debt bondage. In Greece and Türkiye, forcibly displaced persons are at a greater risk of encountering poverty or homelessness, especially when asylum procedures take a long time and financial support is absent or insufficient.

While asylum seekers in Greece are entitled to cash assistance, there have been several problems with cash dispersals since the Greek government took over from the UNHCR in October 2021. By the end of 2021, approximately 36,000 asylum seekers had not received their cash assistance.¹³⁸ At the time of writing this report, systematic delays in the issuance of this financial assistance continue, which means that some asylum seekers complete their asylum process without ever receiving the financial support that they are entitled to. All these barriers have forced many vulnerable asylum seekers into situations of extreme poverty, unable to meet their basic needs.¹³⁹

¹³⁶ UNHCR, Temporary Protection in Türkiye, available at: <https://help.unhcr.org/turkiye/information-for-syrians/temporary-protection-in-turkey/#:~:text=As%20part%20of%20the%20temporary,from%20the%20Government%20of%20turkey>.

¹³⁷ L. Schack, *Overcoming Barriers to Preventing the Human Trafficking of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Greece*, *Border Criminologies*, 2022, available at: <https://blogs.law.ox.ac.uk/border-criminologies-blog/blog-post/2022/12/overcoming-barriers-preventing-human-trafficking>

¹³⁸ Refugee Support Aegean, *The state of the Greek asylum system, twelve years since M.S.S.*, July 2023, para 52, available at: <https://rsaegean.org/en/the-state-of-the-greek-asylum-system-12-years-since-m-s-s/>.

¹³⁹ Refugee Support Aegean, *Refugees in Greece Experience Third Month of Humanitarian Crisis and Hunger*, December 2021, available at: <https://rsaegean.org/en/refugeesgr-humanitarian-crisis-and-hunger/>; Refugee Support Aegean, *The state of the Greek asylum system, twelve years since M.S.S.*, July 2023, para 53, available at: <https://rsaegean.org/en/the-state-of-the-greek-asylum-system-12-years-since-m-s-s/>.

In Türkiye, the lack of financial support also forces many displaced people into situations of destitution. Many of the displaced persons contacting STTG during the Istanbul campaigns were in desperate financial situations. For example, many were in debt or were at the verge of homelessness because they were unable to pay their rent. An Arabic speaker commented the following on the STTG survey for the organ trafficking campaign in Istanbul, explaining why some refugees resort to selling their organs:

“Everyone who intends to sell his organs is a person who has had all the options closed in his face and his decision is of his own free will despite the risks. But the end is ultimately financial and if it wasn't for his need for money, he wouldn't have thought of putting himself at risk of death because in reality he is at the verge of death.”

4.4. Precarious legal status

One of the most serious enabling factors that make forcibly displaced persons vulnerable to trafficking in Türkiye is lack of legal status. Through STTG's Istanbul campaigns, the organisation observed that unregistered migrants face multiple barriers to accessing fundamental rights and support in Türkiye. At least 44% of the people who reached out to STTG asking for support were unregistered. The majority were from Afghanistan and African countries. Unregistered persons do not have access to education, health services, or legal employment and are excluded from society. This means they are at an increased risk of police violence and deportation at any moment. Fear of deportation was one of the most frequently expressed issues by the people who messaged STTG through the campaigns or responded to the surveys. To avoid deportation, unregistered people said that they often avoid leaving their accommodation and feel like prisoners inside their own homes. A Farsi-speaking respondent to a survey wrote:

“We are human. We request the world and organisations to consider immigrants as human beings and help them. In every country where immigrants are present, they should pay attention to their documents and at least benefit from their human rights. I have been in Türkiye for many years. I am always on the run from the police. I am afraid of the deportation, if they deport me, I will return to the rule of the Taliban and face the risk of death.”

Recipients of temporary and international protection also face a precarious legal status. The Turkish government does not grant Syrians official refugee status as aforementioned, leaving them with only international protection. However, this international protection offers a more restricted range of rights and assurances while they endure lengthy waits to be resettled in third countries. This process can stretch over several years, compounding their challenges and uncertainties.¹⁴⁰ Although Türkiye does offer a path to citizenship for Syrians, the requirements

¹⁴⁰Heinrich Boll Stiftung, *Immigration Politics: Refugees in Türkiye and the 2023 Elections*, August 2022, available at: <https://us.boell.org/en/2022/08/17/immigration-politics-refugees-turkey-and-2023-elections>.

and application process are unclear and arbitrary.¹⁴¹ Only about 200,000 Syrian refugees have obtained Turkish citizenship in recent years, about half of whom are eligible to vote in Türkiye.

In Greece, codified policies and bureaucratic delays also place many asylum seekers in a state of legal precarity. Greece considers Türkiye a safe third country for nationals from Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Somalia. Therefore, Greek authorities deem asylum applications of asylum seekers of these five nationalities inadmissible and refuse to examine the material facts (merits) of their applications.¹⁴² Since June 2021, this policy places nationals from these five countries in a legal limbo: unable to gain international protection status in Greece and unable to be formally readmitted to Türkiye due to a suspension imposed since March 2020.¹⁴³ This situation leaves thousands of asylum seekers in Greece without access to material reception conditions, often including food.¹⁴⁴

Additionally, the Greek asylum system is marred by delays in registering and examining applications, especially on the mainland.¹⁴⁵ Limitations in access to the asylum procedure, particularly on the mainland, continue to be a concern. In September 2022, an online platform was introduced for third-country nationals to submit asylum applications in order to request an appointment to complete the registration in Diavata or Malakasa RICs.¹⁴⁶ However, the third country nationals frequently were unable to assess the platform or proceed with these requests and, when they were able to do so, appointments for registration would only occur months after the request was initially lodged. In some cases, the appointments were assigned over twelve months after the initial online registration.¹⁴⁷ Between the moment of submitting the registration request in the platform and the date of the registration appointment, Greek authorities did not consider the third-country nationals as asylum applicants and, therefore, they were not protected from detention and did not have access to reception facilities.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴¹ Elise Daniaud Oudeh, *Syrian Refugees in Turkey: Legal Frameworks and Recent Developments*, 2022, available at: <https://timep.org/2022/11/21/syrian-refugees-in-turkey-legal-frameworks-and-recent-developments/>.

¹⁴² Codified in JMD 42799/2021.

¹⁴³ Fenix Humanitarian Legal Aid, *A Bilateral Instrumentalisation of Asylum Seekers*, 2023, p. 5, available at: <https://www.fenixaid.org/articles/a-bilateral-instrumentalisation-of-asylum-seekers-a-legal-and-political-analysis-of-the-failures-of-the-eu-turkiye-deal-and-recommendations-from-the-ground-at-the-greek-borders>.

¹⁴⁴ See Fenix Humanitarian Legal Aid, *Denying Food: Instead of Receiving Protection People Go Hungry on EU Soil*, 26 October 2021. <https://www.fenixaid.org/articles/denying-food-instead-of-receiving-protection-people-go-hungry-on-eu-soil>.

¹⁴⁵ Asylum Information Database (AIDA), *Regular Procedure: Greece*, June 2023, available at:

<https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/greece/asylum-procedure/procedures/regular-procedure/>.

¹⁴⁶ Asylum Information Database (AIDA), *Country Report: Greece, 2022 Update*, June 2023, p 19-20 and 53-55, available at: https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/AIDA-GR_2022-Update.pdf.

¹⁴⁷ Asylum Information Database (AIDA), *Country Report: Greece, 2022 Update*, June 2023, p 19-20 and 53-55, available at: https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/AIDA-GR_2022-Update.pdf.

¹⁴⁸ Asylum Information Database (AIDA), *Country Report: Greece, 2022 Update*, June 2023, p 19-20 and 53-55, available at: https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/AIDA-GR_2022-Update.pdf.

4.5. Other enabling factors

4.5.1. Xenophobia and racism

Racism and discrimination against forcibly displaced populations are widespread in Türkiye.¹⁴⁹ The anti-migrant rhetoric in the media and politics has resulted in attacks, violence, and tensions targeted at communities of displaced people. A large proportion of people who saw the STTG campaign talked about racism and how it affects their lives in comments on Facebook, responses to surveys, and in direct messages. They expressed fear and made it clear that racism affects their livelihoods and their physical and mental health to a great extent. It seems that this is something that unites all displaced communities in Türkiye. Isolation caused by racism and homophobia contributes to 'enabling factors' of marginalised communities' vulnerability and increasing their risk to exploitation. A French speaker in Istanbul who saw STTG's prevention campaign wrote:

"Foreigners, especially Africans, live in fear."

Racism and xenophobia is also a reality for people on the move in Greece. The Racist Violence Network (RVRN) recorded 74 incidents of racist violence in 2022.¹⁵⁰ Of the 74 incidents, 33 targeted persons of the refugee communities and migrants in general due to their national origin, religion, colour, sexual orientation or gender identity.¹⁵¹ Another important finding of the RVRN report was that 22 of the 74 incidents of racist violence were from public authorities (law enforcement authorities or public servants).¹⁵² In the majority of the incidents, RVRN also registered that the survivors did not take any action mainly due to fear of secondary victimisation or re-victimisation.¹⁵³

More recently, following the big wildfires in the Evros region and the attempt to blame refugee communities in some media channels for the fires, there has been an escalation of the racist violence against these communities. On August 22, 2023, 13 asylum seekers were imprisoned in a truck by a Greek citizen.¹⁵⁴ While this is one isolated case, there have also been reports of 'militia groups' engaging in unlawful acts of violence against asylum seekers, and some members of the Greek Parliament appear to be urging such practices through their public statements, including through a "call to action" to citizens in the area.¹⁵⁵

¹⁴⁹ NPR, *Syrian Refugees in Türkiye Face Racist Attacks and the fear of deportation*, 2022 available at: <https://www.npr.org/2022/12/22/1145082636/syrian-refugees-in-turkey-face-racist-attacks-and-the-fear-of-deportation>.

¹⁵⁰ RVRN, *Presentation of the Annual Report for 2022*, 6 April 2023, available at: <https://rvrn.org/en/2022-annual-report/>.

¹⁵¹ RVRN, *Presentation of the Annual Report for 2022*, 6 April 2023, available at: <https://rvrn.org/en/2022-annual-report/>.

¹⁵² RVRN, *Presentation of the Annual Report for 2022*, 6 April 2023, available at: <https://rvrn.org/en/2022-annual-report/>.

¹⁵³ RVRN, *Presentation of the Annual Report for 2022*, 6 April 2023, available at: <https://rvrn.org/en/2022-annual-report/>.

¹⁵⁴ Refugee Support Aegean, *19 refugees dead in the devastating fires and escalation of racist violence in Evros, Greece*, 23 August 2023, available at: <https://rsaegean.org/en/19-refugees-dead-fires-and-escalation-of-racist-violence/>.

¹⁵⁵ RVRN, *Racist Violence Recording Network expresses serious concern over escalating targeting of refugees and migrants*, 25 August 2023, available at: <https://rvrn.org/en/racist-violence-recording-network-expresses-serious-concern-over-escalating-targeting-of-refugees-and-migrants/>; Refugee Support Aegean, *19 refugees dead in the devastating fires and escalation of racist violence in Evros, Greece*, 23 August 2023, available at: <https://rsaegean.org/en/19-refugees-dead-fires-and-escalation-of-racist-violence/>.

4.5.2. Lack of language skills and knowledge of legal rights

Forcibly displaced persons often face language barriers and lack a support network and knowledge of their legal rights.¹⁵⁶ These factors make them vulnerable to traffickers, who initially offer friendship, shelter or money, and later take control through threats, abuse, violence, or withholding documents or wages. Within the category of forcibly displaced persons, some groups are more vulnerable, including unaccompanied minors and women.

4.5.3. Intersectional identities

Forcibly displaced people with protected characteristics such as persons with disabilities, members of the LGBTQI+ community, and pregnant women were found to be more vulnerable to exploitation than other groups. Intersectional identities, such as disability and refugeehood, put many at a higher risk of ill-treatment, abuse, and violence in detention facilities and police custody. For example, an asylum seeker in Türkiye who contacted STTG with autism spectrum disorder and panic disorder has faced human rights abuses while in police custody due to their legal status. Other forcibly displaced persons who fled their home countries due to fear of persecution because of their sexual orientation or gender expression continue to be discriminated against in Türkiye.

In Greece, asylum seekers with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) face particular challenges in accessing adequate support. After their arrival in Greece, people with diverse SOGIESC should have access to adequate accommodation; nonetheless, they are often compelled to continue concealing their identity or sexual orientation when they are forced to live in accommodation where they do not feel safe.¹⁵⁷

The challenges faced by displaced people elaborated throughout this chapter increase their vulnerability to exploitation through modern slavery or human trafficking. The more desperate a person is in their situation, the more likely they are to choose unsafe options or accept dubious offers of help, while traffickers prey on vulnerability and desperation.

¹⁵⁶ UNHCR, *Trafficking In Persons*, available at:

<https://www.unhcr.org/what-we-do/protect-human-rights/asylum-and-migration/trafficking-persons>.

¹⁵⁷ Fenix, "You Have to Hide Your Real Self": LGBTQI+ Asylum Seekers and the Failure of Greek Authorities, 29 August 2022, available at: <https://www.fenixaid.org/articles/you-have-to-hide-your-real-self-lgbtqi-asylum-seekers-and-the-failure-of-greek-authorities>; Fenix, "It's like being a shadow of yourself": Closed Camps and Compelled Concealment, 18 April 2023, Available at: <https://www.fenixaid.org/articles/its-like-being-a-shadow-of-yourself-closed-camps-and-compelled-concealment>; Fenix, *No Safe Place: SOGIESC Asylum Seekers & Reception Conditions Policies*, 17 May 2023, available at: <https://www.fenixaid.org/articles/no-safe-place-sogiesc-asylum-seekers-reception-conditions-policies>.

Chapter 5: Greek response to modern slavery and human trafficking

Many international and civil society organisations work on issues of modern slavery and human trafficking in Greece; such organisations include the UNHCR, IOM, A21, Praxis, the Greek Council for Refugees (GCR), DIOTIMA, and the Association for the Social Support of Youth (ARSIS), among others. These organisations play important roles in identifying survivors of modern slavery and trafficking, providing protection services, offering educational and training programs, providing medical, housing and food assistance, and generally empowering survivors. While these organisations play critical roles in responding to issues experienced by asylum-seeking survivors of modern slavery and human trafficking, this report focuses not on the services offered by civil society, but instead on national authorities' responses to human trafficking.

Greece has historically lacked appropriate legal frameworks and processes to prevent trafficking and to identify and protect survivors.¹⁵⁸ As a result, the country has faced regular criticism for the lack of institutional support for survivors of human trafficking, including by the European Court of Human Rights.¹⁵⁹ Over the last two decades, different steps were taken to improve the Greek approach: laws were adopted, a National Rapporteur was appointed, and a National Referral Mechanism was created to support survivors.

5.1. Legislative framework

Despite the growing concerns relating to human trafficking in Greece, legislation on the issue was not introduced until the early 2000s.¹⁶⁰ Before that time, provisions in the Greek penal code covered different acts that are now considered human trafficking, like crimes against personal freedom and sexual freedom.¹⁶¹ However, different actors remarked that these provisions were chronically under-enforced, because of a lack of capacity both within law enforcement and the legal system.¹⁶² The lack of a specific legal framework slowly started to change after Law 2928/2001 was introduced.¹⁶³ Even though the legislation focused on fighting organised crime, rather than just human trafficking, the extension it contained for the investigative powers of police authorities is viewed as also benefiting the monitoring and criminalisation of human trafficking. However, other sources consider this punitive focus to have prevented a more survivor-oriented approach.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁸Human Rights Watch, *Greece: Urgent Action Required on Trafficking*, 23 July 2001, available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2001/07/23/greece-urgent-action-required-trafficking>.

¹⁵⁹ See e.g. the ECtHR cases on the treatment of survivors of Human Trafficking in Greece: ECtHR 21 January 2016, *L.E. v. Greece*, 71545/12; ECtHR 30 March 2017, *Chowdury a.o. v. Greece*, 21884/15.

¹⁶⁰ GRETA, *Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Greece*, GRETA(2017)27, October 2017, para 17, available at: <https://rm.coe.int/greta-2017-27-fgr-gre-en/168075f2b6>.

¹⁶¹ See US Department of State 2001, 2002, 2003; *Human Trafficking in Greece*.

¹⁶² See US Department of State 2001, 2002, 2003; *Human Trafficking in Greece*.

¹⁶³ See Law 2928/2001 regarding the Amendment of provisions of the Criminal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure and other provisions for the protection of the citizen from criminal acts of criminal organisations, A/141/27.06.2001. See for an overview of legislation: <https://www.e-nomothesia.gr/kat-egklema-organomeno/>. See on transnational crime: L.3875/2010 on Ratification and implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime and its three Protocols and related provisions, 158/A/20-9-2010.

¹⁶⁴ G Papanicolaou and G A Antonopoulos, *Migration, Trafficking, and the Greek Economy: A comment on "the trafficker next-door"*, *Anti-Trafficking Review*, issue 18, 2022, p. 175.

The first piece of legislation that explicitly dealt with human trafficking was introduced in 2002: Law 3064/2002 laid the groundwork for the current anti-trafficking framework.¹⁶⁵ The law set the principles of the provision of assistance to survivors of human trafficking.¹⁶⁶ Crucially, Law 3064/2002 introduced measures of protection and support for survivors of human trafficking, including shelter, health care, counselling and legal aid for as long as needed.¹⁶⁷ However, Greek authorities struggled to implement the provisions despite the necessity for providing protection in practice.¹⁶⁸ With Law 3875/2010,¹⁶⁹ Greece ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its three Protocols, and with Law 4198/2013¹⁷⁰, Greek legislation was harmonised with Directive 2011/36/EU¹⁷¹ on the prevention and combating of human trafficking and the protection of its victims. More recently, there were developments in 2019¹⁷² and in 2023¹⁷³ which further expanded the Greek legal framework regarding survivors of human trafficking.

Aside from standards on the treatment of human trafficking survivors in general, there are also frameworks specifying how Greek authorities should treat asylum seekers who display indications of having experienced human trafficking. In the asylum context, it is Law 4939/2022¹⁷⁴ that currently specifies the asylum procedure and the rights and obligations that asylum seekers and

¹⁶⁵ Law 3064/2002 on combating trafficking in human beings, crimes against sexual freedom, child pornography and, in general, the economic exploitation of sexual life and assistance to the victims of these acts, 248/A/15.10.2022, available at: <https://www.e-nomothesia.gr/kat-egklema-organomeno/n-3064-2002.html>. Law 4198/2013 on the Prevention and combating of human trafficking and protection of its victims and other provisions, 215/A/11-10-2013, with the latest changes from Law 4619/2019 (95/A/11-6-2019), Law 4855/2021 (215/A/12-11-2021) and Law 5028/2023 (54/A/9-3-2023).

¹⁶⁶ The operational details were introduced by Presidential Decree 233/2003.

¹⁶⁷ Article 12(1) of Law 3064/2002.

¹⁶⁸ Bouklis, Avi, and Papanicolaou, Georgios. 2019. *Human trafficking in Greece* In: Winterdyk, John and Jones, Jackie eds. *The Palgrave International Handbook of Human trafficking*. Palgrave Macmillan. Papanicolaou and Bouklis 2011.

¹⁶⁹ Law 3875/2010, Official Gazette 158/A/20-9-2010 on Ratification and implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its three Protocols and related provisions, available at: <https://www.e-nomothesia.gr/kat-egklema-organomeno/n-3875-2010.html>.

¹⁷⁰ Law 4198/2013, Official Gazette 215/A/11-10-2013 on Prevention and fight against human trafficking and protection of its victims and other provisions, <https://www.e-nomothesia.gr/kat-anthropina-dikaiomata/n-4198-2013.html>.

¹⁷¹ DIRECTIVE 2011/36/EU OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/629/JHA, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:101:0001:0011:en:PDF>.

¹⁷² Law 4619/2019, Official Gazette 95/A/11-6-2019, Sanction of the Penal Code (Penal Code Codified), available at: <https://www.e-nomothesia.gr/kat-kodikies-nomothesias/nomos-4619-2019-phek-95a-11-6-2019.html>; LAW UNDER NO. 4620/2019, Official Gazette 96/A/11-6-2019 on Sanction of the Code of Criminal Procedure, available at: <https://www.e-nomothesia.gr/kat-kodikies-nomothesias/nomos-4620-2019-phek-96a-11-6-2019.html>.

¹⁷³ Law 5039/2023, Official Gazette 83/A/3-4-2023 (Codified) on Measures to support relatives of the victims and those affected by the February 28, 2023 Tempe train accident, pension provision, provisions to enhance transportation safety, provisions to enhance development, available at: <https://www.e-nomothesia.gr/sygkoinonies-metafores/n-5039-2023.html>; LAW UNDER NO. 5023/2023, Official Gazette 34/A/17-2-2023 on Principle of equal treatment regardless of disability or chronic illness, updating the terminology of the Civil Code, the Code of Civil Procedure, the Criminal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure, the Code of Administrative Procedure, the Code of Notaries and Law 4478/2017, for the harmonization of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ratified by Law 4074/2012 and other provisions to facilitate access to justice for persons with disabilities, available at: <https://www.e-nomothesia.gr/kat-nomothesia-genikou-endiapherontos/n-5023-2023.html>.

¹⁷⁴ Law 4939/2022 with the legislative changes introduced by Law 5027/2023 on the Ratification of a Code of Legislation on the reception international protection of third country citizens and stateless persons and temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced foreigners, A 111/10.6.2022, available at: <https://www.kodiko.gr/nomothesia/document/797068/nomos-4939-2022>.

beneficiaries of international protection have.

It is important first to note that Law 4939/2022 defines survivors of human trafficking as a vulnerable group,¹⁷⁵ but not the broader category of survivors of modern slavery, maintaining the same definition of Law 4375/2016¹⁷⁶ and Law 4626/2019.¹⁷⁷

For third-country nationals who enter or stay in Greece without legal formalities, the identification of vulnerabilities must occur during the reception and identification procedures, or at any point of the asylum process that they become evident.¹⁷⁸ Medical problems and vulnerabilities must be assessed through medical examination and psychosocial assessment by the National Public Health Organisations (EODY), regardless of the assessment of international protection needs.¹⁷⁹ By recommendation of EODY, the Commander of the Reception and Identification Centre (RIC) or Closed Control Access Centre (CCAC) must refer asylum seekers belonging to vulnerable groups to competent organisations to provide adequate care, including special reception conditions.¹⁸⁰ In addition, the special situation of asylum seekers with vulnerabilities must be taken into account throughout the asylum procedure and must be monitored closely, even if it only becomes apparent at a later stage of the procedure.¹⁸¹ For asylum seekers who are identified as survivors of trafficking, the relevant competent authorities must also refer the asylum seekers to the National Referral Mechanism (see below).¹⁸²

5.2. National Rapporteur Office for Combatting Human Trafficking

In 2005, various actors including different State secretaries, 12 NGOs and the IOM, signed a Memorandum of Cooperation.¹⁸³ This memorandum aimed to improve coordination, and to provide NGOs with access to screening and referral processes.¹⁸⁴ Additionally, a 2006 inter-agency plan labelled ILAEIRA was introduced to strengthen cooperation between the Ministry of Citizen Protection, law enforcement, and different IGOs and NGOs (including Amnesty International, MSF and Doctors of the World).¹⁸⁵

These developments led to a shift in strategic leadership on human trafficking issues from law enforcement to other actors.¹⁸⁶ In 2013, Greece established the Office of the National

¹⁷⁵ Article 1(l) of Law 4939/2022.

¹⁷⁶ Article 14(8) of Law 4375/2016.

¹⁷⁷ Article 39(5)(d) and 58(1) of Law 4939/2019.

¹⁷⁸ Articles 38-46 of Law 4939/2022.

¹⁷⁹ Article 41 of Law 4939/2022.

¹⁸⁰ Article 41 of Law 4939/2022.

¹⁸¹ Article 41 and 62(3) of Law 4939/2022.

¹⁸² Article 39(5) and 58(5) IPA, article 6 L. 4198/2019.

¹⁸³ Panouris P, 2007, *Speech of the Secretary General of the Greek Ministry of Justice Mr. Panagiotis Panouris. Proceedings from Trafficking in persons: modern day slavery*, Washington, D.C.

¹⁸⁴ Panouris P (2007) *Speech of the Secretary General of the Greek Ministry of Justice Mr. Panagiotis Panouris. Proceedings from Trafficking in persons: modern day slavery*, Washington, D.C.

¹⁸⁵ Bouklis, Avi, and Papanicolaou, Georgios. 2019. Human trafficking in Greece In: Winterdyk, John and Jones, Jackie eds. *The Palgrave International Handbook of Human trafficking*. Palgrave Macmillan. Papanicolaou and Bouklis 2011, p 12.

¹⁸⁶ Bouklis, Avi, and Papanicolaou, Georgios. 2019. Human trafficking in Greece In: Winterdyk, John and Jones, Jackie eds. *The Palgrave International Handbook of Human trafficking*. Palgrave Macmillan. Papanicolaou and Bouklis 2011, p 12

Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings (NRO) within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to coordinate national efforts.¹⁸⁷ This body now leads policy-making efforts, with its main targets being: (1) human trafficking monitoring, (2) further developing the NRM for the identification of survivors, (3) creating a national database on human trafficking, (4) developing training for agencies and (5) improving coordination between different actors.¹⁸⁸ Through the National Rapporteur, Greece can also better participate in the EU network of Special Rapporteurs, which was created by the European Council.¹⁸⁹

5.3. National Referral Mechanism

To make the Greek response to human trafficking more survivor-centred, a National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for victims of human trafficking was created in 2016.¹⁹⁰ The NRM is the competent authority responsible for collecting and responding to protection requests and following up on human trafficking cases and the protection needs of survivors.¹⁹¹ It is managed by EKKA and supervised by the Office of the National Rapporteur against Human Trafficking.¹⁹²

State actors must refer survivors of human trafficking to the NRM,¹⁹³ after which the NRM is supposed to coordinate protection measures.¹⁹⁴ In addition, civil society organisations that are recognised as a partner of the NRM can also refer cases.¹⁹⁵

5.4. Gaps in the protection of asylum seekers who survived modern slavery and human trafficking

5.4.1. Gaps in the identification

As already aforementioned, asylum seekers who are survivors of other forms of modern slavery that are not considered to constitute human trafficking by the authorities - e.g. forced marriage, forced conscription and different forms of serfdom - are per definition not identified as

¹⁸⁷ Law 4198/2013, with the latest changes from Law 5028/2023 on the Prevention and combating of human trafficking and protection of its victims and other provisions, A/215/11.10.2013. This law transposed EU Directive 2011/36/EU.

¹⁸⁸ Bouklis, Avi, and Papanicolaou, Georgios. 2019. Human trafficking in Greece In: Winterdyk, John and Jones, Jackie eds. *The Palgrave International Handbook of Human trafficking*. Palgrave Macmillan. Papanicolaou and Bouklis 2011, p 12.

¹⁸⁹ Bouklis, Avi, and Papanicolaou, Georgios. 2019. Human trafficking in Greece In: Winterdyk, John and Jones, Jackie eds. *The Palgrave International Handbook of Human trafficking*. Palgrave Macmillan. Papanicolaou and Bouklis 2011, p 12.

¹⁹⁰ Ministerial Decision 30840/2016, available at:

https://www.ekka.org.gr/images/pdf/nomothesia/5/%CE%9A%CE%A5%CE%91_30840-2016.pdf.

¹⁹¹ National Referral Mechanism, *Handbook of the Greek National Referral Mechanism for the Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking*, available at:

https://ekka.org.gr/images/KOINONIKON-PAREMBASEON/%CE%95%CE%9C%CE%91/46034_EMA_leaflet_ENGL.pdf.

¹⁹² EKKA is the National Centre for Social Solidarity, which coordinates the Greek network providing social support services, care and solidarity. Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family Affairs, *National Referral Mechanism*, available at: <https://ekka.org.gr/index.php/en/ethnikos-mixanismos-anaforas-en>.

¹⁹³ Article 62(5) of Law 4939/2022.

¹⁹⁴ National Referral Mechanism, *Greek National Referral Mechanism for the Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking Annual 2019, 2020*, available at:

https://www.ekka.org.gr/images/KOINONIKON-PAREMBASEON/%CE%95%CE%9C%CE%91/NRM-REPORT_2019_eng_fin.pdf.

¹⁹⁵ National Referral Mechanism, *Handbook of the Greek National Referral Mechanism for the Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking*, available at:

https://ekka.org.gr/images/KOINONIKON-PAREMBASEON/%CE%95%CE%9C%CE%91/46034_EMA_leaflet_ENGL.pdf.

vulnerable.¹⁹⁶ Therefore, they are not assured access to special reception conditions or special procedure guarantees.

The Greek government amended its standard operating procedures, to include specialised procedures so that first responders could identify survivors of trafficking.¹⁹⁷ According to authorities, each RIC also designated a trafficking focal point to collect information on potential trafficking cases.¹⁹⁸ However, the identification process still shows serious shortcomings.¹⁹⁹ These shortcomings reflect a longstanding inconsistency in the effective screening and identification of vulnerabilities, including the identification of survivors of trafficking.²⁰⁰ Reports indicate that procedures are often rushed and superficial.²⁰¹

Moreover, Fenix observes that since November 2022, no psychosocial assessments have been conducted on Lesbos without an explicit request by the doctor responsible for the medical examination, contradicting Greek legislation, including Law 4939/2022. On 26 April 2023, Fenix submitted a complaint to the Greek Ombudsman on behalf of four applicants regarding the shortcomings of their vulnerability assessments during the reception and identification procedures, particularly the lack of psychosocial assessment.²⁰² On 17 July 2023, the Greek Ombudsman responded to Fenix's complaint, and specified, among others, that (i) the psychosocial assessment is mandatory for all new arrivals at the RICs and CCACs, and (ii) in

¹⁹⁶ Article 1(1) of Law 4939/2022.

¹⁹⁷ US State Department, *Trafficking in Persons Report: Greece, 2022*, available at: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-trafficking-in-persons-report/greece/>.

¹⁹⁸ US State Department, *Trafficking in Persons Report: Greece, 2022*, available at: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-trafficking-in-persons-report/greece/>.

¹⁹⁹ Fenix, *Unrecognised vulnerability: Greece's systematic failure to identify and certify Victims of Torture*, 25 April 2023, p 11-17 available at:

https://uploads-ssl.webflow.com/60bcf98f54ccd12605b18048/6447d8e53fafc60626d0c612_Unrecognised%20Vulnerability%20-%20Fenix%20Humanitarian%20Legal%20Aid.pdf; AIDA, *Country Report: Greece, 2022 Update*, June 2023, p 106-115, available at: https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/AIDA-GR_2022-Update.pdf.

²⁰⁰ See for example: US State Department, *Trafficking in Persons Report: Greece, 2022*; Refugee Support Aegean and others, *The State of the Border Procedure on the Greek Islands*, September 2022, available at: https://rsaegean.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/BorderProcedure_Greek_islands_report.pdf; Fenix and others, *Joint NGO Briefing on the Situation in Greece*, 1 November 2021, available at: <https://www.fenixaid.org/articles/joint-ngo-briefing-on-the-situation-in-greece>; Fenix, *Unrecognised vulnerability: Greece's systematic failure to identify and certify Victims of Torture*, 25 April 2023, p 11-17 available at: https://uploads-ssl.webflow.com/60bcf98f54ccd12605b18048/6447d8e53fafc60626d0c612_Unrecognised%20Vulnerability%20-%20Fenix%20Humanitarian%20Legal%20Aid.pdf; Asylum Information Database (AIDA), *Country Report: Greece, 2022 Update*, June 2023, p 106-115, available at: https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/AIDA-GR_2022-Update.pdf.

²⁰¹ Fenix, *Unrecognised vulnerability: Greece's systematic failure to identify and certify Victims of Torture*, 25 April 2023, p 11-17 available at:

https://uploads-ssl.webflow.com/60bcf98f54ccd12605b18048/6447d8e53fafc60626d0c612_Unrecognised%20Vulnerability%20-%20Fenix%20Humanitarian%20Legal%20Aid.pdf; Asylum Information Database (AIDA), *Country Report: Greece, 2022 Update*, June 2023, p 106-115, available at: https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/AIDA-GR_2022-Update.pdf. Fenix, *Submission of Fenix to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe concerning the group of cases of M.S.S. v Greece*, available at: <https://www.fenixaid.org/articles/submission-of-fenix-to-the-committee-of-ministers-of-the-council-of-europe-concerning-the-group-of-cases-of-m-s-s-v-greece>.

²⁰² Complaint to the Ombudsman Protocol Number 20073/26.04.2023 on 26 April 2023. In April 2021, a complementary complaint was submitted.

addition to the clinical examination by a doctor, it is explicitly stated that the psychosocial assessment must occur, according to Greek legislation in force.²⁰³

5.4.1.1. Field examples of identification gaps in human trafficking survivors

In several recent cases where Fenix provided services, asylum authorities failed to identify incidents of human trafficking, including several very apparent cases. One such client had been kept prisoner and forced into sexual servitude in their country of origin for five years. However, the EODY screening only took 20 minutes, and the client was not asked whether they had been subjected to violence—consequently, EODY failed to recognise this client as a survivor of trafficking. This case is among many that indicate that authorities are either unwilling to use the vulnerability qualification or are insufficiently familiar with its specifics to identify cases adequately.

Moreover, on several occasions, Fenix observed that caseworkers conducting the asylum interviews appeared to only inquire about incidents of human trafficking that occurred in the applicant’s country of origin. While such incidents are often central to why a person chose to flee that country of origin or habitual residency, many asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection have faced incidents of human trafficking while in transit, outside of their country of origin or even in the country of reception. For example, one of Fenix’s clients was forced into a trafficking scheme for the purpose of sexual exploitation in a third country. However, the client was not recognised as a survivor of human trafficking during their first vulnerability assessment because it was considered not relevant. Not until a year later, following an intervention by Fenix, were they recognised as vulnerable. These blind spots in vulnerability assessments and identification are problematic considering that a breadth of evidence indicates that people in transit are highly vulnerable to human trafficking and other forms of modern slavery.²⁰⁴

5.4.2. Gaps in the support provided

Once survivors of human trafficking have been identified as such, they become entitled to certain rights and guarantees.

5.4.2.1. Living conditions

When it comes to living conditions, available accommodation is very limited, especially on the islands. Between 2020 and 2022 there has been a significant decrease in the official number of new arrivals and asylum seekers in Greece²⁰⁵; nonetheless, living conditions continue to be substandard across the country. On both the Greek Eastern Aegean islands and the mainland, reception facilities are inadequate, and the majority are located in remote areas with limited

²⁰³ Response of the Greek Ombudsman with Protocol Number 335188/34354.

²⁰⁴ UNHCR, *IOM-UNHCR Framework document on developing standard operating procedures to facilitate the identification and protection of victims of trafficking*, 2020, 6. Available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5ee22b4f4.html>.

²⁰⁵ The numbers of arrivals have been increasing again in 2023.

access to transportation, medical care, and other services.²⁰⁶ Frequent gaps in the provision of electricity, food and hygiene structures also continue to persist despite investment by European and Greek authorities.²⁰⁷ Indeed, reception conditions, including accommodation, have been repeatedly criticised.²⁰⁸ On multiple occasions, the ECtHR found violations of Article 3 ECHR due to competent authorities' failures to provide adequate reception conditions to asylum seekers.²⁰⁹

EKKA runs only two shelters for women and girls, and two emergency shelters. Moreover, these shelters provide accommodation to survivors of multiple forms of violence, not just human trafficking.²¹⁰ The government has set up collaborations with NGOs, such as A21 and Diotima, to establish shelter programs, psychosocial support, medical care, legal aid, and reintegration support.²¹¹ However, their capacity is also limited, especially on the islands. Crucially, shelter programmes for men seem to be wholly absent.

Finally, the Greek government has reduced or eliminated the programmes or facilities that provided accommodation adjusted to the needs of vulnerable groups. In February 2022, the Ministry of Migration and Asylum announced the restriction of the ESTIA program's capacity to 10.000 places by April 2022, aiming to terminate the program completely by the end of 2022.²¹² In October 2022, during the program's initial reduction, many asylum seekers with vulnerabilities, including survivors of violence and trafficking, were informed at short notice (in some cases, as little as 24 hours) and without formal notice as required by law, that they would have to leave their apartments.²¹³ On 31 December 2022, the EU-funded ESTIA program was completely

²⁰⁶ Asylum Information Database (AIDA), *Overview of the main changes since the previous update*, May 2022, available at: <https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/greece/overview-main-changes-previous-report-update/>.

²⁰⁷ Asylum Information Database (AIDA), *Country Report: Greece*, 2022 Update, June 2023, p 167-183, available at: https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/AIDA-GR_2022-Update.pdf.

²⁰⁸ Asylum Information Database (AIDA), *Country Report Greece: Types of accommodation*, 30 May 2022, available at: <https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/greece/reception-conditions/housing/types-accommodation/>.

²⁰⁹ ECtHR 21 January 2011, *M.S.S. v Belgium and Greece*, 30696/09; ECtHR 13 June 2019, *Sh.D and Others v Greece, Austria, Croatia, Hungary, North Macedonia, Serbia and Slovenia*, 141165/16; ECtHR 11 March 2015, *AL.K. v Greece*, 63543/11; ECtHR 21 October 2014, *Sharifi and Others v Italy and Greece*, 16643/09; ECtHR 5 July 2011, *Rahimi v Greece*, 8687/08. The ECtHR granted several interim measures to asylum seekers in Greece due to inappropriate medical care and living conditions, incompatible with Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights. See for example, Fenix, *ECtHR grants interim measures for an extremely vulnerable Applicant whom the Greek authority overlooked for more than one year*, 22 December 2022, available at: <https://www.fenixaid.org/articles/ecthr-grants-interim-measures-for-an-extremely-vulnerable-applicant-whom-the-greek-authority-overlooked-for-more-than-one-year>; Fenix, *European Court of Human Rights Grants Interim Measures for Three Fenix Clients*, 22 July 2021, available at: <https://www.fenixaid.org/articles/interim-measures-for-three-clients>; LCL, *Greek Government instructed by European Court of Human Rights to Guarantee Rights of 3 LCL Clients: An indictment of Reception Conditions in Lesbos*, 17 March 2021, available at: <https://legalcentrelesvos.org/2021/03/17/greek-government-instructed-by-european-court-of-human-rights-to-guarantee-rights-of-3-lcl-clients-an-indictment-of-reception-conditions-in-lesvos/>.

²¹⁰ GRETA, *Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Greece*, GRETA(2023)03, Second Evaluation Round, 23 March 2023, para 21, available at: <https://rm.coe.int/greta-evaluation-report-on-greece-2nd-evaluation-round/1680aaa70a>.

²¹¹ US State Department, *Trafficking in Persons Report: Greece*, 2022, available at: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-trafficking-in-persons-report/greece/>.

²¹² Fenix, *Closure of ESTIA II: thousands of extremely vulnerable asylum seekers to be left without humane and adequate accommodation and proper care*, 31 October 2022, available at: <https://www.fenixaid.org/articles/closure-of-estia-ii-thousands-of-extremely-vulnerable-asylum-seekers-to-be-left-without-humane-and-adequate-accommodation-and-proper-care>.

²¹³ Fenix, *Closure of ESTIA II: thousands of extremely vulnerable asylum seekers to be left without humane and adequate accommodation and proper care*, 31 October 2022, available at: <https://www.fenixaid.org/articles/closure-of-estia-ii-thousands-of-extremely-vulnerable-asylum-seekers-to-be-left-without-humane-and-adequate-accommodation-and-proper-care>.

terminated.²¹⁴ This decision forced hundreds of asylum seekers with vulnerabilities, including survivors of human trafficking, to transfer to camps throughout Greece with inhumane conditions and no access to medical care; others ended up on the streets.²¹⁵ In response to these issues, in January 2023, the Greek authorities announced the creation of temporary accommodation for approximately 1,000 extremely vulnerable applicants.²¹⁶ Yet, as of July 2023, no further public information is available on the smaller accommodation program, and the Reception and Identification Service (RIS) has stopped accepting new referrals for accommodations to ESTIA.²¹⁷

Limited shelter options mean that asylum seekers who survived human trafficking will most often not have access to specialised accommodation.²¹⁸ In all of these situations, they are much more vulnerable to various forms of exploitation.

5.4.2.2. Living conditions of minors

While EKKA is responsible for ensuring that minors who have survived human trafficking can access specialised protection services, including appropriate accommodation, legal guardians play an important role in ensuring unaccompanied minors can access these services.²¹⁹ Initially, Law 4554/2018 established the regulatory framework for the guardianship of unaccompanied children. However, the provisions in the law did not function well in practice, with shortcomings in the appointments and approvals process.²²⁰

Consequently, Law 4960/2022 was adopted in 2022. Under the new law, guardians are professionals employed by a public or private legal entity and appointed by Greek authorities. Guardians assist by representing minors in administrative and judicial proceedings, ensuring minors are provided housing, medical care, education and daily care, and assist children in

²¹⁴ Ministry of Migration and Asylum, *The program for hosting asylum seekers in urban apartments "ESTIA" has been completed*, 4 January 2023, available at: <https://migration.gov.gr/oloklirothike-to-programma-filoxenias-aitoynton-asylo-se-astika-diamerismata-estia/>; Ministry of Migration and Asylum, *The "ESTIA II" housing program is completed in 2022*, 22 February 2022, available at: <https://migration.gov.gr/oloklironetai-to-programma-stegasis-estia-ii-to-2022/>.

²¹⁵ Refugee Support Aegean, *A step backwards for protection and integration: On the termination of the Estia II housing programme for asylum applicants*, 22 December 2022, available at: <https://rsaegean.org/en/termination-of-the-estia-ii-for-asylum-applicants/>; Kathimerini, *Από τους ξενώνες ξανά στην πλατεία*, 11 January 2023, available at: https://www.kathimerini.gr/society/562217191/apo-toys-xenones-xana-stin-plateia/?fbclid=IwAR2UkoyEv_RAKxqmPkfZgAqD_1W3DQIN25OkODP_DKJhRx7xkKqCL1eVkeEo.

²¹⁶ Kathimerini, *Από τους ξενώνες ξανά στην πλατεία*, 11 January 2023, available at:

https://www.kathimerini.gr/society/562217191/apo-toys-xenones-xana-stin-plateia/?fbclid=IwAR2UkoyEv_RAKxqmPkfZgAqD_1W3DQIN25OkODP_DKJhRx7xkKqCL1eVkeEo.

²¹⁷ This information was identified by Fenix representatives, but also confirmed by AIDA, Country Report: Greece 2022 Update, June 2023, available at: <https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/greece/reception-conditions/housing/types-accommodation/>.

²¹⁸ US State Department, *Trafficking in Persons Report: Greece*, 2022, available at: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-trafficking-in-persons-report/greece/>.

²¹⁹ See Law 4554/2018 (130/A/18-7-2018) and Law 4960/2022 on the National Custodial System and Framework for Hosting Unaccompanied Minors and other provisions under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Immigration and Asylum, 145/A/22-7-2022.

²²⁰ GRETA, *Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Greece*, GRETA(2023)03, Second Evaluation Round, 23 March 2023, para 18. See also: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Guardianship systems for unaccompanied children in the EU*, 2022, available at: https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-guardianship-systems-developments_en.pdf.

accessing benefits.²²¹ However, an additional hurdle in the access to specialised services for minors is the systemic nonrecognition of unaccompanied minors as minors.²²² If their minority goes unrecognised, these children both lose their right to be supported by a legal guardian and their access to specialised accommodation and care.

5.4.2.3. Inclusion and integration

Beneficiaries of international protection, including survivors of human trafficking, face several challenges due to the lack of Greek integration policies. These obstacles include difficulties in accessing housing, residence permits, social benefits and welfare.²²³ In practice, these challenges greatly exacerbate risks of destitution and homelessness for beneficiaries.

Fenix's work in the field confirms many of the abovementioned trends. In the few cases where Fenix's clients were identified as survivors of human trafficking, they did not get access to necessary protection services during their asylum procedure. Accommodation and housing in particular have been nearly impossible to access since the abolishment of the ESTIA program

Lastly, and notably, organisations that are not part of the NRM cannot refer cases to the mechanism, or request information from it, precluding them from following up on their clients' cases within the NRM-system.²²⁴

²²¹ GRETA, *Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Greece*, GRETA(2023)03, Second Evaluation Round, 23 March 2023, para 93.

²²² Fenix, *A Child's Best Interests? Rights Violations in the Absence of Presumption of Minority*, 13 October 2022, available at: <https://www.fenixaid.org/articles/a-childs-best-interests-rights-violations-in-the-absence-of-presumption-of-minority>.

²²³ Refugee Support Aegean, *Systemic deficiencies in the access of beneficiaries of international protection to supporting documents and social rights*, 30 March 2023, available at: <https://rsaegean.org/el/report-dikaiouchoi-diethnous-prostasias/>; Refugee Support Aegean, *The new "Cartoneros" of Athens*, 2022, available at: <https://rsaegean.org/en/the-new-cartoneros-of-athens/>; Refugee Support Aegean, *Beneficiaries of international protection in Greece: Access to documents and socio-economic rights*, March 2022, available at: https://rsaegean.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/2022-03_RSA_BIP_EN.pdf.

²²⁴ Prior to Fenix's incorporation into the NRM network, Fenix staff would have to communicate with GAS caseworkers to ensure the agency understood the relevant client was a survivor of human trafficking. This was done to ensure clients were properly referred to the NRM since Fenix, at that point, could not do so directly.

Chapter 6: Turkish response to modern slavery and human trafficking

6.1. Institutional Framework

Türkiye's approach to combat human trafficking encompasses prevention, law enforcement, victim support, international cooperation, and legal reforms. In Türkiye, national action against human trafficking is coordinated by the Ministry of the Interior's Presidency on Migration Management (PMM), through its Department of Protection of Victims of Trafficking. Until October 2021, the PMM was known as the Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM).

The PMM's responsibilities related to migration management and human trafficking were laid out by the 2013 Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP). The PMM's responsibilities include registering refugees and issuing international protection; managing the process for the temporary protection status of Syrians; running refugee camps and removal centres; and managing the voluntary return program. The PMM is also responsible for carrying out actions and implementing projects related to combating human trafficking and protecting victims of trafficking. The PMM and its provincial directorates are responsible for identifying victims, establishing hotlines for victims of trafficking, referring victims to shelters, operating and outsourcing shelters for victims of human trafficking, and coordinating the voluntary return program.²²⁵

Türkiye has implemented two national action plans on combating trafficking in human beings. These plans, adopted in 2003 and 2009, encompassed a range of measures, including legislative amendments, the establishment of a prevention hotline, the creation of shelters for victims, ensuring the safe repatriation of victims, and raising awareness through public campaigns and training programs. There is currently no national action plan in place.²²⁶

Law enforcement agencies under the Ministry of the Interior also have responsibilities relating to human trafficking. The Turkish National Police, which operates in urban areas, has a Department for Combating Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking which coordinates anti-trafficking activities and engages in international cooperation. When they detect presumed victims of trafficking, they refer them to the PMM. The General Command of the Gendarmerie, which operates in rural areas, also has a Department of Counter Smuggling and Human Trafficking and participates in working groups on combating human trafficking. The Turkish National Police and the General Command of the Gendarmerie both conduct training programs for their personnel to enhance their capacity to combat human trafficking effectively. These training sessions cover areas such as victim identification, investigation techniques, and cooperation with international counterparts.

²²⁵ GRETA, *Report Concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in human Beings by Türkiye*, 2019, available at: <https://rm.coe.int/report-concerning-the-implementation-of-the-council-of-europe-conventi/1680981563>.

²²⁶ US State Department, *Trafficking In Persons Report: Türkiye*, 2022, available at: <https://www.state.gov/reports>.

Finally, the Coast Guard Command controls Turkish sea areas, performs search and rescue operations, and focuses on combating irregular migration. Unlike the former two agencies, it has no investigative powers for human trafficking and is not involved in the identification of trafficking victims, but it is involved in the initial screening of migrants after disembarkation. If indicators of trafficking are identified, the information should be submitted to the PMM and relevant law enforcement departments.²²⁷

Non-state organisations are also involved in transnational counter-trafficking efforts. The PMM cooperates with NGOs to ensure the provision of support and rehabilitation services to victims of human trafficking. This includes medical and psychological assistance, access to legal aid, shelter facilities, and vocational training programs to facilitate their reintegration into society. The Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs established a National Task Force on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings which implements national action plans in collaboration with three main national NGO partners of the Ministry: the Human Resource Development Foundation (HRDF) in Istanbul, the Foundation for Women's Solidarity (FWS) in Ankara and Antalya Family Counsellors Association (AFCA) in Antalya.²²⁸ Turkish authorities are responsible for the identification of human trafficking victims and rely on NGOs to work on supporting victims who are granted assistance and protection by the state.²²⁹

IOM Türkiye has also been involved in counter-trafficking efforts, predominantly working to "prevent trafficking in persons and protect victims while offering options for safe and sustainable reintegration and/or return to their home countries". Part of their work focuses on training government and civil society institutions to better tackle trafficking risks and challenges, as well as to offer support with developing counter-trafficking policy and legislation. In May 2023, IOM Türkiye and the PMM launched a new project called "EU Support in Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in Türkiye" which aimed at "strengthening the anti-trafficking response and victim protection mechanisms in the country".²³⁰

6.2. Legislative framework

6.2.1. The Law on Foreigners and International Protection

In 2013, Türkiye adopted the comprehensive Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP), which establishes a dedicated legal framework for asylum in Türkiye and which lays out the responsibilities of the PMM. The LFIP provides three types of international protection status in accordance with Türkiye's 'geographical limitation' policy on the 1951 Refugee Convention.²³¹

²²⁷ GRETA, *Report Concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in human Beings by Türkiye*, 2019, available at:

<https://rm.coe.int/report-concerning-the-implementation-of-the-council-of-europe-conventi/1680981563>.

²²⁸ Republic of Türkiye, available at: <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-on-trafficking-in-human-beings.en.mfa>.

²²⁹ International Centre for Migration Policy Development, *NRM Overview Türkiye 2016*, available at: https://www.icmpd.org/file/download/52269/file/NRM_Overview_turkey_2016.pdf.

²³⁰ IOM, *IOM and PMM Launch New Project to Combat Human Trafficking in Türkiye* 2023, available at: <https://turkiye.iom.int/news/iom-and-pmm-launch-new-project-combat-human-trafficking-turkiye>.

²³¹ Asylum Information Database (AIDA), *Country Report: Introduction to the asylum context in Türkiye*, available at: <https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/turkiye/introduction-asylum-context-turkiye/>.

Persons who fall within the refugee definition of the 1951 Convention and come from a 'European country of origin' qualify for refugee status. Persons who fall within the refugee definition of the 1951 Convention but come from a 'non-European country of origin' are instead offered conditional refugee status. Conditional refugee status is a Turkish legal concept introduced by the LFIP for the purpose of differentiating in treatment between 1951 Convention-type refugees originating from non-European states and those originating from European states.²³²

Türkiye grants Syrians and stateless Palestinians from Syria a temporary protection status on a group basis and grants other non-European nationalities an international protection status, as aforementioned. People seeking protection apply to the PMM, the authority responsible for registration, asylum adjudication, and migration management in Türkiye. Persons who do not fulfil the eligibility criteria for either refugee status or conditional refugee status but would be subjected to death penalty or torture in their country of origin if returned or would be at 'individualised risk of indiscriminate violence' due to situations of war or internal armed conflict, qualify for subsidiary protection status under the LFIP. The Turkish legal status of subsidiary protection mirrors the subsidiary protection definition provided by the EU Qualification Directive.²³³

The LFIP furthermore established a 'recovery and reflection period' as well as renewable residence permits for victims of trafficking and stipulated that victims included in the victim support programme should not be removed from the country and should be exempted from residence permit fees.²³⁴

6.2.2. Trafficking legislation

Türkiye has made efforts to align national legislation with international standards and best practices. Türkiye signed the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime and its Protocols on Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants in 2000 and ratified them in 2003. Subsequently, Türkiye adopted a range of legal and institutional counter-trafficking measures to comply with international standards.²³⁵

Türkiye criminalised human trafficking in 2005, when Article 80 of the revised Criminal Code came into force.²³⁶ The Criminal Code was further adapted in 2006 to include forced prostitution in the definition of trafficking. In 2006, the Ministry of the Interior adopted the Circular No.74 on

²³² Asylum Information Database (AIDA), *Country Report: Introduction to the asylum context in Türkiye*, available at: <https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/turkiye/introduction-asylum-context-turkiye/>.

²³³ Asylum Information Database (AIDA), *Country Report: Introduction to the asylum context in Türkiye*, available at: <https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/turkiye/introduction-asylum-context-turkiye/>.

²³⁴ GRETA, *Report Concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in human Beings by Türkiye*, 2019, available at: <https://rm.coe.int/report-concerning-the-implementation-of-the-council-of-europe-conventi/1680981563>.

²³⁵ International Centre for Migration Policy Development, *Fight Against Human Trafficking and Organized Crime*, available at: https://www.icmpd.org/file/download/52269/file/NRM_Overview_turkey_2016.pdf.

²³⁶ Republic of Türkiye, *Türkiye's fight against Human Trafficking*, available at: <https://en.goc.gov.tr/turkey-s-fight-against-human-trafficking>.

Fighting Against Human Trafficking, which covered a range of issues including the identification of victims, protection and support for victims, the training of law enforcement, and collaboration with NGOs and international organisations.

In 2016, the Regulation on Combating Human Trafficking and the Protection of Victims established the rules and procedures concerning the identification of victims of trafficking, victim support programmes, voluntary and safe return programmes, and residency permits for foreign victims. In addition, the 2003 Regulation on the Implementation of the Law on Work Permits of Foreigners No. 4817 entitles survivors of trafficking to access the labour market.

In 2016, Türkiye deposited the instrument of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. To comply with the convention, Türkiye made adjustments to relevant legislation, particularly the Turkish Penal Code and Law on the Work Permits for Foreigners and the Turkish Nationality Law to help combat Trafficking of Human Beings. Article 80 of the penal code outlaws sexual and labour trafficking, with penalties of 8 to 12 years in prison. Article 227 prohibits the facilitation of child prostitution, with penalties of 4-10 years imprisonment.²³⁷

6.3. Gaps in the protection of forcibly displaced persons

The following sections identify key gaps in the Turkish anti-trafficking approach. The information is based on the findings of key reports, including the TIP and GRETA reports on Türkiye, as well as information shared by STTG's contacts on the ground who chose to stay anonymous.

6.3.1. Gaps in the identification

While Turkish anti-trafficking legislation is relatively robust, there appears to be a significant divergence between legislation and practice. Compared to the high number of estimated trafficking survivors in Türkiye, only a small number of them are identified and granted the victim of trafficking status. There are several reasons for this, including a continued lack of awareness among government and law enforcement agencies about trafficking. While there have been efforts to train Turkish officials who are likely to encounter survivors of trafficking, such as border police forces or people working with forcibly displaced persons, NGOs on the ground report that there remains a widespread lack of awareness of trafficking. In particular, there is often confusion about the difference between human trafficking and human smuggling.²³⁸ Furthermore, identification efforts are also not consistent nationally, and much depends on both the province where the victim is interviewed and the interviewer themselves. The GRETA report recommends increased training to relevant professionals on identification indicators, techniques and procedures, as well as increasing staff and resources for proactive identification.²³⁹

²³⁷ Republic of Türkiye, *Türkiye on Trafficking of Human Beings*, available at: <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-on-trafficking-in-human-beings.en.mfa>.

²³⁸ Information from Stop the Traffick Group partners.

²³⁹ GRETA, *Report Concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in human Beings by Türkiye*, 2019, available at: <https://rm.coe.int/report-concerning-the-implementation-of-the-council-of-europe-conventi/1680981563>.

There is also an overemphasis within Turkish anti-trafficking efforts on disrupting sex trafficking, meaning that victims of other forms of trafficking often go un-identified.²⁴⁰ While sex trafficking is a serious concern in Türkiye, there is a significant amount of other trafficking activity which affect asylum-seeking populations, including labour exploitation, forced marriage and organ trafficking. The TIP and GRETA reports emphasise the particular need to proactively identify victims of forced labour and labour exploitation. The GRETA report recommends that Türkiye should expand the capacity of labour inspectors to prevent trafficking; monitor the effectiveness of labour inspections, especially in the agricultural sector in remote areas; and separate labour inspection from immigration enforcement functions.²⁴¹

The Turkish government does not sufficiently seek to identify survivors of trafficking in highly vulnerable asylum seeking and migrant communities. For example, media and civil society reports indicate forced repatriation to Syria without screening for indicators of trafficking.²⁴² Accordingly, the GRETA report emphasises the need for proactive identification of trafficking victims among asylum seekers and people in removal centres as well as at border crossings.²⁴³

Finally, there are very few civil society organisations involved in identifying and preventing human trafficking. Indeed, NGOs on the ground reported that trafficking victims they refer to the authorities are generally not formally recognised as such and are granted temporary protection instead, thereby not accessing protection and rights afforded to victims of trafficking.²⁴⁴ A multi-agency approach and increased collaboration between Turkish NGOs engaging in anti-trafficking efforts and the Turkish government could be essential to identifying traffickers and protecting survivors.²⁴⁵

6.3.2. Gaps in the support provided

While there is legislation in Türkiye guaranteeing support and protection for survivors of trafficking, many trafficking victims do not gain access to these rights. In part, this is because of the lack of formal identification and recognition of survivors. However, even for those who are recognised as survivors of trafficking, the majority do not access state support but are rather returned to their countries of origin via voluntary return procedures due to their irregular

²⁴⁰ GRETA, *Report Concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in human Beings by Türkiye*, 2019, available at:

<https://rm.coe.int/report-concerning-the-implementation-of-the-council-of-europe-conventi/1680981563>.

²⁴¹ GRETA, *Report Concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in human Beings by Türkiye*, 2019, available at:

<https://rm.coe.int/report-concerning-the-implementation-of-the-council-of-europe-conventi/1680981563>.

²⁴² US State Department, *2023 Trafficking of Persons Report: Türkiye*, available at:

<https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-trafficking-in-persons-report/turkey/>.

²⁴³ GRETA, *Report Concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in human Beings by Türkiye*, 2019, available at:

<https://rm.coe.int/report-concerning-the-implementation-of-the-council-of-europe-conventi/1680981563>.

²⁴⁴ NGOs sharing this information chose to stay anonymous.

²⁴⁵ US State Department, *2023 Trafficking of Persons Report: Türkiye*, available at:

<https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-trafficking-in-persons-report/turkey/>.

migration situation.²⁴⁶ This has a secondary consequence: because there are few survivors who remain in the country, there are almost no trials against traffickers in Türkiye, meaning that the crime largely goes unpunished.²⁴⁷

The law entitles foreign survivors to a temporary residence permit for 30 days, which authorities can extend up to 3 years with the option to apply for a work permit. Enabling more victims to extend the temporary permit and stay would not only increase prosecution of traffickers, but also ensure that trafficking survivors who would like to remain in the country are allowed to do so. The GRETA report recommends that the recovery and reflection period for identified foreign survivors of trafficking should be systematically applied and they should be informed of their rights²⁴⁸. Residence permits for trafficking victims should be granted and renewed based on evaluation reports and with exemptions from fees. If survivors choose to return to their countries of origin, the Turkish authorities should ensure the safe and dignified return of trafficking survivors and involve NGOs in risk assessments and reintegration efforts.²⁴⁹

However, even for identified survivors who remain in Türkiye, there is a lack of available support. Regarding shelters, the TIP report found that in 2022, there were only three specialised shelters for survivors of trafficking in the country, with a total of 90 spaces.²⁵⁰ The GRETA report emphasises the urgent need to strengthen protection services, including shelters, safe accommodation options, psychosocial support, social inclusion and long-term support for trafficking survivors.²⁵¹ Furthermore, both the TIP and GRETA reports emphasise the need for cooperation with NGOs to ensure the provision of assistance and support to trafficking survivors.

6.3.3. Gaps in prevention

Forcibly displaced persons in Türkiye are especially vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation as they often do not have access to services or legitimate work. Increasing the rights and protections of asylum seekers and recipients of international protection would greatly reduce their vulnerability to trafficking. Facilitating access to legitimate employment is particularly important for prevention. Currently, Turkish law allows recipients of temporary protection the right to work, provided that they were registered in the province they wished to work in for at least the

²⁴⁶ GRETA, *Report Concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in human Beings by Türkiye*, 2019, available at:

<https://rm.coe.int/report-concerning-the-implementation-of-the-council-of-europe-conventi/1680981563>.

²⁴⁷ GRETA, *Report Concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in human Beings by Türkiye*, 2019, available at:

<https://rm.coe.int/report-concerning-the-implementation-of-the-council-of-europe-conventi/1680981563>.

²⁴⁸ GRETA, *Report Concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in human Beings by Türkiye*, 2019, available at:

<https://rm.coe.int/report-concerning-the-implementation-of-the-council-of-europe-conventi/1680981563>.

²⁴⁹ GRETA, *Report Concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in human Beings by Türkiye*, 2019, available at:

<https://rm.coe.int/report-concerning-the-implementation-of-the-council-of-europe-conventi/1680981563>.

²⁵⁰ US State Department, *2023 Trafficking of Persons Report: Türkiye*, available at:

<https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-trafficking-in-persons-report/turkey/>.

²⁵¹ US State Department, *2023 Trafficking of Persons Report: Türkiye*, available at:

<https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-trafficking-in-persons-report/turkey/>.

preceding six months. However, applying for a work permit is the responsibility of the employer, and refugee advocates report that the procedure is burdensome and costly, and so few employers pursue that path.²⁵² Therefore, most beneficiaries of protection do not have a work permit, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation.

There are also steps that could be taken to reduce specific forms of trafficking. STTG intelligence research about global organ trafficking has identified that organ trafficking in Türkiye often involves the forgery of documents to bypass hospital ethics boards.²⁵³ Organ trafficking could be prevented through awareness campaigns for hospitals and medical personnel about the issue and making the approval process for organ transplants more rigorous. For example, approval processes could include interviewing potential donors and requiring original kinship documents rather than copies.

Some preventative measures can also be counterproductive, particularly regarding Turkish efforts to prevent sex trafficking which have largely involved shutting down brothels, including legal brothels. However, reports suggest that these practices actually make sex workers more vulnerable to exploitation and trafficking.²⁵⁴ In general, there is often a conflation in Türkiye between sex work and sex trafficking, which poses a barrier to prevention as well as to the identification of victims of sex trafficking.²⁵⁵

Finally, efforts should be taken to prevent trafficking among forcibly displaced persons, who are particularly vulnerable to exploitation. This includes the timely appointment of guardians for unaccompanied children, the provision of specialised accommodation, and a protective environment for all children.²⁵⁶

²⁵² US State Department, *2023 Trafficking of Persons Report: Türkiye*, available at: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-trafficking-in-persons-report/turkey/>.

²⁵³ Stop the Trafficking Gorum, *Organ Trafficking in Türkiye 2023*, available at: <https://www.traffikanalysis.org/t%C3%BCrkiye-key-judgements>.

²⁵⁴ Nawyn, S. et al., *Human Trafficking and Migration Management in the Global South*, 2016, available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00207659.2016.1197724>

²⁵⁵ US State Department, *2023 Trafficking of Persons Report: Türkiye*, available at: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-trafficking-in-persons-report/turkey/>.

²⁵⁶ GRETA, *Report Concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in human Beings by Türkiye*, 2019, available at: <https://rm.coe.int/report-concerning-the-implementation-of-the-council-of-europe-conventi/1680981563>.

Conclusion: Addressing modern slavery and human trafficking of forcibly displaced persons

Due to the high numbers of people seeking protection living and arriving in their countries, Greece and Türkiye face significant challenges in countering human trafficking and identifying and protecting survivors of modern slavery. While there have been significant steps made in both countries to improve trafficking-related legislation and the protection of victims, vital gaps remain. Based on findings of official reports and on the experiences of Fenix Aid, STTG and their partners, there are different options for Greek and Turkish authorities to improve how they identify and protect survivors. Currently, there are still significant gaps in identification and protection processes, leaving asylum seekers excluded from protection. In addition, both governments can significantly improve their efforts to prevent incidents of MSHT.

7.1. Greek Response

Greece has implemented several mechanisms to address human trafficking, including among asylum seekers. Such measures include adopting a legislative framework that criminalises acts of human trafficking and establishes liability for those involved in or benefiting from human trafficking. Additional legislation was introduced to provide protection and support measures for survivors of human trafficking, and specific legislation was adopted for identifying survivors among those applying for international protection. The Office of the National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was established to coordinate national efforts around human trafficking prevention and monitoring. The body leads policy-making efforts on the subject and facilitates Greece's participation in the EU networks of Special Rapporteurs. The National Referral Mechanism for victims of human trafficking was created in 2016 and is the competent authority responsible for collecting and responding to protection requests.

While these measures represent a substantial step forward in responding to human trafficking instances, particularly among people seeking international protection, Greek authorities have struggled to implement many of these provisions and to provide practical protection and the procedural guarantees afforded by these mechanisms. In the cases of Fenix's clients who survived human trafficking, the actions taken by the Greek authorities to identify and protect survivors have been largely insufficient, leaving asylum seekers excluded from protection. This also substantially raises the risk of them ending up in situations of homelessness or destitution and of being re-subjected to trafficking. Importantly, efforts to provide such protection to survivors of other forms of modern slavery are absent.

7.2. Turkish Response

In recent years, Türkiye has implemented several policies to address trafficking. Since first criminalising human trafficking in 2005, Türkiye has strengthened penal codes against trafficking, developed victim support and safe return programmes, and established residency permits for foreign victims. However, there are several gaps in Türkiye's approach. Türkiye has

disproportionately focused on addressing sex trafficking, at the expense of other forms of trafficking, and there are insufficient levels of training on trafficking identification. Furthermore, organ trafficking in Türkiye remains a significant issue, and Türkiye can address this issue by improving hospital organ transplant approval processes.

To protect survivors, Türkiye needs to significantly increase shelter capacity and support services, including psychosocial support. In addition, there are reports that trafficking victims are sometimes forced to repatriate to their countries of origin. Instead, Türkiye should allow more victims to extend their temporary permit and stay in the country. This would also facilitate more prosecutions of traffickers. Finally, to prevent future occurrences of MSHT, Türkiye should ease the process of work permits so more employers are willing to sponsor work permits for refugees.

7.3. Gaps in identification

Firstly, there are fundamental flaws in identification processes. A lack of staff and proper training within the different competent authorities leads to a practice where only very obvious types of modern slavery and human trafficking are identified. Moreover, cases of human trafficking that occurred outside of the country of origin, or included a transnational element, are frequently ignored, especially in Greece.

In addition, there seems to be a focus on certain kinds of modern slavery and human trafficking. Greece and Türkiye both identify a disproportionate number of victims of sex trafficking, compared to other forms of exploitation. Our evidence suggests that there is a significant amount of other trafficking activity ongoing which affects forcibly displaced populations, including labour exploitation and forced criminality. In Türkiye, our numbers also show that asylum seekers are regularly affected by forced marriage and organ trafficking.

7.4. Gaps in support provided

This lack of identification deprives forcibly displaced persons who have survived modern slavery and human trafficking of the protection they are entitled to. However, even recognised human trafficking survivors often lack adequate access to protection systems. There seems to be a general lack of coordination and oversight. In Greece, the authorities responsible for the reception and asylum procedures seem to count on the National Referral Mechanism to coordinate protection efforts for survivors of human trafficking. However, the National Referral Mechanism does not consider itself competent to do that; it only monitors efforts by other actors to provide protection. The result is that there is no public body that follows up with identified survivors and coordinates their access to services.

Moreover, the protection services available in both countries are insufficient. This includes possibilities for asylum seekers who have survived modern slavery and human trafficking to gain access to appropriate housing. The result is that in most cases survivors will either go unidentified or not gain access to special reception conditions or adequate accommodation in both Greece

and Türkiye. This leaves them highly vulnerable to ending up in detention-like camps, that are completely unadjusted to their needs, or on the streets.

7.5. Gaps in prevention

Providing forcibly displaced persons with access to rights and public services also serves important preventative purposes. Their vulnerable position, often without access to adequate accommodation or financial resources, leaves them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Displaced populations are often under significant financial pressure, or desperate for different kinds of support, which makes them into ideal targets for traffickers. Governments can be a better opponent to traffickers by providing potential victims with support.

In addition to access to preventative services, other measures can be taken. STTG has organised dozens of successful prevention campaigns that raise awareness among vulnerable groups around the world. The Greek and Turkish Governments should continue to be allies in those efforts while implementing more prevention efforts such as awareness campaigns among vulnerable populations. In addition, both governments can increase inspection in businesses that are known to facilitate labour or sexual exploitation.

7.6. Lack of collaboration

Finally, there is potential for Greece and Türkiye to improve their collaboration on fighting modern slavery and human trafficking. The relations between Greece and Türkiye have been troubled since the states' establishment. However, the last couple of years have shown indications that both Greece and Türkiye want to improve bilateral relations. President Erdoğan visited Greece in 2017, the first time in 65 years that a Turkish head of state did so; Prime Minister Tsipras visited Türkiye in 2019. In 2021, the ministers of Foreign Affairs also met repeatedly to discuss further cooperation.

Unavoidably, Greece and Türkiye already have to coordinate on migration and asylum. They share an important border. Both states have stated that they want to counter modern slavery and human trafficking. This creates opportunities for them to collaborate. As this report shows, populations in Greece and Türkiye are confronted with similar types of modern slavery and human trafficking. Greece and Türkiye could further coordinate efforts to counter human trafficking networks that appear to work across their shared border. Finally, Greece and Türkiye can exchange knowledge and expertise. This could inform the training of staff on both sides, potentially improving prevention, identification and protection processes.

Policy recommendations

Prevention

Greece

- Establish safe and legal routes to seek asylum;
- Re-introduce humanitarian protection for cases of modern slavery and human trafficking
- Promote community-based accommodation for survivors of modern slavery and human trafficking or those at risk of it;
- Create emergency accommodation outside of RICs and CCACs for survivors of modern slavery and human trafficking or for persons at risk of it.

Türkiye

- Increase support services for forcibly displaced persons;
- Provide stronger protection for unaccompanied minors, including the timely appointment of guardians and safe accommodation;
- Increase labour rights and simplify the work permit process for forcibly displaced people;
- Improve medical ethics procedures to prevent organ trafficking.

Identification

Greece

- Ensure that psychosocial assessments occur during the reception and identification procedures;
- Ensure medical exams and the psychosocial assessment are done in line with international and European standards;
- Ensure that forcibly displaced persons identified as survivors of trafficking have access to their procedural and substantive rights and guarantees;
- Include survivors of all types of modern slavery as vulnerable groups;
- Train authorities to identify survivors of modern slavery, including during the reception and identification or asylum procedures;
- Ensure clear and appropriate referral procedures, with clear guidelines for staff on trafficking indicators;
- During the asylum interview, asylum seekers' full stories should be explored so human trafficking survivors are identified.

Türkiye

- Ensure that other forms of MSHT besides sex trafficking are focused on, including labour exploitation, forced marriage and organ trafficking;
- Increase training for authorities and employees on identifying victims and survivors of trafficking, and increase identification capacity;
- Increase identification efforts among displaced and asylum seeking communities and at borders;
- Increase cooperation with NGOs in the identification and referral process.

Protection of survivors

Greece

- Further collaboration between all the stakeholders and actors providing protection services to survivors of human trafficking;
- Establish adequate accommodation, namely community-based accommodation instead of closed facilities;

Türkiye

- Ensure that survivors are not pressured into 'voluntary return' but are granted protections;
- Increase shelter capacity for survivors of trafficking, and provide stronger psychosocial support services;
- Increase cooperation with NGOs in the protection of survivors.

International investigations and collaboration

- Increase cross-border cooperation on identifying and preventing trafficking between Greek and Turkish authorities and beyond. Human trafficking is a global issue which should be tackled through international cooperation at all levels.