

Can you hear us? Unaccompanied minors in Moria Camp ask...



More than 800 unaccompanied minors live in the, already overcrowded, Moria Camp, exposed to hazardous conditions for their health and overall protection. During the last month, there has been documented a systematic increase in the number of unaccompanied minors being hosted in Moria Camp.

In particular, unaccompanied minors, due to the lack of adequate space and overcrowding, are forced to sleep on the floor in outrageous conditions. They are unable to access medical and psychosocial care, while being exposed to serious risks to their physical and mental health. The recent tragic incident of the murder and serious injury of unaccompanied minors by another unaccompanied minor within the 'safe zone' of Moria Camp, unequivocally indicates the

devastating effects of abandoning unaccompanied minors in inhumane living conditions. The systematic failure of meeting the peculiar needs of these children coupled with their exposition to the existing living conditions in the various Sections of Moria Camp, aggravates their already unstable psychological state and heightens the risk of triggering additional acts of despair.

In addition, due to the lack of staff capacity at the KEELPNO services, unaccompanied minors only get pre-registered without being able to proceed with their full registration at the Asylum Office. This condition has an adverse effect on the evolution of both their placement in appropriate shelters in the mainland, as well as, on their family reunification case under Dublin III Regulation, given the fact that most EU states accept family reunification requests within a three month deadline since the pre-registration date.

It is evident that the existing situation violates the national, EU and international legal framework which recognizes that children on the move have the absolute right to enjoy their childhood in a secure, caring and protective environment. Especially, regarding unaccompanied minors on the move, EU Member States have recognized their extreme vulnerability and have taken responsibility to protect them in practice, by ensuring that their vulnerability does not deprive them of the dignified life they deserve.

However, in reality, children are the victims of the European immigration policies that while being implemented have given rise to such horrible living conditions on the Greek islands. In particular, the EU-Turkey deal has forced thousands of people, among them hundreds of unaccompanied minors, to be trapped in the unsafe environment of Moria Camp.

We urge EU Member States to take immediate action to ‘rescue’ the unaccompanied minors from the Moria Camp, by speeding up the family reunification procedures, relocating them to other EU States and adopting general measures aiming at the equal distribution of the European responsibility towards the people in need of international protection.

In the meantime, we urge the Greek State to prioritize the transfer of unaccompanied children to appropriate shelters in the mainland while simultaneously proceeding with the creation of new ones. At the same time, we call for the direct staffing and reinforcement of the public health and social support services in Lesvos and mainland.

Possible delays and inadequate response to the current critical situation run the risk to coerce more children to transgressive behaviors and serious risks of their life.

