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**PRESS RELEASE**

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**Death of detained irregular migrants**

Up to one year the Ministry of Public Order applies the practice of prolonged detention (up to 18 months) for irregular migrants and asylum seekers. This prolonged detention is often carried out in the facilities of Police Stations which are suitable only for a few days' detention as well as in other detention facilities which do not comply with the standards of international law. In these facilities the detainees' nutrition and medical care are often inadequate. We note that it is for these conditions of detention –and for shorter periods– that Greece has been convicted by many decisions of the European Court of Human Rights and has been severely reprimanded by the Committee for the Prevention of Torture of the Council of Europe.

As it is written in the relevant decisions of the police authorities, this prolonged detention aims at the removal (deportation) of the detainees. However the police authorities apply it even in the case of people who cannot be deported, either because this would violate the principle of non-refoulement (people who come from countries of origin where there are massive violations of human rights such as Afghanistan, Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea etc) or because the deportation is practically impossible. This happens although the law provides that in these cases the removal is postponed for 6 months and the detainees are released (article 24 of law 3907/2011).

Moreover the prolonged detention is routinely applied to detainees who ask for asylum, although the law provides that the detention of the asylum seekers should be only exceptional (article 13 of presidential decree 114/2010)

Thus this prolonged detention is carried out routinely in facilities which are inadequate for lengthy stay and as far as a big part of the detainees is concerned (those who are not deportable and the majority of asylum seekers) it is entirely illegitimate since it is contrary to the articles 24 of law 3907/2011 and 13 of presidential decree 114/2010.

From the above it is evident that this practice puts a big number of detainees in inhuman and degrading treatment. In the cases that the detainees are not deportable or the majority of asylum seekers this illegitimate and illegal detention gives the impression that it is some kind of punishment the authorities impose to the migrants who had the misfortune of coming to Greece.

This new situation of the prolonged detention of thousands of irregular migrants and asylum seekers in conditions that are often unacceptable, has led to extreme and very dangerous situations such as rebellions of the detainees and loss of human life. According to recent publications two detainees committed suicide (one in Grevena Police Station and another in

Kozani) while a few days ago an Afghan detainee lost his life. According to the allegations of the Afghan Community the detainee in Korinth detention center didn't get medical treatment on time and when he was taken to hospital his situation was not reversible.

We note that these inadequate conditions and the fact that this situation is dangerous have been pointed out from the Panhellenic Union of Policemen in a recent document (28 June 2013). The Union writes that the situation is very dangerous for the mental health of the detainees and that many detainees have tendency for suicide.

We would like to emphatically stress that according to international and national law:

- Administrative detention should not be carried out in facilities which do not comply to international standards, since this violates international law.
- Administrative detention should never be applied to people who are not deportable and should be applied to asylum seekers only exceptionally.

We call the competent authorities:

- To review the illegal, inhuman and dangerous for the detainees life and well -being practice of prolonged detention in inadequate conditions
- To ease the pressure from detention facilities by using the option of the postponement of removal for 6 months for those who are not deportable and by applying the detention of asylum seekers only exceptionally, as it is provided by the law.