

Racist Violence Recording Network

Annual Report 2018



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Introduction

In 2018, the Racist Violence Recording Network (RVRN) recorded an increase in incidents of racist violence, especially against refugees and migrants. This increase is linked to the political polarization at a global level regarding the reception of refugees and migrants, coupled with national and local factors shaping the situation in Greece. The reinforced presence of the far-right parties in Europe encourages the violent xenophobic groups that claim an increasing proportion of the public sphere. In view of the European elections, the more space is occupied by the far-right agenda and euro-scepticism, the more the far-right, neo-Nazi and extreme nationalist groups across Europe gain further strength and form alliances with each other or even compete in committing racist attacks.

In other words, the acceptance and regularisation of extreme xenophobic positions does not defuse tension through the participation of their representatives in the political system; on the contrary, alongside the exoneration of fearful perceptions towards the *other*, the *different*, violence finds a footing and attracts more supporters. Some of these supporters are extremists, organized into groups, and themselves perpetrators of racist attacks. This category includes the perpetrators of attacks for which organizations are assuming the responsibility, or perpetrators of attacks committed following extreme xenophobic invitations through social media. Others are occasional perpetrators, i.e. if given an opportunity, they unleash violent assaults against targeted groups. So, on the occasion of a dispute for irrelevant reason, e.g. an incident of on-road behaviour, some of them manifest extreme violence, which shows their profound prejudice against the victim. This category also involves lighter incidents, occurring in the urban area by professionals working in public transportation, or by the neighbours of newly arrived refugees. Most of the times these incidents are not extreme, but they are absolutely demeaning. Finally, perpetrators' profiles also include persons who do not commit violence directly, but in fact they applaud it, facilitate it and might even benefit from it. Thus, an employee will receive (?) the money for a bus ticket paid by the victims, before calling the police to arrest them as irregular migrants.

The aversion to "foreignness" and diversity was also recorded in incidents against individuals considered "foreigners", even if they were Greek citizens. Those people are targeted because of their colour, national or ethnic origin. The perpetrators of these incidents show nationalist reflexes based on an over-simplified perception they have about blood ties amongst the citizens of a State.

The above-mentioned observations are also confirmed with regards to attacks on LGBTQI+ persons. Since its first recordings, the RVRN has noted that LGBTQI+ people are targeted by a wide range of perpetrators, including organized groups, neighbours, ordinary citizens, civil servants, law enforcement officials, and even family members. Acknowledging the extent of this issue, the RVRN stresses that the attacks against LGBTQI+ persons require particular attention, while the low number of complaints is of concern to actors across Europe.

The intensity of such phenomena is mitigated by the vigilance of some competent authorities. In 2018, the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights and the prosecution authorities undertook significant initiatives. These include mainly measures aiming to raise awareness and provide coordination with regard to the response to racist crime by all the competent authorities, the geographical extension of the appointment of Special Prosecutors for racist crime, the training of Prosecutors in racist crime by the OSCE, the classification of files for racist crime at the Athens Public Prosecutor's Office with the indication

“RV” and the management of the data on the case files and court judgements in order to make it easier to identify them. The RVRN supports these initiatives while contributing actively to the work of the National Council against Racism and Intolerance and to the development of a National Action Plan Against Racism.

This effort needs to be further strengthened by all competent authorities. The only way that the State can combat the reinforcement of racist trends, is through the dissemination of clear messages for the protection of human dignity across the country. Law enforcement officials and other civil servants experience a delicate balance of conflicting duties, which intensify stereotypes and may be manifested with violence or tolerance to racist crimes. The preventive measures that the law enforcement officials are called to implement at the national borders, are of questionable compatibility with human rights law. On the other hand, civil servants are not properly trained to counter stereotypes or avoid their expression during service. The pressure applied on public administration due to the shortcomings in reception services and the tolerance over discrimination incidents, enhance the dehumanization of the targeted groups.

Further to these introductory observations, the following findings, based on the RVRN recordings, briefly describe the quantitative and qualitative trends for 2018:

1. The support base for violent acts against refugees and migrants is expanding. The RVRN recorded incidents showing signs of organized attacks, or committed by organized groups. These groups proudly state that they are infused with extreme xenophobic ideologies, they adopt the relevant vocabulary and practices and believe that they are on a mission against the non-Greeks. In addition, the RVRN has recorded aggressions against asylum-seekers in other aspects of everyday life within the city. There are two trends: incidents involving families of refugees and unaccompanied minors when using public transportation and incidents where the perpetrators are either neighbours or the landlords in whose properties the refugees reside.
2. The RVRN has recorded criminal offences against persons who have Greek citizenship and are not targeted as migrants or refugees, but as “less” Greeks, due to their national or ethnic origin or colour.
3. The recordings of attacks on LGBTQI+ people are decreased, raising concerns about the low number of complaints across Europe. Besides, the position expressed since 2016, that the recording and reporting are linked to the provision of support services to the victims, seems to be confirmed.
4. The number of anti-Semitic incidents remains stable. The RVRN is aware of the many faces of anti-Semitism in Greece, which, as in other countries, is not limited to desecrations and vandalisms by groups, but it also penetrates large parts of the population and is reflected in everyday talks. For that, RVRN remains vigilant, acknowledging the need to form more alliances with the community.
5. A significant increase is recorded in incidents where law enforcement officials are either the perpetrators or just involved. In the vast majority of these incidents, the victims reported that they sustained physical violence in public spaces or inside police stations in Athens. Incidents involving civil servants, bear witness of the lack of tolerance to diversity, as well as the development of a culture of harassment, especially against LGBTQI+ people. Additionally, it is noted that when it comes to transgender individuals, the process of legal recognition of gender identity entails risks, because the need for privacy and non-exposure to further targeting has not yet been well acknowledged in practice

I. Working Methods of the Racist Violence Recording Network

There follows a thorough description of the RVRN working methods, with a view to promoting awareness and transparency in relation to RVRN activities and raising public awareness about the results of such activities.

A. Institutional Observations

This report is the eighth in a row to be published by the RVRN. The initiative for the establishment of the RVRN was taken in mid-2011 by the Greek National Commission for Human Rights (GNCHR) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Greece (UNHCR) on the basis of two major findings: a) the identified absence of an official and effective data collection system on racist violence and b) the need to coordinate organisations which recorded, on their own initiative, incidents of racist violence against people who sought their services.

The RVRN is comprised of actors offering medical, social, legal services or/and coming in direct contact with victims of racist violence or victims of other hate- or bias-motivated violent attacks as well as organizations established by the groups which are usually targeted by racist violence themselves. To join the RVRN a necessary precondition is respect for human rights, diversity, multiculturalism, and freedom of religion as well as action in tackling discrimination and intolerance. Apart from the coordinators, the UNHCR and the GNCHR, the RVRN is comprised of 46 Non-Governmental Organisations and civil society actors, as well as the Greek Ombudsman and the Migrants' Integration Council of the Municipality of Athens, as observers¹. The participating actors acknowledge and jointly pursue combating racist violence as well as all racially-motivated acts on the grounds of race, colour, religion, descent, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, sex characteristics and disability.

For the RVRN, “**incidents of racist violence**” include any criminal acts, or violent acts or behaviour against people targeted because of their national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, sex characteristics and disabilities. The RVRN also records criminal acts or violent activities or behaviours against *human rights defenders*, namely against people who promote and protect human rights and are targeted as a result.

In pursuit of the common objective, the RVRN: a) submits recommendations to the Greek authorities

1. RVRN Membership during 2018: Aitima, Solidarity Now, Antigone-Information and Documentation Centre, University of Aegean Anti-Racist Observatory, Arsis, Doctors of the World (MdM), Amnesty International, Network for Children's Rights, Network for Social Support of Refugees and Immigrants, “Pleiades - Hellenic Action for Human Rights”, Hellenic League for Human Rights, Hellenic Red Cross, Greek Council for Refugees, Greek Forum of Migrants, Greek Forum of Refugees, Human Rights Commission of the Bar Association of Rhodes, Positive Voice, Medical Intervention, Caritas Athens, Caritas Hellas, Centre for Research on Women's Issues “Diotima”, Center for Life, “Babel” Day Centre, Centre for the Support of Repatriated and Migrants - Ecumenical Refugee Program, Network for the Support of Refugee and Migrant Rights (Patras), World Without War and Violence, LATHRA? - Solidarity Committee for Chios refugees, METAdrasi, Rainbow Families, Group of Lawyers for the Rights of Refugees and Migrants, Group of Lawyers for the Support of Refugee and Migrant Rights (Thessaloniki), Homosexual and Lesbian Community of Greece, Association of Afghans United In Greece, Association of Social Workers of Greece, Greek Transgender Support Association, Faros tou Kosmou, Forum of Migrants in Crete, Refugee Support Aegean, Act Up Hellas, ASANTE, Colour Youth - LGBTQ Youth Community of Athens, Generation 2.0 RED, HIAS in Greece, HumanRights360, Melissa Network, PRAKSIS.

in compliance with Greek and international law on the protection of human rights; b) promotes the provision of information to the public and raises public awareness on combating racist violence; c) carries out consultations with various actors on special issues relating to racist violence; d) enhances collaboration with other actors in pursuit of combating racist violence; e) organises and participates in training programmes held by civil society and other competent institutional bodies in relation to issues pertaining to the identification, recording, and combating of hate crimes.

Ever since October 2011, when the RVRN began to effectively operate, its scope of activity has been constantly growing. The RVRN engages in institutional initiatives for the improvement of the response to racist crime and seeks to raise awareness of the racist crime in every possible way. To this end, it responds to a variety of reporting requests from researchers, journalists, students. In addition, RVRN contributes to the dissemination of legislation against racism and racist crime through participation in seminars, trainings and public debates. Acknowledgement of RVRN's role in combating racist crime is reflected in the frequent invitations that it is receiving by international and European organizations, as well as other bodies, in order to present its data but also to provide detailed information about its activities and to demonstrate its methodology.

B. Methodology

The RVRN has been applying a strict methodology from the outset, recording incidents exclusively on the basis of interviews conducted with the victims. The victims' willingness to come forward is therefore key in terms of the number of incidents that are actually recorded. All members of the RVRN agreed on a cooperation agreement which sets out the rights and obligations of participants, and they adopted the consolidated recording form of the RVRN. Each RVRN organisation member appoints focal points to record the incidents, i.e. social workers, lawyers, or other professionals or volunteers, who are trained by the RVRN. Recording forms are completed anonymously and used exclusively by the RVRN for the purpose of combating racism and hate crimes.

The documentation of racist violence in Greece by the RVRN has led some institutions to fund special programmes, in order to promote recording practices. As a result, several RVRN members are now implementing a series of programmes to support the recording procedures, while offering various other supporting services to the victims of racist violence. Thus, while the RVRN remains a collective initiative with common operational rules and common objectives, the individual activities of its members have a complementary and mutually empowering impact. Based on the experience gained through the implementation of these programmes, the RVRN acknowledges the positive effects achieved in terms of broadening the use of RVRN tools and enabling the supporting bodies to address more situations.

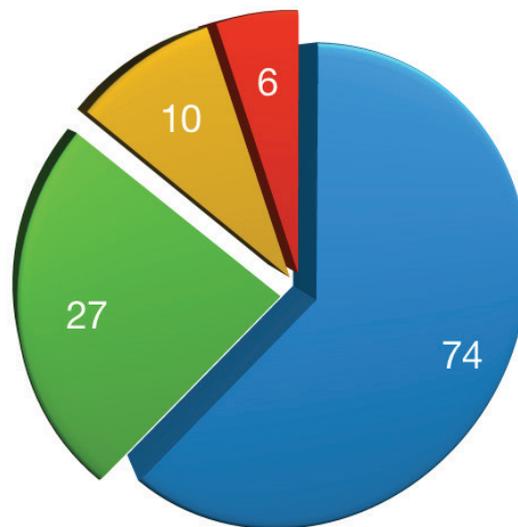
II. General findings of the recorded attacks

During the period January-December 2018, the RVRN documented, through interviews with victims, **117 incidents** of racist violence, with more than 130 victims. In **74 incidents** the victims were **migrants or refugees** on grounds of ethnic origin, religion, colour, **associations of third country nationals, human rights defenders due to their connection with refugees and migrants**, as well as a memorial to the victims of shipwrecks. In **6 incidents**, Greek citizens were targeted due to their colour, foreign or ethnic

origin (members of the Roma community). In **9 incidents**, the targets were Jewish sacred or symbolic places and the Jewish community and in **1 incident** the target was a Greek citizen due to **educational activity against anti-Semitism or perceived religion**. In **27 incidents** the targets were **LGBTQI+ persons** (including **5 refugees, asylum-seekers and EU citizens**).

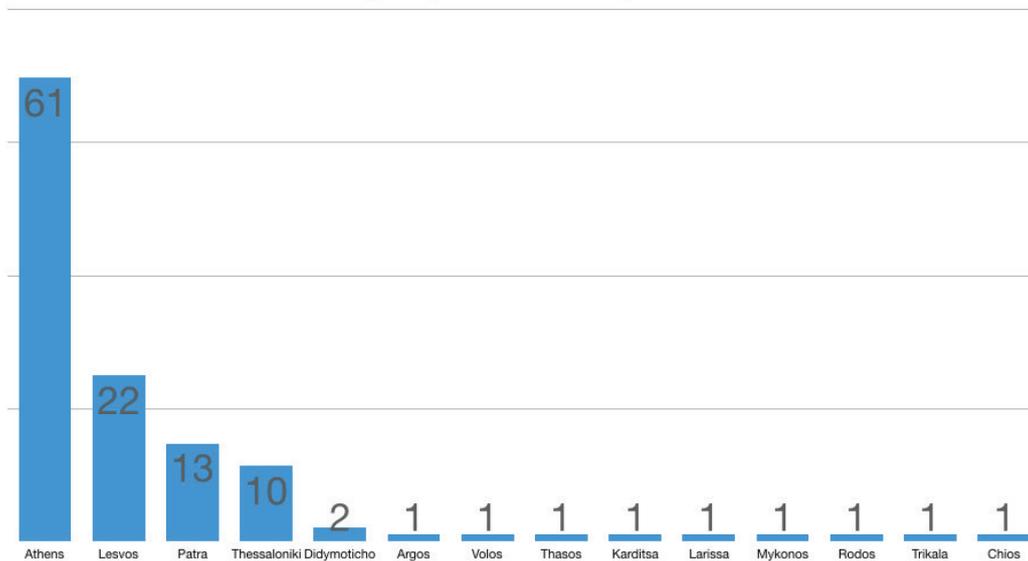
In **59 incidents** more than one victim was targeted, whereas in 63 incidents the assault was committed by a group (of at least 2 persons).

Motivation of the attack according to victims



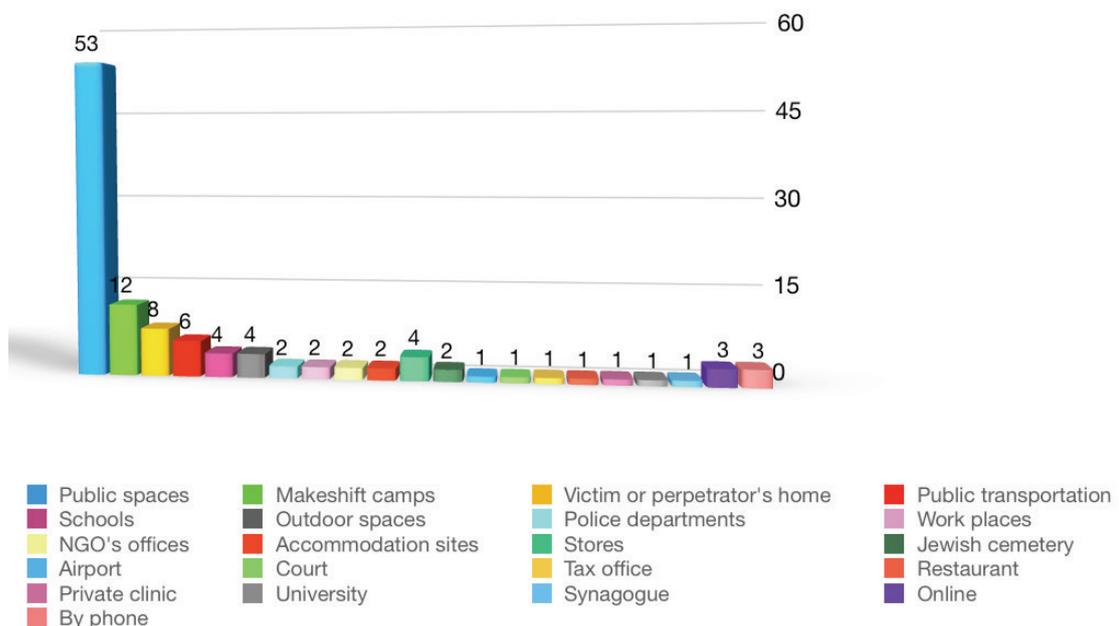
- Immigrants or refugees
- LGBTQI+
- Religion
- Greek citizens due to colour, ethnic or ethnotic origin

Geographical dispersion



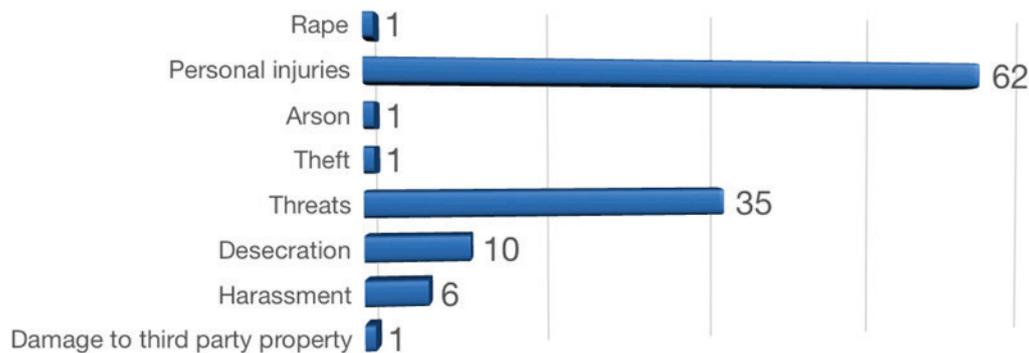
Geographical dispersion: 61 incidents took place in Athens, mainly close to the city centre, but incidents were also recorded in areas such as Piraeus, Nikaia, Aspropyrgos, Menidi, Mesogeion Avenue and Liossia. In the rest of the country, 22 incidents were recorded in Lesvos, 13 in Patras, 10 incidents in Thessaloniki, 2 in Didymoteicho and 1 incident each in Argos, in Volos, in Thassos, in Karditsa, in Larissa, in Mykonos, in Rhodes, in Trikala and in Chios.

Sites



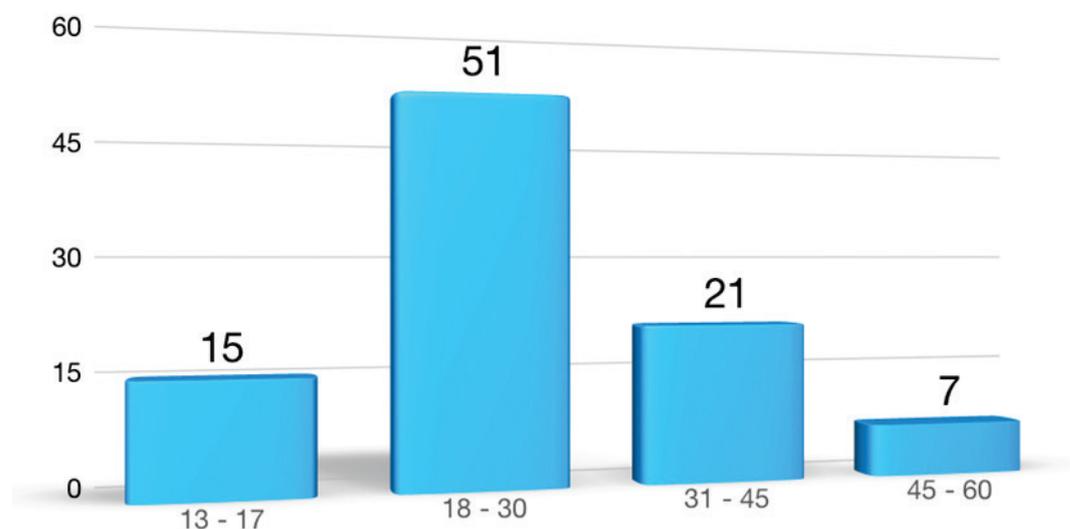
Sites: 53 incidents took place in public spaces (streets, squares, near an accommodation facility, during a demonstration), 12 incidents in a makeshift camp and the nearby port, 8 incidents in the victim or perpetrator's home, or in the building where the victims and perpetrators reside, 6 incidents in public transportation, bus stops and stations, 4 incidents in schools, 4 incidents in fields and outdoor spaces in villages, 2 incidents in Police Departments, 2 incidents in the victims' work place, 2 incidents in offices of associations and NGOs, 2 instances in accommodation sites, 2 in stores, 2 at the Jewish cemetery, 2 at the car park of a department store and a supermarket, 1 at the EL. Venizelos airport, 1 incident in a court, 1 incident at the tax office, 1 in a restaurant, 1 in a private clinic, 1 incident in a university, 1 incident at the synagogue, 3 online and 3 by phone.

Characteristics of attacks



Characteristics of the attacks: A significant number of the assaults resulted in **personal injuries and other serious offences**. Among the recorded incidents, there was 1 rape, 62 incidents of personal injuries or injuries along with verbal abuse and threats, thefts and other property damages, 1 arson, 1 theft, 35 incidents involving threats, verbal abuse, factual insult, 10 incidents of desecration, 6 incidents of verbal or other types of harassment, 1 incident of damage to third party property along with threats.

Age of victims



Victims: In **54** incidents the victims who contacted the RVRN were **men**, of which **2** were **transgender men**, whereas in **28** incidents the victims were **women**, of which **6** were **transgender women**. In **8** incidents, the victim group was **mixed** (in **2** incidents the targets were **mothers with their children**). In 15 incidents, minors between **13-17 years of age** were targeted due to their foreign origin, religion, ethnic origin or sexual orientation, whereas in 51 incidents the victims were **18-30 years old**. In 21 incidents, the victims were **31-45 years old**, whereas in 7 incidents they were **46 -60 years old**.

Perpetrators: According to the testimony of the victims, in **84** incidents the perpetrators of the recorded attacks were **men**, in **13** incidents **women** and in **6** incidents the attack came from **mixed groups of men and women**. In the rest of the cases the perpetrators were not visible by the victims (e.g. case of desecration of sacred spaces). In 9 incidents the perpetrators were **minors**, in 26 incidents they belonged to the 19-30 years age group. In 16 incidents the perpetrators were between 31-45 years old, while 18 incidents with older perpetrators were recorded (up to 78 years old).

According to the victims, the perpetrators are in the **vast majority Greek citizens** (86 incidents). 12 incidents were also recorded, in which the perpetrators were foreigners. In the majority of the attacks, more than one perpetrators were reported. 62 assaults were committed by groups of 2-10 people, whereas in 42 cases only one perpetrator was reported.

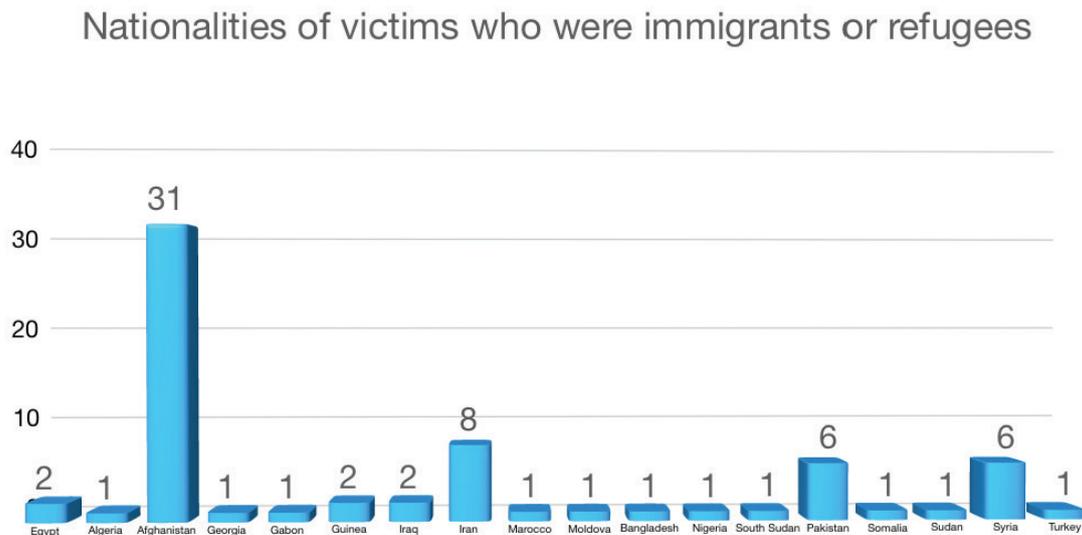
III. Analysis of the findings

This section analyses the assaults against refugees and migrants (A), against Greeks on grounds of national or ethnic origin and/or colour (B), against LGBTQI+ individuals and actors (C), as well as anti-Semitic attacks (D). As in previous reports, specific reference is made to incidents involving law enforcement officers and civil servants (E).

A. Attacks against refugees and migrants

1. Quantitative data

The recorded assaults against refugees and migrants due to national origin, religion or colour, are as follows:



Victims: 49 assaults against men (in 14 situations the victims were 14-19 years old), 17 assaults against women, out of which 2 were against them and their children (the women were 21-54 years old), 4 assaults against migrant associations. The victims of the incidents recorded in 2018 came from **Egypt** (1), **Algeria** (3), **Afghanistan** (31), **Georgia** (1), **Guinea** (1), **Gabon** (1), **Iraq** (2), **Iran** (8), **Morocco** (1), **Moldova** (1), **Nigeria** (1), **South Sudan** (1), **Pakistan** (1), **Somalia** (1), **Sudan** (1), **Syria** (6) and **Turkey** (1).

Legal status of the victims: 37 incidents against asylum-seekers, 5 against persons lawfully residing in Greece and 6 against refugees, 3 against unaccompanied minors (unregistered), 15 against undocumented third country nationals.

Perpetrators: According to the victims, the perpetrators were mainly Greek citizens (55 incidents) and men (52 incidents). In 3 incidents the perpetrators were women. In 5 incidents the perpetrators were foreigners and in 3 incidents the group of perpetrators was mixed. In 11 incidents the perpetrators were 16-30 years old; in 5 incidents 31-40 years old and in 6 incidents 41-70 years old.

2. Organized or semi-informal groups on a mission against refugees and migrants

During 2018, the activities of extreme, formal and informal xenophobic groups was further strengthened in the region and the city of Athens. The RVRN has recorded attacks that either have features of structured organizations, or committed by organized groups. These groups proudly state that they are infused with extreme xenophobic ideologies, they adopt the relevant vocabulary and practices and they believe that they are on a mission against the non-Greeks. In this category, the RVRN includes the attacks for which the structured organization “Krypteia” claimed responsibility, i.e. the arson of the offices of the Afghan Migrant and Refugee Community in Greece, as well as threats to the Forum of Migrants and other members of the RVRN. In these attacks, the perpetrators threatened the actors and employees because they are working with “*illegal settlers*”:

«... we've targeted you. Targeting means the destruction of facilities, and the selective violence against staff. We are nationalists fighting to drive out all **illegal settlers** and if necessary, we will take all necessary measures for the appropriate conformance of those showing solidarity to the **illegal settlers**. We say that we intend no harm to Greeks, but we will take up the conformance of some if needed. **Illegal settlers** are our top priority.

The assaults that took place on April 2018 in Sappho square in Mytilene, also have features of a structured organization. According to victims of that night, there were dozens of men and women among the perpetrators who had covered their features and they were throwing rocks, bottles and objects ablaze. Extremist groups infiltrated and took advantage of that gathering of refugees and residents of Lesbos and they brutally attacked refugees, including several young children. It is therefore confirmed that the attraction of members from extremist groups is motivated by the tensions created as a result of the management of refugee and migrant flows.

The RVRN underlines the link between the rise in xenophobic trends and racist behaviour and the overcrowding of refugees over a long period of time on the islands, as a result of the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement. Therefore, there is great need to speed up the registration, asylum, and vulnerability assessment procedures, as well as, in general, all procedures relating to status determination; moreover, to further ease overcrowding on the islands and promote a faire distribution system of new arrivals across the mainland, both for humanitarian reasons and in order to prevent rise in social tensions and far-right rhetoric.

The list of organized incidents also includes assaults where perpetrators are on a vehicle and target the victim who is either walking alongside the accommodation sites or is coming out of an area linked to third-country nationals. In addition, an assault on unaccompanied minors by a group of 8-10 people who wore hoods and caps, also had features of a structured organization. In these assaults, the perpetrators ask the victims what their origin is («Where are you from?»), which is something that indicates and heralds that the violence that follows is linked to the victim's origin. Additionally, the perpetrators strike their victims in visible spots so that the sight of the wounds is intimidating for the other members of the victim's community.

3. Incidents involving single parent families and unaccompanied minors within the urban area.

In addition to organized violence by far-right groups, the RVRN has recorded aggression against refugees in other aspects of everyday life. There are two main trends: incidents involving refugee families and unaccompanied minors when using public transportation means and incidents where the perpetrators are either neighbours or the landlords in whose properties the refugees reside. Apart from the incident in which unaccompanied minors were forced to get off the bus at Oraiokastros, other incidents where the victims were mothers with baby carts were recorded. The common characteristic of these incidents is the inability of victims to board and travel following a demeaning behaviour against them.

Additionally, the RVRN recorded some incidents with tenants within a building against lone mother-led asylum seeking families with minor children, to whom some apartments of that building were rented. The occupiers tried to force them out of the building using derogatory language, causing tensions, even resulting to physical violence. Those incidents intensified during the Ramadan period, as the women started wearing the hijab (headscarf) and the other tenants watched them going around with it. After that, the incidents continued with greater intensity.

4. The identification of migration as revocation of rights

RVRN recordings have highlighted over time that the assaults mostly target asylum-seekers and undocumented third country nationals. However, we are aware that there are specific recording programmes which, with the engagement of cultural mediators, which may highlight the violence on migrants and refugees with legal permits residing in Greece for a long time.

In 2018, some incidents were recorded in which the lack of a culture of effective integration and acceptance of long-term resident migrants, was apparent. This category includes the violent incident against a Bangladeshi who was attacked with a crowbar outside a big supermarket in Lesbos, because he dared to point out to a driver that he had parked in a disabled persons parking space and asked him to park elsewhere.

«It was 6:30 on Saturday afternoon. There weren't many around. I saw a car parking in a disabled persons parking space and told the driver that the other parking space was empty and that he is not supposed to park in a disabled persons parking space. A few minutes after I found myself on the ground. At first, I did not react, they told me not to bother. The driver started swearing at me, saying that I am an illegal migrant, while I do have a legal permit. I couldn't even get a chance to talk to him and then he pulled out a crowbar and he attacked me. If I hadn't put my hand in front of my head, I'm afraid I wouldn't be alive.»

One more incident that took place in Rhodes falls into this category. The victim, who was employed as a sous-chef, sustained demeaning behaviour and physical violence by the restaurant owner, while the head-chef had no complaint. Specifically, the owner's words were: "...this is not your country, this is Greece".

B. Attacks against Greeks on grounds of national or ethnic origin and/or colour

The RVRN has recorded criminal offences against persons who have the Greek citizenship which are not targeted as migrants or refugees, but as «less» Greeks, due to their national or ethnic origin or colour. The racial discrimination in the context of citizenship has been highlighted by the UN Special Rapporteur on modern forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance, and she concludes that for nationalism, in its broad sense, the nation is perceived in terms of blood ties and origin. The increase in racist violence and hate speech is also attributed to the resurgence of nationalist populism, which has played a decisive role in the diffusion and «normalization» of extreme messages of intolerance, which were adopted by marginal and extremist groups²

Within this group falls an incident about a Roma male who was shot by the perpetrator, on the occasion of some cut leaves which fell into the latter's property. Among other words, the perpetrator said "you filthy, bloody Gypsies, I'll show you". During the incident, the perpetrator's daughter was shouting from the balcony, using similar vocabulary. The eyewitness describes that the perpetrator went to his house while his daughter kept on shouting «Kill all the bloody Gypsies». The perpetrator went to the balcony holding a shotgun, he pointed at the victim and shot him. He reloaded the shotgun to shoot again, but it jammed. The perpetrator kept on pointing his shotgun at the witness and the others (Roma as well) who had gathered, and he didn't allow them to take the victim to the hospital. The police arrived a bit later, they broke into the perpetrator's apartment and arrested him. The victim is in the intensive care unit in critical condition, but he has lost his vision.

Each of the following examples, is an incident that occurred under different circumstances, but eloquently depict the breadth of stereotypes against the new generation of people of different or mixed ethnic origins and / or colour.

1. A young woman of Nigerian origin was verbally abused by a tax office civil servant who was on duty at the time. The civil servant believed that the victim had a fake, Greek ID card and she shouted at her saying that «she is not Greek, because she didn't have Greek blood, and that she should go back to her country.» The victim complained and the civil servant said that "she can take her complaints to the Greek state which issued her ID card or call the police." The victim said that the civil servant was offensive to all those who «looked like» foreigners, she was shouting at them also, instead of serving them, while her colleagues did not say anything. Two young eyewitnesses defended the victim asking the civil servant to apologize. The civil servant didn't apologize but she provided her services to the victim.
2. During a taxi ride, the taxi driver was talking disrespectfully about refugees and migrants, using expressions like "ape-faced", "illegal migrants who dragged themselves into our country and we are feeding them". When the victim replied that she was Albanian, the driver said: "You dragged yourself here as well, go back to your home", and he kept on insulting the victim with vulgar expressions. When the victim asked to get off, before reaching the final destination and after she paid the ride, the driver threw the change on her face and kept on insulting her. After that, he got off the car, and started kicking the victim, throwing her to the ground. The incident ended with the intervention of passersby.

2. A/73/305 (2018), Contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, nap. 17.

3. A photojournalist, who was at a protest over the Agreement and the name issue of the Republic of North Macedonia, while trying to take pictures of the riot police, suddenly felt an arm pulling him to the back by his camera strap. As he turned around, he saw the perpetrator, who had a helmet on, holding him with both hands, and he felt his neck excoriating. He tried to defend himself, but he saw 10 more people with helmets on, 3-4 had military trousers on and they were holding rafters with flags. They asked whom was he working for and the victim replied: "Let me do my job, I am a photojournalist". They kept on pulling and calling him "half-breed". The victim believes that he was considered a third country national due to his features and mixed origin. However, when he spoke Greek, they called him a "half-breed". They hit his thigh with a rafter. He took his camera off of his neck to show them what he had photographed, but two others took it. When he turned around to check on his camera, he didn't find it.

C. Assaults against LGBTQI+ individuals and actors

From 2015 to 2017, the recorded assaults against LGBTQI+ persons outnumber all the others. In the 2017 report, the RVRN highlighted the downward trend of recorded assaults against LGBTQI+ persons, stressing that the low number of complaints is an alarming trend across Europe. That trend was confirmed in 2018 as well. The RVRN participated in a study on the difficulties in accessing justice or even simpler mechanisms for recording assaults against LGBTQI+ persons³. Besides, the opinion expressed since 2016, according to which the recording of incidents and reporting are linked to the provision of support services to the victims, seems to be confirmed⁴. Recorded assaults against LGBTQI+ persons, depict the diffusion of verbal attacks, which in some cases lead to physical violence.

1. Assaults on grounds of sexual orientation

Out of the 27 incidents against LGBTQI+ persons, in **18** the victims were targeted due to their sexual orientation.

Victims: 12 incidents against men, 3 against women, 4 against a mixed group and 2 incidents against LGBTQI+ persons' rights defenders. **Age of the victims:** In 5 incidents the victims were 14-18 years old; in 7 they were 20-31 years old and in 5 they were 32-54 years old.

Perpetrators: In 14 incidents the perpetrators were men, 3 of whom were minors; in 4 incidents the perpetrators were 20-30 years old and in 3 incidents they were 50-60 years old. In 4 incidents, the perpetrators were women, mainly 16-45 years old.

Among the recorded assaults there was 1 incident of rape, while 6 incidents involved personal injuries along with verbal assault and threats. In one of those, the victim, a minor homosexual man, was assaulted while waiting at the tram stop. At first, the perpetrator asked the victim "What are looking at, you f...?". He then started using derogatory language with homophobic vocabulary and phrases such as "Greece is full of f...!". After that, the perpetrator punched the victim several times. According to the victim's

3. T. Stavrinaki, "The Law is not enough: Anti-LGBTQI hate crime in Greece" in P. Godzisz and G. Viggiani (eds.), *Anti-LGBT Hate Crime in Europe, Working Papers on Research, Policy and Practice* (Warsaw: Lambda Warsaw 2018) 128.

4. Annual report 2016, p. 13.

testimony, none of the eyewitnesses reacted, except for a lady who intervened and told the perpetrator to stop. Then the perpetrator fled. The victim went to the police station to report the incident and asked the police officers to use the recorded material caught on the security cameras of the tram station where the incident took place. However, according to the victim's testimony, the police officers told him that this cannot be done on grounds of confidentiality.

Based on the recorded incidents, the RVRN pointed out that any confrontation or tension may end up to a racist crime, even if it is not like that from its outset. In an incident that was recorded in 2018, a confrontation that was triggered due to the on-road behaviour of a professional driver ended up in a homophobic assault: The perpetrator, using homophobic vocabulary, grabbed a crowbar and threatened the victim, while his partner was hit by the taxi driver. Right after that, the taxi driver fled. The first victim took the taxi's plate number and went straight to the police station to file a complaint. The police tracked down the perpetrator immediately.

In 2018, the online attacks against Colour Youth continued. A typical example was a celebrity's post on social media: "Board them on a train to Auschwitz". It is worth mentioning that in her profile picture, this perpetrator has a Nazi soldier with the phrase "Defend Europe", referring to the argument that the Nazis were defending the white / Aryan Europe.

The RVRN reiterates that the attacks against the defenders of the rights of LGBTQI+ individuals, have an increased impact, because the LGBTQI+ organizations have been set up by the LGBTQI+ community and a large number of their members is coming from the targeted group.

2. Attacks due to gender identity

In 2018, **9 incidents** of assaults due to gender identity were recorded.

Victims: In **6** incidents the victims were women 20-44 years old and in 3 incidents the victims were men 16-36 years old.

In 2018, 3 incidents of physical violence along with verbal assault and threats were recorded. One was a case of domestic violence while from the other two, the risks for transgender individuals (in this case they were women), even in busy public places, can be confirmed. In the first incident, the victim was a Syrian, female asylum-seeker who was assaulted by a group of men. They followed her in the locale's bathroom, they slapped her repeatedly and after that they hit her with a crowbar on the head. At the same time, they were using transphobic vocabulary and they threatened to kill her.

"The police arrived and I explained to them that I was attacked for being a transgender woman. Even though I was on the ground and covered in blood, the police officers didn't protect me. They sided with the perpetrators, because one of them was a minor".

The police called an ambulance and she was taken to the hospital, where they stitched her head. The victim reported that her whole body was in pain.

In the second incident, a transgender woman tried to avoid the group of perpetrators, who were sitting at a fast-food. At first, she tried not to reply to the provocative insults. In the end, she replied to the vulgar

threats, warning the perpetrators that she had self-defence skills. The group assaulted her and threw her on the ground. The victim managed to protect, to an extent, the head, the diaphragm and her ribs, but they had brutally hit her. The victim reported to the RVRN that ever since, she avoids walking alone, even in the day.

Apart from the harassing behaviour that transgender people experience by civil servants, which will be elaborated in the relevant sections, the RVRN wishes to focus to the verbal attacks against transgender people at the time of their transition⁵. Those recorded incidents show that transgender people sustain verbal abuse, almost on a daily basis, which intensifies as their transitioning progresses and it becomes more visible. A victim of such attacks reported:

“I am making this complaint in order to have it somewhere in writing, if an even more serious incident happens, for example an incident of physical violence, so I can report it, and know the chronic traumatic and everyday nature of intimidation, ridicule, threat of violence that I am experiencing when I’m just walking around in my neighbourhood.”

D. Anti-Semitic attacks

In 2018, the RVRN recorded 9 anti-Semitic attacks. In particular, there were 6 incidents of desecration of Holocaust memorials in Athens and Thessaloniki, 2 incidents of desecration of the Jewish cemetery in Nikaia and Trikala as well as 1 incident of vandalism of the synagogue in Volos. In these incidents the perpetrators drew Nazi symbols or words and slogans referring to the Holocaust, threatening the Jewish community as a whole. Additionally, there was an incident against a teacher, who is being harassed severely due to his educational activity against anti-Semitism.

According to the Fundamental Rights Agency—FRA, the challenge regarding the rise of anti-Semitism worldwide, has the following paradox: According to the most recent Eurobarometer results, while anti-Semitic behaviour is so common that it is considered a normal situation, only 36% of those who answered believe that anti-Semitism has increased. In addition, only 4 out of 10 Europeans believe that children in schools learn enough about the Holocaust⁶.

The RVRN is aware of the many faces of anti-Semitism in Greece, which, as in other countries, is not limited to desecrations and vandalisms by groups, but it also penetrates large parts of the population and is reflected in the everyday talks. For the above, the RVRN participated, with great interest, to a meeting held by the General Secretariat of Transparency and Human Rights.

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5. Transitioning is the process of changing one’s gender presentation on a social and/or medical and /or legal level. On a social level by following the norms and behaviours that constitute the desired social gender, on a medical level through transgender hormone therapy, sex reassignment surgery * etc and on a legal level by changing the gender in the official documents. This procedure may vary considerably among individuals. Source: <https://www.colouryouth.gr/terms/>
 6. FRA, Experiences and perceptions of antisemitism - Second survey on discrimination and hate crime against Jews in the EU (2018). See the relevant Eurobarometer survey: <http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/survey/getsurveydetail/instruments/special/surveyky/2220>

E. Attacks with the involvement of law enforcement officials and civil servants

The RVRN analyses the incidents involving law enforcement officials and civil servants in a different section, because of their discrediting nature.

1. Police violence

The RVRN records incidents where there is concrete evidence (verbal abuse, threats, circumstances, etc.) demonstrating racist motives by law enforcement officials. A significant increase is recorded in incidents where law enforcement officials are either the perpetrators or just involved. In **22 recorded incidents**, the perpetrators were law enforcement officials, in comparison to the 10 incidents recorded in 2017. In 5 incidents, the victims report that they sustained unprovoked violence by law enforcement officials during the course of the events at Sappho square in Mytilene, in April.

In these attacks the victims were mainly **undocumented** refugees and migrants (11 incidents), **unaccompanied minors** (3 incidents), **asylum-seekers** (6 incidents), a **refugee** (1 incident), a **Greek transgender woman** (1 incident).

As regards the characteristic features of these attacks, they all involved disagreeable behaviour demonstrated by law enforcement officials during routine or non-routine police control operations. In the vast majority of these incidents (19 incidents), the victims reported that they sustained physical violence in public spaces or inside police departments in Athens.

Recorded incidents at the borders

1. The situation at the Port of Patras

In 11 incidents the victims, while trying to enter the port or to go near it, sustained physical violence by law enforcement officials. It should be mentioned that in 7 incidents the victims were 14-19 years old. The following description raises serious questions about the compatibility of the preventive measures that, according to the complainant, the law enforcement officials used:

“Two people without uniforms caught me at the port, they punched me on the nose and it bled. They took me to the office, they handcuffed me using plastic handcuffs and hit me with a baton. We were 2 individuals. They told me to sit with my head bent over my knees. I told them I was sick, but they were shouting at me and they even ripped the referral note to the hospital that I was given by solidarity doctors. They let us go 4 hours later.”

2. Didymoteicho

The use of preventive measures at the northern borders of Greece has been of particular concern for several actors in the field of refugee rights and human rights in general. The RVRN recorded an incident where a law enforcement official resorted to violence because he believed that it was legal to do so against people who are not Christians and entered Greece illegally.

"I was arrested by police officers, along with my other nine fellows, in a village near Didymoteicho. After frisking, we handed over our cell phones and we boarded a police van. They took us to a camp where they gather all those that they send back to Turkey. While waiting there, they kept on bringing more people. When we boarded the van again, some police officers hit some of my fellows. One of them wore a military uniform. I asked him why they do that and they use violence, knowing it is illegal. He immediately raised his arm and hit me on the shoulder, neck and face. He asked me in English if he, being a Christian, had come to my country, how we would have treated him".

Border control, as well as the management of migrant and refugee populations, intensify the stereotypes of law enforcement officials, who under certain circumstances, believe that violence is part of their operational mission. However, these procedures foster the distancing of authorities' practices from legality, as well the de-humanization of the targeted groups and ultimately of the involved authorities themselves.

2. Attacks by civil servants

In 7 incidents the perpetrators were either civil servant or employees at public transportation. The categorization of incidents based on the reason for becoming a target, shows that all targeted groups face problems when dealing with the public sector. Specifically, the RVRN recorded 4 incidents against asylum-seekers, 1 incident against a Greek woman because of her colour, 1 incident due to sexual orientation and 1 incident due to gender identity.

Those incidents indicate the lack of tolerance for diversity, as well as the development of a culture of harassment for LGBTQI+ people, even within working places⁷. Apart from the aforementioned⁸ incidents at the tax office against a Greek woman because of her colour, and within public transportation against asylum-seekers, the RVRN focuses in the incidents due to sexual orientation and gender identity.

In an incident against a ministry staff, the victim had been verbally attacked and harassed by a senior staff, on the ground of sexual orientation. It is noteworthy that in the particular working place, due to the hierarchy and the dependency of the employees' promotion on their superiors, that incident takes greater proportions, especially considering the fact that the victim was in a trial period. The victim felt that the perpetrator violated his privacy, as there was nothing that could legitimize the perpetrator to hold that conversation. In addition, the incident shocked the victim, as for the first time in his adult life, someone talked to him in this manner about his sexual orientation. The victim reported to the RVRN, that he felt that homosexuality constitutes an obstacle to his career. Furthermore, the incident intimidated the victim, as due to the trial period status, there is an inequality of powers between the victim and the perpetrator. It should also be noted that when the perpetrator was on duty and encountered the victim anew, he pretended that he didn't know him and that they had never met before.

Finally, the RVRN recalls that it welcomed the legal recognition of gender identity on the basis of L.

7. See RVRN Annual Report 2017, p. 18.

8. Section III, A 3 and B.

4491/2017 (Government Gazette A152). However, the process of legal recognition of gender identity entails risks, because the need of privacy and non-exposure to further targeting has not yet been acknowledged in practice. In an incident recorded by the RVRN, during a hearing to change the sex and first name in a birth certificate, the judge did not respect the specificity of the procedure, forcing the applicants to speak loudly in a public session, in violation of the provision of article 4 par. (2) L. 4491/2017, according to which “The statement is made in a private office without publicity”.

IV. Complaints and authorities’ response

The RVRN monitors thoroughly the implementation of the legislation for combatting racist crimes as well as the relevant practice of all actors involved. The RVRN aims to identify and point out the legal and practical obstacles in the victims’ access to justice. This section analyses the RVRN data on complaints (A) and on other information related to the police and judicial response to racist violence, including measures adopted by the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights (B).

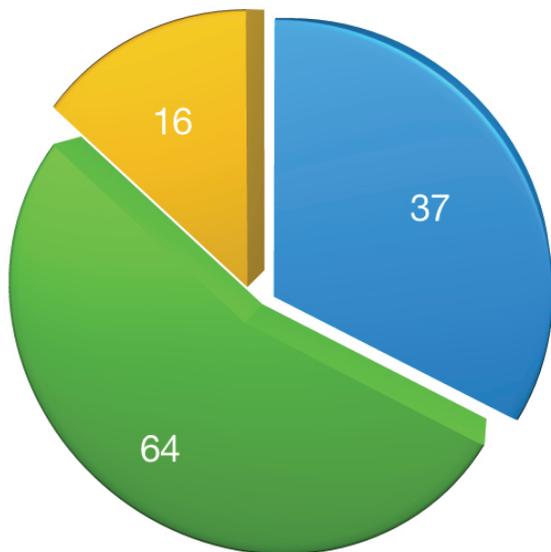
A. Analysis of the RVRN data

At the time of recording by the RVRN’s organizations, 37 incidents out of 95 had been reported to the police. 19 of those incidents related to assaults against refugees and migrants, as well as their associations, 2 against defenders, 9 related to anti-Semitic desecrations and vandalisms, 4 related to the ethnic origin of Greek citizens, while only 3 related to serious attacks against LGBTQI+ persons.

In 16 incidents, the victims stated that they had not reported the incident to the police but intended to do so. In 56 incidents, the victims stated that they would not take further steps due to fear; or due to language and communication issues with the authorities; or lack of trust in the authorities, as well as due to bureaucracy. In two incidents a complaint was filled to the Greek Ombudsman.

It is therefore clear that more incidents against refugees and immigrants were reported to the police. However, the lack of trust in the authorities is recorded within the group of asylum-seekers as well. A typical example is the case of a victim of the incidents that took place at Sappho Square in Mytilene, who said that he did not want to take any further action, as nobody was arrested.

Reported incidents



- Incidents reported to the police
- Incidents reported to RVRN member organisations
- Incidents that the victims stated they had not reported to the police but intended to do so

B. Authorities' response to racist violence

The RVRN constantly pursues the best possible cooperation with the police and prosecuting authorities. As previously stated, the cooperation between civil society and the police on the combat against racist crime has been viewed as successful, since, besides supporting the victim, it also allows some shortcomings on the part of the police to be rectified.

1. Recording of incidents and response by the Police

According to the information communicated to the RVRN by the Hellenic Police, from 01.01.2018 until 31.12.2018 the competent agencies of the Hellenic Police Force recorded a total of 226 incidents, potentially involving racist motives, 63 of which were related to hate speech. Out of the 226 incidents, in 170 the police authorities took charge and conducted preliminary investigations either ex officio or following a complaint, whereas in the remaining 56 incidents the police authorities took charge on the basis of instructions by the prosecution authorities ordering a preliminary investigation.

TYPE OF COMPETENT SERVICE	
POLICE DEPARTMENTS COMBATING RACIST VIOLENCE	150
POLICE DEPARTMENTS AND SECURITY DEPARTMENTS	53
DIVISION OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS	3
CYBER CRIME DIVISION	1
SECURITY SUB-DIRECTORATE OF ATTICA	19
TOTAL	226

As regards the perpetrators:

- 104 incidents involved citizens;
- 7 incidents involved citizens and unidentified perpetrators;
- 15 incidents involved law enforcement officials;
- 10 incidents involved organised groups;
- 87 incidents involved unidentified perpetrators.
- 1 incident involved citizens and unidentified perpetrators and law enforcement officials.
- 2 incidents involved citizens and law enforcement officials.

The investigation revealed that:

- In 152 incidents the motive was related to the victim's national or ethnic origin.
- In 2 incidents to the victim's descent.
- In 3 incidents to the victim's colour.
- In 5 incidents to the victim's race.
- In 28 incidents to the victim's religion.
- In 29 incidents to the victim's sexual orientation.
- In 11 incidents to the victim's gender identity.
- In 16 incidents to the victim's disability.
- In 1 incident it was related to other/ unspecified factors.

76% of the victims were men and 24% were women.

VICTIMS PER CITIZENSHIP	%
EGYPT	2.29
ETHIOPIA	0.57
ALBANIA	5.71
ALGERIA	1.14
NORTH MACEDONIA	1.14
BULGARIA	1.14
GEORGIA	0.57
GREECE	34.29
INDIA	0.57
IRAK	6.29
IRAN	4.00
ISRAEL	1.14
ITALY	0.57
LIBYA	1.71
GREAT BRITAIN	1.14
BANGLADES	1.71
MYANMAR	0.57
NIGERIA	4.57
PAKISTAN	24.00
SYRIA	5.71
TURKEY	0.57
TUNISIA	0.57

OFFENCE	
HOMICIDE	2
THREAT	16
ATTEMPTED ARSON	1
DENIAL OF SERVICE	6
TORTURE	1
DISTINCT CASES OF DAMAGE	10
DISSEMINATION OF FALSE INFORMATION	2
DISTURBANCE OF DOMESTIC PEACE	1
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFENSE	4
ARSON	2
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	1
VERBAL ABUSE	41
LIFE THREATENING PERSONAL INJURIES	4
BLASPHEMY	1
MALICIOUS REFUSAL TO ACKNOWLEDGE CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY	1
THEFT	5
BREACH OF DUTY	9
UNLAWFUL VIOLENCE	1
HATE SPEECH	63
INJURIES	45
DAMAGE TO A THIRD-PARTY'S PROPERTY	10
TOTAL	226

The RVRN cites the above data in order to provide better understanding of racist crimes in Greece, through the comparative analysis of the data collected by the Hellenic Police and those collected by the civil society. However, it should get across that this process will be greatly facilitated if the State publicly discloses the qualitative analysis of the above data, in order to clarify the trends and match the type of crime with the targeted groups. The RVRN is aware of the fact that the Hellenic Police runs the qualitative analysis of the data in order to monitor the development of racist crime. The public disclosure of that analysis will enhance transparency and trust to the authorities and it will improve the planning of activities in combating racist crime.

2. Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights

a) The National Council against Racism and Intolerance (NCRI)

In 2018, the RVRN attended the NCRI's sittings with two representatives (and two deputies). The RVRN highlights some points of its activities within the NCRI:

1. Information on the follow-up to the development of the case Sakir v. Greece.
2. Support a letter to the Minister of Public Order and Citizen Protection, requesting the dissemination of Law 3907/2011, article 41, par. 1, as well as the appointment a focal point in the Aliens Division of Attica for its immediate coordination with the competent Services for Combating Racist Violence in the spirit of encouraging victims to report such incidents without the fearing that their identification will take longer than their detention period.
3. Support the enhanced visibility of NCRI through the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights website.
4. Submission of guides against discrimination, drafted by the organizations participating in the RVRN, in order to suggest material to the Institute of Educational Policy (IEP) for the thematic week.
5. Inform the NCRI about worrying events that preceded the registration of refugee children in schools in Chios, as well as some texts drafted by parents, which may incite hatred.
6. Authorizing the NCRI Plenary to write a letter to the IEP, in order to send material which could help teachers form their activities, as well as to lift misinterpretations and inconvenience when approaching such issues.

b) The National Action Plan against Racism

Pursuant to paragraph 2 of Article 17, Law 4356/2015 (Government Gazette A181), NCRI prepares a National Action Plan against Racism, monitors its implementation systematically and ensures its regular update. The NCRI is currently in the process of drafting the first National Action Plan against Racism. The RVRN strongly supported the establishment of the National Plan following the consultations between the Council members and other special bodies or experts on specific matters. Additionally, the RVRN made efforts towards the update of the table of actions submitted by the Ministries.

The structure and type of the National Plan has been the subject of long-term consultations between the members of the NCRI. The RVRN, reviewed the respective action plans in other countries and, considering the practice followed to date on a national level, proposed that a short and comprehensive text be drawn up with defined timetables and evaluation procedures. In addition, the RVRN proposed that the NCRI should prioritize specific thematic axes, for which the National Plan will adopt specific objectives and set out specific actions under each objective.

Additionally, the RVRN is making efforts for the NCRI to have the possibility to codecide (and not just approve) for the above. In short, each thematic axis is discussed separately and it is being pursued on the basis of the RVRN's proposal that a relevant call for action is submitted by the participating ministries. RVRN contributes with a special input on each axis and with suggested actions based on the expert field knowledge we have gained.

The RVRN expects the State to design, cost and implement specific actions on the basis of the National Action Plan against Racism and, upon completion of the above, it can assist by providing information to the NCRI in any specific actions, should they fit the framework of a national strategy and can be implemented by the civil society and State partnership.

c) Agreement on inter-agency co-operation on addressing racist crimes in Greece

The RVRN signed a cooperation agreement to deal with racist crime in Greece. The agreement aims to a coordinated approach of national institutions and civil society organizations, in order to deal with racist crimes effectively. The agreement was the result of the cooperation between the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights on the initiative of the General Secretariat for Human Rights and the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the OSCE (ODIHR), in the framework of the project "Building a Comprehensive Criminal Justice Response to Hate Crime ". The programme was funded mainly by the European Commission.

The RVRN participates in the Working Group, which is composed of representatives of the below actors:

- the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights
- the Ministry of Interior,
- the President of the Supreme Court,
- the Public Prosecutor at the Supreme Court,
- the Ministry of Health,
- the Ministry of Migration Policy
- the National School of Magistrates
- and the OSCE National Points of Contact on Hate Crimes for Greece.

The Working Group aims to coordinate actions and take initiatives to deal with racist crimes. For the RVRN, among the positive aspects of the Agreement, lies the fact that since it has been signed, it already enhanced the information and awareness of the authorities involved in the field of racist crime. It is true that the agreement succeeded in bringing around the same table, bodies which may not have needed yet, to accurately record what exactly means to their organization to manage racist crime and to support the victims.

However, the RVRN stresses that the implementation and sustainability of the agreement faces the below challenges:

1. Institutional coherence and substantial commitment of the parties involved regarding the representation and participation in the Working Group. It is very important for the bodies and institutions to be represented by people who a) have in-depth knowledge of the way that their organization operates and b) they can ensure the sustainability of the results produced, whatever the circumstances.

2. Each institution and body should provide technical support, to avoid turning the Working Group into in a theoretical think-tank without any practical impact. In other words, the participants should actively provide support and contribute to the Group's work. In order to achieve this, the representatives should prepare, dedicate time and be in close cooperation with their organization. In other words, this is not an individual matter, but rather a completely institutional issue where each of us pursues our common goal with the means provided by our respective organisation.
3. Diffusion of expertise in all the levels of the hierarchy, i.e. cultivating the culture needed to deal with racist crime in every service with clarity.

The RVRN expects that the Working Group will intensify its work, in order to further advance the implementation of the commitments that have been made.

V. Recommendations to the State

The RVRN addresses the following recommendations to the State in order to combat racist crimes.

Recommendations to the Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection

A. Combating racist crime

1. Reinforcement and proper staffing of the Police Departments Combating Racist Violence.
2. Conduct of a training programme, with the assistance of international and European organisations specialised and experienced in the training of law enforcement/judicial bodies, gradually for the entire personnel of the Hellenic Police.
3. Guidance to police regarding their obligation to assist the victims, to intervene for their rescue and to make sure that they are informed and referred to appropriate services.
4. Provision of specialised information on the existing victim support structures in each geographic region, on a case-by-case basis (victim's removal from the victimising environment, upon consent of the victim).
5. Setting up special task forces in each region, and training them on how to inform victims of racist crimes of their rights and how to handle their initial contact with the victims, ensuring that briefings by specialised staff are not replaced by the information supplied in the form of brochures.
6. Constant communication and cooperation between police departments nationwide, governmental or non-governmental bodies and immigrant communities, to ensure that victims are offered medical, social and legal assistance and interpretation services to facilitate their access to the police.
7. Continuous evaluation of police authorities to ensure compliance with the circular entitled "Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination in Policing" (8.11.2014).
8. Effective dissemination of the knowledge on regulations regarding protection against the return of third country nationals that are victims or key witnesses in crimes with racist characteristics or hate speech (Law 927/1979), who express their intention of filing a complaint or reporting an incident to the competent police authorities (Article 41 Law 3907/2011).

9. Speeding up the identification process of undocumented third-country nationals who are victims of racist violence, in order to minimise restrictions to their freedom.
10. Adoption of a special circular on the appropriate treatment of LGBTQI+ persons aiming at providing law enforcement officials with clear guidance and avoiding secondary victimisation.
11. Protection of human rights defenders, namely all individuals and organisations promoting and protecting human rights.
12. Exploring the possibility of evaluating the data on racist crimes together with civil society, while respecting the protection of personal data.
13. Disclosure of the qualitative analysis on the data collected and processed by the Hellenic Police with regard to racist crimes.

B. Combating racially motivated police violence

1. Introduction of a specific procedure in the framework of disciplinary control within the Hellenic Police Force for faster processing of racially-motivated arbitrary acts.
2. Disclosure of relevant data, in particular about the course of complaints, in order to further enhance transparency and confidence of victims in the Hellenic Police.

Recommendations to the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights and to the Prosecution and Judicial Authorities

1. Abstain from amending the current art. 81A PC and codification of the positive legislative measures taken to support victims of racist violence.
2. Strengthen the work of the Working Group on the coordination of actions to combat racist crimes.
3. Strengthen the actions for the coordination of support services for victims of racist violence under Law 4478/2017.
4. Adoption of a legislative provision for the protection of human rights defenders.
5. Ensuring the prompt referral of juvenile victims to the Juvenile Support and Social Care Services of the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights, in light of the serious risk involved in terms of secondary or repeated victimisation.
6. Ensuring the appointment of an interpreter preferably among the persons who are familiar with communicating with the deaf or mute victim.
7. Adoption of measures to protect interpreters and prevent their victimisation.
8. Special training of persons who might be required to examine victims of sexual assault, victims of violence due to gender identity and victims of domestic violence.
9. Appointment of a specific person to keep the victim informed throughout the penal procedure.

10. Prevention of abusive withdrawals of requests for the provision of information by the victim (Article 59 (3) L. 4478/2017).
11. In cooperation with the judicial authorities, adoption of special measures to ensure the victims' safety (entry/exit from courts and prosecution offices, keeping victims at a safe distance from defendants, etc.)
12. In-depth study and discussion among scientific and professional bodies on how to adapt restorative justice to racist crimes (Article 63 of Law 4478/2017).

Recommendations to the Ministry of Health and the Medical Associations

1. Cooperation with the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights on the implementation of Law 4478/2017, particularly in terms of performing medical tests as per Article 66 (c) of Law 4478/2017.
2. Briefing and training of the medical staff on the cultural aspects of their interaction with victims of racist violence and on the particular aspects of their interaction with LGBTQI+ persons.
3. Training and sensitization of mental health specialists on issues of gender identity and sexual orientation due to ongoing reports of abusive behaviour against LGBTQI+ persons in violation of the World Health Organization (WHO) International Statistical Classification of Illnesses and Related Health Problems (ICD) and the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) of the American Psychiatric Association (APA).
4. Compliance with the rule that medical tests are performed by persons of the same sex as the victim, and that the victim must be the one to decide (Article 69(1)(d) of Law 4478/2017) only in exceptional circumstances of shortage of medical staff.

Recommendations to the Ministry of Migration Policy

Additional initiatives and measures which can contribute to reducing tensions among refugees, relieving pressure from local communities (especially on islands-entry points), and preventing or limiting social tensions, which in turn become a breeding ground for xenophobic reactions and racist behaviours. Such measures may include the following:

1. Significantly improving reception conditions, especially for vulnerable persons, as well as creating the conditions for greater security in all reception sites, Reception and Identification Centres and reception facilities in the mainland.
2. Ensuring faster registration and processing of asylum claims of all nationalities.
3. Systematisation and speed up of registration and reception of unaccompanied minors, and appropriate care and referral procedures.
4. Re-assessing the geographic restrictions imposed on asylum seekers on the islands.
5. Holistic approach to immigration and refugee issues, with long-term planning across the country.
6. Preventative measures to prevent the victimization of refugees leaving the apartments of the ESTIA programme.

Recommendations to the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs

7. Developing a comprehensive handbook for school communities on understanding and addressing bias-motivated incidents of violence and interconnection with experienced civil society actors implementing specific programs.
8. Strengthening the framework of combating school hate-motivated violence with the active participation of teachers, students and parents' associations.
9. Introduction in the primary and secondary education of a course related to sexual education for the purpose of removing stereotypes and prejudices about gender identity and sexual orientation and creating an inclusive and safe school environment.
10. Promoting an intercultural and inter-religion dialogue in order to address stereotypes and prejudice.

Recommendations to the Ministry of Infrastructures, Transports and Networks

1. Drafting of guidance for staff working in public transport (including buses) on obligations to respect all passengers regardless of race, colour, ethnic or ethnotic origin, descent, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics.
2. Provision of special clauses related to the above obligations in contracts of concession.
3. Investigation of the incidents involving civil servants.
4. Introduction of proportional sanctions for non-compliance with the obligation to respect all passengers regardless of their race, colour, national or ethnic origin, descent, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics.

Recommendations to the Minister of Digital Policy, Telecommunications and Media - General Secretariat of Information and Communication

1. Training and awareness of management and journalists, editors and newscasters of electronic, paper and television media, with regard to the coverage of racist crimes, the protection of human rights and the elimination of the (re)production of negative stereotypes against certain groups, through special training activities and guidelines.

