



— Press Release —

For the 1st Time: an EU Citizen Takes EU Pushbacks to Court

**6 YEARS IN TURKISH PRISON BECAUSE OF THE EU:
GREECE PUSHED BACK A FRENCH CITIZEN PERSECUTED IN TURKEY**

frontLEX has filed an unprecedented case against Greece at the European Court of Human Rights challenging the racist pushback of a French citizen from the EU. The legal team includes international lawyers Adv. Omer Shatz (*frontLEX* and Sciences Po Paris), Prof. Violeta Moreno-Lax (Queen Mary University of London), and Adv. Francesco Gatta, Adv. Iftach Cohen and Ms. Estelle Nandnaba from *frontLEX*.

The case has been filed on behalf of a **French student** who left France to study at a Turkish university. After she and her husband were **politically persecuted and spuriously condemned to 6 years in prison by the Turkish regime**, they fled to Greece with the purpose of **returning to their family and home in France**.

After crossing the Evros river in October 2021, the victim presented her **French Passport and ID**, permitting her to enter the EU, informed the Greek police of the grave risk she was in, and begged them for assistance. **Her family in France alerted the Greek and French authorities multiple times** of the situation and requested their urgent consular protection, but to no avail:

Greek forces abducted, detained, abused, robbed, forcibly transferred the young woman to an unsafe dinghy, and collectively expelled her on a life-threatening voyage to a military zone in Turkey, where soldiers captured her. She is now serving 6 years in a Turkish prison in cruel, degrading, and inhuman conditions.

The Greek Government is perpetrating systematic and serious human rights violations at the Greek-Turkish border, with Frontex cooperation and EU assistance. Whether EU citizens or foreign nationals, **tens of thousands of toddlers, women and men have been victims** of this appalling policy of pushbacks. **This application to the European Court of Human Rights should bring this practice to a halt.**

Meanwhile, *frontLEX* calls on the **EU to immediately institute infringement proceedings against Greece and terminate Frontex's operations in the country**. With the French Presidency of the EU, *frontLEX* also calls on the **French government to demand Greece to immediately cease its pushback policy**, and to demand Turkey to release and let an innocent French citizen return to her home and family in France.



Quotes

- Adv. Omer Shatz, Legal Director of frontLEX and Lecturer at Sciences Po (Paris):

“This case shows that EU migration policy is not a legal or even political matter. It is sheer racism. **If the Court doesn’t speak out when they come for the migrants, they will eventually come for the citizens.** Combining physical and legal violence, the EU's hybrid war on migrants is ultimately detrimental to its own rule of law. From now on EU citizens should know their own governments may abandon them, expel them, and let them face abuse and ill-treatment in the very places they fled from.”

- Prof. Violeta Moreno-Lax, Queen Mary University of London (London):

“**This is the first time an EU citizen has been illegally pushed back to face ill-treatment because of her physical appearance.** Not looking ‘European enough’ triggered a spiral of violence and abuse that has put her life at risk, revealing the cruelty of the racist foundations of the EU border control regime. This needs to be forcefully condemned and rejected as an affront to the most basic principles of a democratic society.”

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