

--- Press Release ---

*For the First Time in the History of the Agency, Legal Action Against FRONTEX Has Been Submitted to the Court of Justice of the EU for Human Rights Violations.*

**FRONTEX failed to terminate its operations in GREECE despite serious, systematic, and widespread violations of fundamental rights under EU Law.**

An unprecedented legal action against FRONTEX was submitted to the EU Court of Justice today by Adv. Omer Shatz and Adv. Iftach Cohen from **front-LEX**, Adv. Loica Lambert and Adv. Mieke Van den Broeck from **Progress Lawyers Network**, empowered by Mr. Panayote Dimitras and Ms. Leonie Scheffenbichler from **Greek Helsinki Monitor**, and Gabriel Green from *front-LEX*. The case was filed on behalf of **two asylum seekers – an unaccompanied minor and a woman – who, while seeking asylum on EU soil (Lesbos), were violently rounded up, assaulted, robbed, abducted, detained, forcibly transferred back to sea, collectively expelled, and ultimately abandoned on rafts with no means of navigation, food or water.** The Applicants were also victims of other ‘push-back’ operations during their attempts to seek protection in the EU.

Despite undisputed and overwhelming evidence for serious and persisting violations of fundamental rights, FRONTEX and its Executive Director, Fabrice Leggeri, have failed to terminate the Agency’s activities in the Aegean Sea, in flagrant infringement of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU and Frontex Regulation. Frontex and Greece’s policy aims to stem ‘migration’ at *all* costs. This systematic and widespread attack against asylum seekers breaches the right to asylum, the prohibitions on *refoulement* and collective expulsions, and amount to crimes against humanity of, *inter alia*, deportation. **This is the first time that FRONTEX is being taken to Court over human rights violations in its 17 years of operation.** We will hold the EU to account. We will reinstate the Rule of Law over EU borders.

**Omer Shatz and Iftach Cohen from Front-LEX:** “We watched videos showing the worst crimes that humanity has imagined and outlawed. We watched the Director of Frontex, Leggeri, telling the EU Parliament and Commission that what we see in these videos is actually not happening.

But 10,000 victims attest: these crimes are being committed, on a daily basis, on EU territory, by an EU agency. The EU Court is responsible for protecting EU fundamental rights law. To date, the Court has *never* reviewed the conduct of Frontex nor provided remedy for its countless victims. We trust the Court to hear the victims, to see what everyone sees, to hold EU border agency to account, and to restore the Rule of Law over EU lands and seas.

**Omer Shatz, Adv., *front-LEX*** (English, French): +33650784880, [omer.shatz@front-lex.eu](mailto:omer.shatz@front-lex.eu)

**Iftach Cohen, Adv., *front-LEX*** (English, Italian): [iftach.cohen@front-lex.eu](mailto:iftach.cohen@front-lex.eu)

**Adv. Loica Lambert and Adv. Mieke Van den Broeck from Progress Lawyers Network:** “In the EU and at its borders, migrants and people who help them are being unjustly criminalized. At the same time and on the same borders, Frontex has been committing gross violations of international and European law for years, while avoiding prosecution. It is time Frontex is held accountable for the crimes it is committing against people who are seeking protection, and who are forced to risk their lives at sea due to the lack of safe and legal channels for migration.

**Mieke Vandebroeck Adv., Progress Lawyers Network** (Flemish, French and English)  
[mieke.vandebroeck@progresslaw.net](mailto:mieke.vandebroeck@progresslaw.net), +32498395724

---

**Panayote Dimitras and Leonie Scheffenbichler from GHM:** "The two applicants have landed successfully on Lesbos more than once, even met a local academic, have pictures of well-known roads of the island. Yet, Greek forces brutally expelled them from the island with Frontex supervision, as Greece claims. They will not get justice in Greece, where there is no rule of law. They deserve justice in Europe, if it wants to claim that it abides by the rule of law."

**Mr. Panayote Dimitras, Greek Helsinki Monitor** (Greek, French, English):  
[panayotedimitras@gmail.com](mailto:panayotedimitras@gmail.com) +30-2103472259;

**Ms. Leonie Scheffenbichler** (French, German, English): [leonie.scheffenbichler@sciencespo.fr](mailto:leonie.scheffenbichler@sciencespo.fr)