

URGENT ADVISORY

GREEK GOVERNMENT STRIPS THOUSANDS OF REFUGEES OF THEIR HOUSING

The Shift is deeply concerned by information received regarding the termination of the Filoxenia temporary housing programme in Greece that has left over 2,000 refugees without access to adequate housing. Consequently, hundreds of families are now sleeping outside, and more are likely to be driven out in the coming days. To force people to sleep rough, during a global pandemic, in the middle of winter, puts lives in jeopardy. The Shift is also extremely concerned by reports that, in some instances, public authorities have used the police to intimidate individuals and families in order to remove them from their accommodation.

In terminating the Filoxenia housing programme for refugees, the Government of Greece has not upheld its legal duty, under international human rights law, to ensure the right to housing for all people under its jurisdiction, including refugees and asylum seekers, in the following ways:

- Evictions into homelessness are strictly prohibited under international human rights law and represent an egregious violation of the right to housing.
- Utilising threats of violence to remove people from their housing is defined as a forced eviction, which constitutes a gross violation of international human rights law and is prohibited.
- Ending a policy through which thousands of people have obtained housing without ensuring that individuals and families have immediate access to new and adequate accommodation represents a retrogressive measure, which is again inconsistent with the Government's international legal obligations.

The Shift calls on the Greek government to immediately reverse the termination of the Filoxenia programme and respect, protect and fulfil the human right to housing for all refugees and asylum seekers under its jurisdiction.

THE SHIFT