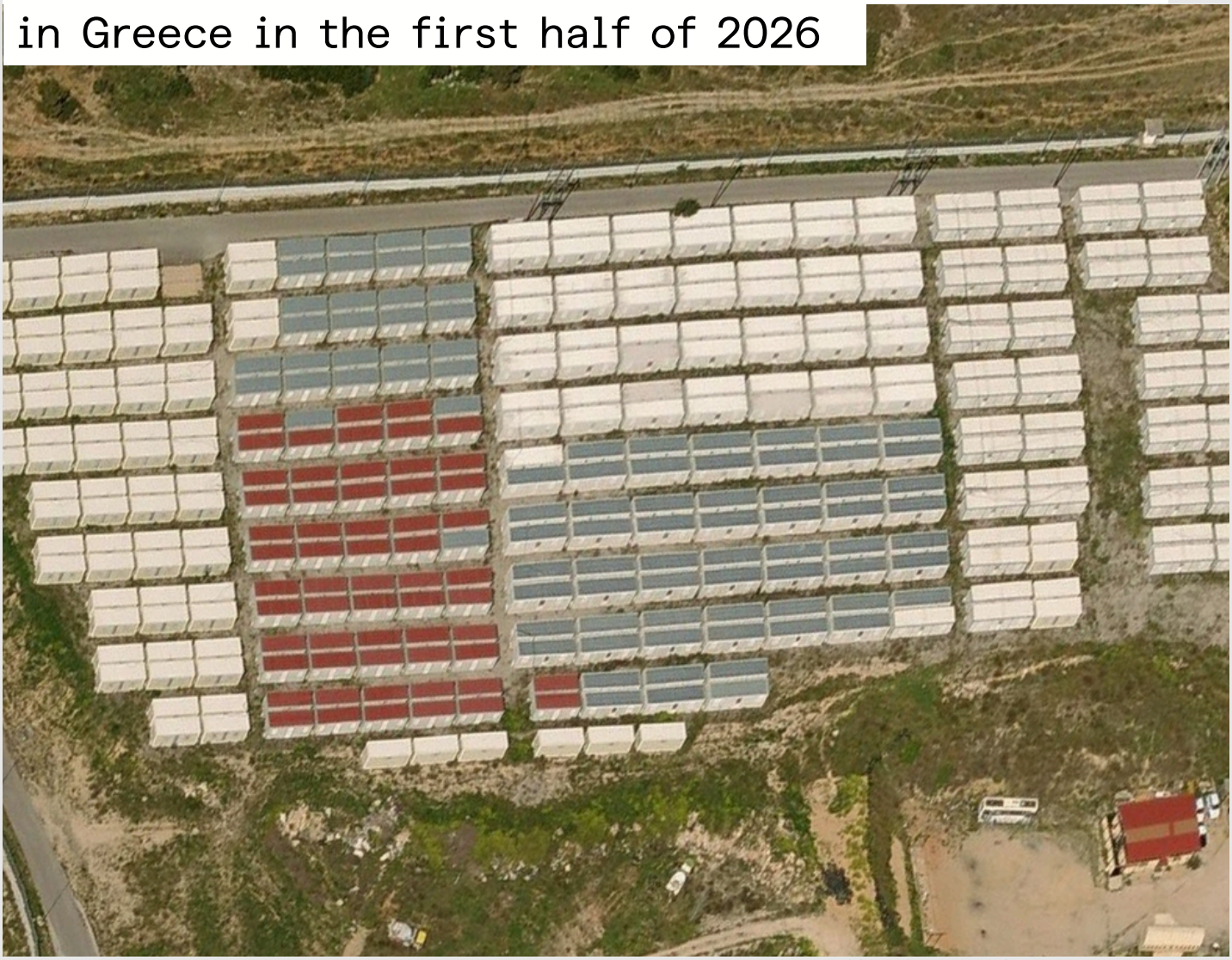
Policy Note

Deportation and immigration detention

October 2026

Deportation and immigration detention statistics in Greece in the first half of 2026



Amygdaleza. Photo: ©2024 Blom, ©2024 TomTom, ©2024 Maxar

RSA REFUGEE SUPPORT AEGEAN

Deportation and immigration detention statistics in Greece in the first half of 2026

More people detained in pre-removal centres and police stations

Returns & deportations

7,809 Hellenic Police decisions: **5,063** return decisions (Return Directive) and **2,746** deportation decisions (derogation from the Directive). Main nationalities are Albania, Egypt and Afghanistan.

3,213 returns of third-country nationals, of which 1,644 concern nationals of Albania and Georgia, not represented in arrivals via Evros and the Mediterranean

Review of return & deportation orders

254 decisions challenged by way of administrative appeal to the Hellenic Police (3.3%)

3.9% approval rate in appeals before the Hellenic Police

Immigration detention

7,270 Hellenic Police detention orders: **3,630** in return procedures; **2,653** in deportation procedures; and **987** in the asylum process

17,169 RIS "freedom restriction" orders

96.6% detention rate in deportation procedures

71.7% detention rate in return procedures

Judicial review of detention

1,686 orders challenged through objections before administrative courts (23.2%)

41.8% approval rate in objections at the administrative courts

0.5% rate of detention orders quashed in *ex officio* review by the same courts based on the same provisions

Detention conditions

2,482 people detained in mainland pre-removal centres at the end of June 2026, of whom **704** in Amygdaleza, **470** in Sintiki and **385** in Corinth. Main countries include Egypt (**906** detainees) and Pakistan (**415** detainees)

357 people detained in police stations as of 30 June 2026

This RSA (Refugee Support Aegean) note analyses the latest statistics on return and deportation proceedings and on immigration detention of refugees and migrants in Greece during the first half of 2026. The data were supplied by the Greek authorities in response to parliamentary questions.[1]

Return procedures

The Hellenic Police issued a total of **7,809** decisions ordering removal from the Greek territory in the first half of 2026. Of those, **5,063** were return decisions based on L 5226/2025 transposing the Return Directive,[2] while **2,746** were deportation orders pursuant to L 3386/2005, in derogation from the Directive. Contrary to 2024 and 2025, most removal decisions were taken under the Return Directive framework.

The main countries of origin of people issued return or deportation orders were as follows:

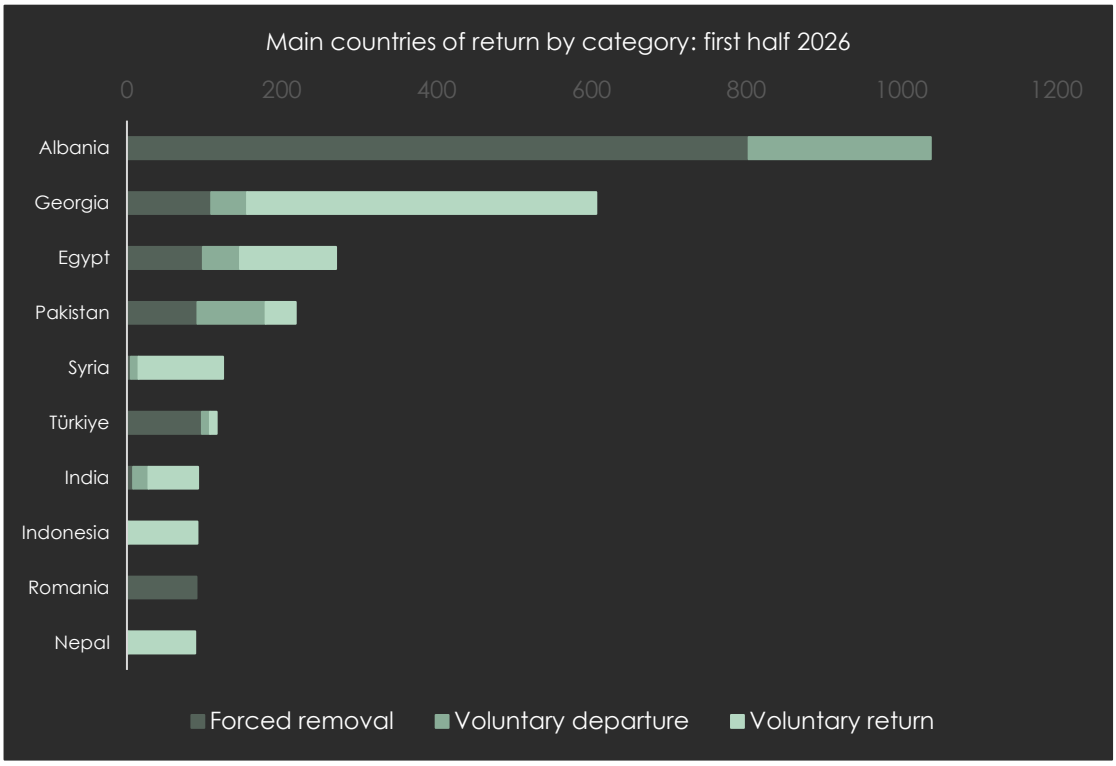


Source: Ministry of Citizen Protection, Reply to parliamentary question, 18 Aug 2026

Throughout the first semester of the year, Greece carried out **3,213** returns and deportations. These include **1,541** forced removals, **565** voluntary departures within a set deadline following a return decision, and **1,107** voluntary returns assisted by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM):

1 Hellenic Parliament, *Διοικητική κράτηση και απελάσεις μεταναστών και αιτούντων άσυλο*, available here.

2 L 5226/2025, Gov. Gazette A' 154/08.09.2025.



Source: Ministry of Citizen Protection, Reply to parliamentary question, 18 Aug 2026

More than half of returns and deportations carried out in the first half of 2026 continue to only concern nationals of Albania (**1,038**) and Georgia (**606**), not represented in arrivals via Evros and the Eastern and Central Mediterranean. Most returns to Albania were forced, while most returns to Georgia were implemented via IOM.

Significant numbers of forced removals concern nationals of Egypt, Pakistan and Türkiye. As for nationals of Syria, most returns were voluntary and implemented through IOM.

Administrative appeal against the return or deportation order

Greek law states that deportation or return decisions issued by the Hellenic Police may be challenged through an administrative appeal before the Hellenic Police within a short deadline of five days. Greece still offers no free legal assistance for the exercise of this remedy, in flagrant and consistent breach of EU law.[3]

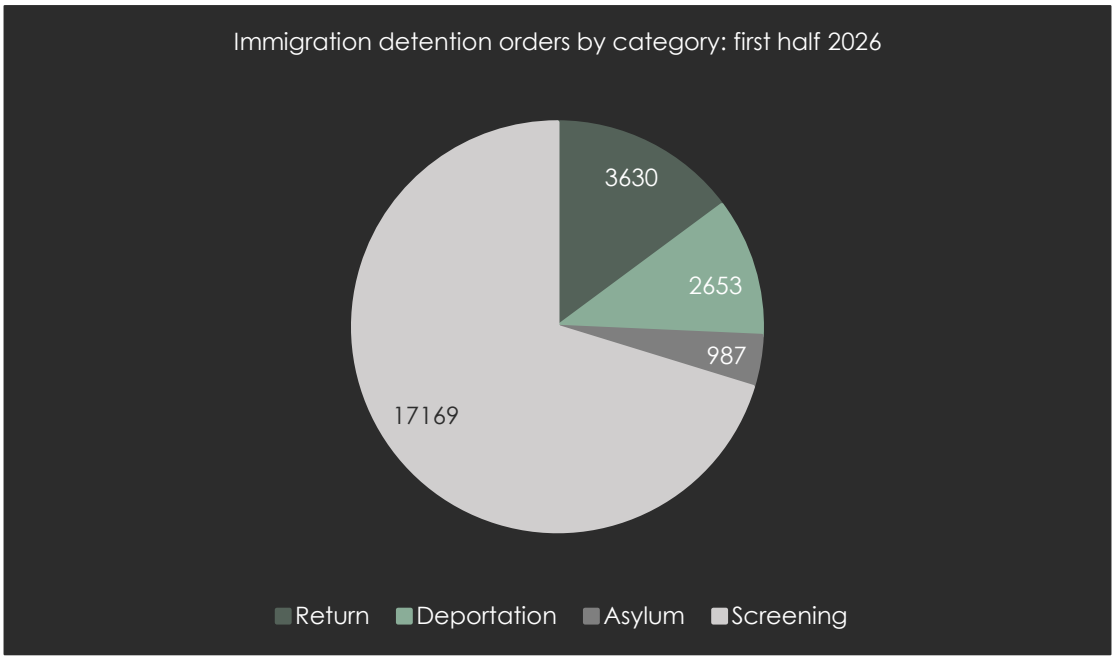
Official statistics yet again confirm the extremely limited accessibility of the administrative appeal against deportation and return orders. Out of 7,809 Hellenic Police decisions issued in the first half of 2026, only **254** were appealed (3.3%).

[3] European Commission, *Report of the 2024 Revisit of Greece related to the serious deficiencies identified in 2021 in the field of return*, C(2025) 4342, 3 July 2025, Annex, 6, 8; Plenary of Greek Bar Associations, 'Μεταναστευτικό-Άσυλο: Η προσήλωση στη διεθνή και συνταγματική νομιμότητα αποτελεί μονόδρομο για κάθε ευνομούμενη δημοκρατική πολιτεία', 18 August 2025, available here.

The quality of review performed on appeal by the Hellenic Police is equally problematic. We continue to witness boilerplate decisions that do not assess or give due reasoning on the appellants' submissions, even in cases of manifestly unlawful return decisions issued against asylum seekers who have a right to remain on Greek territory.

The Hellenic Police dismissed **244** and granted no more than **10** out of the 254 administrative appeals processed in the first half of 2026, i.e. just 3.9% of the extremely few administrative appeals it received.

Resort to immigration detention



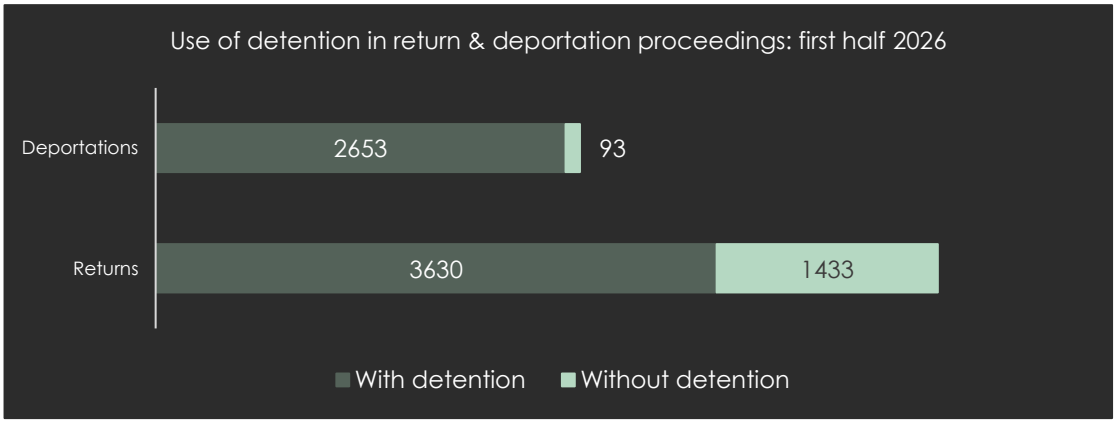
Source: Ministry of Citizen Protection, Reply to parliamentary question, 18 Aug 2026; Ministry of Migration and Asylum, Reply to parliamentary question, 31 Jul 2026

Immigration detention in Greece is formally imposed by the Hellenic Police through detention orders. However, immigration detention also takes the form of "freedom restriction" orders issued automatically and indiscriminately by the RIS during screening procedures in Reception and Identification Centres (RIC), Closed Controlled Access Centres (CCAC) and Mobile Registration Units (MRU).[4] Such detention is applied indiscriminately and automatically, since persons subject to "freedom restriction" during the screening process are forbidden from exiting the camps.

The Hellenic Police issued **7,270** detention orders in the first half of 2026. This year too, the Police used immigration detention systematically and not as a last resort, as required by international, EU and domestic law. In fact, detention is an almost automatic adjunct of deportation orders in L 3386/2005 proceedings that derogate

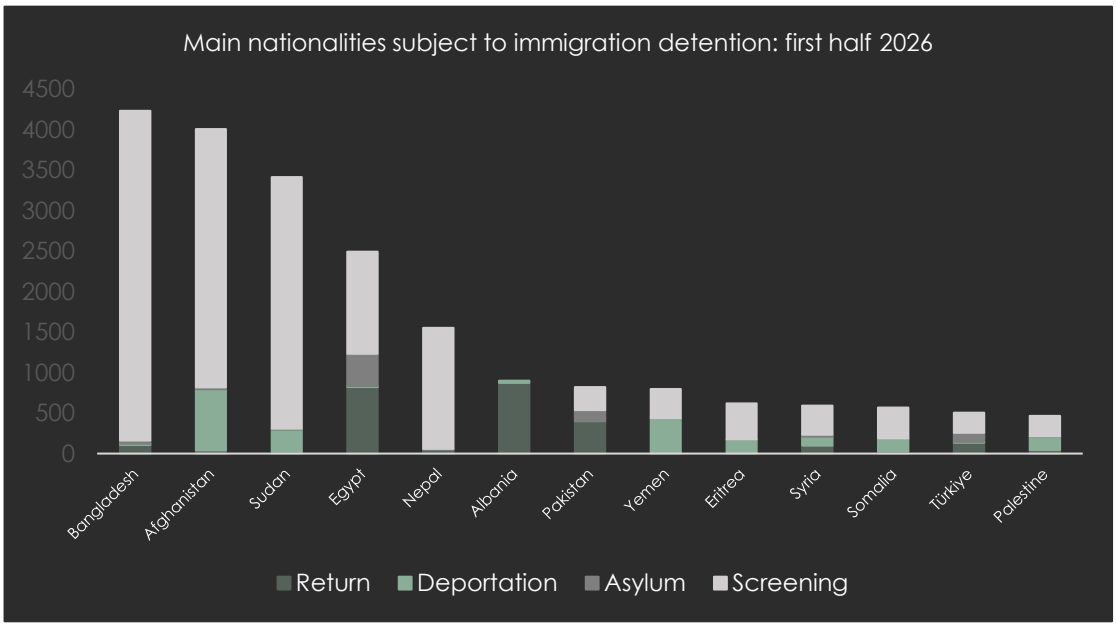
[4] Article 23(2) L 5307/2026, Gov. Gazette A' 90/11.06.2026, introducing a similar provision to the repealed Article 40(a) L 4939/2022, Gov. Gazette A' 111/10.06.2022.

from Return Directive standards and are unlawfully and arbitrarily applied to refugees who seek and obtain asylum in Greece. **96.6%** of deportation decisions were accompanied by a detention order, whereas **71.7%** of return decisions pursuant to the Directive were coupled with detention:



Source: Ministry of Citizen Protection, Reply to parliamentary question, 18 Aug 2026

The main nationalities of people subject to immigration detention under a Hellenic Police detention order or a RIS freedom restriction order during the first half of 2026 were Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Sudan:



Source: Ministry of Citizen Protection, Reply to parliamentary question, 18 Aug 2026; Ministry of Migration and Asylum, Reply to parliamentary question, 31 Jul 2026

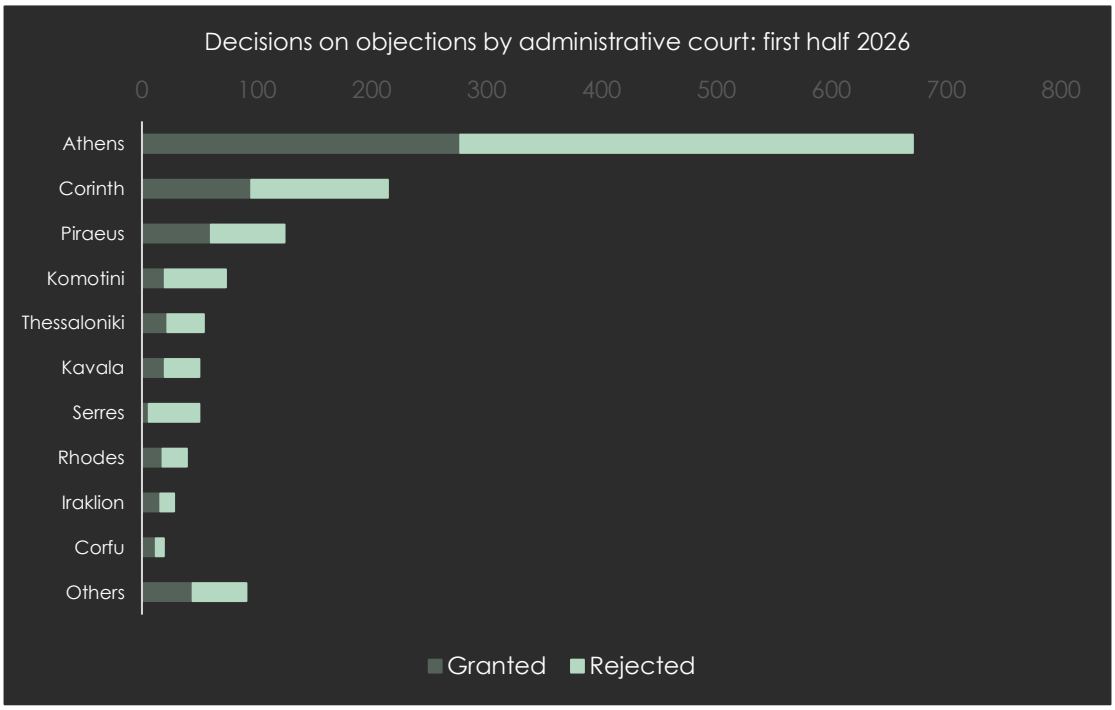
Judicial review of detention

A total of **1,686** objections against detention were lodged in the first half of 2026. This corresponds to **23.2%** of detention orders issued by the Hellenic Police – excluding the freedom restriction orders issued by the RIS. That means that less than one in four Police detention orders were challenged. The aforementioned obstacles to the accessibility of the administrative appeal against return and deportation decisions, coupled with

the complete absence of free legal assistance, adversely affect the effectiveness of access to the objections remedy as well.

Half of objections against detention in Greece were lodged with the Administrative Court of Athens (**841**), far ahead of the Administrative Courts of Corinth (**303**) and Piraeus (**125**).

The administrative courts granted **41.8%** of objections against detention processed on the merits in the first half of 2026:



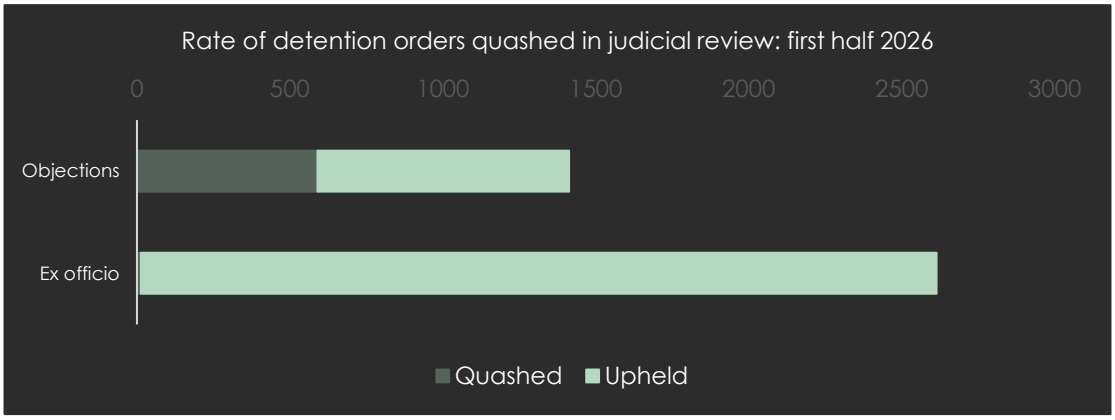
Source: Ministry of Justice, Reply to parliamentary question, 31 Aug 2026

Sharp disparities persist between judicial review of detention in objections and ex officio judicial review of extensions of detention orders based on domestic asylum (L 4939/2022) and return legislation (L 5226/2025), even though they relate to the very same provisions and are conducted by the same courts.

Ex officio review of legality of immigration detention: first half 2026				
	Asylum (L 4939/2022)		Return (L 5226/2025)	
	Quashed	Upheld	Quashed	Upheld
Serres	0	962	0	36
Corinth	2	521	0	0
Athens	0	193	3	173
Kavala	3	243	0	100
Komotini	0	217	0	21
Total	**7**	**2,204**	**6**	**397**

Source: Ministry of Justice, Reply to parliamentary question, 31 Aug 2026

Extreme discrepancies in the workings of available mechanisms of judicial review of detention are now a systematic phenomenon in Greece. The administrative courts quashed more than two out of five detention orders challenged before them through objections, yet found less than **0.5%** of orders they reviewed ex officio to be unlawful.

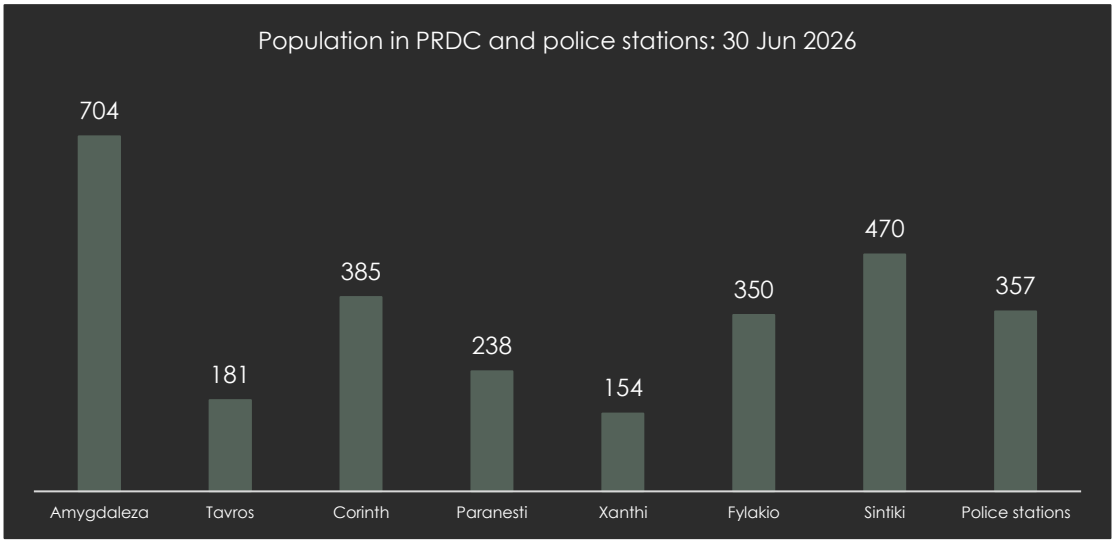


Source: Ministry of Justice, Reply to parliamentary question, 31 Aug 2026

We highlight yet again the pressing need for free legal assistance to people subject to immigration detention in Greece.

Detention conditions

2,839 people were held in immigration detention at the end of June 2026. Of those, **2,482** were detained in the six Pre-Removal Detention Centres (PRDC) on the mainland and in the Special Detention Facility in Sintiki,[5] while **357** were held in police stations throughout the country. These figures point to a significant increase in the population in PRDC and police stations compared to the end of 2025.



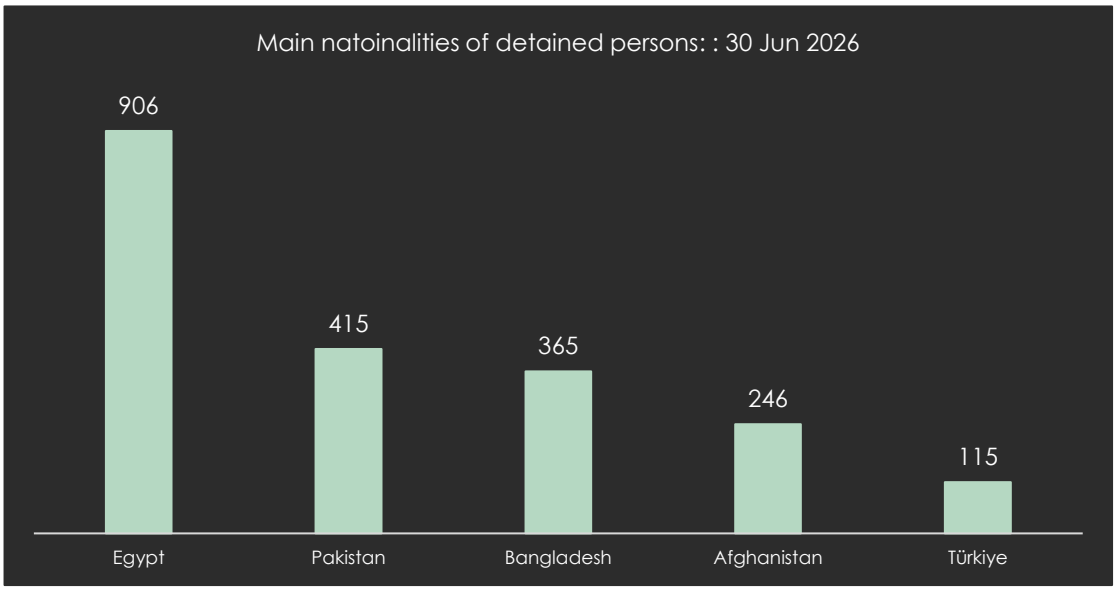
Source: Ministry of Citizen Protection, Reply to parliamentary question, 18 Aug 2026

5 Hellenic Police data do not include the number of people detained in PRDC Kos inside CCAC Kos.

The increase in the number of people detained in police stations from 204 at the end of 2025 to 357 at the end of June 2026 gives pause. Immigration detention under grossly substandard conditions in police stations still amounts to degrading treatment condemned by the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR).

The main country of origin of people in detention at the end of the first half of 2026 was Egypt (**906**), mainly in Amygdaleza and Sintiki, followed by Pakistan (**415**), namely in Corinth and Amygdaleza.

The main countries of origin of people in immigration detention at the end of June 2026 include Afghanistan and Türkiye:



Source: Ministry of Citizen Protection, Reply to parliamentary question, 18 Aug 2026

Data provided in reply to parliamentary questions refer to deployment of Health Units SA (*Ανώνυμη Εταιρία Μονάδων Υγείας*, AEMY) personnel in the pre-removal detention centres at the end of the first half of 2026 as follows:

AEMY staff by mainland pre-removal centre: 30 Jun 2026						
Profile	Amygdaleza	Tavros	Corinth	Paranesti	Xanthi	Fylakio
Doctors	2	1		2	1	1
Nurses	4	2	2	1	2	2
Psychologists	2	1		1	1	1
Social workers	1	1	2	1	1	1
Interpreters	2	2	1	1	1	1
Health visitors	2	1			1	
Administrative staff	1	1	1		1	
Total	**14**	**9**	**6**	**6**	**8**	**6**

Source: Ministry of Citizen Protection, Reply to parliamentary question, 18 Aug 2026

Finally, **9** experts were deployed by Frontex, evenly split between PRDC Amygdaleza, Tavros and Corinth, as well as a roving roster of **9** interpreters for those centres.

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