

Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context; the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants; the Special Rapporteur on the right to food and the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights

Ref.: AL GRC 3/2026

(Please use this reference in your reply)

13 May 2026

Excellency,

We have the honour to address you in our capacities as Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context; Special Rapporteur on the right to food; Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants and Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 61/16, 58/10, 52/20 and 53/10.

In this connection, we would like to bring to the attention of your Excellency's Government information we have received concerning the situation of the community residing in the **Prosfygika housing complex on Alexandras Avenue, Athens. Reportedly, around 400 people are currently residing in the complex, and they are at risk of eviction if a development and renovation plan is implemented by the authorities of the Region of Attica. While the building may be in need of structural review and repair, we are concerned that the eviction would render many people homeless and may strongly affect self-organised social welfare programmes as well as food provisioning that are vital for the affected residents and the local community.**

According to the information received:

The Prosfygika housing complex on Alexandras Avenue, Athens, consists of eight building blocks with 228 apartments, built by the State between 1933 and 1936 to house Greek refugees from Asia Minor. In the early 2000s, the Greek State planned to demolish the complex for commercial development. Most original residents were forced to sell their homes at below-market prices or were expropriated. 177 apartments passed into state ownership. However, 51 residents refused and appealed successfully to the Supreme Administrative Court of Greece.

Between 2003 and 2013 the buildings were officially declared preserved historic monuments through several decisions made by the Ministry of Culture (ΥΠΠΟ/ΔΙΝΕΣΑΚ/Β/803/63030/2003, ΥΠΠΟ/ΔΙΝΕΣΑΚ/118103π.ε./2896/2009, and the Supreme Administrative Court of Greece ΣτΕ 3050/2004, ΣτΕ 3059/2009, ΣτΕ 1507/2010, ΣτΕ 2274/2011, ΣτΕ 1970/2012).

Despite these administrative court decisions, the then largely emptied buildings were allowed to decay. Over time, persons in situation of vulnerability lacking housing alternatives sought shelter in the vacant apartments. By 2010, residents

began to organise, forming the Assembly and subsequently the Community of Squatted Prosfygika.

Today, more than 400 residents from 27 countries reside in the complex. The community includes families with more than 50 children, women, older persons, persons with chronic illnesses, immigrants, asylum seekers, refugees, and individuals in addiction rehabilitation. For 16 years the community has operated as one of Europe's largest self-organised neighbourhoods, running over 22 open, self-organised social welfare structures, open not only to the residents but also to the broader population of Athens. Key structures include:

1. Education and Childcare: The "Children's House" and the "Self-Organised Nursery School" operate daily, providing a full educational programme complementary to the public school system. This structure works in direct cooperation with local public schools, parents' associations, and teachers' unions nationwide.
2. Healthcare and Solidarity: The "Health Structure and Social Pharmacy" offers vital care to residents and neighbours in need, collaborating with dozens of self-organised health clinics and healthcare workers' unions at a panhellenic level. The community runs a "Hosting Structure for Patients and their Companions", providing free accommodation for people receiving treatment at the nearby Anticancer Hospital "St. Savvas", in direct cooperation with the hospital employees' union.
3. Food Security: The Collective Bakery "Berkin Elvan" produces bread and pastries daily, feeding both the community and residents of the wider neighbourhood.
4. Protection of Women: The "Women's Structure" focuses on the empowerment of women, functioning as a crucial emergency shelter for women in crisis.

Reportedly, there have been in 2016, 2019, 2022 and 2024 incidents of police using teargas and/or force resulting in the arrest of some residents, who were later found innocent and released. Residents also alleged that they have been exposed to surveillance by video cameras.

In June 2025 the Ministry of Culture, the Region of Attica and DYPA (Public Employment Service) signed an agreement for the "Restoration of four refugee apartment blocks". The restoration work would rely on 15 million EUR provided by an EU structural fund (NSRF – National Strategic Reference Framework). Reportedly, the restoration agreement does not take into account that there are currently about 400 people living in the Prosfygika housing complex, treating the inhabited buildings as if they were vacant, thereby bypassing any obligation for consultation or alternative housing provision.

In January 2026, the Attica Regional Governor Nikos Chardalias was interviewed by newmoney.gr where he confirmed that emptying the complex

for construction would be executed by the police (Ministry of Protection of Citizen), anticipating a plan for a mass eviction.

Without prejudging the accuracy of the information received, we want to express our concern that the eviction of the Prosfygika housing complex could render several hundreds of people homeless, including children and other vulnerable persons, unless alternative housing is secured for all those in need of support.

The eviction would furthermore have serious consequences for the right to food of the affected residents and the wider neighbourhood. The Collective Bakery "Berkin Elvan" and the broader self-organised welfare structures operating within the complex represent a vital, community-led mechanism through which the right to adequate food is realised for vulnerable groups. Self-organized community food provisioning is one of the main ways to realize the right to food of the most marginalized groups. Any resettlement scheme must therefore respect and preserve the capacity of affected community for self-organised food provisioning.

We would like to recall that international human rights law establishes that everyone has a right to adequate housing and that any housing alternatives provided, must in order for housing to be deemed 'adequate', it should provide legal security of tenure, ensure availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure, be affordable, habitable, accessible, in a location that allows access to services and facilities, and be culturally adequate. (See Annex on Reference to international human rights law.)

An eviction with no alternative housing solution would not only endanger the right to adequate housing of the affected residents and other rights, such as the rights to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, to education, to food, and to privacy and family life. All these rights that should be enjoyed by everyone without any form of discrimination, including on the basis of race, colour, sex, disability, age, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

While we understand the housing complex may be in need of structural review and repair, we kindly request the Greek authorities to provide information about the future plans for the buildings. We are particularly interested in learning about how the planned renovation and redevelopment plans, reportedly funded in part by the European Union, will result in the improvement of the living conditions of the residents and the wider community.

In connection with the above alleged facts and concerns, please refer to the **Annex on Reference to international human rights law** attached to this letter which cites international human rights instruments and standards relevant to these allegations.

As it is our responsibility, under the mandates provided to us by the Human Rights Council, to seek to clarify all cases brought to our attention, we would be grateful for your observations on the following matters:

1. Please provide any additional information and/or comment(s) you may have on the above-mentioned allegations.

2. Please indicate what measures will be taken to ensure that nobody is rendered homeless as a result of an eviction from the Prosfygika housing complex.
3. Please indicate how you intend to involve the residents and the local community in the consultation process about the future of Prosfygika.
4. Please share information about how the State will ensure that the best interest of the children remain the primary consideration, and in particular, what measures will be taken to make sure that children's right to education will not be infringed upon as a result of an eviction.
5. Please provide information about the purposes of the redevelopment and renovation plans for the land where the Prosfygika housing complex is currently situated, in particular how those plans would benefit the residents and the wider local community.
6. Please explain what safeguards central and local authorities intend to put in place —while different relocation solutions remain under consideration and beyond— to ensure that affected communities retain full and unimpeded access to their existing self-organized food provisioning systems.
7. Please provide information about how the central, regional and local authorities intend to provide adequate education, childcare, healthcare, and food-assistance support to complement the existing self-organised horizontal social welfare support schemes.

This communication, and any response received from your Excellency's Government, will be made public via the communications reporting [website](#) at the 60 days mark. Should Your Excellency's Government respond within 60 days, both the communication and the response, may be published before the 60 days mark. The communications and responses will also be made available in the subsequent periodic report to be presented to the Human Rights Council.

While awaiting a reply, we urge the authorities not to proceed with any forced evictions and to undertake all necessary interim measures to preserve all the rights of Prosfygika residents. We also urge to consult and engage meaningfully with the affected community to find alternative housing solutions for the affected residents at risk of eviction. Such housing alternatives should be in close proximity, preserving the cohesion of the community and its self-organised services ensuring access to public services and livelihood.

We kindly ask you to share this communication with the regional authorities in Attica and any other public or private actor to whom this may concern.

A copy of this communication will also be shared with the Permanent Mission of the European Union, with the view to ensure that structural funds provided to Greece and reportedly used for the rehabilitation of the housing complex do not undermine the

goal of the European Union to end evictions into homelessness as outlined in the Lisbon Declaration on the EU Platform to Combat Homelessness, and to ensure that such funds are used in compliance with articles 1, 7, 24, 25 and 34 of the EU Charter on Fundamental Rights and international human rights standards.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

Koldo Casla

Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context

Sofía Monsalve Suárez

Special Rapporteur on the right to food

Gehad Madi

Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants

Elena Carolina Díaz Galán

Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights

Annex

Reference to international human rights law

In connection with the above alleged facts and concerns, we wish to draw your attention to the relevant international norms and standards that are applicable to the issues brought forth by the situation described above.

We would like to refer to article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), ratified by Greece on 5 August 1975. The enjoyment of the rights guaranteed in the ICCPR is not limited to citizens of States parties but “must also be available to all individuals, regardless of nationality or statelessness, such as asylum seekers, refugees, migrant workers and other persons, who may find themselves in the territory or subject to the jurisdiction of the State Party” (CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.13 (2004), para. 10).

Article 25 of the Universal Declaration Human Rights that recognizes the right of everyone “to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food.”

Article 11(1) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), ratified by your Excellency’s Government on 16 September 1985, recognizes “the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing, and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions.”

In interpreting this provision, the Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) stressed in its general comment No. 12 that a violation of the right to food occurs when the state fails to provide the “minimum essential level required to be free from hunger”. The Committee affirms that particularly disadvantaged groups may need special attention and sometimes priority with regard to food accessibility. The Committee makes special mention of socially vulnerable groups, such as migrants, as segments of the population that may need specific attention from governments through, for example, social programmes (GC 12, para. 13).

Article 11 of ICESCR, enshrines everyone’s right to adequate housing, without discrimination. The ICESCR clarifies that the rights enunciated in the Covenant, including housing, are to be exercised without discrimination of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

According to general comment No. 4 of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR, 1991), the right to housing should not be interpreted in a narrow or restrictive sense which equates it with, for example, the shelter provided by merely having a roof over one’s head or views shelter exclusively as a commodity. Rather it should be seen as the right to live somewhere in security, peace and dignity. In order for housing to be considered adequate, the CESCR has clarified that it should a) provide legal security of tenure, b) availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure, essential for health, security, comfort and nutrition; c) be affordable; d) be habitable, therefore providing the inhabitants with adequate space and protecting

them from cold, damp, heat, rain, wind or other threats to health, structural hazards, and disease vectors; e) be accessible; f) be in a location which allows access to employment options, health-care services, schools, childcare centres and other social facilities; and g) be culturally adequate (general comment No. 4, 1991, para. 8). States parties to the ICESCR “must give due priority to social groups living in disadvantaged conditions and pay special attention to them. Policies and legislation should not, in this context, be designed to benefit already advantaged social groups at the expense of other social strata” (general comment No. 4, 1991, para. 11).

For an eviction to be justified as proportionate to the purpose pursued, it must be subject to the supervision of a judicial body with guarantees of independence and impartiality before it is carried out. In its general comment No. 7, the CESCR clarified that if an eviction is to take place, procedural protections are essential, including, among others, genuine consultation, adequate and reasonable notice, alternative accommodation made available in a reasonable time, and provision of legal remedies and legal aid. Under no circumstances should evictions result in homelessness, and the State party must take all appropriate measures to ensure that adequate alternative housing, resettlement or access to productive land, as the case may be, is available to the affected individuals, where they are unable to provide for themselves. Notwithstanding the type of tenure, all persons should possess a degree of security of tenure, which guarantees legal protection against forced eviction, harassment, and other threats. States parties shall ensure, prior to carrying out any evictions, and particularly those involving large groups, that all feasible alternatives are explored in consultation with the affected persons (general comment No. 7, para. 11, 15). The proportionality principle applies in situations of occupation or squatting as well, and the assessment of proportionality requires looking not only at the personal circumstances of the family facing an eviction, but also at the financial position of the land-owner seeking it (CESCR, *López Albán v. Spain*, 2019, para. 10.1, 11.5).

Article 17 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), accessed to by Greece in 1997, recognises the right to private and family life, including the protection of the home. This right is meant to protect from unlawful and arbitrary interference, which means that an interference with a place of residence, irrespective of the legal title, can only be compatible with human rights when it takes place on the basis of law, including international law, and when it is reasonable in the particular circumstances (Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 16, 1988, para. 3-4).

Finally, we would like to recall the obligations stemming from the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), ratified by Greece in 1993, in particular article 16, establishing the right of every child to be protected from interference with their privacy, family and home; article 27, providing the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child’s physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development; article 28, on the right to education; and article 3, where it is established that the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.