

Press Release 07/01/2022

Solidarity and respect of human rights: the solution to the situation in Chloraka

The migrant and refugee community in Chloraka and more particularly those in the Ayios Nicolaos building complex are subjected to an [indiscriminate and totally inappropriate attack](#)¹ by the government, the police, extreme right local dignitaries and some troublemakers from their own community.

Instead of focusing its attention on those involved in the violent incidents of the last few days and their agitators, who in their majority do not live in Chloraka, the government chose to target all asylum seekers and refugees in the area and to grab the opportunity to proceed to the implementation of a series of unlawful acts that it had announced long before the recent incidents.

According to the [statements](#)² both of the extreme right leader of the Chloraka local council as well as of the [Minister of Interior](#)³,

1. The refugees in the area change the demographic character and constitute a threat to the safety and identity of the local community.

KISA considers these statements to be hate speech as they indiscriminately target a social group on the basis of characteristics protected by law. Not only do these statements not contribute to the solution of the problems but they also harbour and strengthen racist perceptions and views that have reached particularly worrying levels in the area.

The community of refugees itself knows that a small group of young people in the area have arrived in Cyprus with very traumatic experiences and need help and guidance by the government and other specialists and services so as to be able to overcome their problems and to integrate easily in society.

Instead of the authorities and the competent Ministry to initiate a dialogue with the community and to utilise European funds for projects of support and integration of these young people, they proceed with repressive police measures and unlawful prohibitive orders, which will not only not resolve the situation but will actually worsen it.

The authorities are aware that legal proceedings have been initiated against these administrative acts (order for terminating the financial assistance of the Social Welfare Services and order prohibiting new asylum seekers in Chloraka by the Ministry of Interior). Instead of respecting the legal proceedings, the authorities proceed with new repressive measures which in effect constitute disrespect of justice itself and the right of defence of the ruled by abuse of power.

2. The building complex of Agios Nicolaos is, according to the extreme right leader of the Chloraka local council and the Minister of Interior, unfit for habitation and, therefore, they are planning measures for its closure.

¹ <https://politis.com.cy/politis-news/kypros/kleinoy-n-to-sygekrotima-poy-zoyn-600-atoma-astynokratoymeni-i-chloraka/?fbclid=IwAR1TFweddB6clHTAWB6TQ2SiCAMUbH03UvD0B1KD2k7YLIZOaDzo7R4XTM>

² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mKwAKNUbJiQ>

³ <https://www.sigmalive.com/news/local/892747/yp-esoterikon-oi-apofaseis-pou-lifhikan-meta-tis-symplokes-sti-xloraka-vid>

KISA is fully aware of the very difficult living conditions of asylum seekers and refugees in the whole of Cyprus. The Agios Nicolaos building complex provides much better living conditions than the overwhelming majority of similar private buildings and it is a 5 star hotel if they are compared to the living conditions in all the reception centres operated by the Ministry of Interior itself, such as those in Pournara, Kofinou and the more recent one in Limnes.

The major problem in the said complex is the illegal and arbitrary cut of the water supply by the extreme right leader of the Chloraka local council who, through this measure and other illegal acts, which may constitute penal offences, is thereby trying to force the refugees to leave the area.

It is noted that the company that owns the complex has applied to the court against the illegal decisions of the council leader who, taking advantage of the long court procedures, continues to refuse to re-connect the water supply to the building. In doing so, he ignores even a decision of the Medical Services Department which, as the competent authority for monitoring the quality of water for human use, has since June 2020 been calling on him to re-connect the water supply, without him complying.

On 17/11/2021, the Paphos District Officer, most probably acting on directions of the Minister of Interior, issued an order on the basis of article 15 of the Regulation of Streets and Buildings Law, which prohibits the use of the building complex because of unhealthy conditions, i.e. the non-use of suitable drinking water. This order, however, is not immediately executable as, according to the law, its execution is postponed until the expiry of the deadline for filing an appeal and if such an appeal is filed until the court issues its decision. The deadline for appeal expires on 31/01/2022 and, as we are aware, an appeal will be filed.

The intention therefore expressed by both the Minister of Interior as well as the director of his office to the media for taking measures for the implementation of the order before the expiry provided by the law will be illegal, with all the corresponding consequences for those involved in this illegal act.

Instead of formulating and implementing a housing policy for refugees, the competent authorities are trying with prohibitive measures and the deprivation even of their food resources to make them homeless and prey to exploitation of owners and managers of unfit housing/

KISA calls on society to turn their back in the racist and xenophobic calls and to stand in solidarity with the refugees in Chloraka and the rest of the country.

KISA calls on the media and independent authorities to take on their responsibilities for correct information, shielding the rule of law and protection of human rights of all people in Cyprus.

KISA also calls on the police to put an end to the indiscriminate violence and terrorising of the migrant and refugee community in Chloraka.

Steering Committee