

Statement by Abdulaziz Muhamat, Global Detention Project Advocacy Fellow

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Distinguished Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to address these pressing issues concerning the treatment of refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants in Turkiye.

The main issues we wish to address today concern (1) abusive and inhumane immigration detention practices; and (2) refoulement, pushbacks, and mistreatment of people fleeing conflict and persecution along Turkiye's borders with Syria and Greece.

Turkey has one of the largest immigration detention systems and the conditions at immigration detention centers have repeatedly been criticized for their terrible and inhumane conditions. There are also ongoing reports of forced deportations of people fleeing the conflict in Syria, who are returned to regions where they face a high probability of being tortured, imprisoned, disappeared, or killed.

We urge the Committee to recommend that:

1. Turkiye immediately stop detaining children, families, and other people who have inherent vulnerabilities, including people who are fleeing torture, asylum seekers, refugees, pregnant women, the elderly, and trafficking victims
2. Turkey provides the committee with concrete details of visits by monitoring bodies to all sites of immigration-related detention and enables access to detention centers by civil society organizations, independent medical providers, and lawyers.
3. Thirdly, the state party provides details about gender- and child-responsive training including with respect to trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants.
4. Fourthly, Turkiye immediately halt all forced returns along its borders including deportations in which people are coerced into signing “voluntary” return forms.
5. Lastly, Turkiye provide details about the provision of legal assistance, including in particular at border crossing points, during immigration procedures, and at facilities for migrants.

Thank you.