

THE SHIFT

#RIGHT2HOUSING

5 November 2020

Dear Honourable Prime Minister Mitsotakis

Hon. Minister Mitarachi, Minister for Immigration and Asylum

Hon. Alternate Minister Koumoutsakos, Alternate Minister for Migration and Asylum Policy

President von der Leyen, President of the European Commission

Vice-President Schinas, Vice-President of the European Commission

Attn: Commissioner Mijatović, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights

High Commissioner Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Mr. Balakrishnan Rajagopal, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing

Please accept this letter written in my capacity as Global Director of The Shift, the international movement for the right to housing. Prior to this appointment, and until recently, I was the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Housing for six years (2014 –2020).

I have been following events regarding the Moria refugee, migrant, and asylum seeker Reception and Identification Centre (hereinafter, 'Moria RIC'), located on Lesbos Island in the North-Eastern Aegean. It is my understanding that following a fire at Moria RIC, approximately 13,000 refugees, asylum seekers and migrants were rendered homeless. Prior to the fires, conditions at the camp were unfit for dignified habitation and inconsistent with international human rights norms – with significant overcrowding and lacking necessary water, sanitation and healthcare facilities. Furthermore, I have been informed that the new temporary Kara Tepe camp, that has been built by the Greek Government to accommodate those displaced by the fire at Moria RIC, may be insufficient to meet the Greek Government's human rights obligations with respect to the right to housing, as well as other human rights.

According to the information received:

Moria RIC

1. Moria RIC was located near Mytilene, the capital of the island of Lesbos. The camp was intended to serve as an initial reception centre wherein refugees and asylum seekers could stay for short periods of time to enable them to file their asylum applications. However, the situation at Moria RIC rapidly deteriorated, leading to the site being utilised to house refugees and asylum seekers for extended periods of time, sometimes up to two years.¹ Those living at Moria RIC had arrived in Greece from

¹ Dunja Mijatović, 'Report of the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe Following Her Visit To Greece from 25 to 29 June 2018' para 17, available at: <https://rm.coe.int/report-on-the-visit-to-greece-from-25-to-29-june-2018-by-dunja-mijatov/16808ea5bd>

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approximately 70 countries. Around 50 per cent of the camp's residents were under 18 years old. Most were escaping conflict, threats of violence and persecution in the countries they had arrived from.²

2. Conditions at Moria RIC had long been regarded as grossly inadequate for habitation. In 2018 the camp was described by Dunja Mijatović, the European Commissioner on Human Rights, as being “seriously overcrowded” with 9,000 people being held in a space which only had the capacity for just over 3,000. The Commissioner also noted that poor hygiene in the camp was causing “insecurity” and “despair” amongst those living there, and threatened to “put the human rights of the camp’s residents at high risk.”³ Formal living spaces in Moria RIC were mainly tents and containers, some of which housed up to 125 people.⁴ Despite these deplorable conditions, individuals and families continued to be brought to Moria RIC requiring the creation of an overflow site known as the Olive Grove.

3. Despite strong warnings regarding the conditions at Moria RIC, few improvement measures were taken and instead the situation at the camp was allowed to deteriorate. At the beginning of 2020, it was reported that the number of refugees and asylum seekers living in and around Moria RIC had increased to 19,000, despite the capacity of the camp being only around 2,800.⁵ Many others were forced to live in the Olive Grove where families were left to construct their own shelters from plastic sheeting and other materials leaving them exposed to extreme weather conditions and other environmental hazards.

4. Within Moria RIC and the Olive Grove, sanitation and hygiene facilities were very poor. Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), which worked within the camp, noted in 2018 that there were 62-70 people per working toilet and 91 people per shower. These ratios were described as being 2 and 3 times more respectively than is recommended in an emergency situation.⁶ In September 2018, the Lesbos Public Health Directorate found the camp to be “unsuitable and dangerous for public health, with toilet waste pipes having broken resulting in a strong stench.” In April 2020, it was noted that in some areas of the camp up to 1,300 people shared one water tap.⁷

5. The disgraceful conditions that refugees were forced to live in have been shown to have had an extremely detrimental impact on their well-being. MSF noted that the camps were highly dangerous in terms of disease transmission, with communicable health problems such as scabies, lice and diarrhoea

² According to statistics from the Greek Asylum Service, from 7 June 2013 to 29 February 2020 around 70 per cent of people applying for refugee status in Greece were from countries with a high refugee recognition rate in Greece. See, http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:IDXv8GBkLnwJ:asylo.gov.gr/en/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Greek_Asylum_Service_data_February_2020_en.pdf+&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=uk

³ Dunja Mijatović, ‘Report of the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe Following Her Visit to Greece from 25 to 29 June 2018’ page 1, available at: <https://rm.coe.int/report-on-the-visit-to-greece-from-25-to-29-june-2018-by-dunja-mijatov/16808ea5bd>

⁴ Ibid at para 16

⁵ See, for example, <https://infocrisis.gov.gr/7598/national-situational-picture-regarding-the-islands-at-eastern-aegean-sea-22-1-2020/?lang=en>

⁶ International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) and European Council for Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) v. Greece, (Complaint No. 173/2018) 21 December 2018, para 44, available at: <https://rm.coe.int/cc173casedoc1-en/168090390c>

⁷ International Rescue Committee, ‘New IRC analysis reveals risk that coronavirus transmission rates in Moria, Al Hol and Cox’s Bazar refugee camps could outpace those seen on the Diamond Princess cruise ship’ (1 April 2020) available at: <https://www.rescue.org/press-release/new-irc-analysis-reveals-risk-coronavirus-transmission-rates-moria-al-hol-and-coxs>

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being prevalent.⁸ There were particular concerns with regards to COVID-19, with charities and NGOs repeatedly outlining the risk of the spread of the disease in the camp, due to the huge overcrowding, lack of healthcare, and poor hygiene conditions.⁹ In addition, security at the Moria RIC was extremely poor, with reports of sexual assaults, harassment, and other forms of violence common.¹⁰ The dangers posed to the health and well-being of those living in Moria RIC have also had a significant impact on their mental health. Clinicians working in the camp noted that 1 in 6 people they saw had a mental health issue, which they stated was often exacerbated by the conditions in the camp.¹¹ Furthermore, MSF has reported on the shocking levels of self-harm by children within the camp, including suicide attempts by children as young as 10.¹²

6. These are conditions in which no one should have to live, and starkly contravene the Greek Government's international legal obligations to adopt appropriate measures using the maximum of available resources to ensure access to adequate housing for those in need, regardless of their migration status or place of origin.

8 September 2020 Fire

7. On 8 September 2020, a number of fires occurred at Moria RIC. Fires were a repeated occurrence at Moria RIC. In 2016, a fire left a 66-year-old woman and a 6-year-old child dead, and another woman and a 4-year-old child seriously injured,¹³ and in March 2020, another child was killed in a fire within one of the living containers at the camp.¹⁴ Although, thankfully, there was no loss of life in the 8 September fire, it led to the almost complete destruction of the camp. Overnight, the 13,000 residents of Moria RIC were left homeless in the middle of a pandemic.¹⁵ Many of those forced to flee the blaze lost everything they owned and with no immediate alternative housing provision made available, were left sleeping in car parks and fields in the area surrounding the camp, often with no

⁸ MSF, 'Statement: Overcrowded, dangerous and insufficient access to healthcare in Moria' available at: <https://www.msf.org/greece-overcrowded-dangerous-and-insufficient-access-healthcare-moria>; Marion MacGregor, 'Dehydration, trauma - the health risks migrants face' Infomigrants, available at: <https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/19789/dehydration-trauma-the-health-risks-migrants-face>

⁹ International Rescue Committee, 'IRC analysis: Coronavirus transmission rates in refugee camps could outpace those seen on the Diamond Princess cruise ship' (Press Release: 1 April 2020) available at: <https://www.rescue-uk.org/press-release/irc-analysis-coronavirus-transmission-rates-refugee-camps-could-outpace-those-seen>; Human Rights Watch, 'Greece: Island Camps Not Prepared for Covid-19' (22 April 2020), available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/04/22/greece-island-camps-not-prepared-covid-19>

¹⁰ See, for example, -----, 'Afghan woman killed in Moria camp' (23 May 2020) available at:

<https://www.ekathimerini.com/252983/article/ekathimerini/news/afghan-woman-killed-in-moria-camp>; -----, 'Two migrants hurt as shots fired into island camp' (23 April 2020) available at: <https://www.ekathimerini.com/251938/article/ekathimerini/news/two-migrants-hurt-as-shots-fired-into-island-camp>; UNHCR, 'Refugee women and children face heightened risk of sexual violence amid tensions and overcrowding at reception facilities on Greek islands' (9 February 2018) available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/news/briefing/2018/2/5a7d67c4b/refugee-women-children-face-heightened-risk-sexual-violence-amid-tensions.html>

¹¹ Boat Refugee Foundation, 'Dutch doctors shocked by the situation in Moria refugee camp: physical and mental health under great pressure' (undated), available at: <https://bootvluchteling.nl/artsen-geschokt/>

¹² MSF, 'Self-harm and attempted suicides increasing for child refugees in Lesbos' (17 September 2018) available at: <https://www.msf.org/child-refugees-lesbos-are-increasingly-self-harming-and-attempting-suicide>

¹³ -----, 'Two dead, two injured after fire breaks out at Greek migrant camp' (24 November 2016) Reuters, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-greece-camp-idUSKBN13J2CE>

¹⁴ Katy Fallon, 'Child killed in Lesbos refugee camp fire' (16 March 2020) The Guardian, available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/16/child-killed-in-lesbos-refugee-camp-fire>

¹⁵ -----, 'Moria fire: 'I know how little people had before' (9 September 2020) BBC, available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/world-europe-54094048>

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access food or water.¹⁶ When seeking assistance in local towns and villages they were met with violence and hostility from some members of these communities and from the police who are said to have blocked roads and used tear gas against them.¹⁷

New Refugee Camp Site

8. It is recognised that the Greek Government, with assistance from UNHCR, worked quickly to establish a new emergency facility in Kara Tepe to house many of those who had previously lived in Moria RIC. The new camp was established on a former army firing range. From 17 to 24 September, the Government moved approximately 9,400 of the displaced residents into the camp, transferring others to alternative accommodation on Lesbos or the mainland.¹⁸

9. Conditions in the Kara Tepe emergency camp are poor, with a spokesperson for UNHCR pointing to “critical gaps in drainage, water, sanitation, hygiene and health services.”¹⁹ Those living at the camp have complained that electricity is inadequate and that there are an insufficient number of toilets which has caused residents to limit their intake of food.²⁰ There are no shower facilities, so inhabitants have to wash using hosepipes or in the sea.²¹ Additionally, recent heavy rains have left the site waterlogged, flooding tents and forcing residents to self-construct flood defences to protect their homes and belongings from further flooding.²²

10. Significant concerns have also been raised regarding the presence of lead in the soil at the site, which is a phenomenon common to military sites where activity involving ammunition has taken place. Whilst the Greek Government has noted it made efforts to remove spent ammunition from the site during the construction of the camp, refugees report finding bullet and shell casings. Moreover, toxicologists have warned that removing spent ammunition does not end the risk of lead poisoning as

¹⁶ Eva Cossé, ‘Greece’s Moria Camp Fire: What’s Next?’ (12 September 2020) Human Rights Watch, available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/09/12/greeces-moria-camp-fire-whats-next>

¹⁷ -----, ‘Moria migrants: Fire destroys Greek camp leaving 13,000 without shelter’ (9 September 2020) BBC, available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-54082201>; Sofia Barbarani, ‘After Moria fire, refugees decry conditions in new camp on Lesbos’ (18 September 2020) Al Jazeera, available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/9/18/after-moria-fire-refugees-decry-conditions-in-new-camp-on-lesbos>

¹⁸ UNHCR, ‘Greece Update: Moria Fire Emergency’ (25 September 2020) page 1

¹⁹ Peter Yeung and Pavlos Kapantais, ‘Lead poisoning fears at Greek refugee camp built on military site’ (2 October 2020) Al Jazeera, available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/10/2/lead-poisoning-greece>

²⁰ Katy Fallon, ‘Moria 2.0: refugees who escaped fire now living in ‘worse’ conditions’ (7 October 2020) The Guardian, available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/oct/07/moria-20-refugees-who-escaped-fire-now-living-in-worse-conditions>

²¹ Marion MacGregor, ‘Moria 2.0: The new Lesbos refugee camp’ (12 October 2020) Infomigrants, available at: <https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/27851/moria-2-0-the-new-lesbos-refugee-camp>

²² -----, ‘Charities demand change in migrant policy on Greek islands’ (9 October 2020) Infomigrants, available at: <https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/27831/charities-demand-change-in-migrant-policy-on-greek-islands#:~:text=The%20petition%20demands%20that%20the,the%20Greek%20islands%20more%20freely.>

Sofia Barbarani, ‘Greece accused of failure to safeguard migrants after tents flood in controversial new Lesbos camp’ (14 October 2020) The Telegraph, available at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/10/14/greece-accused-failure-safeguard-migrants-tents-flood-controversial/>

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dangerous invisible residue is very likely to remain present.²³ This puts those living in the Kara Tepe emergency camp, particularly children and pregnant women, at significant risk from serious harm.

11. The Greek Government clearly recognises the importance of protecting people from COVID-19, yet conditions in the camp are conducive to increasing the spread of the disease. The lack of hygiene facilities and the inadequacy of the housing provided means that the Government mandated requirements to stay home and maintain good personal hygiene through handwashing are impossible to properly fulfil in the Kara Tepe emergency camp, as they were in Moria RIC and in the aftermath of the fire when many were living in homelessness. Consequently, it is deeply concerning, though unsurprising, that a large number of refugees and migrants have been discovered to have now contracted COVID-19 with 243 new cases being confirmed on 21 September.²⁴ This represents an increase of 226 cases since testing was undertaken at Moria RIC on 8 September and an increase in the rate of infection by over three times (controlling for the numbers of tests done on each occasion).²⁵

12. In light of the many instances of inadequacy at the Kara Tepe emergency camp, one local NGO, Refugee Support Aegean, has noted that “conditions in the new camp fall short of minimum standards of dignified living under Greek and international law.”²⁶ This cannot be an outcome which the Greek Government regards as satisfactory.

Incompatibility with International Law

13. Without prejudicing the accuracy of these allegations, I wish to express my concern that the conditions faced by refugees and migrants in Moria RIC, and those currently faced by those who have been moved to the Kara Tepe emergency camp, in no way meet international human rights law standards with respect to the adequacy requirements of the right to housing.

14. The human right to housing is recognised in a number of international and regional conventions ratified by Greece. The most prominent articulation of the right to housing under international law is found in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), which Greece ratified on 16 May 1985. As you may be aware, under Article 11.1 of the ICESCR, ‘housing’ does not simply mean having a roof over one’s head, but rather is broadly defined as a place where people can live in “security, peace and dignity.”²⁷ The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has further elaborated on what it means for housing to be ‘adequate’, holding that this requires homes to,

²³ Peter Yeung and Pavlos Kapantais, ‘Lead poisoning fears at Greek refugee camp built on military site’ (2 October 2020) Al Jazeera, available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/10/2/lead-poisoning-greece>

²⁴ -----, ‘Lesbos: Hundreds test positive for Covid-19 after migrant camp fire’ (21 September 2020) BBC, online at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-54239446>

²⁵ Benjamin Bathke, ‘Greece reports at least 17 coronavirus cases at Moria migrant camp’ (8 September 2020) Infomigrants, available at: <https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/27109/greece-reports-at-least-17-coronavirus-cases-at-moria-migrant-camp>; Previous testing carried out in Moria on 8th September discovered 17 cases from 1,600 tests, for a 1.06% positive return rate. Testing in Kara Tepe discovered 243 cases from 7,000 tests, for a 3.47% positive return rate.

²⁶ Sofia Barbarani, ‘After Moria fire, refugees decry conditions in new camp on Lesbos’ (18 September 2020) Al Jazeera, available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/9/18/after-moria-fire-refugees-decry-conditions-in-new-camp-on-lesbos>

²⁷ CESCR, General Comment No. 4, E/1992/23, para 7

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inter alia, be habitable, have access to necessary goods and services, provide security of tenure for those living there, and should be in appropriate locations.²⁸ Furthermore, as per Article 2.1 of the ICESCR, States must “take steps” to “progressively realise” the rights contained within the Covenant, using “all appropriate means” and the “maximum of available resources”.²⁹ According to Article 2.2 of the Covenant, the rights must be guaranteed without discrimination of any kind.³⁰

15. Greece is also party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified on 11 May 1993, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, ratified on 7 June 1983, and the Revised European Social Charter, ratified on 18 March 2016. The right to adequate housing is also contained within the Convention on the Status of Refugees, which Greece ratified on 3 April 1960, and which states that “as regard to housing” States Parties must “accord to refugees lawfully staying in their territory treatment as favourable as possible and, in any event, not less favourable than that accorded to aliens generally in the same circumstances.”³¹ Furthermore, the right to housing is enshrined in the Greek Constitution, wherein it notes that “the acquisition of a home by the homeless or those inadequately sheltered shall constitute an object of special State care.”³²

16. Based on the information I have received, the following conditions in Moria RIC were non-compliant with the right to housing under international and regional law: a lack of access to adequate water, sanitation and healthcare; the failure to provide housing to those in need, forcing them to sleep rough and construct their own homes on a non-sanctioned site; and the poor quality of housing which failed to properly protect residents from threats such as diseases and fire. These conditions threatened the physical and mental health and well-being of residents and forced them to live in extreme indignity.

17. According to the information I have received, the Government’s failure to provide habitable conditions in fact worsened conditions overall by contributing to the events of 8 September, which ultimately put thousands of lives at risk, left all of the residents of the camp homeless in the middle of the pandemic, and required the Government to create a new site. It appears that the Government did not draw lessons from the Moria RIC camp experience when establishing the Kara Tepe emergency camp. I have learned that this camp too fails to ensure residents have access to habitable homes which protect them from inclement weather, fails to provide access to water and sanitation facilities, and prevents residents from practicing good hygiene and physically distancing to prevent the spread of COVID-19. It was also placed on a site which poses a significant health risk to those living there, which is in direct contradiction of the location aspect of the right to housing, which stipulates that “housing should not be built on polluted sites nor in immediate proximity to pollution sources that threaten the right to health of the inhabitants.”³³

²⁸ Ibid at para 8

²⁹ International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Article 2.1

³⁰ Ibid at Article 2.2

³¹ Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees 1951, Article 21

³² Constitution of Greece, Article 21§4

³³ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General Comment No. 4: The Right to Adequate Housing (Art. 11 (1) of the Covenant), E/1992/23, para 8(f)

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18. Human rights are interrelated, interdependent and indivisible, and consequently they cannot be viewed in isolation. Having assessed the information made available to me regarding the conditions in Moria RIC and the Kara Tepe emergency camp, and the situation refugees and migrants were faced with immediately after the 8 September fire, it is also clear that a number of other human rights may have been breached, in addition to the right to adequate housing. In particular, I draw your attention to Art 12.1 of the ICESCR, which guarantees the right to health, Arts 11 and 12 of the ICESCR and General Assembly Resolution 64/292,³⁴ from which the rights to water and sanitation are derived, and Art 7.1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which states that no one shall be subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. With respect to the last of these rights, it is notable that the Committee Against Torture, in its 2019 Concluding Observations of Greece, stated that “the containment policies applied ... have resulted in migrants and asylum seekers being exposed to appalling and unsanitary living conditions, especially in the case of those held in overcrowded reception centres as “hotspots” such as the centres in Samos and Moria, Lesbos” with the Committee calling on Greece to “strengthen its efforts to ensure adequate living conditions in all immigration centres.”³⁵ In addition, I draw your attention to Art 6.1 of the ICCPR, which ensures the right to life, and in particular to General Comment No. 36 which recognises that as part of its duty to protect life, States have an obligation to alleviate conditions, including homelessness, which pose a direct threat to life.³⁶

19. I wish to emphasise that international human rights protections are not only owed by a State to its own nationals, but rather apply to all people within the territory of a State, whatever their status. This is noted in General Comment No. 20 of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which holds that “Covenant rights apply to everyone including non-nationals, such as refugees, asylum-seekers, stateless persons, migrant workers and victims of international trafficking, regardless of legal status and documentation.” Similarly, in its General Comment No.31, the Human Rights Committee stated with regards to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights that “States Parties are required by article 2, paragraph 1, to respect and to ensure the Covenant rights to all persons who may be within their territory and to all persons subject to their jurisdiction.”³⁷

20. Whilst I recognise that, particularly with respect to the new camp at Kara Tepe, the situation faced by the Greek Government was one of an emergency, whereby many thousands of people had to be rehoused in a very short period of time following a disaster, I wish to make it clear that human rights are not suspended in times of emergency or crisis. Consequently, it is insufficient for the Government to rely on the emergency nature of the situation in order to justify failing to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of the refugees and migrants living therein. I am certain that the Government of Greece does not wish these egregious, degrading and non-human rights compliant conditions to persist. In this

³⁴ General Assembly Resolution 64/292 on the Human Right to Water and Sanitation, A/RES/64/292, Adopted on 28 July 2010

³⁵ Committee Against Torture, ‘Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Greece’ (3 September 2019) CAT/C/GRC/CO/7, para 20

³⁶ Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 36 (2018) on Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, on the right to life, CCPR/C/GC/36, para 26

³⁷ Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 31: The Nature of the General Legal Obligation Imposed on States Parties to the Covenant, CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add. 13, para 10

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regard, the Government must take immediate measures to ensure the Kara Tepe emergency camp meets minimum human rights requirements so that residents can live in security and dignity, whilst establishing and commencing longer-term policies to enable the full enjoyment of all human rights in the camp in the shortest time possible.

21. In light of the serious human rights concerns and the failure of the Greek Government to meet the human rights obligations it owes to migrants and refugees in Greece, I offer the following recommendations to remedy the harm caused and ensure compliance with international human rights law:

- A. The Government should publicly acknowledge its human rights obligations with respect to migrants and refugees living in Moria RIC and the Kara Tepe emergency camp. Based on this, the Government should develop emergency legislation and human rights-based strategies, with measurable goals and timelines, and appropriate monitoring and accountability measures, to ensure that conditions at the Kara Tepe emergency camp, and all other refugee and migrant camps, are human rights compliant.
- B. An independent human rights inquiry should be established to investigate the conditions at Moria RIC prior to the 8 September 2020 fire, the circumstances of the fire, and the aftermath in which residents were left homeless. The body of inquiry appointed must have the authority to issue binding decisions and be empowered to determine satisfactory remedies for all those affected.
- C. The Government must take immediate action to ensure that the Kara Tepe emergency site is capable of meeting international human rights standards. This must include ensuring the provision of habitable accommodation, satisfactory water, sanitation and hygiene facilities and appropriate healthcare services, and taking steps to properly protect residents from COVID-19. Equally, the Government must, without delay, undertake an investigation alongside toxicologists, to determine whether the site itself is safe for human habitation.
- D. Ensure that the Kara Tepe emergency camp does not become long-term housing for the inhabitants by meaningfully engaging with them to find long-term solutions on mainland Greece

22. I hope that the Greek Government will take the concerns raised in this letter with the utmost seriousness and will immediately begin working towards a solution which respects its human rights obligations. I understand that challenges may be faced as a result of EU regulations and policies, which impact on Greece's ability to progressively realise the human right to housing for migrants and refugees. I would be happy to work with the Government to encourage the EU to better acknowledge the need for Member States to ensure the right to housing for migrants and refugees and to call on the European Commission to provide greater support to Greece, which would help enable the Government to meet its human rights commitments in this area.

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23. I would be grateful for a timely response to this letter prior to 11 November 2020. On this date, I intend to publicly publish this letter. Any response received, either prior to the publication of this letter or after its publication, will also be made public via The Shift's website and social media channels. I also intend to discuss this matter with my successor as Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing, Mr Balakrishnan Rajagopal.

I look forward to hearing from you with regards to my concerns.

Yours faithfully,



Leilani Farha
Global Director, The Shift
Former UN Special Rapporteur on the right to housing