

# URGENT ACTION

## DO NOT EXTRADITE NGO WORKER

On 16 March 2026, Tommy Olsen, a Norwegian human rights worker and founder of the NGO Aegean Boat Report, was arrested at his home in Tromsø and remanded in custody following a European arrest warrant issued by the Greek authorities and subsequently released. The warrant stems from a 2022 Greek investigation into his work with refugees and migrants. He was released on 20 March but remains at risk of extradition to Greece, where he could face pre-trial detention for up to 18 months on charges that are not backed by evidence and stem from Greece's misuse of anti-smuggling legislation. Amnesty International calls on Norwegian authorities not to extradite him, to uphold international human rights law and protect human rights work.

**TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER**

**Minister of Justice, Astri Aas-Hansen**

Ministry of Justice  
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Dear Minister Astri Aas-Hansen,

*I am writing to express deep concern about the arrest and proposed extradition to Greece of **Tommy Olsen**, a Norwegian human rights worker and founder of the NGO Aegean Boat Report. Tommy has spent years assisting refugees and migrants arriving in Greece, documenting cases of distress at sea, and reporting serious human rights violations against them, including illegal pushbacks at sea and land borders. His work is legitimate, humanitarian, and vital for holding authorities accountable.*

*On 11 February 2026, Tommy was informed by Norwegian authorities that a European arrest warrant had been issued against him following a 2022 investigation in Greece, on charges of membership of a criminal organization. These charges are not backed by evidence and are a misuse of anti-smuggling legislation. While he has been released pending his appeal hearing, Tommy remains at risk of extradition to Greece, where he could face pre-trial detention for up to 18 months.*

*The escalation in his case sends a concerning signal about the treatment of individuals carrying out essential human rights and humanitarian activities. It occurs as Greece intensifies its crackdown on civil society by explicitly targeting NGOs.*

**NGOs and humanitarian workers should be protected, not prosecuted through the misuse of smuggling laws. Norway should not be complicit in this. I call on you to refrain from extraditing Tommy Olsen to Greece, ensuring that he is not sent to be prosecuted for his human rights work and for helping people in need. Upholding Norway's international human rights obligations in this case is critical to protecting civil society's freedoms and opposing attempts to undermine those speaking out against human rights violations.**

Yours sincerely,

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Tommy Olsen, 53 years old, a Norwegian human rights worker, founded Aegean Boat Report (ABR) in 2017 after volunteering with refugees and migrants on Lesbos. Alongside fellow human rights worker Panayote Dimitras, of the NGO Greek Helsinki Monitor (GHM), since 2022 he is being prosecuted on charges of facilitation of irregular entry and stay of people (smuggling) and membership of a criminal organization. Based on information available to Amnesty International, the charges against Olsen and Dimitras are not backed by evidence, are a misuse of smuggling legislation and target their legitimate exercise of human rights work, including assistance to migrants and refugees and the documentation of human rights violations against them by Greek authorities.

Since the creation of ABR, Tommy Olsen has monitored arrivals of refugees and migrants to the Greek islands through the Aegean, documented and reported situations of distress and Greece's unlawful returns (so called "pushbacks") at sea and land borders, and [provided critical information](#) to humanitarian organizations, service providers, and international media, helping ensure that people in distress receive assistance and that abuses are monitored and recorded. His co-defendant, Panayote Dimitras, with the Greek Helsinki monitor has similarly filed multiple complaints to Greek authorities concerning pushbacks allegations.

On 11 February 2026, Tommy Olsen was informed by Norwegian authorities that a European arrest warrant had been issued against him following a 2022 Greek investigation. On 16 March 2026, he was arrested at his home in Tromsø. A Norwegian court subsequently ruled that he could be extradited to Greece, a decision which he is appealing, and he was remanded in custody. He was subsequently released on 20 March pending his appeal hearing, but remains at risk of extradition. If extradited, he could face pre-trial detention for up to 18 months. Panayote Dimitras, who is a Greek citizen and based in Greece, was subjected to restrictive measures pending the trial, including a ban on leaving Greece that impacts his human rights work, and regular reporting requirements to the authorities.

The arrest and proposed extradition of Tommy Olsen and the ongoing criminal case against him and Dimitras, happens in a climate of growing hostility against civil society in Greece. Since 2018, Greek authorities have misused anti-smuggling and facilitation laws to criminalize humanitarian and solidarity work. Several people have faced criminal investigations and prosecution, while an untold number of migrants and refugees have experienced human rights violations both in the country and at its borders.

Previous cases, including that of [Seán Binder](#) and other people associated with the NGO ERCI, show how anti-smuggling laws are being misused to target humanitarian work. While defendants in this case were ultimately acquitted in January 2018, their investigation and prosecution lasted over 7 years, causing them significant personal and professional harm, while contributing to a chilling effect on civil society.

Amnesty International has [clearly stated](#) that Greek anti-smuggling legislation is not aligned to international standards and does not adequately protect human rights defenders from criminal prosecution. [New rules](#) introduced by Greece earlier in the year, which make membership of a registered migration NGO an aggravating factor in smuggling cases, create a dangerous and unjustified link between legitimate human rights work and criminal activities. It is imperative that Norway and other European countries are not complicit in attempts to criminalize those standing in solidarity with refugees and migrants and speaking out against violations of their rights.

**PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET:** Norwegian, English

You can also write in your own language.

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL:** 23 September 2026

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

**NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN:** Tommy Olsen (he/him)