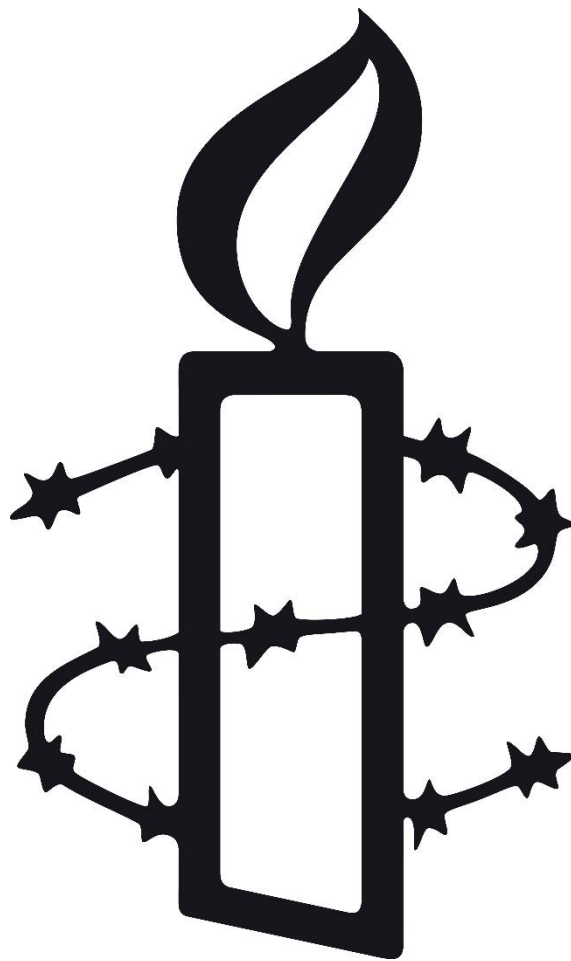


FINLAND

SUBMISSION TO THE UN COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

118th session, 10 - 25 August 2026



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Amnesty International submits this document in advance of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination's (the Committee) consideration of Finland's combined 24-26th periodic reports on the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (the Convention) in August 2026. This submission summarizes Amnesty International's concerns about Finland's failure to comply with its obligations under the Convention, including regarding racial discrimination, hate speech and hate crimes; economic and social rights; violence against women; rights of the indigenous Sámi people; right to freedom of peaceful assembly and rights of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. This is not an exhaustive set of issues.

1. INTRODUCTION

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2. RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, HATE SPEECH AND HATE CRIMES (ARTICLES 2 - 7)

2.1 LEGAL, INSTITUTIONAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR COMBATING RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, HATE SPEECH AND HATE CRIMES

Amnesty International regrets that the current government programme 2023-2027 of Prime Minister Petteri Orpo's (National Coalition Party, NCP) coalition government lacks adequate commitments to combat racism, hate speech and hate crimes.¹ In 2023, after media reports concerning past racist speeches and writings by three ministers of the Finns Party (FP), the government introduced an equality statement that includes a list of measures to combat racism. The measures were to be implemented through a separate action plan.² In 2024, Amnesty International and other NGOs criticized the government for taking numerous measures, which deepened structural racism and discrimination.³

The government's action plan to combat racism and promote equality, published in 2024, did not include legislative measures to combat racism, hate speech and hate crimes.⁴ While it included some positive measures for example regarding equality planning, the action plan showed no clear evidence of a genuine commitment to tackling racism.⁵

A 2023 evaluation report commissioned by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) found that the previous governmental anti-racism action plan 2021–2023 was meeting the criteria set by the EU. Despite the positive overall assessment, the report recommended the government “allocate sufficient resources for

¹ Finnish Government, A Strong and Committed Finland: Programme of Prime Minister Petteri Orpo's Government 20 June 2023, 2023, <https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-383-818-5>; Amnesty International Finnish Section, “Amnesty: Hallitusohjelma ihmisoikeuksien näkökulmasta heikko ja ristiriitainen” [“Amnesty: Government Programme weak and contradictory from the perspective of human rights”], 21 June 2023, <https://www.amnesty.fi/amnesty-hallitusohjelma-ihmisoikeuksien-nakokulmasta-heikko-ja-ristiriitainen/> (in Finnish).

² Finnish Government, Government statement to Parliament on promoting equality, gender equality and non-discrimination in Finnish society, 2023, <https://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi-fe20230829112043>; Ministry of Justice, Finland, An Equal Finland: Government Action Plan for Combating Racism and Promoting Good Relations between Population Groups, 2022, <https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-259-813-4>.

³ Amnesty International Finnish Section, “Yhteiskannanotto: Hallituksen politiikka uhkaa syventää rasismia ja syrjintää” [“Joint statement: Government policy threatens to deepen racism and discrimination”], 18 March 2024, <https://www.amnesty.fi/yhteiskannanotto-hallituksen-politiikka-uhkaa-syventaa-rasismia-ja-syrjintaa/> (in Finnish); Amnesty International Finnish Section, “Järjestöt peräänkuuluttavat hallitukselta antirasistista politiikkaa ja yhdenvertaisuutta edistävää lainsäädäntöä” [“NGOs call on the government to adopt anti-racist policies and legislation that promotes equality”], 12 September 2024, <https://www.amnesty.fi/jarjestot-peraankeuluttavat-hallitukselta-antirasistista-politiikkaa-ja-yhdenvertaisuutta-edistavaa-lainsaadantoa/> (in Finnish).

⁴ Finnish Government, A New Boost for Equality in Finland: Government action plan to combat racism and promote equality, 2024, <https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-383-981-6>.

⁵ Amnesty International Finnish Section, Joint statement on anti-racism in Finland and recommendations 2026, 19 March 2026, <https://www.amnesty.fi/en/joint-statement-on-anti-racism-in-finland-and-recommendations-2026/>. Amnesty International bases its positions on balancing freedom of expression and combating hate speech on the Rabat Plan of Action, see Human Rights Council, 11 January 2013, Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, UN Doc. A/HRC/22/17/Add.4, para 29.

anti-racism policies”, “develop specific measures to combat Afrophobia, Islamophobia and antisemitism”, and “amend the Criminal Code to comply with the EU Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA”.⁶

These recommendations are largely yet to be implemented and the government’s measures to combat racism, hate speech and hate crimes remain insufficient. The activities lack overall coordination, and limited government projects exist to address these issues: a permanent national coordination structure, a whole-of-government action plan to combat hate speech and hate crimes as well as a comprehensive data collection of hate incidents are lacking.⁷

2.2 PREVALENCE OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, HATE SPEECH AND HATE CRIMES

A 2026 report by the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman (NDO) concluded that racial discrimination is a widespread and serious societal problem that affects many minority groups.⁸ A 2023 report by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) revealed that 43% of people of African descent in Finland reported experiencing racist harassment and 54% reported experiencing racial discrimination within a year before the survey.⁹ According to 2021, 2022 and 2023 reports by NGO Anti-Racist Forum, hate incidents reported through its online tool were most or second most often directed at persons who belonged or were presumed to belong to an ethnic minority of people of African descent.¹⁰

According to a Special Eurobarometer survey conducted by the European Commission in 2023, a total of 72% of Finns believed that discrimination against Roma was widespread in Finland.¹¹ The project Roma Civil Monitoring, which works on the rights of Roma people, noted that “antigypsyism was still not adequately recognised or acknowledged at any level of Finnish society”.¹²

In 2024, the National Human Rights Centre and MoJ published a report on the prevalence of antisemitism in Finland.¹³ The report found that most respondents believed antisemitism in Finland had increased over

⁶ MAP Finland ry, Artemjeff, P., Attias, M. & Mohammed, A., “Arviointi valtioneuvoston Yhdenvertainen Suomi -toimintaohjelmasta rasismien torjumiseksi ja väestösuhteiden edistämiseksi” [“Evaluation of the Government Action Plan on Equal Finland to Combat Racism and to Promote Good Relations”], 2023, <https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-400-655-2>. See also: European Commission, February infringements package: key decisions, 18 February 2021, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/INF_21_441.

⁷ See for example: UN Committee against Torture (CAT), Concluding observations: Finland, 3 June 2024, UN Doc. CAT/C/FIN/CO/8; UN Human Rights Committee (HRC), Report on follow-up to the concluding observations: Finland, 16 April 2024, UN Doc. CCPR/C/140/2/Add.1; Senta, C., Knezić, D., Silfors, P., Costa Sa, M. E., Ng’oma, N. & O’Curry, S., Mapping of the Needs of Hate Crime Victims in Croatia, Finland and Ireland, 2024, <https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/items/bc7be417-f5db-48c6-afa9-151975f4be1b>; Aaltonen, M. & Al Omair, N., Centre of Excellence for Work against Hate Crimes and Discrimination – Concept report, <https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-400-759-7>; Saesma, T., Pöytäti, R., Knuutila, A., Kosonen, H., Juutinen, M., Haara, P., Tulonen, U., Nikunen, K. & Rauta, J., “Verkkoviha : Vihapuheen tuottajien ja levittäjien verkostot, toimintamuodot ja motiivit” [“Online Hate: The networks, practices and motivations of the producers and distributors of hate speech”], 2022, <https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-383-298-5> (in Finnish); European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) Report on Finland (Fifth monitoring cycle), CRI (2019)38, para. 44–45.

⁸ Non-Discrimination Ombudsman, “Yhdenvertaisuusvaltuutetun kertomus eduskunnalle 2026”, [“Report by the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman to the Parliament 2026”], K2/2026, 2026, [https://yhdenvertaisuusvaltuutettu.fi/documents/25249352/42720545/Yhdenvertaisuusvaltuutetun%20kertomus%20eduskunnalle%202026%20\(PDF\).pdf/73a510ad-aaf5-e573-34b9-a0f1a09929b8?t=1774340587372](https://yhdenvertaisuusvaltuutettu.fi/documents/25249352/42720545/Yhdenvertaisuusvaltuutetun%20kertomus%20eduskunnalle%202026%20(PDF).pdf/73a510ad-aaf5-e573-34b9-a0f1a09929b8?t=1774340587372) (in Finnish).

⁹ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, Being Black in the EU: Experiences of People of African Descent, 2023, <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2023/being-black-eu>.

¹⁰ Anti-Racist Forum, Shadow reports I, II and III: Together against Hate – shadow reports, 2021, 2022 and 2023, <https://www.antiracistforum.org/together-against-hate-shadow-report>.

¹¹ European Commission, Special Eurobarometer, Discrimination in the European Union – Country Factsheets, Finland, 2023, <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2972>; see also Mannila, S., “Syrjintä Suomessa 2020–2023: Tietoraportti” [“Discrimination in Finland 2020–2023: Data Report”], 2024, <https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-400-955-3> (in Finnish), pp. 15; see also The Finnish Roma Association, “Antigypsyismista” [“On antigypsyism”], <https://www.suomenromaniyhdistys.fi/poliittinen-vaikuttaminen/rasisminvastainen-tyo/antigypsyismista/> (in Finnish) (accessed on 27 May 2026).

¹² Roma Civil Monitoring, Finland – Country Fiche, 2025, <https://www.romacivilmonitoring.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/C3-FI-Country-Fiche-2025.pdf>.

¹³ Human Rights Centre, “Kokemuksia ja näkemyksiä antisemitismistä Suomessa – Selvitys juutalaisiin kohdistuvasta syrjinnästä ja viharikollisuudesta” [Experiences of and Views on Antisemitism in Finland – a Report on Discrimination and Hate Crimes against Jews], 2024, <https://bin.yhdistysavain.fi/1586428/RWwMi5qFyISAkQRjVPSEY0aINBa/Antisemitismiselvitys%202024.pdf> (in Finnish). The report does not seek to define antisemitism, or base its analysis in any definition of antisemitism, but to reflect on the perceptions

the past five years, with the internet and social media identified as the main arenas, followed by the media and political life.¹⁴

According to the European Islamophobia Report 2022, many politicians and public officials portray Muslims as a threat to national security and anti-Muslim racism and xenophobic sentiment have been fueled by several events, including the parliamentary elections in April 2023.¹⁵ In 2024, a FRA report concluded that Finland has one of the highest reported levels of discrimination against Muslims in the EU, with 60% experiencing discrimination within a year and 64% over the past five years before the survey.¹⁶

According to a report¹⁷ published by the MoJ in 2022, silencing the Sámi people or restricting their participation in society is of concern. Almost half of the Sámi respondents reported experiencing hate speech or harassment, and they said the perpetrator was usually a politician or a person in a public position.

Most hate crimes reported to the police in Finland are racist crimes.¹⁸ According to an annual report by the Police University College in 2025, the number of suspected hate crimes continued to increase. In 2024, the police recorded a total of 1, 808 offenses classified as suspected hate crimes, which was the highest number ever recorded in Finland.¹⁹

According to a 2022 survey commissioned by MoJ, the results of many governmental actions taken to combat hate speech are not yet reflected in the experiences of marginalized groups.²⁰ Another study commissioned by the government acknowledged that hate speech has become “an integral part of the online culture”.²¹

2.3 UNDER-REPORTING OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND HATE INCIDENTS

The issue of under-reporting discrimination and hate incidents to the authorities remains a significant problem.²² A 2020 study on experiences of discrimination of people of African descent by the NDO showed that 61% of respondents did not report discrimination they experienced to any authorities.²³ A 2023 report

and experiences of antisemitism and antisemitic discrimination among people who identify themselves as Jewish. The study examined experiences of antisemitism and discrimination among people 16 years of age who identify themselves as Jews in Finland and who lived in Finland at the time of the study. The report utilized both quantitative and qualitative data and studied the experiences based on religion, culture, upbringing, ethnicity, kinship, or other reasons.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 3; see also Hiltunen Rainer, Country report – Non-discrimination. Transposition and implementation at national level of Council Directives 2000/43 and 2000/78. Finland, 2025, <https://www.migpolgroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Finland-country-report-non-discrimination-DS0125069ENN.pdf>, pp. 66.

¹⁵ Bayrakli, E. & Hafez, F. (eds.), European Islamophobia Report 2022, 2023, <https://islamophobiareport.com/islamophobiareport-2022.pdf>.

¹⁶ The statistics describe the discrimination experienced by Muslim respondents across the following grounds: skin colour, ethnic or immigrant background, religion or religious beliefs, age, sex/gender, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity or gender expression. European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, Being Muslim in the EU – Experiences of Muslims, 2024, <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2024/being-muslim-eu>.

¹⁷ Owal Group, Jauhola, L., Siltala, J. & Nieminen, K. “”Että puuttuttaisiin konkreettisesti”: Seurantaselvitys vihapuheesta ja häirinnästä ja niiden vaikutuksista eri vähemmistöryhmiin [“Hoping for a Concrete Intervention”: Follow-Up Survey on Hate Speech and Harassment and Their Effects on Different Minority Groups], 2022, <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-400-482-4> (in Finnish).

¹⁸ Ministry of Interior, Finland, Racist crimes account for most hate crimes, <https://intermin.fi/en/police/hate-crime> (accessed on 26 May 2026).

¹⁹ Rauta, J., ”Poliisin tietoon tullut viharikollisuus Suomessa 2024” [“Suspected hate crimes reported to the police in Finland in 2024”], 2025, <https://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi-fe2025100299240> (in Finnish).

²⁰ Owal Group, Jauhola, L., Siltala, J. & Nieminen, K., 2022, *supra* note 17.

²¹ Saresma, T., Pöyhkä, R., Knuutila, A., Kosonen, H., Juutinen, M., Haara, P., Tulonen, Urho, Nikunen, K. & Rauta, J., 2022 *supra* note 7.

²² According to a survey, only approximately 20% of hate crime victims reported to the police. Ministry of Interior, Finland, Racist crimes account for most hate crimes, <https://intermin.fi/en/police/hate-crime> (accessed on 26 May 2026);

Victim Support Finland (RIKU) and The National Forum for Cooperation of Religions in Finland (CORE Forum), “Uhrien kokemuksia viharikoksista Suomessa vuosina 2014–2018” [“Victims’ experiences of hate crime in Finland 2014–2018”], 2018, https://www.riku.fi/content/uploads/su_file/2140_Uhrien_kokemuksia_viharikoksista_2014_2018.pdf (in Finnish).

²³ Non-Discrimination Ombudsman, Report of the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman: Racism and discrimination - everyday experiences for People of African descent in Finland, 9 June 2020, <https://yhdenvertaisuusvaltuutettu.fi/en/-/report-of-the-non-discrimination-ombudsman-racism-and-discrimination-everyday-experiences-for-people-of-african-descent-in-finland>; Non-Discrimination Ombudsman, “Selvitys afrikkalaistaustaisten henkilöiden kokemasta syrjinnästä” [“Study on experiences of discrimination against people of African descent”], 2020, [https://yhdenvertaisuusvaltuutettu.fi/documents/25249352/0/Selvitys+afrikkalaistaustaisten+henkil%C3%B6iden+kokemasta+syrjinn%C3%A4st%C3%A4+\(PDF,+2204+kt\).pdf](https://yhdenvertaisuusvaltuutettu.fi/documents/25249352/0/Selvitys+afrikkalaistaustaisten+henkil%C3%B6iden+kokemasta+syrjinn%C3%A4st%C3%A4+(PDF,+2204+kt).pdf) (in Finnish), pp. 15.

by Anti-Racist Forum²⁴ and a 2022 survey commissioned by the MoJ on hate incidents and discrimination showed similar results.²⁵

According to a study commissioned by the MoJ, there are shortcomings in the identification and processing of hate motives in the criminal procedure. The study criticized the guidelines by the National Police Board (NPB) for not requiring the police to assign hate crime codes to reported offences.²⁶ The study also found problems in investigating whether hate was a motive for crime, as the interviewing instructions issued by the NPB made no reference to examining the motives.²⁷ According to the Minister of the Interior, the NPB has since updated its instructions to highlight the importance of correct recording practices.²⁸

A report published by the MoJ in 2024 noted that the rates at which offences related to racism are resolved had decreased since 2007, for example from 62% to 50% in the case of discrimination.²⁹ The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) has observed that Finland would benefit from increasing awareness and strengthening the skills of criminal justice professionals to better address and record hate crimes.³⁰

2.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Amnesty International is calling on authorities in Finland to:

- Ensure political leaders and government officials refrain from and speak out against discriminatory rhetoric, strictly condemn hate crimes when they occur and make clear that crimes targeting people for discriminatory reasons will not be tolerated.
- Establish a permanent body to coordinate and develop national efforts to combat racial discrimination, hate speech and hate crimes and ensure that hate crimes are effectively investigated and those perpetrating them held accountable.
- Work with anti-racist civil society actors to develop methodologies for collecting data on hate crimes at all levels, including reporting, investigation, prosecution and sentencing. Data should be disaggregated by protected grounds, made publicly accessible (considering privacy and in line with human rights law and standards), and regularly reviewed to assist the development of policies to combat hate crimes.
- Take legislative measures to combat racism, hate speech and hate crimes and promote equality to address the root causes and contemporary manifestation of racism in line with international human rights law and standards.

²⁴ Anti-Racist Forum, Shadow report III: Together against hate, 2023, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5c61e3977980b3278f57db6e/t/6659e9892db6c77e9b0c3233/1717168536263/shadowreport-III-ENG+%281%29-min.pdf>.

²⁵ Owl Group, Jauhola, L., Siltala, J. & Nieminen, K., 2022, *supra* note 17.

²⁶ National Police Board, "Epäillyn viharikoksen tai sellaisia piirteitä sisältävän rikoksen luokittelu poliisiasiain tietojärjestelmään (Ohje 2020/2011/2098)" ["Classifying a suspected hate crime or a crime containing such elements in the police information system (Guideline 2020/2011/2098)"], 13.12.2011, cited in Juutinen, M., Hate Crimes and their Handling in the Criminal Process, 2021, <https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-259-934-6>.

²⁷ National Police Board, "Ohje esitutkintapöytäkirjan laadinnasta. Liite 2. Käsikirja kuulustelujen kirjaamisesta. (Ohje POL-2016-8514)" ["Instructions for preparing the preliminary investigation report. Attachment 2. Manual for recording interrogations (Guideline POL-2016-8514)"], cited in Juutinen, M., *ibid*.

²⁸ Parliament of Finland, "Vastaus kirjalliseen kysymykseen KKV 392/2025vp" ["Answer to a written question KKV 392/2025vp"], 2025, <https://www.eduskunta.fi/asiat-ja-aanestykset/valtiopaivaasiat/KKV%20392%2F2025%20vp> (in Finnish); see National Police Board, "Epäillyn viharikoksen tai sellaisia piirteitä sisältävän rikoksen tunnistaminen, tutkinta sekä kirjaaminen poliisitoiminnassa" ["Identifying, investigating and recording a suspected hate crime or an offence containing such characteristics in police activities"], 2023, [https://poliisi.fi/documents/25235045/138938434/POL-2023-127636,+27.11.2023,+Epa%CC%88illyn+viharikoksen+tai+sellaisia+piirteita%CC%88+sis%C3%A4%CC%88ita%CC%88va%CC%88n+rikoksen+tunnistaminen,+tutkinta+seka%CC%88+kirjaaminen+poliisitoiminnassa.pdf/ae2f7e0c-363e-ff86-482e-8238b83714b4/POL-2023-127636,+27.11.2023,+Epa%CC%88illyn+viharikoksen+tai+sellaisia+piirteita%CC%88+sis%C3%A4%CC%88ita%CC%88va%CC%88n+rikoksen+tunnistaminen,+tutkinta+seka%CC%88+kirjaaminen+poliisitoiminnassa.pdf/ae2f7e0c-363e-ff86-482e-8238b83714b4/POL-2023-127636,+27.11.2023,+Epa%CC%88illyn+viharikoksen+tai+sellaisia+piirteita%CC%88+sis%C3%A4%CC%88ita%CC%88va%CC%88n+rikoksen+tunnistaminen,+tutkinta+seka%CC%88+kirjaaminen+poliisitoiminnassa.pdf?t=1701681965864](https://poliisi.fi/documents/25235045/138938434/POL-2023-127636,+27.11.2023,+Epa%CC%88illyn+viharikoksen+tai+sellaisia+piirteita%CC%88+sis%C3%A4%CC%88ita%CC%88va%CC%88n+rikoksen+tunnistaminen,+tutkinta+seka%CC%88+kirjaaminen+poliisitoiminnassa.pdf/ae2f7e0c-363e-ff86-482e-8238b83714b4/POL-2023-127636,+27.11.2023,+Epa%CC%88illyn+viharikoksen+tai+sellaisia+piirteita%CC%88+sis%C3%A4%CC%88ita%CC%88va%CC%88n+rikoksen+tunnistaminen,+tutkinta+seka%CC%88+kirjaaminen+poliisitoiminnassa.pdf?t=1701681965864) (in Finnish).

²⁹ Mannila, S., 2024, *supra* note 11, pp. 61.

³⁰ ODIHR, 2024 Hate Crime Report, <https://hatecrime.osce.org/reporting/finland/2024> (accessed on 27 May 2026).

- Support anti-racist civil society actors and enable their participation and resources in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the government's anti-racism work, including the action plan to combat racism and promote equality.

3. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RIGHTS (ARTICLES 2 AND 5)

3.1 RIGHT TO ADEQUATE HOUSING

Racialized groups face significant barriers when accessing the private housing market.³¹ Approximately 31 % of people of African descent and 43 % of Muslims in Finland reported racial discrimination when attempting to rent or buy a home.³² The risk of marginalization and discrimination is heightened by economic status, as 64 % of Muslims who struggle to make ends meet are reported to experience discrimination in housing, compared to 41 % of those in a better financial position.³³

Overcrowding and inadequate housing disproportionately affect migrant households and families with children. In interviews with civil society organizations and social workers, Amnesty International has been informed of cases of large families living in single-room apartments due to inadequate availability of affordable housing and how, in one case, a family with a child with disability also lived in these conditions.³⁴ People of African descent in Finland are reported to be ten times more likely to be unable to afford to keep their homes warm (10 %) compared to the general population (1 %) and face significantly higher rates of overcrowding.³⁵

According to the most recent homelessness statistics collected by the Finnish Centre for State-Subsidised Housing Construction Varke, the number of people “with a foreign background” experiencing homelessness reached 966 in 2025, representing a substantial 21 % share of the population experiencing homelessness.³⁶ The increase in the percentage of people “with a foreign background” experiencing homelessness is occurring alongside a broader reversal of Finland’s long-standing decline in homelessness, with overall homelessness rising significantly by 34 % in 2024-2025.³⁷

A study found that people “with a foreign background” are disproportionately affected by homelessness due to structural obstacles such as limited access to affordable housing, discrimination in rental markets, insecure employment, and language barriers, all of which increase vulnerability to housing exclusion.³⁸ Cuts to the general housing allowance in 2024 and 2025 worsen the situation further for people “with a foreign background”.³⁹

³¹ Amnesty International, “*I have to choose whether to buy food or pay my rent*”: The impact of austerity measures on the right to adequate housing in Finland (Index: EUR 20/9219/2025), 14 April 2025, [amnesty.org/en/documents/eur20/9219/2025/en/](https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur20/9219/2025/en/), pp. 15, 32.

³² European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2023, *supra* note 9, pp. 42; European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2024, *supra* note 16, pp. 30.

³³ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *ibid.*, pp. 31.

³⁴ Amnesty International, 14 April 2025, *supra* note 31, pp. 30-31.

³⁵ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2023, *supra* note 9, pp. 76, 78.

³⁶ The term “people with a foreign background” is used by Statistics Finland. It refers to “persons whose both parents or the only known parent have been born abroad are considered to be persons with foreign background. Persons who have been born abroad and whose parents’ data are not included in the Population Information System are also considered to be persons with foreign background”. Finnish Centre for State-Subsidised Housing Construction Varke, Homelessness in Finland statistics, 2025, varke.fi/en/statistics/homelessness/homeless-people-2024, pp. 8.

³⁷ Finnish Centre for State-Subsidised Housing Construction Varke, Homelessness in Finland statistics, 2025, varke.fi/en/statistics/homelessness/homeless-people-2024, pp. 3-4; Finnish Centre for State-Subsidised Housing Construction Varke, Homelessness in Finland statistics, 2026, varke.fi/en/statistics/homelessness/homeless-people-2025.

³⁸ Hedayati, N., Migrants’ pathways into homelessness in Finland’s Capital Region, Sininauhasäätiö (MASE Project, funded by the Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland ARA), 2024, sininauhasaatio.fi/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Migrants-pathways-into-homelessness.pdf, pp. 10.

³⁹ Social Insurance Institution of Finland Kela, “General housing allowance reduced in 2024, will no longer be available for owner-occupied homes starting in 2025”, 2023, <https://www.kela.fi/news/general-housing-allowance-reduced-in-2024-will-no-longer-be-available-for-owner-occupied-homes-starting-in-2025>.

3.2 RIGHT TO SOCIAL SECURITY AND AN ADEQUATE STANDARD OF LIVING

Amnesty International is concerned by the Finnish government's plans to amend the social security system, to introduce distinctions that would only apply to certain migrant groups, such as stricter criteria to access benefits and lower provision levels. The government has proposed legislative reforms that would introduce an "integration benefit" for unemployed migrants who have resided in Finland for less than three years and who do not meet employment or language-based criteria.⁴⁰ This would replace the current system, where they can access the general basic unemployment benefit, which provides a higher amount than the new integration benefit.⁴¹ This would represent a significant departure from Finland's long-standing principle of equal, residence-based access to social security.⁴²

In parallel, the government has proposed amendments to the child home care allowance scheme, that would introduce a residence-based eligibility requirement of three years for parents who have migrated to Finland.⁴³ In other words, parents who have not been resident in Finland for three years would not be able to access this allowance. The proposal would exclude a significant number of migrant parents, predominantly mothers, from access to the allowance, forcing them to manage without income support or to rely on last-resort social assistance.⁴⁴

Changes also took place in the last few years with regard to the reception allowance, a form of basic subsistence support in Finland provided to asylum seekers, persons granted temporary protection, and those victims of human trafficking who do not have a municipal resident status.⁴⁵ The provision level of reception allowance was reduced in 2024 by a temporary amendment to the Reception Act.⁴⁶ Permanent lower provision levels are expected to take force in 2026.⁴⁷

The amount of the reception allowance after the current reduction would fail to guarantee an adequate standard of living for people eligible for it.⁴⁸ A 2025 Finnish Immigration Service survey of reception centre officials found that recipients face severe difficulties covering essential daily expenses such as food, clothing, and hygiene items, with many accumulating debt and increasingly forced to rely on external food

⁴⁰ Finnish Government, "Hallituksen esitys eduskunnalle laeiksi yleistukilain, työvoimapalveluiden järjestämisestä annetun lain sekä yleisistä kielitutkinnoista annetun lain muuttamisesta" (HE 109/2026) ["Government proposal for acts amending the Act on General Support, the Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration and the Act on the National Certificate of Language Proficiency"], <https://www.finlex.fi/fi/hallituksen-esitykset/2026/109> (in Finnish).

⁴¹ Finnish Government, "Hallituksen esitys eduskunnalle laiksi kotoutumisen edistämisestä annetun lain muuttamisesta ja siihen liittyviksi laeiksi (HE 74/2026 vp)" ["Government proposal to the Parliament: Act on Promoting Integration (HE 74/2026 vp)"], 2026, <https://www.eduskunta.fi/asiat-ja-aanestykset/valtiopaivaasiat/asiakirjat/edktunnus/EDK-2026-AK-22400> (in Finnish).

⁴² Amnesty International Finnish Section, "Lausunto hallituksen esitysluonnoksesta laeiksi yleistukilain, kotoutumisen edistämisestä annetun lain sekä yleisistä kielitutkinnoista annetun lain muuttamisesta" ["Comment on the Government's draft proposal for acts amending the Act on General Support, the Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration and the Act on the National Certificate of Language Proficiency"], AI FI 6/2026, 2026, amnesty.fi/app/uploads/2026/02/Lausunto-AI-FI-6_2026-STM-yleistuki-kotoutuminen-kieli.pdf (in Finnish), pp. 3–5.

⁴³ Finnish Government, "Hallituksen esitys eduskunnalle laiksi lasten kotihoidon ja yksityisen hoidon tuesta annetun lain muuttamisesta (HE 69/2026 vp)" ["Government proposal to Parliament: Act amending the Act on Child Home Care and Private Care Support (HE 69/2026 vp)"], 2026, eduskunta.fi/asiat-ja-aanestykset/valtiopaivaasiat/asiakirjat/edktunnus/EDK-2026-AK-20573 (in Finnish).

⁴⁴ Amnesty International Finnish Section, "Lausunto luonnoksesta hallituksen esitykseksi eduskunnalle laiksi lasten kotihoidon ja yksityisen hoidon tuesta annetun lain muuttamisesta" ["Comment on the draft government proposal to Parliament for an act amending the Act on Child Home Care and Private Day Care Allowance"], AI FI 12/2026, 2026, amnesty.fi/app/uploads/2026/03/Lausunto-AI-FI-2026-STM-kotihoidontuki.pdf (in Finnish), pp. 2–3. About social assistance, see Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, <https://stm.fi/en/income-security/social-assistance> (accessed on 26 June 2026).

⁴⁵ As a rule, those eligible for the reception allowance are not eligible for others benefits.

⁴⁶ Reception Act (Act on the Reception of Persons Applying for International Protection and on the Identification of and Assistance to Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings), Amendment 466/2024.

⁴⁷ Finnish Government, "Hallituksen esitys eduskunnalle EU:n muuttoliike- ja turvapaikkasopimuksen muodostavien säädösten täytäntöönpanemiseksi" ["Government proposal to Parliament on the implementation of the legislative acts constituting the EU Migration and Asylum Pact (HE 52/2026 vp)"]. eduskunta.fi/asiat-ja-aanestykset/valtiopaivaasiat/HE%2052%2F2026%20vp (in Finnish).

⁴⁸ This information is from an unpublished 2025 survey (n.d.) by the Finnish Immigration Service and obtained by Amnesty International with a freedom of information request on 30 June 2025. The survey was conducted between 16 January and 6 February 2025. There were 68 respondents from 48 different reception centres. Some of the results were outlined in the government's legislative proposal to continue the temporary cuts to the reception allowance ("Hallituksen esitys eduskunnalle laiksi kansainvälistä suojelua hakevan vastaanotosta sekä ihmiskaupan uhrin tunnistamisesta ja auttamisesta annetun lain väliaikaisesta muuttamisesta annetun lain voimaantulosäännöksen muuttamisesta" ["Government proposal on the amendment to the entry into force provision on the Act on the Reception of Persons Applying for International Protection and on the Identification of and Assistance to Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings, HE 90/2025 vp"]). eduskunta.fi/asiat-ja-aanestykset/valtiopaivaasiat/asiakirjat/edktunnus/EDK-2025-AK-36908 (in Finnish).

aid.⁴⁹ Other impacts observed in the survey include increased psychological distress, loss of dignity, social isolation, and worsening overall well-being.⁵⁰ Families with children are reported to be especially affected, with increased inability to meet basic nutritional and developmental needs, and growing barriers to participation in education and social life.⁵¹

3.3 RIGHT TO HEALTH

Retrogressive legislation restricting the access of undocumented migrants to mainly urgent health care came into force in January 2026.⁵² Certain exceptions allowing necessary non-urgent care are in place for children, pregnant persons, persons with disabilities, and persons with chronic diseases. Under previous legislation, which was in force for 2023-2025, irregular or undocumented migrants had access to non-urgent care that is deemed necessary by healthcare personnel, in addition to urgent care.⁵³

3.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Amnesty International is calling on authorities in Finland to:

- Ensure adequate housing and housing-related services for all without discrimination. Develop and strengthen housing-related services that address the needs of migrants.
- Repeal plans to differentiate social security benefit access criteria and provision levels based on migration status and ensure equal social protection for all.
- Restore the provision level of the reception allowance to a level that ensures that recipients can access an adequate standard of living.
- Ensure that any future adjustments to reception conditions and changes to housing related services and assistance are subject to rigorous human rights impact assessments and comply with human rights law, including the obligation to ensure non-discrimination.
- Guarantee access to healthcare for all people without discrimination, regardless of their migration status, in accordance with international human rights law and standards.

4. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (ARTICLES 2 AND 5)

4.1 LACK OF DATA ON PREVALENCE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST MINORITY WOMEN

Prevalence of violence against women and girls remains high in Finland: 57% of women have experienced physical or sexual violence at least once in their lifetime after the age of 15.⁵⁴ There is a no disaggregated data on experiences of gender-based violence among lesbian, bi, pan, trans, and Sámi women. Also, many other groups that are stigmatized or marginalized are overlooked in research. For example, there is no recent research on experiences of violence among sex workers.⁵⁵ This is the case also regarding migrant women, even though a study from 2014 estimated that women with a migrant background are raped twice as often compared to women belonging to the majority

⁴⁹ Unpublished 2025 survey (n.d.) by the Finnish Immigration Service. Amnesty International has the survey on file.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Ministry for Social Affairs and Health, Healthcare and social welfare for undocumented persons, 25 March 2026, stm.fi/en/healthcare-and-social-welfare-for-undocumented-persons.

⁵³ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur20/6899/2023/en/>

⁵⁴ European Institute of Gender Equality, Gender Equality Index: Violence against women in Finland 2025, <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2025/domain/violence/FI> (accessed on 1 June 2026).

⁵⁵ Liitsola, K., Kauppinen, J., Nikula, M., Thesslund, E., Huovinen, M., Aalto, E., Ollgren, J. & Brummer-Korvenkontio, H., "Terveystä seksi- ja erotiikka-alalla. Erotiikka-, escort-, ja seksityötä tekevien terveys- ja hyvinvointi Suomessa" ["Health in sex and erotic work. The health and welfare of erotic, escort and sex workers in Finland"], 2013, https://www.julkari.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/110829/URN_ISBN_978-952-302-105-1.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y (in Finnish).

population.⁵⁶ The lack of adequate data can lead to insufficient support systems and prevention programs.

4.2 SERVICES FOR MIGRANT AND SÁMI WOMEN EXPERIENCING VIOLENCE

Domestic violence shelters in Finland aim to offer low-threshold services⁵⁷ to all survivors. However, survivors from minority groups and racialized groups, such as the Roma, often face discrimination in accessing these services.⁵⁸ For those fleeing violence, obstacles in accessing a shelter can be a matter of life and death.⁵⁹

In their 2023 submission to GREVIO⁶⁰, the Sámi Parliament (Sámediggi, Sämitigge, Sää'mte'gǧǧ)⁶¹ outlined critical gaps in implementation of the Istanbul Convention for Sámi women. The submission highlighted a lack of culturally appropriate support services, systemic data collection issues, and the need for greater Sámi involvement.⁶² In its first thematic report in 2025 GREVIO expressed concern over the lack of culturally and linguistically appropriate generalist and specialist services, including the insufficient availability of shelters within the Sámi homeland.⁶³

4.3 ACCESS TO JUSTICE BY RACIALIZED WOMEN IN CASES OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Research published by Amnesty International Finland in 2025⁶⁴ revealed that women who experience multiple forms of discrimination do not trust the judicial system and authorities to treat them fairly. This

⁵⁶ See Lehti, M., Salmi, V., Aaltonen, M., Danielsson, P., Hinkkanen, V., Niemi, H., Sirén, R. & Suonpää, K., "Maahanmuuttajat rikosten uhreina ja tekijöinä" ["Immigrants as crime victims and offenders in Finland"], 2014;

<https://helda.helsinki.fi/server/api/core/bitstreams/03626293-30e9-4bed-9a43-7d052d5004ab/content> (in Finnish)

See also Niemi, H. & Lehti, M., "Ulkomaalaiset, maahanmuuttajat ja rikollisuus" ["Foreigners, immigrants and crime"] in "Rikollisuustilanne 2016: Rikollisuuskehitys tilastojen ja tutkimusten valossa" ["Crimes in 2016: Crime development in the light of statistics and surveys"], 2017, <https://helda.helsinki.fi/server/api/core/bitstreams/b3d5d9c6-8c05-4aa1-97a1-c19e9aa3b9a3/content> (in Finnish), pp. 229–264.

⁵⁷ Low threshold services include, for example, these characteristics in Finland: they are open 24/7, no reservation is needed and it is possible to come with children. Shelter services are free of charge for all service users. Information about accessibility is provided on the webpage of each shelter. Few shelters allow pets. At the moment, there is only one shelter for people with substance dependencies. Victims of trafficking or victims of violence in cases in which the perpetrator is a stranger are not permitted to use shelter services.

⁵⁸ Törmä, S., Toukkola, K. & Hurtig, J., "Lähisuhde- ja perheväkivalta romaninaisten kokemana. Avun tarpeet yhteisössä ja palvelujärjestelmässä" ["Domestic violence experienced by Roma women. Needs for help in the community and service system"], 2013, <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-00-3629-4> (in Finnish).

⁵⁹ Mojšker, N., Racialized Access to Domestic Violence Shelter. NORA - Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research, 2026, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08038740.2025.2606266>, pp. 1–18.

⁶⁰ GREVIO: Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence overseeing the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence which came into force in Finland in 2025. See: Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, "Yleissopimus naisiin kohdistuvan väkivallan ja perheväkivallan ehkäisemisestä ja torjumisesta (2011)" ["The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (2011)"], https://um.fi/euroopan-neuvoston-voimassa-olevat-ihmisoikeussopimukset/-/asset_publisher/mnr92wS4p1I3/content/yleissopimus-naisiin-kohdistuvan-vakivallan-ja-perhevakivallan-ehkaisemisesta-ja-torjumisesta-2011-/35732.

⁶¹ The Sámi Parliament is the representative self-government body of the Sámi people in Finland. The Sámi Parliament decides on matters concerning the Sámi languages, culture, and status as an Indigenous People and is responsible for related tasks. The Sámi Parliament, The Sámi Parliament, <https://samediggi.fi/en/the-sami-parliament/> (accessed on 1 June 2026).

⁶² The Sámi Parliament, The Shadow report from the Sámi Parliament to GREVIO, 2023, <https://rm.coe.int/shadow-report-finland-first-thematic-evaluation/1680ac512c>.

⁶³ GREVIO, Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, Building trust by delivering support, protection and justice. Finland. First thematic evaluation report, 2025, <https://rm.coe.int/first-thematic-evaluation-report-finland/1680b2ab48>.

⁶⁴ Viini, M., Oksanen, P., Lyytikä, H. (edit), "Asenne esiin" ["Attitudes revealed"], 2025,

<https://www.amnesty.fi/uploads/2025/02/amnesty-asenne-esiin-tutkimusraportti.pdf> (in Finnish). The data for this research was collected in 2024 with the following methods:

1) A web-based public opinion survey (N = 1058). The survey was conducted by order by Aula Research. See the compilation of results: Amnesty International Finnish Section, "Amnestyn kansalaiskysely: Suostumuksen ja uudistuneen seksuaalirikoslainsäädännön ymmärrys riittämätöntä Suomessa" ["Amnesty International's citizen survey: Understanding of consent and the reformed sexual offence legislation is insufficient in Finland"], 7 March 2024,

leads to underreporting of experiences of sexual violence, victims and survivors not receiving support for their recovery, perpetrators not receiving support to change their behavior, and sexual violence going unpunished. This allows sexual violence to continue.⁶⁵

A public opinion survey included in the Amnesty International research showed that over 55% of respondents did not trust the judicial system to treat rape survivors fairly. Mistrust was higher among women: 61% did not trust judicial system.⁶⁶ As many as 36% of respondents had little or no trust in public authorities, such as the police and health care providers. These results are significant, as trust in public authorities and the judicial system is generally quite high in Finland.⁶⁷

Group discussions conducted as a part of this research⁶⁸ revealed that women living in Finland lack trust in the authorities due to racism and institutionalized hostility towards minorities. Experiences of racism were mentioned in every group that had participants from racialized ethnic minorities. Every participant in group discussions and 68% of respondents of public opinion survey felt that women and girls are blamed by society for the sexual violence and harassment they experience.⁶⁹

A 2022 report on police procedures by the Deputy Chancellor of Justice highlighted that police often lacked essential skills and knowledge to identify the characteristics of sexual and domestic violence and lacked the capacity to accurately assess the severity of these offences.⁷⁰

In the first thematic report on Finland in 2025, GREVIO identified several issues including the lack of systematic integration of a gender-sensitive and trauma-informed understanding into police procedures and mandatory in-service training for all relevant professional groups – all these require sustained action in order to effectively remove barriers to reporting and build trust by delivering protection, support and justice for acts of violence against women.⁷¹

4.4 RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE FINNISH GOVERNMENT

Amnesty International is calling on authorities in Finland to:

- Collect disaggregated data to assess migrant and minority women's experiences of gender-based violence in Finland.
- Ensure the availability of immediate, medium and long-term specialist support services, including psychological support to victims of all forms of violence against women, in an appropriate geographical distribution, while catering to the specific needs of marginalized women, those in vulnerable positions and those subjected to multiple and intersectional discrimination.
- Facilitate access to justice for all victims of rape and other sexual violence to ensure that more cases are reported and successfully prosecuted in court.

<https://www.amnesty.fi/amnestyn-kansalaiskysely-suostumuksen-ja-uudistuneen-seksuaalirikoslainsaadannon-ymmarrys-riittamatonta-suomessa/> (in Finnish).

2) A series of group discussions (seven discussions with 37 participants in total)

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* Trust in the judicial system is virtually unchanged when compared to results from 2010.

⁶⁷ Vuorensyrjä, M., Rauta, J., Salmi A., Koivula, J., von Bell, A. & Ollila, P. "Poliisibarometri 2024: Kansalaisten arviot poliisin toiminnasta ja Suomen sisäisen turvallisuuden tilasta" ["Police Barometer 2024: Citizens' Assessments of the Operation of the Police and the State of Internal Security in Finland"], 2025, <https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-324-347-7> (in Finnish).

⁶⁸ The group discussions involved incarcerated women, immigrant women, women of colour, disabled women, trans women, and women in sex work.

⁶⁹ Viini, M., Oksanen, P., Lyytikä, H. (edit), 2025, *supra* note 64.

⁷⁰ Deputy Chancellor of Justice, "Poliisin menettely lähisuhdeväkivallan ja seksuaalirikosten esitutkinnoissa" ["Police procedure in preliminary investigations of intimate partner violence and sexual Crimes"], 2022, <https://oikeuskansleri.fi/-/poliisin-menettely-lahisuhdevakivallan-ja-seksuaalirikosten-esitutkinnoissa> (in Finnish).

⁷¹ GREVIO, Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, 2025, *supra* note 63.

5. RIGHTS OF THE INDIGENOUS SAMI PEOPLE (ARTICLES 2-7)

In recent years, Finland has taken steps to strengthen the rights of the Sámi people and to respond to recommendations issued by the Committee. Notably, the reform of the Sámi Parliament Act⁷² and the publication of the final report of the Sámi Truth and Reconciliation Commission represent important progress. However, significant gaps remain in aligning domestic legislation and practice with Finland's obligations under the Convention.

The reform of the Sámi Parliament Act in 2025 addressed long-standing concerns regarding the Sámi people's right to self-determination. Nevertheless, Amnesty International considers that the reform alone is insufficient to ensure that Sámi people's rights are fully realized in accordance with international human rights standards.

Recent evidence indicates persistent shortcomings in the implementation of the principle of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC). A 2025 report by Amnesty International and the Sámi Council highlights that Finnish legislation lacks a consistent framework to ensure that FPIC is obtained before initiating land-use or resource extraction projects affecting Sámi territories.⁷³ Also in 2024, both the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and CESCR found that Finland had violated Sámi rights by authorizing mineral exploration activities without obtaining FPIC and without conducting adequate cumulative impact assessments.⁷⁴

While the reformed Sámi Parliament Act strengthens the authorities' obligation to negotiate with the Sámi Parliament,⁷⁵ there is still no binding legal requirement to obtain the consent of the Sámi people. To ensure compliance with the requirement for FPIC, Finnish legislation should define situations in which consent is required, promote early and meaningful participation, and harmonize sectoral legislation, such as Mining Act and Land Use and Building Act, with the international standards regarding the rights of indigenous peoples.

The report of the Sámi Truth and Reconciliation Commission, published in December 2025, identifies structural discrimination against the Sámi and includes over 70 proposals addressing language rights, land rights, governance and cultural revitalization.⁷⁶ This process is an important step towards addressing historical and ongoing discrimination, but meaningful progress depends on the government's commitment to implementing these proposals.

5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE FINNISH GOVERNMENT

Amnesty International is calling on authorities in Finland to:

- Ensure that the principle of free, prior and informed consent is fully integrated into all legislation and practice affecting the Sámi people.
- Ensure that consultation and participation mechanisms with the Sámi Parliament meet international standards, including the objective of obtaining consent.
- Implement the proposals of the Sámi Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

⁷² Finland, Act on the Sámi Parliament (974/1995, amended in 2025, 414/2025), <https://www.finlex.fi/en/legislation/translations/1995/eng/974>.

⁷³ Amnesty International and Sámi Council, *Just Transition Or 'Green Colonialism'? How mineral extraction and new energy projects without free, prior and informed consent are threatening Indigenous Sámi livelihoods and culture in Sweden, Norway and Finland* (Index: EUR 20/8913/2025), 1 January 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur20/8913/2025/en/>, pp. 59–72.

⁷⁴ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Views adopted under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure* concerning communication No. 172/2022, UN Doc. CRC/C/97/D/172/2022, adopted 13 September 2024; UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, *Views adopted under the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, Communications Nos. 251/2022 and 289/2022, UN Doc. E/C.12/76/D/251/2022–E/C.12/76/D/289/2022, adopted 27 September 2024. A cumulative Impact Assessment evaluates the combined effects of multiple past, present, and reasonably foreseeable activities on the environment and society. Unlike single-project assessments, it focuses on incremental and interacting impacts over time and space, supporting more sustainable, rights-respecting decision-making.

⁷⁵ Finland, Act on the Sámi Parliament (974/1995, amended in 2025, 414/2025), <https://www.finlex.fi/fi/lainsaadanto/saaduskokoelma/2025/414#OTO> (in Finnish), Article 9.

⁷⁶ Sámi Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Finland, "I want a better life for my people": A summary of the proposals given by the Sámi Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Finland, 2025, <https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-383-956-4>.

- Ensure that all land-use, extractive and climate transition projects planned in Sámi homeland area in Northern Finland are subject to robust human rights and cumulative impact assessments.

6. RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY (ARTICLES 2 AND 5)

6.1 BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION FOR RACIALISED PEOPLE

Amnesty International is concerned that the right to freedom of peaceful assembly is not enjoyed equally by all in Finland. Interviews conducted in 2025 by Amnesty International Finland with individuals from diverse backgrounds suggest that BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour) and other racialized groups face multiple and intersecting barriers that prevent them from participating in civil society and exercising their right to freedom of peaceful assembly on an equal footing with the majority population.⁷⁷

Racism was consistently identified as a central factor shaping the interviewees' experiences, influencing interactions with the police, the likelihood of being targeted during protests, and the overall sense of safety while protesting. Interviewees, especially those who are BIPOC, also reported racist hate speech, harassment and threats in online environments.

People interviewed reported distrust towards the police, rooted in lived experiences and perceptions of systemic discrimination. Some interviewees perceived double standards; they believed that protests involving racialised or migrant communities were more likely to be restricted, dispersed, or met with arrests than those led by majority groups.

Individuals with insecure migration status reported that even minor encounters with police, including fines or arrest, could be potential risks to residence permit renewals or future citizenship applications. Recent political developments and legislative changes making residence permits and citizenship status harder to obtain, exacerbate these fears.⁷⁸ Anticipation of unequal treatment and vulnerable legal status can contribute to a significant "chilling effect" on participation amongst certain groups.

Furthermore, Amnesty International has, through protest observation⁷⁹ and monitoring, noted inconsistencies in policing protest. Oversight bodies have corrected some overly restrictive police orders, but police's wide discretionary powers may lead to inconsistent treatment of demonstrations.

For example, in connection with demonstrations supporting far-right ideology and white supremacy organized by anti-rights groups, the police have sometimes restricted the right to freedom of peaceful assembly of counterprotesters by not allowing them to protest within sight and sound of their target or by using disproportionate force or summary arrests. In contrast, Amnesty International has observed at least two protests, where police failed to intervene in violence by participants of the anti-rights protest against counterprotesters or bystanders.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Amnesty International Finnish Section, "Barriers to participation: racism and the unequal right to protest", 13 November 2025, <https://www.amnesty.fi/en/barriers-to-participation-racism-and-the-unequal-right-to-protest/>. The article is a summary of an unpublished study based on 15 interviews with individuals belonging to marginalized groups, focusing on BIPOC and racialized people's experiences. The interviews were conducted between April and September 2025.

⁷⁸ See Chapter 7. Rights of asylum-seekers, refugees and migrants in this submission.

⁷⁹ Between December 2021 and June 2026, Amnesty International Finnish Section has organized over 100 human rights observations in different demonstrations. Observation teams consist of Amnesty staff members and trained volunteers.

⁸⁰ Amnesty International, Finland: Submission to the United Nations Committee Against Torture, 79th session, 15 April – 10 May 2024 (Index: EUR 20/7832/2024), 15 March 2024, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur20/7832/2024/en/>, pp. 17; Amnesty International Finnish Section, "Mielenosoitustarkkailuraportti 2022" ["Protest observation report 2022"], 2023, https://www.amnesty.fi/app/uploads/2023/02/raportti_mielenosoitustarkkailu.pdf (in Finnish), pp. 13-14; Amnesty International Finnish Section, "Mielenosoitustarkkailuraportti 2023" ["Protest observation report 2023"], 2024, https://www.amnesty.fi/app/uploads/2024/02/mielenosoitustarkkailun-vuosiraportti-2023_valmis.pdf (in Finnish), pp. 26, 31; Amnesty International Finnish Section: Mielenosoitustarkkailuraportti 2024, ["Protest observation report 2024"], 2025, <https://www.amnesty.fi/app/uploads/2025/04/tarkkailuraportti-mielenosoituksista-2024.pdf> (in Finnish), pp. 13-14. Amnesty International Finnish Section, "Viranomaiset tukahduttavat kansalaisyhteiskuntaa Suomessa – havaintojamme mielenosoitustarkkailuista", ["Authorities are suppressing civil society in Finland – our observations from protest observation"], 9 March 2026, <https://www.amnesty.fi/viranomaiset-tukahduttavat-kansalaisyhteiskuntaa-suomessa-havaintojamme-mielenosoitustarkkailuista/> (in Finnish); see also OSCE Office for democracy and human rights, 5th Report on Monitoring of Freedom

Amnesty International also monitored more than a dozen protests held in solidarity with Palestinians. While most of these protests were protected by police where needed, Amnesty International documented three instances where unnecessary or disproportionate restrictions were imposed, or police have used disproportionate force in dispersal.⁸¹

Amnesty International also monitored how in December 2022, police prohibited the use of Kurdish organizations' flags in a demonstration where Kurdish activists participated, stating that they may provoke other groups.⁸² Activists complained that the ban was political,⁸³ and breached the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and expression. The Helsinki Administrative Court concluded that the police department had acted within their discretionary powers.⁸⁴ In a protest organized by Kurdish activists in March 2023, police confiscated an effigy of the Turkish President and filed a criminal complaint on defamation, which was soon closed.⁸⁵ The NPB stated in May 2024 that this police action lacked legal basis.⁸⁶

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE FINNISH GOVERNMENT

Amnesty International is calling on authorities in Finland to:

- Respect, protect and fulfil the right to freedom of peaceful assembly without discrimination of any kind, and ensure that no group is subjected to stricter policing based on their actual or presumed identity, such as ethnic background, religion, nationality, gender or sexual orientation.
- Take measures to remove obstacles to the exercise of the right to freedom of peaceful assembly, including by addressing structural racism and other forms of discrimination.
- Guarantee that the exercise of all human rights, such as participating in a peaceful protest, does not negatively impact immigration processes, including an individual's residence permit process or citizenship application.
- Ensure that police guidelines and training focus on equal treatment of all people participating in assemblies and on recognizing vulnerabilities that may hinder participation, and

of Peaceful Assembly in Selected OSCE Participating States, 2 August 2023, <https://www.osce.org/odihr/549388>, pp. 51; Amnesty International Finnish Section, "Poliisi käytti suhteetonta voimaa, eikä onnistunut estämään mielenosoittajien väkivaltaisia hyökkäyksiä vappuna Tampereella" ["The police used disproportionate force and failed to prevent violent attacks by demonstrators in Tampere on May Day"], 11 June 2025, <https://www.amnesty.fi/amnesty-poliisi-kaytti-suhteetonta-voimaa-eika-onnistunut-estamaan-mielenosoittajien-vakivaltaisia-hyokkayksia-vappuna-tampereella/> (in Finnish); Amnesty International Finnish Section, "Poliisin läsnäolo olisi voinut estää pahoinpitelyn Valkoinen vappu -kulkueessa" ["The presence of the police could have prevented an assault in the White May Day parade"], 5 May 2026, <https://www.amnesty.fi/amnesty-poliisin-lasnaolo-olisi-voinut-estaa-pahoinpitelyn-valkoinen-vappu-kulkueessa/> (in Finnish); see also MTV uutiset, "Silminnäkijä STT:lle: Naamioitunut joukkio työnsi ulkomaalaisen naisen katuun Töölöntorilla, poliisi ei puuttunut asiaan" ["Eyewitness to STT: A masked gang pushed a foreign woman into the street at Töölöntori Square, the police did not intervene"], 6 December 2025, <https://www.mtvuutiset.fi/artikkeli/silminnakija-stt-lle-naamioitunut-joukkio-tonaisi-ulkomaalaisen-naisen-katuun-helsingissa-poliisi-ei-puuttunut-asiaan/9266542> (in Finnish); on the use of horses in a demonstration and other remarks on the use of force see also Parliamentary Ombudsman decision 8038/2023, "Poliisin menettely mielenosoituksessa" ["The police's procedure in the demonstration"], 15 November 2024, <https://oikeusasiamies.fi/-/poliisin-menettely-mielenosoituksessa-2> (in Finnish), pp. 16-18.

⁸¹ Amnesty International, *The State of the World's Human Rights: April 2025* (Index: POL 10/8515/2025), 28 April 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pol10/8515/2025/en/>, pp. 169; Amnesty International, 15 March 2024, *ibid*, pp. 16; Amnesty International Finnish Section, "Mielenosoitustarkkailuraportti 2024" ["Protest observation report 2024"], 2025, <https://www.amnesty.fi/app/uploads/2025/04/tarkkailuraportti-mielenosoituksista-2024.pdf> (in Finnish), pp. 9,16; Amnesty International Finnish Section, "Mielenosoitustarkkailuraportti 2023", ["Protest observation report 2023"], 2024, https://www.amnesty.fi/app/uploads/2024/02/mielenosoitustarkkailun-vuosiraportti-2023_valmis.pdf (in Finnish), pp. 29.

⁸² Amnesty International Finnish Section, "Mielenosoitustarkkailuraportti 2022" ["Protest observation report 2022"], 2023, https://www.amnesty.fi/uploads/2023/02/raportti_mielenosoitustarkkailu.pdf (in Finnish), pp. 15; see also Yle News, "Police: Helsinki demo PKK flag ban 'not motivated' by Nato process", 12.12.2022, <https://yle.fi/a/74-20008276>.

⁸³ See for example Yle News, "Researcher: 'Hard not to see' link between Nato bid and PKK flag ban", 8.12.2022, <https://yle.fi/a/74-20007769>; "Natoon pyrkinyt Suomi teki turvallisuuspolitiikan nimissä asioita, joita se ei muuten olisi tehnyt, sanoo professori" ["Finland, which aspired to join NATO, did things in the name of security policy that it would not have done otherwise, says Professor"], 9 April 2023, <https://yle.fi/a/74-20024819> (in Finnish); see also Yle News, "Finland releases 3 men suspected of financing PKK terrorism", 26 December 2025, <https://yle.fi/a/74-20201502>.

⁸⁴ Helsinki Administrative Court decision 6975/2023, 30 November 2023.

⁸⁵ Amnesty International Finnish Section, "Mielenosoitustarkkailuraportti 2023", ["Protest observation report 2023"], 2024, https://www.amnesty.fi/app/uploads/2024/02/mielenosoitustarkkailun-vuosiraportti-2023_valmis.pdf (in Finnish), pp. 34.

⁸⁶ Poliisi, "National Police Board: Effigy of Turkish President should not have been seized", 17 May 2024, https://poliisi.fi/-/poliisihallitus-turkin-presidenttia-esittavaa-nukkea-ei-olisi-saanut-ottaa-haltuun?language=en_US.

robust internal monitoring and administrative enforcement procedures to ensure guidelines are followed by all officers.

7. RIGHTS OF ASYLUM SEEKERS, REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS (ARTICLES 2-7)

Since the last periodic review of Finland, restrictions on the rights of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants have increased sharply even though the number of people seeking asylum during the last 12 months has diminished to only about 2500.⁸⁷

7.1 ACCESS TO FAIR ASYLUM PROCEDURE AND NON-REFOULEMENT

Amnesty International is concerned that legislative changes to the Aliens' Act from 2015-2019 continue to place asylum seekers at risk of human rights violations such as refoulement. Measures introduced include limitations to the right to appeal to the Supreme Administrative Court, the right to choose one's preferred legal adviser in the asylum determination process as well as the suspensive effect of subsequent asylum applications. Also, a heightened threshold for admissibility of the first subsequent asylum application was set. These amendments restricted asylum seekers' right to a fair asylum procedure and to an effective remedy, increasing the risks of forcible returns in violation of the principle of non-refoulement.⁸⁸ Moreover, the current Government programme includes various measures to weaken asylum seekers' legal protection, many of which have already been implemented (as mentioned below).

The current government has issued an unprecedented number of legislative restrictions on the rights of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants - at least 13 amendments only within the Ministry of Interior's administrative sector and more in other sectors such as employment and economy as well as health and social affairs, all proposals including several legal amendments. The restrictions include, among others, reducing the duration of international protection permits, preventing asylum seekers from switching to education or work-based procedures, tightening family reunification and expanding the requirements to obtain permanent residence.⁸⁹

The new measures introduced by the government create obstacles to accessing asylum and raise the bar for migrants' long-term residence and social inclusion in Finland. The legislative amendments have been passed without assessing their cumulative and joint impact. However, as they include new means to refuse residence permits, restrict the possibility to apply for a residence permit on different grounds if a person has first applied for asylum, and restrict granting a residence permit in case of a previous irregular stay, there is a high risk that these changes will increase the number of undocumented people in Finland.⁹⁰

These reforms are also likely to increase asylum seekers' risk of being subjected to refoulement as they have eroded procedural rights in the context of asylum procedures. For example, removing the obligation to review the transcript of the asylum interview at the end of the interview⁹¹ risks incorrect or incomplete asylum interview transcripts in determining the asylum claim together with a below elaborated change to

⁸⁷ Finnish Immigration Service, Statistics: International protection, 15 May 2026, <https://tilastot.migri.fi/#applications/23330?l=en&start=664>.

⁸⁸ Amnesty International, Finland: Time to Address Remaining Gaps in Human Rights Protection: Amnesty International Submission for the 41st Session of the UPR Working Group, 7 – 18 November 2022 (Index: EUR 20/5402/2022), 31 March 2022, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur20/5402/2022/en/>.

⁸⁹ Ministry of Interior, Government Programme measures to reform migration policy, <https://intermin.fi/en/areas-of-expertise/migration/government-programme-measures-to-reform-migration-policy> (accessed on 1 June 2026).

⁹⁰ Ministry of the Interior, "Legislative amendments preventing evasion of entry rules to come into effect starting 1 September", 4 July 2024, https://intermin.fi/-/maahantulosuunnitelmien-kiertamista-estavat-lakimuutokset-voimaan-1.9?languageId=en_US. Approved legislation: "Laki ulkomaalaislain muuttamisesta 255/2025" ["Act amending the Aliens Act 255/2025"], <https://www.finlex.fi/fi/lainsaadanto/saaduskokoelma/2025/255> (in Finnish); "Laki kolmansien maiden kansalaisten maahantulon ja oleskelun edellytyksistä tutkimuksen, opiskelun, työharjoittelun ja vapaaehtoistoiminnan perusteella annetun lain 2 §:n muuttamisesta 473/2024" ["Act amending section 2 of the Act on the Conditions of Entry and Residence of Third-Country Nationals on the Basis of Research, Studies, Internship and Voluntary Activities 473/2024"], <https://www.finlex.fi/fi/lainsaadanto/saaduskokoelma/2024/473> (in Finnish).

⁹¹ Ministry of the Interior, "Legislative amendments improving efficiency of asylum system to enter into force on 1 June", 22 May 2025, <https://intermin.fi/en/-/legislative-amendments-improving-efficiency-of-asylum-system-to-enter-into-force-on-1-june>. Approved legislation: "Laki ulkomaalaislain muuttamisesta 247/2025" ["Act amending the Aliens Act 247/2025"], <https://www.finlex.fi/fi/lainsaadanto/saaduskokoelma/2025/247> (in Finnish).

provide free legal aid only to indispensable measures which might hinder the asylum seeker's possibility to check the transcript with a lawyer.

The parliament recently adopted further legal amendment facilitating the expulsion of people who have lived in Finland under certain residence permits. An appeal against an expulsion decision for people whose residence permits (with the exclusion of residence permits issued based on international protection needs) have been withdrawn or have not been extended, no longer automatically postpones or prevents the enforcement of the decision.⁹²

Also, within the national implementation of the EU pact on migration and asylum (EU pact), free legal aid for asylum seekers in the administrative stage would be restricted to indispensable measures which is a higher threshold compared to that of all other people to whom free legal aid is provided for necessary measures.⁹³ The implementation proposal specifies that legal aid offices would need to make an assessment of the measure's indispensability within each measure they provide instead of simply assessing whether the measure is justified.⁹⁴

The national implementation of the EU pact will further restrict asylum seekers' rights including restricting reception services and, as discussed above, reducing the reception allowance permanently to the minimum level permitted by the Constitution and the EU's Reception Directive.⁹⁵

7.2 FAMILY REUNIFICATION

In 2025, the parliament amended the Aliens Act to further tighten requirements for family reunification compared to the earlier restrictions. In 2016, the government had already introduced a "secure income" requirement for family reunifications for people with international protection, establishing a high income requirement that many cannot meet.⁹⁶

⁹² Ministry of the Interior, "Government proposes faster enforcement of deportation decisions and introduction of entry ban to be imposed in advance", 16 April 2026, https://intermin.fi/-/hallitus-esittaa-karkottamispäätösten-täytäntöönpanon-nopeuttamista-ja-ennakollista-maahantulokieltoa?languageId=en_US. Appealing an expulsion decision would no longer automatically postpone the enforcement of the decision. The decision could be enforced 30 days after it was notified. However, the administrative court can, upon application, prohibit or suspend the enforcement until it has processed the appeal. This law change does not apply to enforcement of expulsion decisions made in asylum cases, but it does apply to cases where people have lived in Finland with other type of residence permits.

⁹³ Finnish Government, "Hallituksen esitys eduskunnalle EU:n muuttoliike- ja turvapaikkasopimuksen muodostavien säädösten täytäntöönpanemiseksi HE 52/2026 vp" ["The Government proposal on the national implementation of the EU pact on migration and asylum HE 52/2026 vp"], 2026, <https://www.eduskunta.fi/en/matters-and-voting/matters/HE%2052%2F2026%20vp> (in Finnish). The list of approved legislation can be found on the same web page.

⁹⁴ See section 5.2.4.6 in the proposal HE 52/2026 vp: Finnish Government, "Hallituksen esitys eduskunnalle EU:n muuttoliike- ja turvapaikkasopimuksen muodostavien säädösten täytäntöönpanemiseksi" ["Government proposal to Parliament for the implementation of the provisions constituting the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum"], <https://www.finlex.fi/fi/hallituksen-esitykset/2026/52> (in Finnish)

⁹⁵ Ministry of the Interior, "Government proposal implementing EU Pact on Migration and Asylum submitted to Parliament", 16 April 2026, https://valtioneuvosto.fi/-/1410869/eu-n-muuttoliike-ja-turvapaikkasopimusta-koskeva-hallituksen-esitys-eduskuntaan?languageId=en_US.

⁹⁶ The income requirement for a family of four (two adults and two children) living in the capital region is at the moment 2.910 euros after taxes per month. See: Finnish Immigration Service, Income requirement for family members of a person who has been granted a residence permit in Finland, <https://migri.fi/en/income-requirement-for-family-members-of-a-person-who-has-been-granted-a-residence-permit-in-finland> (accessed on 26 June). The median salary in Finland was 3.520 euros before taxes per month. See: Statistics in Finland, "Palkka- ja palkkiotulojen mediaani 3 520 euroa huhtikuussa 2026" ["Median wage and salary income EUR 3 520 in April 2026"], https://stat.fi/tup/kokeelliset-tilastot/tulorekisterin_palkat_ja_palkkiot/2026-06-08/index.html (in Finnish). After taxes the median salary would be about 2.600 euros per month which is less than the income requirement for a four-member family. The earned income of people arriving on the basis of international protection is less than half of the income of those arriving with a work permit after ten years of residence. See: Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, Report offers new data on labour market performance of people who have moved to Finland for different reasons, 4 March 2024, <https://tem.fi/en/-/report-offers-new-data-on-labour-market-performance-of-people-who-have-moved-to-finland-for-different-reasons>; Pesola, H., Sarvimäki, M. & Virkola, T., "Eri syistä maahan muuttaneiden työllistyminen Suomessa" ["Employment of People Immigrating to Finland for Different Reasons"], 2024, <https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-327-870-7> (in Finnish).

The 2025 restrictions included requirements such as a minimum age-limit of 21 years for spouses⁹⁷ and a two-year residence-period before being eligible to apply for family reunification.⁹⁸ Together with a very high secure income requirement, they risk making enjoyment of the right to a family life impossible to enjoy for many recipients of international protection, including unaccompanied children.⁹⁹

7.3 DETENTION

Contrary to international standards, Finland still continues to detain unaccompanied children and families with children based on their migration status. Children should never be detained for immigration purposes, as it is never in their best interests. Amnesty International has received reports of lengthy detentions of families and single parents who have been detained with young children and babies for several months¹⁰⁰ and continues to receive reports that asylum seekers and migrants in need of special care are being detained, in particular, pending their removal from the country. These include pregnant women, persons with serious medical conditions, persons suffering from mental illness or trauma related to torture or ill-treatment, and women who have suffered serious violence.¹⁰¹

In 2025, new grounds for detaining asylum seekers and migrants were introduced.¹⁰² Several conditions were added to legislation indicating when there is reason to assume that a person may abscond during their return procedures, which is a ground for detention.¹⁰³ In addition, public order and national security were introduced as grounds for detention in order to respond to "new" and "unpredictable" situations and phenomena such as situations of alleged "instrumentalization", where authorities determine that asylum seekers were directed to a border area by another country.¹⁰⁴ These concepts are vague and open to interpretation and risk placing asylum seekers in detention solely because they have sought asylum in a specific border area.

This amendment also increased the possible period of detention to 18 months compared to the previous limit of 12 months.

7.4 RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

There is concern that the best interest of the child is not always a primary consideration in matters related to asylum and migration. In part, this is due to inadequate legislation: Section 6 of the Aliens Act provides that "special attention shall be paid to the best interest of the child".¹⁰⁵ The wording differs markedly from

⁹⁷ This new age-limit requirement applies only to spouses of foreign nationals. If a Finnish national's spouse applies for family reunification, this requirement is not applicable. Both the applicant and their spouse need to fulfil the minimum age-limit. See: Finnish Government, Legislative amendments and new requirements for family reunification, 16 June 2025, https://valtioneuvosto.fi/-/5202425/perheenyhdistamiseen-muutoksia-ja-uusia-edellytyksia?languageId=en_US.

⁹⁸ This new residence-period requirement applies to persons who have received international protection.

⁹⁹ The amendments are outlined in the Government information page: Finnish Government, "Hallituksen esitys eduskunnalle laiksi ulkomaalaislain muuttamisesta HE 11/2025 vp" ["Government proposal to Parliament for an act amending the Aliens Act HE 11/2025 vp"] <https://valtioneuvosto.fi/paatokset/paatos?decisionId=3317> (in Finnish).

¹⁰⁰ Information received in interviews with an NGO in May 2026. Also, see for example: Yle news, ["Pikkulapset suljettiin ennätyspitkäksi aikaa säilöön Lappeenrannassa – "Se oli vankila", sanoo äiti Mary"] ["Toddlers were detained for a record-breaking time in Lappeenranta – "It was a prison," says mother Mary"], 24 April 2025, <https://yle.fi/a/74-20156277> (in Finnish).

¹⁰¹ Information received in interviews with an NGO in May 2026. Earlier this year Amnesty International received information from an organisation working with refugees that a vulnerable person who would need constant medical care (suffering from medical conditions that don't even allow him to sit) was kept in detention.

¹⁰² Ministry of the Interior, "Government proposes amendments to regulation on detention and entry bans", 3 October 2024, https://valtioneuvosto.fi/-/1410869/hallitus-esittaa-muutoksia-sailoonoton-ja-maahantulokiellon-saantelyyn?languageId=en_US. The approved legislation: "Laki ulkomaalaislain muuttamisesta 147/2025" ["Act amending the Aliens Act 147/2025"], <https://www.finlex.fi/fi/lainsaadanto/saaduskokoelma/2025/147> (in Finnish).

¹⁰³ These criteria include details that, in many cases, may not mean that such a risk would exist, such as presenting forged documents, destroying existing documents or not being able to present identity documents. These criteria would rather imply difficulties in obtaining necessary documents in the country of origin or acting on instruction of a smuggler, than the risk of absconding.

¹⁰⁴ Ministry of the Interior, "Government proposes amendments to regulation on detention and entry bans", 3 October 2024, https://valtioneuvosto.fi/-/1410869/hallitus-esittaa-muutoksia-sailoonoton-ja-maahantulokiellon-saantelyyn?languageId=en_US. The approved legislation: "Laki ulkomaalaislain muuttamisesta 147/2025" ["Act amending the Aliens Act 147/2025"], <https://www.finlex.fi/fi/lainsaadanto/saaduskokoelma/2025/147> (in Finnish).

¹⁰⁵ Section 6, Aliens Act: "[i]n any decisions issued under this Act that concern a child under eighteen years of age, special attention shall be paid to the best interest of the child and to circumstances related to the child's development and health". Finland, Aliens Act, (301/2004; amendments up to 389/2023 included) <https://www.finlex.fi/fi/lainsaadanto/saaduskaannokset/2004/eng/301>, Section 6.

that of Article 3 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which provides that “the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration”.¹⁰⁶ Other legislation concerning children mirrors the wording in the Convention, raising concern that children subject to migration proceedings are provided with weaker protections in law.

7.5 BORDER POLICIES

The government has introduced several legal amendments and new legislation that effectively hindered the right to seek asylum at the eastern border between Finland and Russia. Amendments to the Border Guard Act, which came into force in July 2022, entailed barriers to access the territory and curtailed the right to seek asylum, as they allowed authorities to restrict people’s ability to make asylum applications to specifically designated border crossing points.¹⁰⁷ In 2023, the government gradually closed all eastern border crossing points and the eastern border has been closed since.¹⁰⁸ The closure of the border can result in individuals being rejected at the border, in violation of the principle of non-refoulement.¹⁰⁹

In July 2024, the parliament adopted an emergency law allowing the government to make a decision empowering the authorities to limit the reception of asylum applications in specific parts of the Finnish border, granting them powers to prevent entry, including by force.¹¹⁰ The law allows Finnish border guards to make exceptions in cases involving people they consider to be in vulnerable situations or those at risk of serious violations upon return to the country where they crossed from. However, assessing people’s situations and vulnerabilities requires specially trained personnel as well as adequate time. It is highly questionable that such an assessment would be possible in the context of brief interactions with border officials.

The emergency law also does not offer any real possibility of appeal, only allowing those affected to request an administrative review, which would not suspend the return. This gravely undermines access to asylum and the protection from refoulement. It not only endangers the rights of people seeking safety, but risks leading to arbitrariness and violence at the border.¹¹¹

The government plans to extend both the closure of the eastern border crossing points as well as the emergency law beyond 2026.¹¹²

¹⁰⁶ Numerous studies have provided evidence that the best interest of the child is not a primary consideration in asylum and migration proceedings in Finland, a concern reflected in the concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. See for example Annika Parsons’ research for the Ombudsperson of the Minorities in 2010: Parsons, A., The best interest of the child in asylum and refugee procedures in Finland, Publication 6, 2010, <https://yhdenvertaisuusvaltuutettu.fi/documents/25249352/34271292/The+best+interests+of+the+child+in+asylum+and+refugee+procedures+in+Finland.pdf/13a6a442-710f-426e-9bbd-2daefea7cd6f?version=1.1&t=1600521915976>.

¹⁰⁷ Finland, Border Guard Act, 1999, <https://www.finlex.fi/fi/lainsaadanto/saadaskaannokset/2005/eng/578>, Section 16.

¹⁰⁸ Finnish Government, Situation at Finland’s eastern border, <https://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/situation-at-finlands-eastern-border> (accessed on 1 June 2026).

¹⁰⁹ Amnesty International Finnish Section has continuously criticized the decision to close the border, see for example: Amnesty International Finnish Section, “Päätös jatkaa itärajan täyssulkua on kohtuuton” [“Decision to continue closure of Eastern border is unreasonable”], 8 February 2024, <https://www.amnesty.fi/paatos-jatkaa-itarajan-tayssulkua-on-kohtuuton/> (in Finnish).

¹¹⁰ Ministry of the Interior, “Finland enacts legislation to combat instrumentalised migration”, 16 July 2024, https://valtioneuvosto.fi/-/1410869/suomi-varautuu-valineellistetyin-maahantulon-torjumiseen-uudella-lainsaadannolla?languageId=en_US.

¹¹¹ The Finnish Non-Discrimination Ombudsman wrote a letter to the Minister of Interior stating that in the current situation where the eastern border crossing points are closed, Finland is jeopardizing the right to seek asylum and risks breaching the principle of non-refoulement. The Ombudsman continued that these circumstances do not allow an effective and genuine access to asylum: Non-Discrimination Ombudsman, “Yhdenvertaisuusvaltuutetun kirje sisäministeri Mari Rantaselle koskien itärajan ihmisoikeustilannetta” [“Non-Discrimination Ombudsman’s letter to Minister of the Interior Mari Rantanen regarding the human rights situation on the eastern border”], 30 January 2024, <https://yhdenvertaisuusvaltuutettu.fi/-/yhdenvertaisuusvaltuutetun-kirje-sisaministeri-mari-rantaselle-koskien-itarajan-ihmisoikeustilannetta>.

The Council of Europe’s Human Rights Commissioner and the UNHCR have also expressed their concerns about the risk of violation of access to asylum and non-refoulement: see Commissioner for Human Rights, Finland: Concern over right to seek asylum and need for human rights safeguards after full closure of Eastern land border, 11 December 2023, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/-/finland-concern-over%20right-to-seek-asylum-and-need-for-human-rights-safeguards-after-full-closure-of-eastern-land-border>.

¹¹² Ministry of the Interior, “Finnish Government prepares to extend validity of Border Security Act”, 26 May 2026, https://intermin.fi/-/hallitus-valmistelee-rajaturvallisuuslain-voimassaololle-jatkoa?languageId=en_US

7.6 RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE FINNISH GOVERNMENT

Amnesty International is calling on authorities in Finland to:

- Ensure that the current laws and any further restrictions concerning the removal of foreign nationals do not discriminate, and that asylum seekers and migrants have equal access to effective remedies with respect to asylum procedures and the non-refoulement principle.
- Ensure that the right to enjoy family life is respected and repeal any unreasonable, disproportionate or discriminatory obstacles, such as excessive income or residence-period requirements, or discriminatory age-related restrictions in family reunification processes.
- Cease detaining children, including families with children, and ensure migration detention is used in line with international law standards and never in a punitive manner.
- Amend Section 6 of the Aliens Act to meet the wording of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to make best interests of the child a primary consideration.
- Safeguard asylum seekers' access to asylum procedure, including at all border crossing points, and respect the non-refoulement principle.

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info@amnesty.org


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amnesty.org



Amnesty International
Peter Benenson House
1 Easton Street
London WC1X 0DW, UK

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