
Council of Europe: migration, “concern for families with children and unaccompanied minors”

Over the years, the Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) has identified “ill-treatment against foreign nationals in the context of pushback operations, mainly consisting of being beaten upon apprehension – consisting of punches, slaps, blows with truncheons – by police, border or coast guards, who sometimes remove their identification tags and police insignia to hide their identity”, the CPT says in its 2022 annual report. The CPT denounces forms of inhuman treatment such as “firing bullets close to the persons’ bodies while they lay on the ground, pushing them into rivers, removal of their clothes and shoes”. The CPT expresses concern for “families with children, unaccompanied and separated children, and other persons with vulnerabilities” who are often “held in conditions which might easily amount to inhuman and degrading treatment”. The report calls on governments to “reinforce safeguards to significantly reduce the risk of ill-treatment and collective deportations at borders”. Every foreign national intercepted or apprehended at the border “should be individually identified and registered, undergo health screening and a vulnerability assessment, and be offered the opportunity to apply for asylum”. The CPT recalls that “immigration detention should only be used as a measure of last resort for foreign nationals crossing borders” and expresses concern at “the attempt by certain Council of Europe member states to introduce measures that aim to legalise pushback practices”.

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