

European Union funds Greece's fascistic anti-refugee offensive—Part 2

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This is the conclusion of a two part series. The first part was published on January 4, 2022.

Many already fortified camps are being reinforced. An *Al Jazeera* article published in May revealed that “grey walls, three metres (10 feet) high, are being built around the Ritsona refugee camp near Athens and there are plans to construct walls around another 24 camps on the Greek mainland.”

“The new Moria” researchers note the EU Human Rights Agency’s stipulation that any camp for migrants “should be planned to allow asylum applicants to move freely inside the camp and to come and go (if necessary, facilitated through public transport).” They continue, “The reality is that the camp can be left with a chip card between 08:00 and 20:00. However, not always. People tell us that their way is often blocked. There would be a bus, but it is very expensive compared to the monthly support payment. Exactly: 1.60 euros per trip to the next town. However, people only get 75 euros per month.”

“Children should not be exposed to prison-like fencing and should not witness violence,” says the EU agency, but as the researchers note, “The reality: spikes on the wire mesh, which is also stretched around the playground.”

The researchers list the array of monitoring technology being used in the island camps. Included are “112 cameras for the grounds, 55 turnstiles with chip cards, 20 cameras with motion analysis, 94 cameras for entrances and exits.” The motion analysis cameras are listed under a section of the equipment categorised as “Behaviour analysis”.

Across the islands and the northern and southern Greek mainland, there are 473 cameras in the “Perimeter Structure Protection Subsystem.” Alongside the cameras are the 473 speakers for the loudspeaker system.

Further monitoring of the island camps is carried out by seven drones. In the northern Greek mainland, 16 drones are used, with the same number monitoring southern Greece—a total of 39 drones.

Greece’s “National Migration Strategy 2020-21” may have never been made public were it not obtained and

published by a journalist.

The PowerPoint document also mentions another system, Hyperion, which uses a two-factor authentication process to control entry and exit of camp inmates and NGO workers. The presentation reveals that the closed detention centres on the islands will be surrounded by “a NATO style double fence” with a “six metre wide road separating each individual fence.”

A *Guardian* newspaper analysis published December, “Fortress Europe: the millions spent on military-grade tech to deter refugees”, provided further details of the Greece/EU operation against immigrants. It noted, “Greece deploys thermal cameras and sensors along its land border with Turkey, monitoring the feeds from operations centres, such as in Nea Vyssa, near the meeting of the Greek, Turkish and Bulgarian borders. Along the same stretch, in June, Greece deployed a vehicle-mounted sound cannon that blasts ‘deafening’ bursts of up to 162 decibels to force people to turn back.”

Some of the most sophisticated technology available on the planet is being used to monitor and prevent desperate people fleeing war zones and oppressive regimes from entering the EU. “Refugees and migrants trying to enter the EU by land or sea are watched from the air. Border officers use drones and helicopters in the Balkans, while Greece has airships on its border with Turkey. The most expensive tool is the long-endurance Heron drone operating over the Mediterranean.

“Frontex awarded a €100m (£91m) contract last year for the Heron and Hermes drones made by two Israeli arms companies, both of which had been used by the Israeli military in the Gaza Strip. Capable of flying for more than 30 hours and at heights of 10,000 metres (30,000 feet), the drones beam almost real-time feeds back to Frontex’s HQ in Warsaw.”

What is being carried out against migrants and refugees recalls the police state methods of the Nazis, except the Gestapo appear almost amateurish in comparison to the lengths gone to by the EU in hunting down their quarry. The

Guardian reports, “EU air assets are accompanied on the ground by sensors and specialised cameras that border authorities throughout Europe use to spot movement and find people in hiding. They include mobile radars and thermal cameras mounted on vehicles, as well as heartbeat detectors and CO2 monitors used to detect signs of people concealed inside vehicles.”

After visiting the Samos camp in October, French Interior Minister Gérald Darmanin tweeted video footage of masses of barbed wire fence surrounding it, and its entrance with a sign above reading, in Greek and English, “Closed Controlled Access Center of Samos”. Unable to contain himself, Darmanin added the comment, “We want the Greek model to be applied in other Mediterranean countries, such as Italy, Spain, Malta”. He enthused, “This impressive camp was designed as a waiting center and allows the Greeks to hold their borders well.”

Priti Patel, the Home Secretary of Britain’s Conservative government who is currently pushing through some of the most draconian anti-immigration legislation anywhere on the planet, also takes her inspiration from the Greek/EU camps. In August, during a two-day visit to Greece, Patel met immigration officials in Athens and went on patrol with the coastguard off Samos to appraise the methods used to prevent small boat crossings. She also visited the about-to-go operational detention camp on the island.

An article published last month in the pro-Conservative *Telegraph* reported, “Priti Patel is planning a Greek-style crackdown on migrants, with new restrictions on asylum seekers amid an escalating European crisis.

“Channel migrants held in [the UK’s] new purpose-built reception centres will have to obey strict rules or risk losing their right to claim asylum.

“The Home Secretary plans to model the centres on the camps for asylum seekers being built by Greece, where migrants face routine checks on their movements along with curfews to prevent absconding.”

The report cited a “UK government source” who said, “If they breach the rules, it could affect their asylum claim... You would be told that you would have to be in by this time. That’s fair rules for operating if you provide food and accommodation. The Greeks have things like timings.”

Over the past decade many of the continent’s borders have seen the erection of unpassable boundaries between countries. In its survey of Fortress Europe, “How 1,800km of walls and fences are keeping desperate migrants out”, the *Telegraph* noted, “Thirty-two years on from the fall of the Berlin Wall, there are now 1,800km of walls and fences either built or under construction on Europe’s borders. That is the equivalent of almost 12 new Berlin Walls...”

Vast financial resources are being ploughed into keeping

out a few thousand desperate and vulnerable people fleeing devastated homelands, ruined by decades of war and imperialist intrigues in which the EU powers have played a central role.

The survey notes, “Alongside physical walls there are also burgeoning reinforcements for the fortress. Frontex, the EU’s bloc-wide border force and coast guard, is growing at pace. Frontex was established in 2005 with a budget of €6 million,” which will rise in 2027 to €543 million. “Its manpower is set to jump sevenfold over the same period, from 1,400 staff.”

The monstrous persecution of immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers taking place in Europe is part of an international phenomenon, with the main imperialist powers overseeing savagery everywhere. The global character of this war on the most vulnerable and impoverished sections of the international working class demonstrates that it is a product of the crisis of the world capitalist system.

The Greek detention camps are atrocities, and their creation as part of the reinforcement of Fortress Europe is central to the police surveillance state policies being enacted by governments of all political stripes continent-wide. The techniques developed are already being deployed against the working class as a whole and will be used with increased regularity and severity.

The working class must mobilise its collective strength in opposition to the dictatorial agenda of the EU and its constituent governments, and oppose the ongoing and relentless persecution of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

Against the division of the continent into competing nation states, and borders constructed of barbed wire and concrete walls, the working class must expropriate the super-rich, banks and corporations and reorganise the economy on a socialist basis. This is the perspective of the United Socialist States of Europe fought for by the International Committee of the Fourth International.

Concluded.



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