

To Ms Irene Charalambides  
President of the Committee  
on Human Rights and on Equal  
Opportunities for Men and  
Women

Paris, March 14, 2022

I, Brigitte Espuche, born on 23 June 1979 in Marseille, and residing at 8 rue Courat in Paris (75020), France, Coordinator of the Migreurop Euro-African network, declare that I was a direct witness to the physical assault suffered by Doros Polycarpou, a member of KISA, a Cypriot member association of Migreurop.

On 8 March 2022, I travelled to Cyprus to visit our member KISA as part of my work as Migreurop network coordinator.

On the same day, we received first-hand information that a group of foreign unaccompanied minors had escaped from the Pournara camp through a breach in the fence and had moved towards the city centre after blocking the highway near the camp for a few hours to complain about the deplorable living conditions inside.

On 10 March 2022, I met a group of seven of these Somali minors and asylum seekers sleeping outside in the cold and rain at around 9pm in Nicosia. They explained to me the reasons for their protest, the appalling conditions in which they were living in Pournara (obvious overcrowding, minors sleeping two to a mattress if not on the floor, spoiled food that can cause illness and allergies, and understaffed staff) and their demand for safe and appropriate accommodation and access to education.

On 12 March 2022, before my scheduled departure from Nicosia at 4pm, we decided to visit the Pournara camp with Mr Polykarpou in the morning in order to verify the claims of these minors and to get a direct and personal view of them. At around 11am, as we were driving towards the camp, about 1km from it, we found a very young English-speaking boy claiming to be Nigerian, presumably a minor, with a small suitcase, walking towards the camp, and offered to drive him. When we arrived at the gate of the camp at around 11.05am, we called the guard on the other side of the closed gate and suggested that he call the social services to register the minor. The guard asked him if he had any travel documents with him and when the minor handed over copies of his documents, he pointed out that they were all from his country and asked if he had any documents issued in Cyprus. At around 11.30am, as it was hailing, two exiles of African origin arrived in flip-flops at the outer gates of the camp to talk to Pournara staff, telling them that they had been queuing every morning for over 3 weeks to register their asylum claims, but to no avail until now. One of them explained to us that he was suffering from malaria and that he needed to be registered urgently as his treatment was about to end and he needed to renew it as soon as possible.

As we insisted that social services be called, the guard called a woman who said she was the camp coordinator. She went outside the camp and started a conversation with the minor. She then turned to the two men, who repeated that they had been trying in vain to register their asylum applications for weeks and told them in front of us that she "had already told them that the coordinator was coming, that there was no point coming here". She then entered the camp with the minor.

The two men, dejected at having to turn back once again - and to whom we passed on KISA's contact - invited us to follow them to the back of the camp to show us the surroundings and the conditions in which they live, particularly in terms of hygiene and sanitation, which we did. We entered the pre-camp - or unofficial camp run by the exiles and made up of UNHCR tents - from the eastern part, and Mr Polycarpou and I followed several asylum seekers who, after telling them that we were members of an NGO (KISA/Migreurop), started to explain their living conditions to us and accompanied us through the "pre-camp. We could see the garbage and rubbish on the ground, as well as the stinking water, and the forest of UNHCR tents around the camp (see pictures), so tightly tied together that sometimes we could not even move between them and had to duck under the ropes of the tents to move.

We continued our visit around the camp. At around 12:00, we saw an open gate in front of us that led to the centre of the camp with prefabricated container units: "the official camp of Pournara". There were no guards at this entrance and no surveillance, which probably explains the escape of the 60 minors a few days before. On our way, we reached at a certain point an open gate that connected the official and the unofficial part of the camp, the waiting area (where unregistered exiles wait for their registration). The gate was unguarded, and anyone could enter and leave without being checked. We turned back and continued our visit in the unofficial part of the camp.

Several people, asylum seekers who live in the camp, then told us that the security guards had taken our picture. As I took a few more steps, I turned around and felt something behind me, and then I saw a private security guard (tall, blue-eyed, light brown) in the uniform of the company running the camp, following me at a walk. I then stopped and saw another guard with the same uniform (stocky, brown hair, beard, brown eyes) - whom we had already met at the main entrance - running towards Mr Polycarpou and clapping him on the back. When the latter turned around, the guard said aggressively to him: "do you remember me? A tense face-to-face ensued, and I began to approach in an attempt to defuse the situation, which I felt could quickly escalate. The brown-bearded guard yelled very aggressively in Greek at Mr Polycarpou, who then shouted back. The brown guard then violently pushed several times. Mr. Polycarpou, who at no time responded to the guard's physical provocations, and continued to shout not to push him, not to touch him. Other guards arrived, surrounded Mr Polycarpou and asked him to remain calm. He then shouted in Greek, and then in English so I could understand, that the brown guard in question had just called him a "bastard" and threatened to "stick his fingers up his arse". A young man, who claimed to be in charge of the camp but did not identify himself, suddenly arrived and went straight to Mr Polycarpou, asked him for his identity and informed him "that he should not be here". Mr Polycarpou shouted that he had to stop the attacks by the guards and the guy asked him to first calm down. Concerned about the turn of events, I repeatedly asked the guards, especially the chestnut guard, to remain calm and not to be violent. The guards then asked us to follow them to the police station in the camp, and we started to move forward to get there. Then, at this point, the brown guard violently pushed Mr Polycarpou several times from behind, grabbed him by the back of the neck and brutally and quickly pulled him forward, tripping him, obviously wishing to remove him manu militari from the tented area, amidst the stunned exiles who were worried that the security guards would treat an NGO member in this way. I asked again for everyone to remain calm and the said camp official then told me that Mr Polycarpou was aggressive. For his part, the chestnut-coloured guard - while pushing his dark-haired colleague to the side so that he was no longer around - told us that by "illegally entering the camp we had endangered the lives of the migrants"...

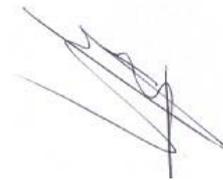
When we arrived at the camp police station, Mr Polycarpou told the police officers that he wanted to lodge a complaint against the physical and verbal attacks by the security guard. He also asked the camp manager for his name - who gave it to him (Alex Abenaya) - and told him that he would mention in his statement to the police that he was present when he was physically attacked in the pre-camp and that he could testify about what exactly happened. At the camp police station, we were asked to sit and wait, but no one took note of my identity or took any real interest in me. Mr Polycarpou said he was going to file a complaint for physical assault, to which the police replied that he should think about it since the guards also had a complaint against him for "illegal entry" into the camp. After a few minutes, another officer entered the office and told us to leave the camp immediately and that if we wanted to file a complaint, we should go to the local police station.

Without further formality, we then left the camp and went to the local police station to lodge a complaint. Mr Polykarpou was given a form to go to the hospital to examine his possible injuries and returned to the police station to lodge a complaint.

I then took the bus to Larnaca that same day at 4pm, and the plane as planned on 13 March at 7.20am to Paris.

I certify on my honour that the information given in this statement is correct and I am aware that any false statement is liable to prosecution ([http://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/enop/ind/0\\_154/section-sc538de4e7-f17f-4668-a2b7-34f90b34ac1e.html](http://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/enop/ind/0_154/section-sc538de4e7-f17f-4668-a2b7-34f90b34ac1e.html)).

Brigitte Espuche  
Passport number: 19EH04260

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Brigitte Espuche', written in a cursive style.