

The UHVA's response to the falsehoods contained in a March 10 New York Times article titled "We Are Like Animals: Inside Greece's Secret Site for Migrants".

The United Hellenic Voters of America condemn the New York Times for publishing a report, which wrongly claims that the Greek government is operating a "secret" site where it is detaining immigrants without following legal process. The report, "*We Are Like Animals: Inside Greece's Secret Site for Migrants*", is not based on facts, and it appears to be put together by amateurs who have completely failed to observe the fundamentals of serious journalism. They simply accepted the anti-Greek and anti-European Union propaganda as it was fed to them by their Turkish sources, who were obviously following orders from Turkey's strongman, Mr. Erdogan. The report, almost on its entirety, is based on Turkish sources, and on "investigative" methods, which would never be accepted as serious or credible journalism. Below are some specific points, which help to separate truth from fiction regarding this report:

1. First and foremost, the authors omit to state that the immigrants, upon whom the thesis of their reporting is based, were not immigrants who came into Greece on their own accord, but rather they were pushed into Greece by the official Turkish state, including the military and police. It was all part of a long term plan by Mr. Erdogan to blackmail Greece and the European Union by using the immigrants as weapons in order to receive additional billions of Euros.
2. The reporters claimed that they had "discovered" the so-called "secret" site of where the detainees were held. Nothing could be further from the truth: The site is well known, and it is used by Greek authorities to handle excessive immigrant border crossings.
3. The fact that the authors of the report used almost exclusively Turkish sources while they practically chose to ignore the openly available Greek sources is questionable at best.
4. The report leads you to believe that those trying to cross the Greek borders are Syrian refugees who are escaping their war torn country. The truth is that the great majority of them (more than ninety percent) are immigrants from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, and from a number of African countries.

It is regrettable that the New York Times has published this report, which is based on shabby journalism. The authors should have been aware that under Erdogan Turkey is an authoritarian regime, and as such it thrives on lies and propaganda. The *International Committee to Protect Journalism* has called Turkey the "worst jailer of journalists". Erdogan's government has an abysmal human rights record. Erdogan has concluded that he cannot rely for support for his regime on the democratic governments of the west, and he has cultivated close ties with Russia's strongman Putin. Yet the authors of this report chose to ignore those glaring facts in their effort to falsely bring accusations against Greece, a free western democracy.

The least that the New York Times reporters had to do is to read a March 6, 2020 Reuters news report from Turkey, in which migrants are quoted on how they are treated by Erdogan: "*Erdogan is using us to press the EU for money*". "*They are smugglers, they take 50 Turkish liras per head, as if it is not enough that the Turkish government is using us like pawns*". "*We are left to the dogs*".

The New York Times March 10 report "We Are Like Animals" appears to be just rehashed Turkish propaganda that only serves Erdogan's goals. It is truly unfortunate that the New York Times has ignored the truth by publishing it.

Below are some links that provide additional relevant information:

HALC has initiated a response to the NYT: [Set the record straight at The New York Times](#)

The New York Times report: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/10/world/europe/greece-migrants-secret-site.html>

Reuters report from Greece: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-syria-security-greece-border/greece-denies-report-of-secret-black-site-for-migrants-near-turkish-border-idUSKBN20Y1VF>

The Reuters report on migrants from Turkey: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-syria-security-turkey-migrants/left-to-the-dogs-migrants-at-turkey-greece-border-lose-hope-idUSKBN20T1IW>

The Greek Prime Minister's interview on CNN: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zEBo0thi2Zg>