

Greece: Trial adjournment leaves 24 humanitarian workers 'in limbo'



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Reacting to the decision by a court in Lesvos, Greece to adjourn the case of 24 humanitarian workers, including search and rescue volunteers Sarah Mardini and Seán Binder, who risk 25 years in prison for helping and defending the rights of refugees, Giorgos Kosmopoulos, Amnesty International's Senior Campaigner on Migration, said:

"These trumped-up charges are farcical and should never have resulted in Sarah and Seán appearing in court. "Today's adjournment means that having already waited over three years, this ordeal will continue to drag on for Sarah and Seán, leaving them in limbo. "The injustice of these absurd charges is being further compounded by the Greek authorities' flagrant violation of Sarah's right to a fair trial, which includes the fundamental right to attend one's own trial. "We call for the Greek authorities to uphold their human rights obligations and drop the charges against Sarah and Seán."

Greek authorities' refusal to lift Sarah Mardini's travel ban means that Sarah has not been able to attend her own trial. However, Seán Binder who was at the trial, said:

"Today's decision is further proof of the absurdity of this case. All we have done is assist people seeking safety at a time of need. After today's decision, our lives are once again left on hold."

Sarah Mardini, a 25-year-old Syrian refugee, and Seán Binder, a 27-year-old German national, face a series of unfair and baseless charges dating from the time they spent volunteering to spot and help people in boats in distress off the coast of Lesvos.

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