

No deportation to Syria: the rights of Syrian asylum-seekers need to be protected

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Denmark, International Humanitarian Law (IHL), Migration and Asylum, Press Release, Syria

June 05, 2012

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The Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN), a regional network of civil society organizations engaged in human rights work, convened for its general assembly in Copenhagen 1-3 June 2012. We are deeply concerned for the news concerning asylum-seekers of different nationalities who have been staging hunger-strikes for several weeks across Denmark. We confirmed media information by visiting one location where refugees live and met with persons of all ages who had stayed in Denmark for varying periods of time ranging from a few months up to ten years. Specifically to the Syrians, we met with persons who are waiting for a decision concerning their claim for asylum as well as persons who have already been issued with a deportation order.

We consider the question of Syrian refugees as an extremely urgent issue where not only the neighboring countries but the European Union member states need to engage responsibly. The Network calls for all the EU member states to respect their obligations under the international humanitarian law and the international refugee law. Concerned for the worsening conflict in Syria, the organizations believe that following the principle of non-refoulement, first of all, no person should be deported to Syria. The asylum claims of the persons who have recently arrived to European Union member states should be processed rapidly and full protection of their rights needs to be ensured. The cases of those who have already received a deportation order should be reopened on the basis of the current situation and serious human rights violations in Syria. As for the context we are presently convening, we call the Danish government and all the European governments, to guarantee the full respect of refugees' rights, including the right to education, right to health care and right to work.

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