

# EU must take responsibility for Syrian refugees in Turkey - NGO director



---

The European Union must continue protecting Syrian refugees within Turkey, but should also take further responsibility and resettle more of them, Human Rights Watch associate director Gerry Simpson wrote in an op-ed published by the EU Observer on Wednesday.

More effort from the EU to safeguard the refugees is essential now because they face the danger of forced deportation from Turkey, Simpson said.

Turkey hosts more than 3.6 million registered Syrian refugees, but public discontent with the number of Syrians in the country has risen as Turkey's economy has stuttered in recent years, and the government has responded by cracking down on undocumented migrants.

Reports by media outlets and NGOs have said Syrians are in danger of arbitrary arrest under the crackdown and that some have been forced to sign voluntary return papers before being bused back to Syria.

Eighteen Syrians told Simpson and his colleague during interviews that this had happened to them in immigration removal centres in Istanbul and the southern Turkish city of Antakya.

"I was deported with about 35 Syrians on a large bus. They handcuffed us and ... they beat some of the men on the bus with truncheons when they asked to go to the toilet or for water. We all spoke with each other [and] no one wanted to go back to Syria," Simpson quoted one of the men as saying.

The return of Syrians to the opposition-controlled Idlib province puts their lives in danger due to ongoing Syrian government attacks, backed by Russian.

Turkey should end the forced deportations and other abuses against Syrians, “but the EU also needs to reverse course on its own problematic policies toward Syrian refugees,” Simpson said.

The EU has paid Turkey more than 6 billion euros so far to fund refugee-related projects but demanded a halt to the flow of migration from Turkey in exchange.

“Yet Turkey has never met the EU’s safe third country criteria, which require effective protection and access to jobs and services,” Simpson said.

Ankara’s plans to resettle millions of Syrians in areas of northern Syria captured in a recent military operation could put the refugees at further risk, he said.

“The European Union should continue to support the registration and protection of Syrian refugees in Turkey, but it should also resettle more Syrian refugees from Turkey,” said Simpson.

“The European Commission should urgently publicly acknowledge that Turkey is committing grave abuses against Syrians, press Turkey to end them, and press the UN refugee agency to monitor whether Syrians detained in immigration removal centres or other facilities actually wish to remain in Turkey.”

---

Source:

<https://ahvalnews.com/syrian-refugees/eu-must-take-responsibility-syrian-refugees-turkey-ngo-director#>

[Disclaimer]