

HELSINKI COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS



The situation at the border crossing Gevgelija and Kumanovo

Period: 01.01.2018– 31.01.2018

Gevgelija

Over the course of the month the situation in the camp was peaceful, without significant changes. A family from Afghanistan, a mother with her two children, has been accommodated in the camp for about nine months, while the other refugees come and go. Increased transiting of refugees originating from Iran has been observed, as well as movement of families, rather than individuals.

Available facilities and conditions

The refugees go on walks around the town, if they need to do their shopping or need medical services in the hospital.

There have been no major changes to the camp infrastructure.

After the holidays, the police officers from the Czech Republic returned to the camp, and the mixed police patrol teams were also observed on field.

Institutional treatment

At the start of the month 6 refugees were present in the camp, i.e. one family (a mother with two children) originating from Afghanistan, a married couple originating from Syria and one person from Iraq.

At the very start of the month, three refugees, a man and a woman from Syria who were travelling together and another person from Iraq (male) who was found together with them, were brought to the camp. The couple originating from Syria stayed in the camp for nearly two weeks due to certain medical examinations. On 21.01.2018 they were transported to Greece.

On 04.01.2018, three refugees originating from Morocco and Algeria were brought to the camp. Soon after, two more refugees originating from Syria were also brought to the camp. After they were interviewed by the police, they were all transported to Greece over the course of the day. On the night between the 4 and 5 January, seven more refugees were brought to the camp, 3 of whom were men, 3 women and one 6-year old child. After they were interviewed by the police, they were all transported to Greece, because they did not want to spend the night in the camp. Over the next morning, 12 more refugees originating from Syria, Algeria and Morocco were brought to the camp, and 7 more refugees originating from Iran were brought to the camp over the afternoon, who, after being interviewed by the police, were also transported to Greece.

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On 13.01.2018 three refugees originating from Iran were brought to the camp, after being caught by the police at the bus station in Gevgeija. They had allegedly walked three days from the border crossing of Taanovce, without knowing which way they were going. One of them had deteriorating health and he spent several hours in the hospital in Gevgelija. After he was given medications, the three of them were transported to Greek territory. On the same day a family originating from Iran was brought to the camp, i.e. a husband and wife with two juvenile children. After they were registered and interviewed by the police, they were temporarily accommodated in the camp.

On 15.01.2018, 5 refugees were brought to the camp, one of them originating from Syria and three of them originating from Iran, along with one from Afghanistan who arrived later on in the day. The refugee originating from Syria, according to his statement, was deprived of 2,000 EUR by a smuggler who lied that he would take him to Serbia, but then left him in Gevgelija. After they were interviewed by the police, they were all transported to Greece.

In the coming days, 11 more refugees originating from Iraq, i.e. two families, including 6 children, were brought to the camp. They were caught in a group of 28 refugees, whereby the rest of them were immediately reported to Greece. On 30.01.2018 the two families were also transported to Greece at their own request. With this, a total of 7 refugees were left in the camp, one family from Afghanistan (a mother with her two children) and one family originating from Iran (mother, father and two children).

Kumanovo

The situation in the camp in Tabanovce is relatively peaceful, with increased movement of refugees, both individuals and groups. The number of refugees accommodated in the cap did not exceed 30.

Available facilities and conditions

The refugees in the camp complain because they do not have access to the Internet.

It can be observed that all the refugees present in the camp over the course of the month were registered by the institutions, i.e. no refugees were left unregistered.

By the end of the month, 24 refugees were accommodated in the camp, all of them registered and originating from Pakistan (13), 6 from Syria, 3 from Afghanistan and two from Libya.

Near the end of the month, the team of the National Preventative Mechanism from the Ombudsman's Office paid a visit to the camp.

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Institutional treatment

At the start of the month there were 22 refugees in the camp, including a woman originating from Afghanistan. The rest of them were all males originating from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Algeria, Palestine, Morocco and Libya.

On the 02.01.2018, 4 refugees from Afghanistan left the camp, including one woman, chiefly because of the bad conditions in the camp and the fact that there was no Internet coverage. According to them, the police promised that they would organize transport to Gevgelija, which usually takes a few days. After waiting for two days, the refugees decided to leave on their own.

One person originating from Pakistan, who was part of the group which had a traffic accident, spent a few days without having any information about the whereabouts of his cousin, who was probably a witness in the case.

The Helsinki Committee once again warns that the freedom of movement of the refugees and migrants found on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia as witnesses in the proceedings against the smugglers must not be limited. This type of detention is an unjustified restriction to the freedom of movement.

On 04.01.2018 two refugees originating from Syria were brought to the camp, accompanied by the Red Cross team. They came to the camp to report that the brother of one of the refugees in the group had gone missing, as he was unable to continue travelling together with them due to a physical injury. After informing the police and being interviewed, all the necessary measures for them to be reunited were taken.

On the night between the 4 and 5 February, five refugees originating from Palestine, Syria and Morocco left the camp.

On the 6, 7 and 8 January, new refugees kept arriving in the camp. In fact, 5 refugees originating from Pakistan arrived on the 7th, while two refugees from Libya left, and on the 8th January 13 more refugees arrived, 8 of whom from Syria and 6 from Pakistan. With them, the number of refugees in the camp reached 30, all male. On 10.01.2018, three refugees originating from Syria left them camp and headed for Greece.

One person originating from Libya who had submitted an asylum request, was expelled from the Reception Center for Asylum-seekers – Vizbegovo, due to misconduct. Due to his problematic behaviour, the person is under the institutions' supervision, and he is also regularly taking his medical therapy. The refugees who suffered a car accident were in good health and were provided with the necessary treatment.

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On 16.01.2018, group of 11 refugees arrived in the camp accompanied by the Red Cross, after being intercepted by the police in the village of Sopot on their way back from Serbia. There is a four-member family among them consisting of a husband, wife and two juvenile girls.

One person originating from Afghanistan expressed intent to seek asylum. The person did not possess any personal identification documents, but his request was processed and only several days later he was transferred to the Reception Center for Asylum Seekers, Vizbegovo.

On 23.01.2018, a group of 6 refugees originating from Syria arrived in the camp, after being intercepted by the police in the village of Sopot, and brought to the camp accompanied by the Red Cross. According to them, after a brief stay in the camp, they plan to try to cross the border again.

On 28, two refugees originating from Afghanistan arrived to the camp, caught by the team of the Red Cross at the bus station in Kumanovo. Their goal is to continue on their way to Serbia.

Irregular migration

Over the course of January 2018, in its newsletters, the Ministry of Interior registered two criminal and legal events related to refugees and smuggling. The first one occurred on 16.01.2018, when the police officers from the precinct in Sopot spotted a group crossing the Macedonian-Serbian border. The group consisted of 11 refugees, one of whom originating from Somalia, four originating from Iran and six people originating from Syria, who had been staying in Serbia for a certain period of time. The people were transported to the Transit Center in Tabanovce.

In the second case, which occurred on 19.01.2018, in the vicinity of the village of Arachinovo, the police officers, during a routine control, stopped a passenger vehicle where they found nine refugees originating from Pakistan, without any documents on them. The refugees and the driver of the vehicle were detained in the police precinct in Gazi Baba for further proceedings.