



SACD Calls on EU, Greece and Turkey to Respect International Law and Protect Syrian Refugees

Syrian Association for Citizens' Dignity calls on the European Union, Greece and Turkey to uphold the provision of the 1951 Convention on Status of Refugees and other relevant international instruments on the rights of refugees, and provide protection to Syrian refugees trying to escape the brutality of the onslaught of Assad's regime and its Russian and Iranian allies. We appeal on all governments involved, as well as the leadership of the EU to recognize the humanitarian needs of Syrian refugees and refrain from any action that causes them further harm, including the politicization of their plight.

We particularly call on Greece and the European Union to uphold the 1951 Convention on Status of Refugees in dealing with Syrian refugees and separate their humanitarian plight from any political issues they may have with Turkey or other governments. Syrian refugees fleeing Idlib and elsewhere in Syria are desperately trying to reach safety and give their children a chance of a normal life. They are not "invaders" against whom military response should be mounted, but refugees which must be afforded protection in accordance with international law and the EU Refugee Law.

We have repeatedly warned that large numbers of Syrians fleeing the indiscriminate and systematic attacks on civilians by the regime, Russia and Iranian militias, see Europe as their only chance of safety once that Turkey has become unable to host new waves of refugees.

We have warned this was the case more than a year ago and with every day in which the attacks escalated. We and other Syrian and European and International groups have relayed this in direct meetings, in our reports and in other public statements. The response that we expect from the EU is to protect refugees from any attempt of dehumanization and prevent any extremist narrative that would legitimize the hunt and attacks on refugees at the border, and to firmly uphold the international framework provided by the 1951 Convention and the EU Refugee Law.

The current numbers of refugees trapped at the Turkish-Greek border are not impossible to manage and the EU should support Greece in establishing effective and humane screening process to determine the safest, most dignified and human way of providing protection to refugees fleeing the carnage in Syria. At the same time, we call on the UNHCR and other international and non-governmental organisations to intensify their efforts to provide aid to the people trapped at the border in harsh conditions.

We echo the words of the Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner, Dunja Mijatovic who called for an immediate stop to the militaristic response to the plight of refugees at the Greek border: "This is antithetical to the idea of human rights and to the values that unite us. The response I see today threatens to upend the entire system of protection that Europe has painstakingly built up over many decades. It is not yet too late to reverse the current course of action and preserve dignity and humanity."



Syrian Association for
CITIZENS' DIGNITY

Ultimately, we repeat the plea we have made repeatedly to the Western governments and the rest of international community: stop the onslaught by Assad, Russia and Iran on the civilians in Idlib. More than a million people have been displaced as a result of indiscriminate attacks on civilians and they are trapped in makeshift camps lacking the most basic conditions for a safe and dignified existence. They are desperate to reach safety for themselves and their children. As the rest of some 13 million displaced Syrians, for this they must not be persecuted, drowned at sea and shot at, but helped, protected and treated as human beings with dignity and solidarity.