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Moria refugee camp pushed beyond limits

EU failings leading to deaths

Immediate evacuation essential to end inhuman treatment and prevent further casualties.

Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK (AOHR UK) condemns the conditions in which refugees and migrants are facing in the refugee camp of Moria, on the Greek Island of Lebos. The camp is home to over 13,000 displaced people, largely from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. As the result of European Union policy, the camp is experiencing severe overcrowding and inhumane conditions leading to multiple fatalities.

AOHR UK notes that Moria was opened in 2015 on a former military base and was originally designed to hold only 3,000 displaced people, but is now thought to be home to over 13,000. This severe overcrowding is leading to a lack of access to vital services such as shelter, food, medical care and heating. Moria, and the makeshift camp that surrounds it, have inadequate sanitation and waste disposal, resulting in the spread of illness. Furthermore Moria is regularly without power, and many inhabitants have reported police brutality.

AOHR UK notes that very high percentages of those at Moria are children, many of whom are unaccompanied. The camp has seen very high levels of trauma and suicides amongst children. There are even reported cases of Resignation Syndrome, an extremely rare reaction to prolonged exposure of trauma.

AOHR UK reports that a fire broke out on the 29th September resulting in the death of a lady named Faride Tajik and her unnamed child, as well as severely injuring many others. The panic that insured as the result of the fire led to many injuries, as people tried to escape through barbed wire fences, causing lacerations, broken bones and smoke inhalation. The fire should not be seen as an accident, but needs to be understood as the direct result of negligence by the authorities that have allowed overcrowding to the point where it has disastrous effects on people's safety.

AOHR UK reports that this was the second death in a week, as a five year old unnamed child from Afghanistan was accidently killed by a truck whilst thought to be playing in a cardboard box.

AOHR UK finds that the overcrowding in the Moria camp is the direct result of the EUs' policy of containment. In 2016 the EU signed a controversial deal with Turkey that was designed to stop the flow of refugees to Greece. In the deal the EU pledged to give Turkey €6.Billion in funds. This policy effectively turned the Greek Islands into holding areas for asylum seekers, who are not allowed to leave until their case has been possessed. The EUs' policy of confinement means that Moria is effectively an open air prison for those fleeing from war and persecution.

AOHR UK states that the unless the European Union and the Greek government do more to process claims for asylum faster, then tragedies such as the latest fire will inevitably increase.

AOHR UK states that the dire conditions inside Moria are the direct result of the failings of the European Union to come up with an effective plan that would see safe passage for refugees to claim asylum.

AOHR UK states that the basic standards set out by the UNHCR for camps for the displaced, and the international laws that protect these standards are met in camps across Asia and Africa and the Middle East. It is appalling that these standards are not being met in the EU, which is the largest economy in the world. The EU has the funds and infrastructure to provide a higher standard than that set by the UNHCR, but it is devoid of moral and political will.

AOHR UK calls on the European Union to adhere to the request of the UNHCR to evacuate all detained in Moria and to close the camp permanently.

AOHR UK calls on the Greek Government to provide adequate accommodation for the displaced on the mainland, were they can live humanly until asylum cases are processed.

Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK (AOHR UK)