

“AITIMA”
NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION
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Press Release

Asylum seekers are put in jail!

Our organisation provides legal support to asylum seekers in the area of Igoumenitsa (port to Italy). This support is provided under a special scheme of the European Refugee Fund, in cooperation with the non- governmental organisation “Doctors of the World” and is co-funded by the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity. The aim of the particular program is to inform refugees of their rights and assist them in practice.

Under this framework the employees of the program started informing refugees of their rights and the procedures. In time, some of them have asked our assistance in order to apply for asylum. After the submission of the first application and after we have informed the local police authorities that more applications are going to follow, we were given notice that from that point on, whoever applies for asylum without holding travelling documents will be detained (we put emphasis on the fact that only few asylum seekers have travelling documents).

Despite the fact, that we considered that such an action from the police authorities is beyond belief, we, in our turn, informed a Sudanese national that wanted to apply for asylum and insisted on doing so. In 29th of April we accompanied him to the Alien’s Department of Igoumenitsa. The asylum application was submitted, however, the applicant- after the indication of the Alien’s Department and the decision of the Police’s Head Officer of Thesprotia- was arrested and is being detained.

The police authorities, punishing with imprisonment everyone who is trying to practice his/her right to apply for asylum, are basically demolishing such entitlement. This practice is a cruel violation of human rights of the refugees. The rights of the refugees are ratified in the international conventions and therefore compel our country.

We invite the Ministry of Citizen Protection, UNHCR, the National Committee for Human Rights and the Civil Society to take action on the matter.

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