

UN refugee agency urges EU States to suspend transfers of asylum-seekers to Hungary

10 April 2017 – The United Nations refugee agency today called on European Union (EU) members to temporarily suspend returns of asylum-seekers to Hungary, concerned about the country's new policy of detaining migrants at the border or expelling those not holding the proper papers.

"The situation for asylum-seekers in Hungary, which was already of deep concern, has only gotten worse since the new law introducing mandatory detention for asylum-seekers came into effect," said Filippo Grandi, UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

The EU's Dublin Regulation, named after the Irish capital in which it was agreed more than 25 years ago, is an EU instrument that determines which European State is responsible for examining an asylum seeker's application.

"Given the worsening situation of asylum-seekers in Hungary, I urge States to suspend any Dublin transfer of asylum-seekers to this country until the Hungarian authorities bring their practices and policies in line with European and international law," he added.

While Mr. Grandi said he was "encouraged" by the decision taken by the European Commission to work with the Hungarian authorities with a view to bringing the new legislation and Hungary's practice in line with EU law, he noted that "urgent measures are needed to improve access to asylum in Hungary."

The High Commissioner's Office ([UNHCR](#)) has repeatedly raised its concerns over the situation of refugees and asylum-seekers arriving to Hungary with the authorities and the EU, stressing that physical barriers and restrictive policies have resulted in effectively denying access to territory and asylum.

Hungary's "emergency measures" under the amended law on asylum expand mandatory detention of asylum seekers and lead to the expulsion from the country of anyone who enters the country irregularly, in violation of the country's obligations under international law.

UNHCR reported that since it came into force on 28 March, new asylum-seekers, including children, are detained in shipping containers surrounded by high razor fences at the border for the entire length of their asylum procedures. As of 7 April, there were 110 people, including four unaccompanied children and children with their families, held there.

"While acknowledging the authorities' recent efforts to address police violence, we remain very concerned about highly disturbing reports of serious incidents of ill-treatment and violence against people crossing the border

into Hungary, including by State agents,” said Mr. Grandi.

“These unacceptable practices must be brought to an end and I urge the Hungarian authorities to further investigate any allegation of abuse and violence,” he added.

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Back in December, UNHCR presented a series of proposals to the EU and Member States to improve the distribution of asylum claims among Member States. The High Commissioner also called for the EU to adopt a simplified asylum system that would identify, register and process arrivals swiftly and efficiently.

“This is key to ensure access to protection for those who need it and to restore public trust,” he said.