



General Assembly

Distr.: General
9 June 2022

English only

Human Rights Council

Fiftieth session

13 June–8 July 2022

Agenda item 9

**Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related
forms of intolerance: follow-up to and implementation
of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action**

Written statement* submitted by Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association, a non- governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[21 May 2022]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only. The views expressed in the present document do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations or its officials.



Discriminatory Practices against Refugees in European Countries

The provisions of international law guarantee international protection for all refugees without discrimination based on race, religion, or country of origin. Despite this, European countries have shown clear double standards in their treatment of refugees who have sought asylum to escape violence and persecution. This discrimination is based on race, color, and origin, in contravention of Article 3 of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, which prohibited discrimination between refugees based on race, religion, or country of origin.

Human rights violations of Middle Eastern refugees at international borders

European countries take a hard line towards refugees from countries in the Middle East, which have targeted their territories; it refused to receive Middle Eastern refugees on its soil after conflicts and armed conflicts in many countries. The European countries followed discriminatory policies and measures to repel Middle Eastern refugees, keep them away from their borders, and prevent them from infiltrating their territories. These policies and procedures included many grave human rights violations against these refugees, especially at the international borders of the European Union. Maat noted the involvement of law enforcement forces and border guards in some European Union countries in violent incidents against refugees and migrants on various European borders; that result in a loss of life. In February 2022, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to express its concern about the increase in these incidents (1). In 2021, more than ten thousand Polish border guards prevented thousands of Middle Eastern refugees, mostly from Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, stranded on the Polish-Belarus border from entering Poland and other European Union countries by using tear gas bombs to tears. That was killing at least 19 refugees and migrants in the bitter winter temperatures. Instead of facilitating refugees and migrants stranded in the forests between the two countries in wretched conditions without food, shelter, blankets, or medicine, Poland sent soldiers to its borders, erected a barbed-wire fence, and began building a 186-kilometer wall to prevent entry to asylum seekers from Belarus. It also adopted legislation that would allow it to expel anyone who crosses its borders irregularly (2). On 15 April 2022, the British Royal Navy began carrying out the task assigned to it by the British government related to repelling migrant boats coming from France across the English Channel. It was able on the first Official workday in this regard by repelling and bringing nearly 50 immigrants to British shores in preparation for their detention in immigration reception centers.

Discriminatory practices towards refugees from the Middle East, Africa and Asia in the aftermath of the Russian/Ukrainian crisis

The recent Ukrainian crisis showed the racial discrimination and xenophobia in European countries towards non-Europeans. Since the refugee crisis in Europe was exacerbated by the Russian-Ukrainian war, European countries have pursued discriminatory practices towards refugees from countries in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. Such as the discrimination and apartheid that European countries followed in their dealings with Ukrainian refugees, African refugees, the Middle East, and Asians while escaping from violence and reception within European lands due to the Russian war on Ukraine. As well as the apartheid and racial segregation that European countries have followed in their dealings with Ukrainian refugees arriving in them and between non-Ukrainian refugees fleeing from other conflict areas in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia and who have resided since periods of time prior to the asylum of Ukrainians in European countries.

In this regard, Maat observed that many students, Middle Eastern, African and Asian immigrants fleeing violence following the Russian/Ukrainian war were subjected to racist treatment, obstruction, and violence while trying to escape the horrors of the Russian war on Ukraine. Many of them described how they were discriminated against in favor of Ukrainian citizens, prevented from boarding trains and buses in Ukrainian cities while Ukrainian

citizens were given priority, and how Ukrainian border guards violently pulled them and stopped them when they tried to cross into neighboring countries, and how the Polish authorities pushed them aside And refused their entry to Poland. R. O., a Nigerian first-year medical student, describes how she was racist as she tried to cross into Poland: “ border guards told me and other foreigners were to get off a public transport bus at a checkpoint between Ukraine and Poland, then they asked to stand aside as the bus set off and on With Ukrainians on board, more than ten buses came and we were watching all the Ukrainians leave, we thought after they took all the Ukrainians they would take us, but told us that we had to walk and that there were no more buses and they asked us to walk, so they were left stranded at the border town of Shehyni, some 400 miles from Ukraine's capital, Kyiv (3).

Moreover, the Middle Eastern and the old Asian refugees, residing in European territory for periods prior to the asylum of the Ukrainians, were subjected to discriminatory and racist policies towards them in favor of the Ukrainian refugees from the very first sight of the Ukrainians coming to the EU countries. Maat noted that most EU countries give priority to the residence, housing, and survival of Ukrainian refugees at the expense of old refugees fleeing conflict areas in the Middle East and Asia. They expelled hundreds of Afghan and Syrian refugees and forcibly evicted them from their homes and places of residence in favor of the new Ukrainian arrivals. A., 33, a social activist and refugee from Afghanistan , describes how she and hundreds of families were evicted from a refugee reception complex in Germany for Ukrainian families: “When I was having breakfast with my husband and two young daughters, a social worker knocked on the door and told us we had to evacuate Our house for newly arrived refugees from Ukraine, saying: No questions, no negotiation, just get out in 24 hours (4).

Recommendations

Recommendations made to the international community:

- Pressure on EU countries to take on their fair share of refugees without discrimination.
- Increasing the allocations and financial grants provided to countries receiving refugees and immigrants.
- Develop permanent solutions to refugee problems by settling disputes and conflicts expelling refugees by peaceful means, and opening the door for the voluntary return of refugees and their resettlement in third countries.

Recommendations for European countries:

- Immediately stop all measures that discriminate against Middle Eastern refugees in favor of Ukrainians, including procedures for differentiation between them in terms of accommodation, accommodation, stay or departure.
- Immediately stop any procedures aimed at deporting refugees to their countries of origin or any third countries where they face grave risks to their lives and basic rights.
- Allow all those fleeing violence in Ukraine to have legal asylum without discrimination on the basis of race, religion or country of origin.

(1): <https://bit.ly/3kprcaV>

(2): <https://bit.ly/38oQxPH>

(3): <https://cnn.it/3rVtWkM>

(4): <https://bit.ly/3F7iulh>