

France Terre d'Asile Launches a European Call against Forced Returns to Afghanistan With

Conseil européen pour les réfugiés et les exilés (ECRE), British Refugee Council (BRC), Comision Espanola de Ayuda al Refugiado (CEAR), Consiglio Italiano per i Rifugiati (CIR), Greek Council for Refugees, Hungarian Helsinki Committee, Immigration Advisory Service United Kingdom (IASUK), ProAsyl, Organisation suisse d'aide aux réfugiés, Aftam, Agir ensemble pour les droits de l'homme (AEDH), Auberge des migrants, CAAR, CASP, Collectif VAN (Vigilance arménienne contre le négationnisme), Collectif urgence Darfour, Fnars, Fédération des PACT, Fondation Caritas Luxembourg, Forum réfugiés, La belle étoile, Salam, SSAE, Uniopss, Vigilance Soudan, SOS Racisme, Emmaus Europe, et beaucoup d'autres...

Following the destruction on 22 September of the main camp used by Afghan migrants in Calais, the French President declared that France will organise forced returns to Afghanistan in cooperation with the British authorities in order to implement the British-French agreement signed on 6th July.

We believe that forced returns to Afghanistan are not an acceptable solution at this time. The security situation in Afghanistan has deteriorated substantially in recent years. It is impossible for anyone, including the international coalition, to ensure the safety of individuals returned to Afghanistan. The return of Afghans to their country of origin would undermine the values of the European Union as guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Many Afghans find themselves destitute in Europe, without any legal status and unable to access their rights. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a significant number of Afghan nationals are refugees in need of protection. However, we believe many among them have not had their protection needs met by European States which fail to ensure access to a fair asylum procedure.

We call on all Member States of the European Union to:

- Suspend forced returns to Afghanistan in light of the widespread insecurity in the country;
- Introduce immediate protection solutions for Afghans, while ensuring that Afghans are able to apply for asylum in Europe. European Member States, individually and collectively have the power and the necessary tools to grant temporary or humanitarian protection to individuals in need. States have worked together to find protection solutions in the past, such as during the Balkan conflict, and should work together to do the same today.

The current situation stems from States' inability to build a harmonised and protective EU asylum policy. We urge EU institutions to build a Common European Asylum System that focuses on protecting those in need and promoting solidarity among Member States and with third countries.