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Afghan refugees' sit in protest in front of UNHCR office in Turkey

April 27, 2014



Dozens of Afghan women, men and children gathered in front of the UNHCR office in Ankara city the capital of Turkey to protest against the performance of UNHCR in considering their cases. Protesters claim UNHCR in Turkey is not reviewing their cases on time, which cause them wait for longer than expected.

The demonstrations have entered in 11th day and protesters are staying there day and night, on road side till their voice is heard.

Asylum seekers have set up a protest camp in the Ankara city, demanding to meet UNHCR officials to review their cases which are already rejected by UNHCR.

The main reason people leave Afghanistan is because of war and internal conflict within the country since 1978. People started to emigrate in 1978 when the Soviet Union came to the country, but in 1992 when the mujahedin came to power, it was the most devastating time in Afghan History, where they looted and killed many people and this is when a lot of people start leaving Afghanistan, either fleeing to neighboring countries (Pakistan, Iran and Russia) or those who had money emigrated to the west.

But the story is different today, the people in Afghanistan are worried about the return of Taliban when the international forces withdraw by end of 2014 from their country.

“There’s no food, no water and all people sleeping together on the pedestrian, that’s not the way it should be,” Mahboba 28 from Kabul complained to public Turkish media before the protesters were cleared out of the road said early Saturday.

“We left Afghanistan because of war and had no choice. I just packed, took my children and left. I did not even get the chance to say bye to my mum and brothers, tell you the truth I did not feel anything, because my daughter was injured and I was just thinking of getting my kids out of here, 37 years old Zarina said.

According to some Afghan protesters, Turkish and UNHCR officials had told them that if they’re not happy they can just go back to where they came from, but often that is just not possible.

The protesters’ spokesman Dr. Abdul Hamid said: “We want to show the government that it would not be easy for us to go back to Afghanistan. They are scared of returning there.”

Many of the participants had been denied asylum despite the fact that Afghanistan is still insecure. Some Afghans have even been deported”.

Turkey has had a military presence in Afghanistan since 2003, as part of the NATO operations there. Around 2.7 million Afghans continue to live in exile from their home country, and some 600,000^[2] are estimated to be internally displaced.