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News | 30.10.2019

EU must pressure Turkey not to deport refugees to Syria

Quote from Tineke Strik & Katrin Langensiepen

Today, Syrian refugees currently residing in Turkey might have to leave Istanbul Refugees residing in Turkey or face the risk of being deported back to war-torn Syria. Refugees had until today to return to the provinces in which they were first registered when arriving in the country.

Under the auspices of the United Nations, representatives of the Syrian Constituent Assembly, including representatives of the Syrian government, opposition and civil society, are meeting for the first time today in Geneva. The meeting marks the start of the expected difficult negotiations on a new constitution.

Tineke Strik MEP, Greens/EFA member of the Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee in the European Parliament comments:

“The Syrian refugees who are forced to leave Istanbul, came to find protection and to build a new future for their families. A forced return to other provinces would deprive them of any prospect and sufficient means of living. With a forced return to the war zone in Northeast Syria they would even loose protection against violence and persecution.

"Last week, the European Parliament urged the EU to use effective sanctions to prevent Erdogan from deporting the Syrian refugees, which would be a grave violation of the Refugee Convention. At the same time, the EU should take a more substantial part in hosting the Syrian refugees by stepping up its resettlement measures.”

Katrin Langensiepen MEP, Greens/EFA Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the European Parliament, comments:

"For Syria, a constitution based on democracy and human rights is vital to secure a lasting peace. A constitution on paper is worth nothing if violence, torture and bombardments in the country do not stop immediately. The Assad regime has shown little interest in stopping the acts of war and to genuinely seek political solutions.

"There is a great danger of a pseudo-legitimization process which, in the end, serves only to maintain Assad's power. The European Union and its Member States must exert influence in order to come one step closer to a

peaceful and free future for Syria.”

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