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Solidarity with war refugees "CLEANING" OF BELGRADE FROM REFUGEES

Serbian authorities implement action of removal of all refugees from Belgrade. We recall that in Belgrade, in an abandoned warehouse near the bus and train stations, as well as in the vicinity of them, since August 2016, lived some 1,500 refugees, mainly from Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Despite the catastrophic living conditions, almost non-existent basic infrastructure, abandoned by almost all, they managed to survive one of the coldest winters. With the help of the few organizations, local and activists from abroad, with great effort, they manage to provide minimal living conditions, shared kitchen where they cooked meals for the refugees, makeshift toilets for hygiene.

On May 8th, the authorities informed the public, that refugees from the center of Belgrade will be removed from the center of Belgrade and sent in camps around Serbia. The refugees have so far avoided going into the camps, for several reasons, including restrictions of movement and the illegal deportation to Macedonia and Bulgaria. Please note that a large number of refugees who were willing to go to some of the camps were rejected, often without explanation.

How the image of the Commissariat for Refugees among refugees is very bad due to their poor and often hostile attitude towards refugees, Commissariat used NGOs working with refugees to convince them to "voluntarily" leave the barracks and go to camps. These NGOs were blackmailed by the fact that some of their activities are conducted in the camps under the control of the Commissariat and they decide who can and who can not enter and work in the camps.

Although it was announced that the entire process will take 20 days, on May 10th, in the morning, a large number of members of the Commissariat and the police showed up in warehouses, stating that within 15 minutes they will start spraying all the rooms with poison against rats. They said that refugees must go out and take their stuff, because it is a highly toxic agent, and that in the evening they will be able to return to their rooms. Due to the short time, part of the refugees failed to take out their belongings, while some still asleep when they started spraying. Much of the modest property that refugees possess has been destroyed in this way.



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Already on May 11th at 7 am, Commissariat workers entered the objects and with the help of police and municipal police, expelled the remaining refugees, thereby destroying tents, on the pretext that they no longer need them. Among the workers of the Commissariat were noticed people on whose violent behavior towards refugees was already pointed out during the last two years of the refugee crisis in Serbia. The vast majority of refugees accepted to go to the camps, because there was almost no choice, because they were threatened by the arrest and deportation, if they are seen on the streets. A smaller number of refugees in despair went towards the borders, to once again attempt to cross.

Already at 11am started the demolition of the buildings where the refugees stayed. The first building that was demolished was a shared kitchen and a makeshift toilet facilities.

Although the refugees were promised that they will have freedom of movement and that they will be able to leave the camps, for two days the camps in Obrenovac and Krnjaca, which are closest to Belgrade, are closed and no one is allowed to go out.

Written by: Mirko Medenica
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