

solidarnost je naša snaga

Visit to refugees from the Middle East at the border crossing Preševo International Day of Action against Fascism and Anti-Semitism

9th November 2015.

Women in Black and Reconstruction Women's Fund Violeta Djikanovic and Slavica Stojanovic on the occasion of the 9th of November - International Day Against Fascism and Anti-Semitism, visited the reception centre for war refugees from the Middle East, in Presevo.

From Belgrade, we brought help in apparel (clothes donated from Miksaliste), food and hygiene items and plastic cups. We stopped in Leskovac where the women from the Women in Black gathered also help in clothes, shoes, blankets and food, along with activist Ivana Ristic we were going to Presevo. In Predajeni we met with activist Svetlana Saric from Vlasotince, who also collected humanitarian aid and we continued the journey.

We went to a humanitarian organization *Remar*-from Spain with whom we made contact and we left humanitarian aid with them. We were told that the influx of refugees is growing every day, and that their stocks are disappearing. That day they expected influx of 10,000 people. Since they are the only humanitarian organization who cook food they told us that their food stocks are getting to a minimum. Indeed, compared to the last time the tent in which food stood is almost empty. They told us that they need salt, sugar, rice, biscuits, tea and of course plastic cups. After about fifteen minutes the police ordered us to leave the camp because we do not have permission to enter and they banned us from taking photographs.

There we met activist from group *Athens* Jelena Hrnjak that gave us a lot of information. In fact, all refugees are registered in Presevo and if they are not registered in Serbia, their enter to Croatia is impossible. After the registration is done at the checkpoint where entry is prohibited, it is not known how the state registered refugees. When the system works they take fingerprints but not all the time. After registering, the refugees continue their way to Sid, transferred by buses and trains. Once a day the train is going to Sid and the ticket costs 15 Euros per person. The price of the bus ticket is 35 Euros per person, and many of them cannot pay for it, and in the Presevo they spent several days until they manage to get on the train. Volunteers fight got another train line and there are always large crowds there.

She also said that international volunteers have been big benefit to the police and helping them with the logistics to organize themselves around a refugees. She told us about the young man from Lebanon who sold a kidney in order to pay his way. She says there are plenty of women who suffer violence. The activists of *Athens* reside in Presevo once a week and take turns, so we plan sending them humanitarian aid.

When we finished we went to meet with Sanije Halili activists from Presevo and agreed to continue to distribute humanitarian aid. We would send with post mail from Belgrade and Sanije and activists of the Youth in Presevo would continue to distribute to *Remar*.

We continued to Leskovac and there we also met with activists from the organization Women for Peace to agree how to continue our work. Since Leskovac is renovating military barracks that will serve for the reception of refugees over the winter. We agreed that they get to know which organization will keep that, will there be the registration of refugees, actually to reach as much information as they could. They have collected a lot of help, which I will take when the barracks qualify for refugee reception.

Recorded: Violeta Djikanovic

