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Release Date:

29/05/2023

104 MEMBERS OF A RELIGIOUS MINORITY WILL BE DEPORTED AND FACE EXECUTION AND IMPRISONMENT

[EDIRNE, TURKEY, May 29th] - Over 100 members of The Ahmadi Religion of Peace and Light, a persecuted religious minority, who have presented themselves at the Turkish-Bulgarian border claiming asylum on Wednesday **have now been issued deportation decisions** and face deportation within 6 days, a decision that will most likely subject them to either imprisonment or death sentences in their countries of origin. A [petition](#) has been raised to the EU Commission to grant those families asylum in the EU.

The members had presented themselves at the Turkish-Bulgarian border but were refused entry, violently beaten, pushed back and detained by the Turkish border police Wednesday. [Gunshots were fired at them](#), they were threatened and their belongings thrown away. The group includes families, women, children and the elderly.

The 104 individuals have been subjected to extreme and systematic forms of religious persecution all across Muslim-majority countries because of their faith. The reason why they face these persecutions is because they follow a man named Aba Al-Sadiq whom they consider to be the awaited Mahdi. They follow his controversial message which includes the establishment of a new Covenant after Islam. Some of the controversial teachings of this Covenant state that the wearing of the headscarf is not an obligation, the fasting of the month of Ramadan falls in December of each year, the five daily prayers are abrogated and the consumption of alcoholic beverages is permissible. Due to these beliefs, they were considered “heretics” and “infidels” which posed a significant threat to their lives. They had been beaten, imprisoned, kidnapped, humiliated, and terrorized in countries like [Iran](#), [Iraq](#), [Algeria](#), Egypt, Morocco, Azerbaijan, and Thailand.

They had gathered in Turkey and were on their way to the Turkish-Bulgarian border to assume their human right to request asylum directly from the Bulgarian Border Police, in line with Article 58(4) of the Law on Asylum and Refugees (LAR), which states that asylum can be applied for with a verbal statement submitted in front of the border police.

Additionally, an [open letter](#) by the European Border Violence Monitoring Network (BVMN) was sent on Tuesday, the 23rd of May, 2023, with 28 human rights organizations and bodies signing their endorsement, urging for the protection of the group and that their right to claim asylum at the border be upheld, in accordance with international law.

The families have now been issued deportation decisions, after being held at an Edirne deportation center. It is expected that they are deported within 6 days.

In Iran, members of the Ahmadi Religion of Peace and Light had been detained in Evin prison in December 2022 because of their beliefs. They were threatened with execution if they don't sign papers to recant their faith and defame the religion. Similarly, members in Iraq have suffered gunned attacks on their homes by armed militias, and scholars have called for them to be killed.

Issuing deportation decisions for these families is a clear violation on Turkey's behalf of the core principle of non-refoulement, which according to international refugee and human rights law, prohibits returning individuals to a country where they would face torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and other irreparable harm.

A [petition](#) has been raised to the EU Commission to grant asylum in the EU to the peaceful group who face extermination.

We implore Turkey not to proceed with the deportation of these families to their countries of origin. These families would be put in danger in their countries of origin and Turkey would be responsible for any loss of life if they are returned to the countries they have escaped from.