

Macedonian Young Lawyers Association



# FIELD REPORT 2017

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*The situation in both camps was calm and there were new developments during January 2017. Some of the refugees staying in the camps decided to leave for Greece while others decided to apply for asylum in Macedonia. Like in the past access to procedure was a serious problem this month as well since the refugees who expressed their wish to apply for asylum were not allowed to do instead they were told to wait.*

## TC Tabanovce

The biggest concern in the camp during the month of January was the number of push backs. The total number of refugee/migrants pushed back from Serbia during January is approx. **200** people, mostly from Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria.

As a new practice this month the police allowed everyone who reached the camp to enter in the camp and use the services available. The change in practice of the officials was due to the extreme cold weather and snow. The officials registered the newcomers as people with temporary stay.

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Due to the new practice the number of accommodated persons in TC Tabanovce has increased. Approximately **41** refugees that were pushed back from Serbia came to the TC Tabanovce during January. The total number of refugees who are staying in TC Tabanovce in January was **90**, of which **49** refugees who were previously accommodated in the camp and **41** newcomers with temporary stay in the camp.

There is no information on the number of refugees who are staying around the railways, in the vicinity of the camp. The officials have not answered what will happen with the newcomers once the weather improves and how long they can stay in the camp.

MYLA's field lawyers conducted interviews with everyone who stayed in the camp. Most of the refugees that

the field lawyers had talked to, informed them that the Serbian Police have used violence when encountering them and have also done collective push backs. The field lawyers informed all of the refugees who approached TC Tabanovce about their right to asylum in Macedonia.



TC Tabanovce in January

source: MYLA

Only one refugee, an eighteen year old boy from Morocco, expressed his wish to seek for asylum. The officials were informed and they will conduct an interview with the asylum seeker during the first week of February. Our partner organizations informed us about the increase in the numbers of refugees who are staying in the houses in the border villages.

On average at least 200 persons during all months were spotted by them when visiting the villages, including vulnerable groups of individuals among them.

*The total number of refugees in TC Tabanovce in January was 90, of which 49 already residing in the camp and 41 newcomers with temporary stay in the camp.*

## TC Vinojug

During the month of January the situation in TC Vinojug was quite calm. The number of persons accommodated in TC Vinojug varied between 92 and 69 persons. With every passing day more and more people were leaving the camp and the main reason for that is their intention to apply for the process of relocation. On January 9th and on January 15th, 26 persons in total left for Greece because of that reason.

*The number of persons accommodated in TC Vinojug In January varied between 92 and 69 persons.*

On the other hand, on January 15th one family from Iran was allowed to be accommodated in TC Vinojug due to health issues of the woman.



TC Vinojug in January

source: MYLA

On January 31st, 15 refugees accommodated in TC Vinojug expressed their wish to apply for asylum.

All of them were told by the police to wait for several days until the police received approval to register their asylum applications. MYLA obtained power of attorney for all asylum seekers.

MYLA has identified 2 cases where persons were not allowed to submit an application for asylum. The police's explanation was that these persons were caught in an attempt to enter Macedonia irregularly and because of that they cannot apply for asylum.

In terms of legal counsel, majority of the people that were offered legal aid and counseling in TC Vinojug were persons that were caught by the Macedonian Police in an attempt to enter Macedonia irregularly and were taken back to the camp site to be profiled and later on pushed back to Greece. In total 100 persons

*15 refugees in TC Vinojug asked for asylum this month.*



TC Vinojug in January

source: MYLA

from Syria, Afghanistan, Algeria, Morocco, Pakistan and Iran have been pushed back to Greece during January.

MYLA's field lawyers gave them the necessary information, mostly on questions regarding the asylum procedure in Macedonia, social security in Macedonia, possibility for finding job, information regarding the conditions for accommodation in the reception center for asylum seekers in Vizbegovo, integration process in Macedonia and other information.

All of the push backs are done unofficially to points where there are no Greek police patrols. The practice of the Ministry of Interior to register those trying to irregularly cross the country continued this month as well. Therefore anyone that is intercepted is fingerprinted and their personal data is registered as well.

*Macedonian Young Lawyers Association (MYLA) is an independent, non-partisan, non-governmental professional organization which provides legal aid and strategically litigates to protect human rights. By using the knowledge and innovative capacities of young lawyers, MYLA promotes the rule of law and influences policy through research and advocacy. MYLA strives for a society in which the rule of law is established and people proactively strive for the respect of their human rights.*

*MYLA is the only organization in the Republic of Macedonia that provides free legal aid and represents asylum seekers, refugees, stateless persons and other persons of concern in procedures related to asylum, legal residence and other social rights.*

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