

Macedonian Young Lawyers Association



# FIELD REPORT 2016

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*The crises situation has been extended until the end of June 2017. Changes have occurred on many levels during October as follows: a double increase in the number of push backs from Serbia compared to previous months; increase of asylum seekers from TC Tabanovce; authorities not following standard operational procedures for minors.*

## TC Vinojug

As previously, the majority of persons who were offered legal aid and counseling in TC Vinojug were caught by Macedonian Police while attempting to enter Macedonia irregularly. MYLA's field data shows that registered push backs continued during October, with an increase of push backs from Macedonia to Greece. The total

done unofficially to places/points where there are no Greek police patrols. As a novelty, MoI began with registering refugees who were caught in an attempt to enter Macedonia irregularly by taking their personal data and fingerprints. The number of persons accommodated in TC Vinojug in October varied between 122 and

*A big success this month was that after months of lobbying and meeting the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy decided to transfer all asylum seekers from the Transit Centers to the Reception Centers for asylum seekers in Skopje*

130 persons, and compared to previous months there has not been significant progress in terms of access to the asylum procedure. MYLA made efforts and achieved some success concerning the right of free movement for asylum seekers, and in the future asylum seekers will be allowed to go out in the city every three days for one hour only, accompanied and transported by the Red Cross.

At the end of October, upon a request letter submitted by MYLA, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy brought a decision that all asylum seekers from TC Vinojug will be transferred to the Reception Center for asylum seekers in Vizbegovo and that this will be the practice in place for the future as well, but so far, the asylum seekers are still accommodated in TC Vinojug and waiting for this decision to be executed.



A day in October at TC Vinojug

source: MYLA

number of refugees who were deported after being caught in Macedonia in October was **210**, most of them coming from Syria, Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq.

MYLA's field lawyers gave them necessary information, mostly on questions on the asylum procedure in Macedonia, social security in Macedonia, job opportunities, information regarding accommodation conditions in the Reception Center for Asylum Seekers in Vizbegovo, the integration process in Macedonia etc. All push backs are

### MYLA FIELD STAFF

- 12 Field Lawyers
- 8 Interpreters
- 3 On-call Attorneys
- 24/7 Free Legal Aid Number

## TC Tabanovce

The official number of beneficiaries accommodated in TC Tabanovce has not changed and remains at 67, although the actual number varied through the month due to newly arrived groups of refugees. Most of the residents are families without necessary finances to engage smugglers and continue their journey. Some have attempted to cross the border with Serbia, but were eventually intercepted by the police and returned back to Macedonia. Most of the residents are constantly trying to find ways to cross the border with Serbia, and some still hope that the borders will open and they will be able to continue to their countries of destination.

Additional measures undertaken by the Border Police and the military forces have not decreased nor prevented

*The police and military forces have continued with increased capacities and teams to patrol the neighboring villages and the border zone with Serbia, in attempt to prevent smugglers and irregular crossings of the border with Serbia.*

ed smugglers and irregular border crossings to Serbia, as there is an increase of smuggling activities, migration transition, push backs and push forwards conducted by authorities of Macedonia and Serbia. In October there was an increase of refugees arriving in TC Tabanovce, especially single men from Pakistan and Afghanistan who were pushed back from Serbia.

Around 90 of the newly arrived refugees were brought by the Macedonian army, and 96 were pushed back from Serbia. Of these, only 50 stayed for at least a day in TC Tabanovce. However, there has been an increase

*During October, 187 new refugees approached TC Tabanovce.*

in the number of single men from Pakistan and Afghanistan who were pushed back from Serbia to Macedonia. Also 10 unaccompanied minors were registered this month in TC Tabanovce. The police allowed only two of them to stay in the camp. MLSP was informed about all of them but they followed the standard operating procedure for only two of them.

Every refugee that came to TC Tabanovce and was pushed back from Serbia during October, shared the same information with MYLA's field lawyers. The Serbian police mistreated them, was violent and took all of their documents and destroyed them. They were all

travelling from their country to the route with smugglers for more or less the same amount of money. However, the refugees pointed out that some of the smugglers told them that the easiest way to enter in Serbia is to go from Macedonia, to Kosovo and to enter in Serbia through Kosovo because the Serbian police is too strict in this period.

MYLA's field lawyers informed all refugees on their rights in Macedonia i.e. the right to apply for asylum and how MYLA can help them in the procedure. Of all of newly arrived refugees in the camp in October, only 15 decided to apply for asylum. Three more refugees who had already been staying in the camp decided to apply, therefore the total number of asylum applications from TC Tabanovce is **18**.



source: MYLA

The camp is being prepared for the winter and new items and structures are added to accommodate more refugees which as the authorities have stated are expected to arrive in the following months. In addition, the children staying in the camp started an educational program for learning languages, math and computers, certified by the Ministry of Education. Activities such as creative workshops an individual and group counseling continued this month as well in both of the camps.

*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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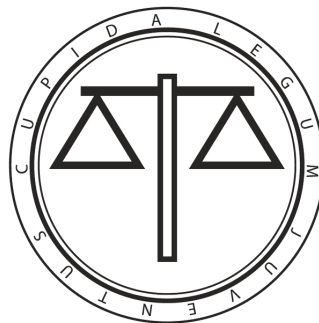
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Kingdom of the Netherlands

