# The refugees at the door of Europe and what Al is doing to support them

Heracles-Spyridon Aktypis
Director of Amnesty International Greece

#### EU welcomes refugees in 2015

• Worst refugee "crisis" in Europe after WWII

- How E.U. has dealt with it
- The crucial year 2015
- Chancellor Merkel's stance in August, reaffirmed in September 2015: "If we had not shown a friendly face, that's not my country"
- Around 1 million people arrived by the sea and crossed Greece

# From "welcome" to the closing of the Balkan route in 2016

• E.U.-Turkey "deal" - officially statement

#### Key points:

- Closure of the borders: official position of the E.U.
- "Deal" with Turkey: "I (EU) give you money and waive visa for your citizens and you (Turkey) keep refugees"
- Breach of international refugee law

# From "welcome" to the closing of the Balkan route in 2016



Obviously because it breaches international refugee law

- Turkey becomes a "safe third country"
- Why Turkey is not a "safe third country"?
- a. Violates the principle of non-refoulement
- b. Is not bound by the Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees
- c. Its asylum system is not in compliance with international standards
- d. Does not provide refugees with a work permit
- e. Does not offer to refugees minimum decent living conditions

### Why Turkey is not a "safe third country"?

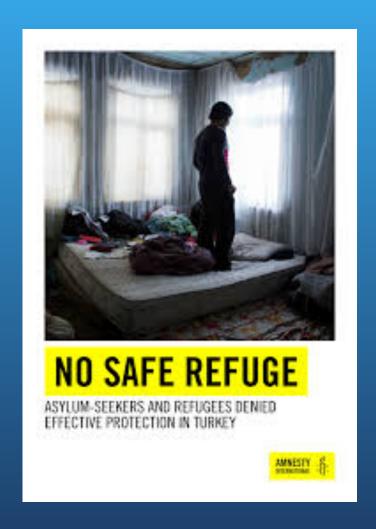
See Amnesty's International Report issued in June 2016

"TURKEY: NO SAFE REFUGE

ASYLUM-SEEKERS AND REFUGEES DENIED EFFECTIVE PROTECTION IN TURKEY"

https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur44/3825/2016/en/

## Why Turkey is not a "safe third country"?



Obviously because it breaches international refugee law

- Turkey becomes a "safe third country"

But also because

#### But also because

- it is/can be used by the EU as a "model" for concluding similar deals with African countries and others like Afghanistan - one already signed
- It sets the example for other countries to treat people entitled to international protection in the the same way (see Kenya...)

- From around 1 million, 15.000 since the implementation of the agreement have arrived in Greece
- However, 2016: deadliest year yet according to the UNHCR
- 3,740 lives had been lost so far in 2016, just short of the 3,771 reported for the whole of 2015

- Implementation of the EU-Turkey deal
- Pending case *Noori*: EU on the brink of a dangerous precedent

https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2016/10/deportation-a-dangerous-precedent/

Help prevent Forcible Return of Syrian Refugee

Tweet to the Greek Prime Minister!



- Implementation of the EU-Turkey deal
- Case of a group of at least 8 Syrians, including four children under the age of five: Evidence points to illegal forced returns of Syrian refugees to Turkey



#### Refugees in Greece: Living conditions of refugees



#### Living conditions of refugees: stories

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qv4z\_E2ydnc

#### Living conditions of refugees: stories

Read their stories and send a message of support by email.

Amnesty will deliver these messages to Greece to let them know that people around the world are with them, saying "I welcome refugees".

## Refugees in Greece: Living conditions of refugees

• Solutions: relocation program

### Living conditions of refugees: relocation program



### Living conditions of refugees: Why relocation program doesn't work

Lack of political will

Other reasons

### Al Pledge I Welcome Refugees

https://www.amnesty.org/en/get-involved/takeaction/speak-out-for-refugees-rights/

#### Al Greece Campaign with Oxfam

#### A museum without a home

An exhibition for hospitality