



SEVGİ VE KARDEŞLİK VAKFI
CHARITY AND SOLIDARITY FOUNDATION
SEVKAR SITUATION REPORT #2
PERIOD: 05.03.2020 - 06.03.2020

SITUATION OVERVIEW

- ❖ On March 5th, SEVKAR sent an assessment team to Edirne's Pazarkule border crossing point to evaluate the humanitarian need arising from the border conflict between Turkey and Greece.
- ❖ The team initially visited DGMM (Directorate General Migration Management), Edirne Governorate and DEMP (Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency, AFAD) and contacted UNHCR team on site, as well as the NGOs operating along the border to deliver food and hygiene items to the refugees.

The field observations of SEVKAR team are as follows:

- ❖ The conditions of refugees and especially of children are alarming.
- ❖ Refugees and migrants are by and large concentrated in two different areas; the zone between Turkish and Greek borders and the area before the Turkish border crossing Pazarkule/Edirne. DGMM is unable to provide a clear figure and estimates an approximately 6000 refugee/migrant located in this area, while the number of refugees waiting in Edirne and surrounding villages is unknown.
- ❖ Women and children constitute the majority of the group.
- ❖ There are many babies, toddlers, and disabled refugees on wheelchairs.
- ❖ In order to get warm, refugees /migrants burn wood and garbage which causes heavy smoke, making it difficult to breathe. A considerable amount of garbage is accumulated in the areas where refugees and migrants stay. Furthermore, there is tear gas smell everywhere.

UPDATES

*Since 28.02.2020, Edirne-Greece border, especially Pazarkule crossing, has been a target of an increasing number of refugees aiming to cross to Greece or E.U countries.

*As of 06.03.2020, Turkish Minister of Interior posted on his tweeter account that the total number of refugees who left Edirne and crossed the Greek border as 142.175.

*Turkey announced it was deploying 1000 police Special Forces along the frontier on Thursday (05.03.2020), claiming scores of people had been injured by Greek guards trying to stop them from crossing the country. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/05/turkey-deploys-special-forces-as-tensions-rise-along-greek-border>

*The EU High Representative Josep Borrell told reporters during a meeting of EU foreign ministers in Croatia that the EU could offer more money beyond the 6 billion euros pledged in 2016 to help the refugees but Turkey must first stop using them as a "bargaining chip", he said.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-syria-security-greece/migrant-crisis-at-greek-turkish-border-in-second-week-eu-mulls-more-aid-idUSKBN20TOPX>

*While Erdogan stated in a news conference (02.03.2020) he had turned down an EU offer of 1 billion Euros for migrants saying, "We do not want this money, Europe must take "a fair share of the burden". <https://tr.euronews.com/2020/03/02/cumhurbaskan-erdogan-ab-1-milyar-euro-teklif-etti-kabul-etmedim-biz-o-paray-da-buluruz>

- ❖ Field workers reported a lice outbreak among the refugee population in the area. They underlined the need for dry shampoo and preventive medication. DGMM and Turkish authorities refrain from setting up mobile showers not to allow the creation of permanent camp settings in the area. There are serious hygiene related problems.



Photo 1: Tents located at outside area of the Greek border

- ❖ An NGO coordination group together with DGMM and UNHCR are working to provide basic relief items alongside the border such as; baby food, diapers, dignity kits and dry food. SEVKAR team observed lack of generators, toilets, plastic bags, powder and liquid formula, warm water for baby formulas.
- ❖ Food packages which contain cookies, soup, sandwiches, bread or canned food are distributed three times a day.
- ❖ DGMM and UNHCR established emergency coordination with DEMP, IOM, Turkish NGO ASAM and Turkish Red Crescent to work in the area between the Turkish and Greek border.
- ❖ A ware house located in the city is managed by a group of NGOs in coordination with DEMP. They stated that they have distributed 6.500 canned food in two days.
- ❖ DEMP declared it has distributed 25.000 sanitary pads, 150.000 hygienic napkins and 144.000 paper tissues so far.
- ❖ Distribution of privately donated polystyrene material is not allowed as it might be used to build long term settlements in the border area.
- ❖ DGMM stated that Greek border police constantly fired warning shots and there were sporadic clashes between the Greek police and refugees. The Human Rights Commission of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey visited the area and reported of deaths and heavy injuries.

- ❖ UNICEF provides a mobile “Child Friendly Space”, which however was and remained inactive throughout SEVKAR’s field trip.
- ❖ DGMM provided buses to carry refugees back to Esenler terminal in Istanbul, but SEVKAR team observed that these buses were empty. There are also ambulances and medical units waiting in the area.
- ❖ Afghans are the principal group in the area while Syrians are the minority probably because they hold a relatively better status than all the rest of the other refugee/migrant groups in Turkey.
- ❖ Comparing to their harsh living conditions in Turkey, SEVKAR social workers find it comprehensible that many Afghans choose to take the risk and put themselves in such a dire, risky and unfavourable environment.
- ❖ It is reported that the Turkish government temporarily prevented any sea crossing due to concerns of security because of weather conditions.



Photo 2: Refugees standing line for food



Photo 3: Refugees waiting at makeshift camp in a field