

March 18 2023 marks the 7th anniversary of the 2016 EU-Turkey Statement. In 2016, Turkey assumed the role of the European Union's border guard. It received billions of Euros from the EU on the condition that it held migrants in Turkey and received those who were deported back. Turkey, however, did not hesitate to exploit this position, using migrants as a threat and, when necessary, as leverage against the EU.

On February 6 2023, following the earthquakes in Turkey, living conditions for migrants have deteriorated. Increasing racism has led to violent attacks against migrants; for this reason, the earthquake-affected areas can no longer be considered safe for migrants. As aid policies have excluded migrants from the relief system, migrants have difficulties accessing even basic necessities such as drinking water or shelter. Migrants have been labeled as "looters", and there have been reports that members of Arabic-speaking communities in the region have been the target of racially-motivated mob attacks. Representatives of the Turkish state publicly use anti-migrant rhetoric and promote racist sentiment. Further, migrants who survive the attacks may be tortured by law enforcement officers, as has been reported by legal and rights-based organizations working in the region.

The February 6 earthquake affected at least 10 cities in Turkey. These cities also host the highest percentage population of migrants compared to the local population. Migrants, who already constitute one of the most vulnerable sectors of society due to their socioeconomic status, are among the most mistreated subjects post-earthquake. As early as the second day of the earthquake, when thousands of people were still struggling to survive while trapped under the rubble, fake news with a racist, anti-migrant agenda was circulated by government agencies and representatives of political parties. This openly threatened migrants who had survived the earthquake. Not only did state representatives fail to take any precautions to ensure the safety of migrants, they also failed to take the necessary steps to transfer migrants to other cities. Migrants cannot travel outside their registered cities without travel permits and the lack of issuance of these permits left thousands of people stranded in the aftermath of the disaster. By the beginning of March there were still people in the earthquake zone who could not find a tent, while nightly temperatures dropped below zero. This fact reveals that Turkey has consistently avoided fulfilling its obligation to protect the migrant population.

On the other side of Europe's border, the Greek Coast Guard and Frontex (the EU's Border Protection Agency), with bloated budgets increasing further every year, are building up the walls of Fortress Europe, threatening people's lives by pushing migrants back to Turkey. In Greece, the islands that are close to the Anatolian peninsula are defined as 'hotspots' where exceptional procedural rules apply. Here, migrants are portrayed as a threat to the existence of Greece itself. Migrants who do manage to reach these islands after surviving pushback incidents face difficulties in accessing the asylum procedure and health care, and are forced to live in camps that operate as open-air prisons, far from city centers. Many migrants' applications for international protection are rejected on the grounds that Turkey is a safe third country, citing the EU-Turkey Statement, which also turned the islands into *de facto* open-air prisons for people who are not permitted to leave. Moreover, in the Greek border camps, from the EU-Turkey Statement until today, many people have lost their lives trapped there, with no accountability

from the Greek state and no change in migration policy. On the contrary, the Greek state with the (political and financial) support of the EU is opening new camps. In Greece, the people are being incited against migrants by media and political networks – just as in Turkey. In Greece, the government criminalizes migrants and people who work or stand in solidarity with migrants, launching absurd criminal investigations and convicting people in trials without evidence. By applying criminal provisions on espionage, smuggling and human trafficking, Greece reproduces yet again the climate of fear, which is already well established in Turkey through the extensive use of ‘anti-terror’ legislation.

We, the undersigned organizations, declare that policies of border externalization, and of turning migrants into a cheap labor force, should be stopped immediately. We are against the use of migrants as leverage in domestic and international politics.

We underline that the externalization statements signed between the EU and Turkey or North African countries are against international law. These externalization statements should be immediately revoked, as they violate the responsibilities of the parties to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.

We, the undersigned organizations, demand:

- the immediate termination of the application of the EU-Turkey Statement, as codified in Greek national law and regulations or through international agreements with Turkey, as well as all similar externalization statements with other countries, which have been implemented with a similar motive of preventing migrants from entering the EU;
- that the practice of pushbacks between Turkey and Greece, in which the right to life and the prohibition of torture as enshrined in the European Convention of Human Rights are routinely violated, be stopped and remedy mechanisms for the survivors to be implemented immediately;
- that regulations assuring that migrants’ rights are respected, ensuring decent living conditions and freedom of movement, be implemented.

Academics for Peace / Germany (Barış İçin Akademisyenler Almanya)
Adalet İçin Hukukçular / Lawyers for Justice
Agora Association Izmir (Turkey)
ASGI - Association for Juridical Studies on Immigration
Asociación Americana de Juristas

Association for Mutual Support and Solidarity with Migrants (Göçmen Yardımlaşma ve Dayanışma Derneği) (Turkey)

Avukat Dayanışması / Lawyer solidarity

Campaign Against Criminalising Communities (CAMPACC)

Center for Research and Elaboration on Democracy/Group of International Legal Intervention (CRED/GIGI)

Civic Space Studies Association (Sivil Alan Araştırma Derneği - Türkiye)

Community Peacemakers Teams (CPT) (Greece)

Confederation of European Alevi Unions (Avrupa Alevi Birlikleri Konfederasyonu)

Confederation of Lawyers of Asia & Pacific (COLAP)

Confederation of Public Employees' Trade Unions (Kamu Emekçileri Sendikaları Konfederasyonu - KESK) (Turkey)

de:|border | migration justice collective (Netherlands)

Democratic Alevi Associations (Demokratik Alevi Dernekleri - DAD) (Turkey)

Democratic Lawyers Association of Bangladesh (DLAB)

Demokrasi İçin Hukukçular / Lawyers for democracy

Demokratische Jurist*innen Schweiz

Diotima - Centre for Gender Rights & Equality (Greece)

Doug Nicholls, General Secretary, General Federation of Trade Unions

European Democratic Lawyers (AED)

European Lawyers for Democracy and Human Rights (ELDH)

Feminist Autonomous Centre for research (FAC)

Foundation for Society and Legal Studies (Toplum ve Hukuk Araştırmaları Vakfı - TOHAV) (Turkey)

Giuristi Democratici (Italy)

Göç Araştırmaları Derneği (Association for Migration Research - Turkey)

Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers

Hubyar Sultan Alevi Cultural Association (Hubyar Sultan Alevi Kültür Derneği) (Turkey)

I Have Rights, Samos (Greece)

International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IADL)

International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)

Iran of the World

Iuventia-Crew

İnsan Hakları Derneği - İHD (Human Rights Association) (Turkey)

Kadın Zamanı Derneği (Women's Time Association / Turkey)

Kadınlar Birlikte Güçlü Platformu - KBG (Women Are Stronger Together Platform - Istanbul) (Turkey)

Kartal hukukçular derneği

La Garriga Societat Civil (Catalunya)

Lawyers Association for Freedom (Özgürlük İçin Hukukçular Derneği - ÖHD) (Turkey)

Legal Center Lesbos (Greece)

Lesvos LGBTQI+ Refugee Collective

MAYA Eğitim Kültür Araştırma Yardımlaşma ve Dayanışma Derneği (Maya Association for Education, Culture, Research, Solidarity and Cooperation)

Media and Law Studies (Medya ve Hukuk Çalışmaları Derneği) (Turkey)

Medya ve Göç Derneği (The Media and Migration Association (MMA) - Turkey)

Migrant Solidarity Network / Ankara (GDA / Ankara)

Mültecilerle Dayanışma Derneği (Association for Solidarity with Refugees) (Turkey)

National Union of People's Lawyers of the Philippines (NULP)

Observatori DESC, Cátedra UNESCO de desarrollo humanos sostenible (Universidad de Girona) (Catalunya)

ÖDAV / Libertarian democrat lawyers

Pembe Hayat LGBTİ+ Dayanışma Derneği (Pink Life LGBTİ+ Solidarity Association-Turkey)

People's Bridges (Halkların Köprüsü) (Turkey)

Pir Sultan Abdal Cultural Association (Pir Sultan Abdal Kültür Derneği) (Turkey)

Progressive Lawyers Association (Çağdaş Hukukçular Derneği - ÇHD) (Turkey)

Progrssive Lawyers Group (Çağdaş Avukatlar Grubu) (Turkey)

Refugee Legal Support Athens

Refugees in Libya (refugeesinlibya.org)

Republikanischer Anwältinnen- und Anwälteverein e. V (RAV)

Research Institute onTurkey (RIT)

Schweizerischer Friedensrat, Zürich

Sınırsız Kadın Dayanışması (Woman's Solidarity Without Borders - Istanbul)

Sol Hukuk (Turkey)

Solidarité sans frontières

Sosyal Hukuk

Syndicat des avocats de France (SAF)

Tadamun Antimili (Colombia)

The Catalan association ACDDH

the Socialist Lawyers Association of Ireland

Toplumsal Hukuk (Turkey)

Transnational Migrants Coordination

Turkey Human Rights Litigation Support Project (TLSP)

Vereinigung demokratischer Juristinnen und Juristen

We Want to Live Together Initiative (Birlikte Yaşamak İstiyoruz İnsiyatifi) (Turkey)

Yoga and Sports with Refugees