

Open letter

27 April 2015

Mr. Sokratis Hasikos
Minister of Interior

Refugees in the Mediterranean region die not only in the sea, but also on land, with the difference that the latter is a slow and silent death.

We are Abdel Alsatat and Mahmoud Hasan, stateless Kurds from Syria (Ajanib). Ten years ago, in August 2005, we were forced to leave from Syria because we were persecuted by the Assad regime and because of the continuous violations of our human rights that are suffered by all Ajanib Kurds in Syria.

In October 2014, we started a strike in front of the Ministry of Interior with other Ajanib Kurds from Syria, in order to pressure the Cypriot government to proceed with the examination of our asylum applications. In December 2014, we received the decision of the Refugee Reviewing Authority to grant us subsidiary protection.

For us, it is unacceptable and unfair that we were granted subsidiary protection instead of recognized refugee status, since this entails us living without dignity and with permanent feelings of insecurity, because:

- Subsidiary protection does not guarantee a durable solution to our problems and leaves us in fear of a possible return to Syria and re-persecution there.
- We do not have actual opportunities of integration and active participation in the society and as a result, we are excluded and marginalized, live under continuous discrimination and without being able to restart our lives here in Cyprus.
- With this status, we are not provided with travel documents that are recognized from other countries and since we are stateless, we have no travel documents at all.
- Subsidiary protection does not grant us the right to family reunification.
- This status leaves us trapped in statelessness, because it does not allow us effective access to citizenship, especially taking into consideration the restrictive naturalization policies carried out by the authorities of the Republic of Cyprus.

Furthermore, we consider this status that we were granted with as unfair, because it is contrary to both the international and EU law and it is not consistent to the respective asylum practices in other EU countries: in other EU countries, the stateless Kurds from Syria (Ajanib) are entitled to and therefore granted with recognized refugee status.

We have already spent a decade of our lives in a vacuum and we cannot continue living the slow death that the subsidiary protection status, which was unfairly granted to us, entails.

Under these circumstances, we decided to start a hunger strike, until there is a positive response to our just demands: reexamination of our asylum applications and granting us the recognized refugee status.

Yours sincerely,

The hunger strikers stateless Kurds from Syria – 99990252