

URGENT ACTION

FORCIBLE RETURN FOR AFGHAN FAMILY

Eight Afghan nationals were deported to Dubai, United Arab Emirates on 28 November. The group had been held in the departure lounge of Boryspil airport in the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, since they were detained on 16 November. They are at risk of being forcibly returned to Afghanistan.

According to the most recent information, the group consists of a 33-year-old woman, her five children aged between three and 15, her mother and another family member. Members of the group had stated that they were afraid of returning to Afghanistan because they feared persecution, and they said they wanted to claim asylum in Ukraine.

Representatives of the UN Refugee Agency, UNHCR, were denied access to the group detained at Boryspil airport, until the asylum-seeker's lawyer successfully contacted the European Court for Human Rights on 19 November, resulting in the Court asking Ukraine not to return the asylum-seekers until it had considered the case. As a consequence, the deportation, scheduled for 19 November, was cancelled and UNHCR representatives were able to interview the group and assist them in filing asylum applications. However, on 27 November, the European Court for Human Rights withdrew its "interim measures", arguing that Ukraine intended to return them to the United Arab Emirates. The asylum applications of the group are believed to have been rejected by the Ukraine State Migration Service shortly before they were deported.

The whereabouts of the eight asylum-seekers are currently unknown and Amnesty International remains seriously concerned as requests for asylum are not acknowledged by the border guards in the United Arab Emirates and that the group may be deported to Afghanistan. The United Arab Emirates have neither ratified the UN Refugee Convention nor the Convention against Torture.

No further action is required. Thanks to all who sent appeals. Amnesty international will continue to monitor the situation.

This is the first update of UA 318/09 (EUR 50/004/2009). Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR50/004/2009/en

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