



***EU Commissioner for Home Affairs  
Ylva Johansson***

Brussels, 30 October 2020

Dear Commissioner Johansson,

It has been nearly two months since the fire in Moria left more than 12,000 persons destitute and the response from Greece, the EU and member states has been pitiful. Whilst responding to urgent needs warranted setting up a temporary camp on Lesbos, we now risk seeing this temporary solution turning into a permanent one. But, based on the account of refugees themselves and experienced service providers, the conditions in the new camp are worse than the conditions in Moria.

Almost 8,000 people – mostly families with children – have been forced to live in tents and face dire living conditions. Rapid protection assessments<sup>1</sup> carried out at the end of September identified numerous risks to the people living in the camp. These include limited access to food with reports of residents fainting out of hunger, inadequate measures against Covid-19 as well as no drainage nor sewerage system on site, with only one toilet being shared by twenty people and no access for persons with physical disabilities. Due to a lack of running water, residents are forced to wash themselves in the sea – this raises a risk to children who could drown. This lack of sanitary facilities coupled with the insufficient lighting exposes women to an increased risk of sexual and gender-based violence. Residents are unable to access health services or legal aid. Children have no access to education and truly risk becoming a lost generation.

We are increasingly concerned that the camp, located by the beach, will not withstand the against adverse weather conditions, such as strong wind and rain. In the weeks since that camp had been built, it had already been flooded twice, destroying whatever little property asylum seekers had with them. With temperatures expected to drop soon, residents are likely to use stoves and fires to heat themselves at night, creating fire hazards. After years of raising this issue at a plenary level, we still see no suitable accommodation provided for the winter conditions. In this context, we condemn the eviction of PIKPA camp and call for an appropriate space where it can go on. We demand not to close the old Kara Tepe camp.

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<sup>1</sup> The Greek Council for Refugees and Oxfam, October Lesbos Bulletin:  
<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Lesbos%20Bulletin%20-%20Oct%202020%20%28joint%20Oxfam%20%26%20GCR%29.pdf>

We stress that this is not a national issue. Greece cannot and should not handle this situation alone. It is a European responsibility and European leaders should not turn a blind eye to the situation at hand.

We call on the Commission to urgently work with member states to push for the immediate relocation of all asylum-seekers, in particular unaccompanied, separated or sick children and vulnerable persons. We call on the Commission to work with the Greek authorities to ensure that, for as long as this temporary solution is there, that the place is safe for all and that it has adequate infrastructure with access to running water, food and health provisions and dedicated services for vulnerable people as well as access to education and to legal aid. The Commission must also ensure NGOs are supported in carrying out their vital work on the ground.

Our common European values espouse human dignity and human rights, and the new camp stands in stark opposition to both. We urge you to bring truth to your promise – “no more Morias” – and bring immediate change for the better to the lives of thousands of people in need of our attention.

Yours sincerely,

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