

PRESS RELEASE

1 May, 2020

The Refugee Community Urges: “We appeal for rent support or else we will stay without a roof over our heads”

The undersigned civil society organisations, The Association for Solidarity With Syrian Refugees in Izmir, the Afghan Refugees Solidarity Association (ARSA), the Ravdanur Foundation and the Research Centre on Asylum and Migration (IGAM), are pleased to share with the Turkish Government and the international organisations the below quoted urgent appeal representing, we believe, the voice of four million refugees in Turkey:

“The impact of the global coronavirus epidemic being declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO), causes severe consequences for the poor. The ones who get to be damaged first are we refugees.

“Due to the outbreak, the production processes of tens of thousands of businesses from different sectors in Turkey had to be interrupted. Thousands of workers had to be sent to an unpaid holiday. The government announced that it would provide unpaid workers allowance. However, we are not able to benefit from the governmental opportunity as almost all of us refugees are employed informally.

“As we tackle on the one hand, the risk of starving and ending up homeless, we are trying, on the other hand, to protect ourselves from the virus. With the limited budget we hold in our hands, we spent it on nutrition. Thus, we cannot pay our bills instantly, and consequently, the payment of these bills gets delayed.

“Our landlords do not care about the unemployment caused by the COVID-19 epidemic. If this issue does not get solved as soon as possible, we, in fact, may stay without homes to stay. We are not claiming that we will not pay our rent; we only demand the deferral of the rent payment.

“With our appeal to the government as well as local administrations, unemployment funds for unemployed refugees should be expanded. In the same manner, social and financial support funds should be expanded. By

making an appeal to the landlords, we can ensure the demand for delayed rent payments. Electricity and water bill payments should be as well delayed to a later date. Again, during the pandemic process, necessary measures should be taken for us to access all hygiene materials freely.

“We call on the United Nations and the European Union to provide more support to the Turkish government’s refugee works. Social cohesion aid, carried out with the financing of the European Union, should be extended to cover all international and all refugees under temporary protection. Also, funds should be provided to cover the 3-month rent and invoice expenses of the unemployed refugees during the pandemic.”

Dozens of refugee families reach our associations and other CSOs every day, informing us that their landlords want them to leave the apartment due to their delayed rent payment. We hope this appeal will lead immediate action from the all shareholders.

On this occasion, we the undersigned CSOs would like to celebrate the May day of the Turkish people, the refugees, the humanitarian community and wish healthy days for all humanity.



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