

## **International Refugee Day: respect of international conventions, human rights and human dignity**

**EuroMed Feminist Initiative** joins other actors from the civil society to pay a tribute to the millions of refugees who have been forced to leave their homes and countries, fleeing war, occupation and various forms of persecution. In 2018, unprecedented figures have been reached with the number of refugees exceeding 70 million according to the UNHCR's annual Global Trends report. Women and men lose their lives in an attempt to cross the Mediterranean Sea in search of security. Those who survive are despoiled of their belongings by criminal groups and they are often confronted to the brutality of the border police. In the course of fleeing war and persecution, a great number of people fall under other forms of oppression or are imprisoned in detention centers and overcrowded camps where they experience degrading conditions. Refugees are trapped in a vicious circle of violence that resembles the conditions that initially motivated their journey to countries they are now being bluntly expelled from.

EFI remains committed to supporting and protecting refugees and vulnerable people, and particularly women, who face complex and specific hardships during their forced mobility in the place of destination, and to advocating for the right of people to free movement and self-determination and to living their lives free from violence and abuse on their integrity and dignity.

EFI calls on the international community to find means to support refugees and displaced people and to work towards peaceful resolution of conflicts, allowing them to return safely to their homes.

European policy makers must put an end to the inhumane regulations and the hostile climate that have built up against refugees in the continent. Some European countries are now criminalizing humanitarian support provided to migrants and refugees, which is a clear violation of international law.

More than ever, we strive for a Europe that demonstrates its commitments to democracy, respect of human rights and international conventions, notably the 1951 Geneva convention related to the rights of migrants and refugees.

*EuroMed Feminist Initiative is a policy network that encompasses women's rights organizations from the two shores of the Mediterranean. It provides expertise in the area of gender equality and women's rights as inseparable from democracy building and citizenship, advocates for political solutions to all conflicts, and for the right of peoples to self-determination.*

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