Greece Sends Back Refugees Not Granted Asylum

Athens, December 11 (RHC)-- The Greek government says it will deport economic refugees stuck at the country's border with Macedonia if they fail to qualify for asylum. "Those without papers, the so-called illegal refugees, have the right to request asylum (or) the right to voluntary repatriation," Greek Minister for Migration Affairs Yiannis Mouzalas said on Thursday, adding: "If they do not request either within 30 days, they will be returned to their countries of origin."

The announcement came a day after Greece also removed some 2,300 African refugees from its border with Macedonia, where they had been stranded for days after the neighboring country denied them entry.

Macedonia in late November erected a metal fence on its southern border with Greece to block the entry of asylum seekers, leaving hundreds trapped on the Greek side of the border.

Macedonian officials have adopted a selective approach and are only allowing refugees from such war-torn countries as Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan to pass the border, leading to weeks-long clashes between police and the asylum seekers.

Greece has been a top destination on the path of the refugees trying to reach wealthier European state. The country, whose economy has been grappling with a severe crisis in recent years, has been struggling to deal with the huge influx of refugees into its borders.

Europe is struggling to cope with the unprecedented surge of refugees, fleeing war and persecution. According to the UN, nearly 900,000 refugees have landed in Europe via the Mediterranean from Africa and Asia this year. Hundreds of the refugees, mainly from the Middle East, have died in their perilous journey to the West.

Many of the EU states have come under fire for their mistreatment of asylum seekers at the borders, where they have been grappling with dire living conditions in refugee camps.

Radio Habana Cuba