

Finland Prepares to Expel 20,000 Asylum Seekers



Helsinki, January 29 (RHC)-- Finland is set to expel tens of thousands of the asylum seekers who arrived in the country last year amid the ongoing refugee crisis in Europe. Paivi Nerg, Finnish Interior Ministry's administrative director, announced on Thursday that Helsinki expects to expel nearly 20,000 refugees out of the 32,000 it received in 2015.

The official stressed that each application was being evaluated individually. "In principle, about two-thirds, meaning approximately 65 percent of the 32,000, will get a negative decision (to their asylum application)," said Nerg, adding: "In previous years around 60 percent (of applicants) received a negative decision but now we have somewhat tightened our criteria for Iraqis, Afghans and Somalis."

Nerg further said at least two charter flights to deport Iraqis were planned within the following months. Earlier in the day, Swedish Interior Minister Anders Ygeman said Stockholm intends to expel as many as 80,000 refugees whose applications for asylum have been rejected.

Germany's government has backed a new draft law to make it easier to deport foreign nationals who commit crimes in the country. The proposal made by justice and interior ministers will expedite the deportation of non-EU foreign nationals found guilty of committing physical and sexual assaults.

Human Rights Watch says that a number of European governments have responded to an influx of refugees by cracking down on basic freedoms.

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