

African Union Urges Swift Relocation of Refugees from Overcrowded Camps in Libya



Cairo, December 1 (RHC)-- African Union leaders have called on their European counterparts to help relocate thousands of refugees currently stranded in camps in violence-plagued Libya. Moussa Faki Mahamat, the chairman of the African Union Commission, said that the number of African refugees who currently live in camps and other places in Libya in the hope of reaching Europe some day is estimated between 400,000 and 700,000 people.

Mahamat said many of those refugees were living in “inhuman conditions” and there was an urgent need for thousands, including women and children, to be removed from the camps that are either overcrowded or have other problems. The European Union has reached an agreement with Libya aimed at stopping the flow of refugees across the central Mediterranean to the north. The deal, criticized by human rights organizations and even governments, has managed to drastically decrease the number of arrivals in Italy although other issues have emerged, including the harsh treatment of refugees in Libya.

A video recently surfaced on the Internet, showing refugees being auctioned as slaves in a Libyan market, sparking anger at the way Europe has secured its borders from the influx of desperate refugees.

Mahamat, who was speaking at the closing of a summit of European and African leaders, said at least

3,800, most of them West African refugees, were waiting for quick relocation from a camp in the Libyan capital Tripoli. He said people in dozens of other facilities across Libya were also living in dreadful conditions.

According to reports, European and African leaders vowed to do more to deal with the burgeoning population of refugees living in squalid camps in Libya. African governments have also embarked on a process to repatriate their nationals from Libya although the measure seems hardly effective given the dimensions of the crisis.

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