

Fire Breaks Out at Greece Migrant Camp Amid Protests



Athens, July 12 (RHC)-- A fire broke out at a migrant camp on the Greek island of Lesbos on Monday, following a protest at the site among migrants who were demanding better living conditions.

Local authorities told reporters that the fire at the Moria camp was extinguished quickly and that at least five container units and three tents were destroyed. No injuries were reported.

According to the Greek Athens-Macedonia News Agency, ANA, the incidents began when a group of migrants headed toward the pre-departure center operating within the camp protested against the living conditions of detainees, who were due to be returned to Turkey.

“What happened was that, during the transfer of a migrant to the pre-departure center, after the conclusion of the process for examining his right to asylum at primary and secondary level, his application was rejected and there was a decision for his return,” Greek Deputy Migration Policy Minister Yiannis Balafas said during a radio interview on Tuesday.

The police intervened, but were met with a barrage of stones. In response, the police fired tear gas, after which the violence spread, the ANA reported. The fire is believed to have been set deliberately and the protesting migrants were allegedly blocking the fire brigade's attempts to enter the compound and put out the fires, according to the report.

More than 14,000 migrants remain stranded on Lesbos and other Greek islands near Turkey. They are not allowed to travel to the Greek mainland under the terms of an agreement between the European Union and Turkey reached last year.

Under the deal, refugees and migrants must stay in Moria until their cases are assessed. Those who are not granted asylum would be returned to Turkey. Refugees and migrants have frequently complained about delays in the evaluation process of their bids. One observed told reporters: "The people are tired, they are tired of what is happening here."

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