



Iran - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Wednesday 17 February 2016

Information on undocumented Afghans threatened with deportation if they do not fight in Syria

Human Rights Watch in January 2016 states:

“Iran’s Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) has recruited thousands of undocumented Afghans living there to fight in Syria since at least November 2013, Human Rights Watch said today, and a few have reported that Iranian authorities coerced them. Iran has urged the Afghans to defend Shia sacred sites and offered financial incentives and legal residence in Iran to encourage them to join pro-Syrian government militias” (*Human Rights Watch (29 January 2016) Iran Sending Thousands of Afghans to Fight in Syria*).

This report also states that:

““Iran has not just offered Afghan refugees and migrants incentives to fight in Syria, but several said they were threatened with deportation back to Afghanistan unless they did,” said Peter Bouckaert, emergencies director at Human Rights Watch” (*ibid*).

This document also points out that:

“Threatening registered Afghan refugees with deportation to Afghanistan if they refuse to fight in Syria would amount to refoulement, a practice prohibited under international law” (*ibid*).

In January 2016 *Voice of America* notes:

“Iran has sent thousands of undocumented Shi’ite Afghan refugees to Syria to fight alongside forces of the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah and Iran’s elite Revolutionary Guard forces in support of the government of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, sources in Iran and Afghanistan told VOA” (*Voice of America (29 January 2016) Iran Sending Afghan Refugees to Fight in Syria*).

A report issued by *The Guardian* in November 2015 states:

“Iran is recruiting Afghan refugees to fight in Syria, promising a monthly salary and residence permits in exchange for what it claims to be a sacred endeavour to save Shia shrines in Damascus” (*The Guardian (5 November 2015) Afghan refugees in Iran being sent to fight and die for Assad in Syria*).

No further information on this issue could be found among sources available to the RDC.

References

The Guardian (5 November 2015) *Afghan refugees in Iran being sent to fight and die for Assad in Syria*

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/05/iran-recruits-afghan-refugees-fight-save-syrias-bashar-al-assad>

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Human Rights Watch (29 January 2016) *Iran Sending Thousands of Afghans to Fight in Syria*

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/01/29/iran-sending-thousands-afghans-fight-syria>

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Voice of America (29 January 2016) *Iran Sending Afghan Refugees to Fight in Syria*

<http://www.voanews.com/content/hrw-says-iran-sending-afghan-refugees-to-fight-in-syria/3168887.html>

Accessed Wednesday 17 February 2016

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

Sources Consulted

Amnesty International
BBC News
Electronic Immigration Network
European Country of Origin Information Network
Freedom House
Google
Human Rights Watch
Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada
Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
International Crisis Group
IRIN News
Lexis Nexis
Minority Rights Group International
Online Newspapers
Refugee Documentation Centre E-Library
Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database
Reliefweb
Reuters
United Kingdom Home Office
United States Department of State
UNHCR Refworld