



Ms Mette Frederiksen
Prime Minister

Mr Kaare Dybvad
Minister for Immigration and Integration

Brussels, 13 April 2023

Dear Prime Minister Frederiksen,
Dear Minister for Immigration and Integration Dybvad,

It is with great concern that we have learned that the Danish Immigration Service has recently added the regions of Latakia and Tartus in Syria to the list of Syrian regions deemed safe for the return of Syrian refugees.

According to your immigration service, the security situation in the two governorates has improved, which means that Syrian refugees from these areas could lose their temporary protection in Denmark. Losing their temporary protection status in Denmark obligates them to leave their normal residence, stop their work or education and be *de jure* forced to return home. *De facto*, the Syrians from these areas will not be able to be repatriated as Denmark does not have any agreements with Syria on repatriation, they will be obligated to take residence in repatriation centres taking them away from their lives in and contributions to Danish society based on a decision, which can never be implemented.

Two years ago, cross-party MEPs wrote to you raising this issue and it is clear that these new developments are not in the right direction.

Indeed, this decision does not take into account the numerous NGO reports documenting the horrific situation Syrian refugees face upon their return to Syria, namely: serious human rights violations, persecution at the hands of the Syrian government and affiliated militias, torture, extrajudicial killings, kidnappings and bribery.

On 7 February 2023, the UN Human Rights Council's International Independent Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic presented its findings covering the year 2022, according to which "*conditions are not currently in place to ensure voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable returns, given the continuing violations in the country*".

This decision also sends the wrong signal at a time when the Assad regime blatantly continues to violate human rights and humanitarian law throughout the country.

Furthermore, while there is no notable progress on a credible political process, this decision undermines the unity of the European Union in advocating a lasting solution to the Syrian conflict through a genuine and inclusive political transition, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2254.

We therefore call on you to reverse Denmark's decision to revoke the protection of Syrian refugees from these areas and to recognize that Syrian refugees remain at risk in the whole country of Syria.

We look forward to your reply and appreciate your immediate attention to this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Nathalie Loiseau, Standing Rapporteur of the European Parliament on Syria, Renew Europe
Karen Melchior, Renew Europe
Sophie in't Veld, Renew Europe
Bernard Guetta, Renew Europe
Pierre Larrouturou, S&D
Marie-Pierre Vedrenne, Renew Europe
Dietmar Köster, S&D
Mounir Satouri, The Greens/EFA
Fabienne Keller, Renew Europe
Thijs Reuten, S&D
Stelios Kouloglou, The Left
Jakop Dalunde, The Greens/EFA
Margarida Marques, S&D
Laurence Farreng, Renew Europe
Jordi Solé, The Greens/EFA
Malin Björk, The Left
María Soraya Rodríguez Ramos, Renew Europe
Jan-Christoph Oetjen, Renew Europe
Katrin Langensiepen, The Greens/EFA
Maria Arena, S&D
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Marisa Matias, The Left
José Gusmão, The Left
Barry Andrews, Renew Europe
Nikolaj Villumsen, The Left
Abir Al-Sahlani, Renew Europe
Hannah Neumann, The Greens/EFA
Sylvie Brunet, Renew Europe
Tineke Strik, The Greens/EFA
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