
EU URGES BULGARIA TO PROBE SHOOTING OF REFUGEE AT BORDER

07.12.2022

Millet News (7 December 2022)

The European Commission on Tuesday urged Bulgaria to thoroughly investigate the alleged shooting by Bulgarian guards of a Syrian refugee on the countrys border with Türkiye.

European Commission spokeswoman Anitta Hipper told reporters that Brussels expects Bulgarian authorities to investigate any allegations and to follow up swiftly and effectively.

We take all allegations of any wrongdoings at the European border seriously, and violence and loss of life is unacceptable, she added.

A video released Monday showed an asylum seeker collapsing to the ground after a bullet penetrates his hand and lodges into his chest during the October 3 incident. The footage, shot from the Turkish side of the border, was part of a joint investigation by several European media outlets led by Lighthouse Reports.

In separate footage, the asylum seeker identified himself as 19-year-old Abdullah El Rustum from Syria. He said he was shot by Bulgarian border officers after his group was caught trying to illegally enter Bulgaria and pushed back into Türkiye.

The Bulgarian government denied the allegations, arguing that border guards strictly followed international and domestic laws and have encountered more aggression from people trying to illegally enter the country.

Last month, officials reported that a Bulgarian police officer was shot dead by an unidentified person at the border with Turkey. In August, two police officers were also killed when they were hit by a bus carrying migrants.

In a statement released Tuesday, the Interior Ministry said there was no evidence that Syrian refugees were shot at the Bulgarian-Turkish border on October 3, when border patrols prevented an attempted border crossing by a group of about 65 people.

The ministry said the group retreated back to Turkish territory after spotting the border patrol but returned displaying aggressive and hostile behavior which escalated into physical violence, resulting in the injury of a policeman who was hit by a stone and a police vehicle being damaged.

According to the ministry, a phone video shot by migrants was played a month later at a joint meeting of Bulgarian and Turkish officials in which an audible gunshot injured a Syrian citizen on

Turkish territory. The ministry insisted an investigation found that no shots were fired from the Bulgarian side.

<https://www.milletnews.com/balkans/eu-urges-bulgaria-to-probe-shooting-of-refugee-at-border>

Kaynak/Source: