

Greece - Sexual Assaults on Children at Refugee Camps

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The Guardian reports: "Children as young as seven have been sexually assaulted in official European refugee camps, the Observer has been told. The claims come as testimony emerges suggesting that some camps are so unsafe that youngsters are too terrified to leave their tents at night." The article refers specifically to a government-run camp at the outskirts of Thessaloniki, Greece, holding about 1,400 refugees, most of them Syrians. Aid organizations claim that "the level of risk of sexual attack is so acute that women are too afraid to visit the camp toilets alone at night."

One volunteer serving at the camp, alleged that some young girls had been effectively groomed by male gangs. He said an Iraqi family had to be moved to emergency accommodation outside the camp after their daughter was attacked. "The parents are still in disbelief over what happened. A man from one of the 'mafia' groups asked their seven-year-old daughter into their tent to play games on his phone and then zipped up the tent. She came back with marks on her arms and neck. Later the girl described how she was sexually abused. It has scarred a seven-year-old child for life,"

The Guardian also talked to Anna Chiara Nava of Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) in Thessaloniki, who confirmed allegations of children being victims of sexual violence. She said they, MSF, were in regular contact with at least 10 women from the camp who had complained of sexual violence and explained that many occupants, including children, were too afraid to speak out. "It's really hard for the unaccompanied minors - 16 and 17 years-old - to survive. It's the survival of the fittest in there. In the evening and night, it's impossible to find them [children] because they are hiding in the tents. The women are afraid. They complain that during the night and evening they cannot go to the toilet alone. They have all heard of reports of others being attacked."

The Greek Government built a number of refugee camps near Thessaloniki after the informal one at Idomeni, near the Macedonian border, was closed in May. This followed the European Commission's (EC) allocation of £71 million (€82 million) of humanitarian funding for emergency projects to help the 57,000 refugees stranded in official government camps throughout Greece.

Sputnik News - interview

Question:

Do you think this report [*The Guardian*] is trustworthy?

Peter Koenig: Yes, absolutely...

This is first of all a typical EU crisis – where nobody wants to be responsible, yet the EU are involved up to their neck with causing the refugee crisis.

Sexual assaults on innocent children scar them forever. It is one of the most horrible crimes humanity can commit. It shows how low ‘humanity’ has sunk – in the drift of constant wars, where human values of life have been eviscerated, due to the never ending war on terror, instigated by the West – not the Muslims, not the Middle East.... Instigated to keep the profit war machine churning out more weapons, more killing, more profit.

Europe together with the US and NATO keep destroying the Middle East, bombing it to rubble, creating a flood of refugees, whose closest place to survive is – unfortunately – their executioner himself, Europe. Then they (EU) reject the refugees – perhaps with the exception of Germany – but especially the Brits and the French – and leave the problem in the hands of a country whose borders are closest to the place of origin of the refugees, Greece.

Greece is a nation that the very EU – her brothers and sisters, have basically liquidated with debt and privatization of public assets – a country starving itself and striving for the sheer survival of more than 50% of its own population. With hardly any funds from the bureaucrats in Brussels, Greece is left to fend on her own for holding and caring of the refugees. The €82 million of humanitarian funding for emergency projects to help the 57,000 refugees stranded in official government camps throughout Greece, is hardly a drop on a hot stone – and certainly not enough to police and protect the camps from thugs and sexual assault as described by *The Guardian*.

These people [the refugees] are punished three-fold by Europe, first their livelihood is being destroyed, then they are crammed into refugee camps, where they are assaulted, sexually and otherwise, then rejected from seeking refuge, shelter and survival in the ‘clean and snottily rich’ European countries – for having done nothing, absolutely nothing; these refugees have committed no crime whatsoever.

This is European justice. This is just another reason why the EU is not fit to survive, is not reformable. The EU is despicably unhuman and has nothing to do with a union of countries. Brussels and especially the EC that calls most of the shots, is a club of extravagant high-paid non-elected bureau- and technocrats, working for the plutocracy, for the ultra-rich, with total neglect of the people – in this case the refugees, but also the European populace at large.

The EU should be dismantled as soon as possible. I can only hope and trust that BREXIT will actually happen and that it will contribute to hastening the pace of the dissolution of the European Union and its fake currency the Euro, modeled after the US-dollar, made out of thin air, based on nothing but debt; an instrument to enslave and impoverish countries and rob their public assets. Greece is a master example.

Question: What do you think should be done now? Should women and girls be placed in separate camps to protect them?

PK: As a first and emergency reaction – yes, absolutely. As an interim measure and since nothing substantial can be expected to come from Brussels in ‘useful time’, Greece and

other countries in solidarity may fund this emergency step, eventually to be reimbursed by Brussels. But in the long run its clearly a question for the EU / Brussels to resolve, allocating appropriate funding – and first of all stop the profit-driven wars that create abject poverty and prompt the flow of refugees.

Question: What do you think Brussels reaction will be now? Will they actually do something, provide the resources for countries like Greece to deal with the refugee problem properly – or will they continue dragging their feet?

PK: Well, one would hope that a damning report like the one in *The Guardian* would actually incite Brussels to react, but I wouldn't be surprised if they again would just drag their feet and shove the problem from one bureaucratic commission of non-elected technocrats to another – and nothing will happen.

I'm often thinking of the EU as a huge uncontrollable mob of adolescents, where nobody wants to be responsible but all want to claim somehow 'credit' for their 'grandeur' – they are incompetent for the task that they should fulfill.

It is almost unthinkable that something like this could happen in an individual government of one of the EU nations that were once sovereign nations – no longer – if they had to deal with the crisis on their own. In the first place, they probably would have never participated in this cruel, senseless Washington invented war on terror, a smoke screen for endless war and endless profit for the (mostly US-based) war industry and – Wall Street that finances it. But all of them, through the EU as a block, have been coopted or coerced into participating – and this against the will of the people they are supposed to represent. The fear of 'economic sanctions' for those who don't behave is overwhelming. And economic sanctions can only work as long as the west is bound to the fraudulent US-controlled dollar-euro system.

Some of the 'stronger' countries, that could wage some influence, like Germany, should exert the necessary pressure on Brussels that funds are made available to properly protect these refugee camps, and especially women and girls – protect them from sexual and other abuse.

This is an absolute priority to deal with – it is a human catastrophe that deserves immediate and serious attention. Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the EC, himself should jump in the frying pan and find the resources to protect these victim of US – EU – NATO aggression.

As a long term solution – I repeat what I said before, the EU and its common currency should be resolved, dismantled as soon as possible and something new created in its stead – a federation of truly solidary countries, inspired by Europeans themselves, without transatlantic influence and sabotage, as is the case with the current set-up of Europe – of the EU and the Euro.

Note

This is an approximate transcript of a Sputnik phone interview on 14 August 2016, based on [an article in The Guardian](#) (13 August) about child abuse in a Greek refugee camp.

Peter Koenig is an economist and geopolitical analyst. He is also a former World Bank staff and worked extensively around the world in the fields of environment and water resources. He writes regularly for *Global Research*, *ICH*, *RT*, *Sputnik*, *PressTV*, *The 4th Media*, *TeleSUR*, *The Vineyard of The Saker Blog*, and other internet sites. He is the author of [Implosion – An](#)

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