



**47th Regular Session of the Human Rights Council (21 June - 15 July 2021)**

**ITEM 3: ID with the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants**

**“Conditions of migrants on the Balkan route: humanitarian crises and violent push backs”**

*Check against delivery*

Madam President,

APG23 and other 14 co-signing NGOs are deeply concerned over the condition of migrants and asylum seekers moving through the Balkan route.

Another humanitarian failure is taking place in front of us; through a systematic practice of violent push backs at the borders, including chain push backs over multiple countries, migrants suffer humiliation, violence, and threats from border police.

The EU has funded countries along the Balkan route to manage the migratory flows. Financial aid has been used to strengthen borders instead of providing access to international protection, facilitating transit and improving life conditions in the camps. This closure policy has led to the creation of inhumane and overcrowded camps where migrants are often stuck.

Border management can never ignore respect for life and respect for human rights; no one should be robbed, beaten and humiliated just because in search of a chance for a dignified life and a better future.

More than ever, we have a moral duty to fight against these violations. As long as migrants will continue to be portrayed in a negative light, as enemies to be fought and not as human beings in need of protection, humanitarian crises will be further exacerbated. As Pope Francis reiterates in His message for the next world day of migrants and refugees: “we can transform borders into privileged places of encounter, where the miracle of an ever wider “we” can come about.”

In light of all this, we strongly condemn the indiscriminate use of violence and the practice of push backs along the Balkan route on land and at sea and we call for their immediate interruption.

We appeal to EU and Member States to do everything in their power to ensure respect for human rights in the management of borders, avoiding measures that would restrict or deny access to asylum procedure.

We ask the Special Rapporteur: which are in your view the real obstacles in implementing programmes such as humanitarian corridors and in applying human rights-based policies related to migration? Thank You!