

**To the general public in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and across Europe:
An urgent appeal on behalf of refugees stranded in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

To want the world
to continue
as it is

is to want it
not to continue
to exist

(Erich Fried)

We, the undersigned, are angered and distressed by the appalling circumstances in which a group of people in the Lipa area, near the town of Bihać in Bosnia and Herzegovina, have been living for months in makeshift camps. Their living conditions are appalling and subhuman. There are 700 refugees currently eking out an existence in Lipa; the situation that faces thousands more throughout the border region is unknown.

We are profoundly shocked by the dire plight of these people. Some of us were once war refugees ourselves. We condemn the hatred being stirred up against the migrants by local politicians and residents. We condemn, too, the violent "pushback" treatment being meted out to refugees arriving in Croatia by the border police, who repeatedly - in breach of Croatian and European asylum law and the Geneva Convention on Refugees - force them back across the border into Bosnia and Herzegovina. And we also condemn the EU authorities, who are aware of these pushbacks but tacitly condone them.

It is more than respect for the law, it is the fundamental imperative of our common humanity that compels us to speak out against the inhumane treatment of migrants in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Croatia. Sudbin Mušić, a Bosnian survivor of the Trnopolje concentration camp, warns that "the misery of the migrants' current situation could soon turn into a tragedy without precedent". This is why we are calling on each and every individual who believes in the idea of a democratic and united Europe to stand up and speak out!

The refugees are in urgent need of safe and decent accommodation and medical care. We demand an immediate end to the violence at the EU border and an acknowledgment of Europe's complicity and responsibility. Croatia must respect international law and apply European law at the border; Bosnia and Herzegovina must guarantee that EU funds are spent promptly and without bureaucratic hindrance on the provision of emergency aid; and the EU must stop pressurising Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina to prevent refugees entering the EU at any cost. The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the Refugee Convention commit the EU to implementing just and fair asylum procedures at its external borders; we demand that the individuals stranded on the Balkan Route are allowed access to such an asylum procedure.

All those of us who believe in Europe and our common humanity must stand together and end the silence. We refuse to accept that the world should continue as it is.

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Saša Stanišić, author
Carl-Wilhelm Macke, journalist
Annika Reich, author, co-founder of WIR MACHEN DAS and Weiter Schreiben
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Julia Eichhorn, literary agent
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Matthias Heyl, historian, author and director of Jugendbegegnungsstätte Ravensbrück
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Nicolas Moll, historian
Oliver Held, playwright, Theater Aachen
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Teresa Zschernig, actor
Bassam Ghazi, stage director and drama coach
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Maja Zećo, actor
Danko Rabrenović, author, musician, journalist
Sudbin Musić, journal ist and activist
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Hanna Slak, director and film-maker

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Magdalena Jagelke, author
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Matthias Berthold, actor and musician
Sead Porobić, literary scholar and author
Goran Georgievski, climate research scientist
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