

Press release on the expulsion of Burkinabe refugees and asylum seekers by Ghana

Jul 22, 2023

The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights has learned with dismay of the expulsion of more than 200 Burkinabe asylum seekers and refugees, including women and children, by the Ghanaian authorities since 11 July 2023.

The Commission is particularly concerned by this situation given the prevailing security situation in Burkina Faso.

It condemns the treatment reserved for Burkinabe asylum seekers and refugees, and the violation by the Republic of Ghana of the principle of non-refoulement enshrined in the OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, to which it is a party.

Article 2(3) of the Convention stipulates that "no one shall be subjected by a Member State to measures such as refusal of admission at the frontier, refoulement or expulsion which would compel him to return to or remain in a territory where his life, physical integrity or freedom would be threatened".

The Commission reminds the Ghanaian authorities that, by virtue of this principle, they are obliged to take all necessary measures to ensure assistance and protection to asylum seekers and refugees on its territory, and that by expelling them to a territory where their security is still precarious, they are violating the provisions of the Convention.

It stresses that this also constitutes a violation of the rights guaranteed by the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which obliges States to take all necessary measures to ensure respect for the rights contained therein. This includes respect for human dignity, human security and the right to choose one's residence.

The Commission calls on the Ghanaian authorities to respect the rights guaranteed by the African Charter and the OAU Refugee Convention by ensuring the protection of Burkinabe asylum seekers and refugees on its soil and by refraining from turning them back under the pretext of voluntary departure.

Banjul 21 July 2023