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During the last week the afghan refugees committee was trying to negotiate with the government. The Red Cross and the Norwegian Council for refugees were mediators in the negotiation process. Three meetings took place with officers of the government, but eventually the refugees felt that the government was playing with them, and was not at all willing to move back from their position. The refugees kept bringing in the negotiation table the issue that some of the refugees really could not go back to Afghanistan, because they would face serious danger. So, they were asking for a review of such refugee cases, a request that the government refused to consider. Claiming that even if some areas in Afghanistan are not safe, Kabul is a safe place, they are considering deporting people from various places of Afghanistan directly to Kabul.

Eventually the refugees decided to stop the negotiation process, and organized their non-violent resistance, as they expected an immediate move by the government. Many people, locals and refugees, spent the night chained together in the place of the hunger strike in order to protect the hunger strikers.

Early Friday morning around 100 policemen, some of them with horses, came in place, and violently entered the hunger strikers tents, in order to remove them. The police exercised exceed pressure and violence and even broke fingers of refugees.

Zahir Athari, the spokesman of the afghan refugees committee, lied down and told the police, "come and break my hand, not the hands of these people". Then they pulled him out, forced him to stay on the ground and handcuffed him. They took him away to a police car and kept him there until the end of the operation, in order to break the other refugees morale.

When they left him, the other refugees had been packed in the police caged-window bus, in which they were forced to stay down on the floor. Although the police said they would take the refugees to the hospital, they just left them in a park nearby, many of the refugees barefoot.

The refugees directly came back to the place of the hunger strike, but all their tents and stuff had been destroyed or removed.

Again the people chained together and declared that, even without tents, they would continue the hunger strike outside.

The whole event received big coverage by the media in Norway.

The government received severe criticism by parties and organizations for the violence of its response.

As Zahir says, Norway is now going through a complete crisis.

Many new photos can be found at

http://pg.photos.yahoo.com/ph/luckyseven_2006/my_photos

Gianna Chouvarda 😊