

Norway: Afghan asylum seekers end hunger strike

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<http://www.norwaypost.no/cgi-bin/norwaypost/imaker?id=25422>

The around 80 Afghan asylum seekers who have been on a hunger strike in front of the Oslo Cathedral for 26 days, ended their strike late Tuesday evening. The asylum seekers will receive legal assistance to have their applications reassessed.

A spokesman for the strikers, Zahir Athari, says a statement by the Norwegian government on Tuesday was decisive.

The Government stated that all Afghan asylum seekers who have been seeking asylum in Norway, will receive legal assistance to have their applications reassessed.

In addition, the Government promised to follow the recommendations from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on returning refugees to Afghanistan, and that no one will be returned to Kabul, unless the UNHCR believes it is safe.

- This is a victory for both us and the Government, says Athari. He adds that the fight to obtain residence in Norway will continue in other ways.

Integration Minister Bjarne Haakon Hanssen says the government has not given in to pressure.

- In theory, anyone may obtain asylum, provided new information is uncovered during the new legal reassessment, Hanssen says.

(NRK)

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