

Greece to boost guards on Turkey border

Author:

Mon, 2021-10-11 00:10

ATHENS: Greece's police minister on Sunday said 250 additional guards would be deployed on the country's land border with Turkey, where thousands of asylum-seekers tried to enter last year.

"We are ready ... and we are further increasing (security) forces by hiring 250 new border guards to support Greek police," Citizens' Protection Minister Takis Theodorikakos said during a visit to the border area of Kastanies, according to a ministry statement.

In February 2020, tens of thousands of migrants surged toward Greece after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said he would let migrants seeking to reach the EU pass through.

Days of clashes with asylum seekers on the border ensued, with Greek police accusing their Turkish counterparts of firing tear gas against them.

In the aftermath of the incident, Greece invested in a new anti-migration arsenal including cameras, radar and a 40-km steel fence, to cover part of the 200-km border region crossed by the river Evros.

The Greek civil aviation authority on Saturday also said a tethered balloon known as an aerostat, equipped with a long-range thermal camera, had been deployed at Alexandroupolis airport in August to assist border surveillance.

A Zeppelin operated by EU border agency Frontex is also active in the area, state agency ANA said Sunday.

Greece has said it will examine claims of illegal pushbacks of migrants trying to enter from Turkey, made in a major investigation published Wednesday by media from several European countries.

Athens has consistently denied any wrongdoing, including claims of migrants saying they were beaten, stripped and robbed before being forced back across the land border with Turkey.



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[Turkish fires endanger world pine honey supplies](#)

Author:

Sun, 2021-10-10 23:59

COKEK, Turkey: Beekeepers Mustafa Alti and his son Fehmi were kept busy tending to their hives before wildfires tore through a bucolic region of Turkey that makes most of the world's prized pine honey.

Now the Altis and generations of other honey farmers in Turkey's Aegean province of Mugla are scrambling to find additional work and wondering how many decades it might take to get their old lives back on track.

“Our means of existence is from beekeeping, but when the forests burned, our source of income fell,” said Fehmi, 47, next to his mountainside beehives in the fire-ravaged village of Cokek. “I do side jobs, I do some tree felling, that way we manage to make do.”

Nearly 200,000 hectares of forests – more than five times the annual average – were scorched by fires across Turkey this year, turning luscious green coasts popular with tourists into ash.

The summer disaster and an accompanying series of deadly floods made the climate – already weighing heavily on the minds of younger voters – a major issue two years before the next scheduled election.

Signaling a political shift, Turkey’s parliament this week ended a five-year wait and ratified the Paris Agreement on cutting the greenhouse emissions that are blamed for global warming and abnormal weather events.

But the damage has already been done in Mugla, where 80 percent of Turkey’s pine honey is produced.

Turkey as a whole makes 92 percent of the world’s pine honey, meaning supplies of the thick, dark amber may be running low worldwide very soon.

Turkey’s pine honey harvests were already suffering from drought when the wildfires hit, destroying the delicate balance between bees, trees, and the little insects at the heart of the production process.

The honey is made by bees after they collect the sugary secretions of the tiny Basra beetle (*Marchalina hellenica*), which lives on the sap of pine trees.

Fehmi hopes the beetles will adapt to younger trees after the fires. But he also accepts that “it will take at least five or 10 years to get our previous income back.”

His father Mustafa agrees, urging President Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s government to expand forested areas and plant young trees.

“There’s no fixing a burnt house. Can you fix the dead? No. But new trees might come, a new generation,” Mustafa said.

For now, though, the beekeepers are counting their losses and figuring out what comes next.

The president of the Mugla Beekeepers’ Association, Veli Turk, expects his region’s honey production to plunge by up to 95 percent this year. “There is pretty much no Marmaris honey left,” he said.

“This honey won’t come for another 60 years,” he predicted. “It’s not just Turkey. This honey would go everywhere in the world. It was a blessing. This is really a huge loss.”

Beekeeper Yasar Karayigit, 45, is thinking of switching to a different type

of honey to keep his passion – and sole source of income – alive.

“I love beekeeping, but to continue, I’ll have to pursue alternatives,” Karayigit said, mentioning royal jelly (or “bee milk”) and sunflower honey, which involves additional costs.

“But if we love the bees, we have to do this,” the father-of-three said.

Ismail Atici, head of the Milas district Chamber of Agriculture in Mugla, said the price of pine honey has doubled from last year, threatening to make the popular breakfast food unaffordable for many Turks.

He expects price rises to continue and supplies to become ever more scarce.

“We will get to a point where even if you have money, you won’t be able to find those medicinal plants and medicinal honey,” Atici said.

“It’s going to be very hard to find 100-percent pine honey,” beekeeper Karayigit agreed. “We have had so much loss.”



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[UAE and Syria agree to 'enhance economic cooperation'](#)

Sun, 2021-10-10 22:39

DUBAI: The UAE and Syria have agreed on plans to enhance economic cooperation and explore new sectors.

The Emirates' economy ministry announced the agreement on Sunday.

The ministry said value of non-oil trade between the two countries in the first half of 2021 was one billion dirhams (\$272 million).

It added that the UAE is "Syria's most prominent global trade partner."

The announcement came after the UAE's Minister of Economy Abdulla bin Touq Al-Marri met with his Syrian counterpart.

The UAE re-opened its mission to Damascus in late 2018 after closing it due to the Syria conflict.



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[Arab coalition: Air operations halt Houthis' incursion into Abdiya](#)

Sun, 2021-10-10 21:24

RIYADH: The Arab coalition's air operations have stopped the Houthis' incursion into the Abdiya district in Marib over the past 18 days, an official said.

Spokesman Brig. Gen. Turki Al-Maliki said coalition forces carried out 118 attacks to protect civilians in Abdiya during the past 96 hours.

Al-Maliki added that 15 military vehicles belonging to the Iran-backed Houthi militia have been destroyed, with more than 400 casualties on the Houthi side.

He also called on the UN and international organizations to assume their humanitarian responsibility toward civilians in Abdiya.



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100 Houthis killed in heavy fighting outside central Yemeni city of Marib
Houthis under fire for killing displaced civilians in Marib

[Migrants in Libya fearful and angry after crackdown and killings](#)

Author:

Reuters

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Sun, 2021-10-10 17:53

TRIPOLI: Hundreds of migrants and refugees waited outside a United Nations center in Tripoli on Sunday to seek help in escaping Libya after what aid groups called a violent crackdown in which thousands were arrested and several shot.

The migrants say they have faced violent abuse and extortion in a country that has had little peace for a decade, but has become a major transit point for people seeking to reach Europe in search of a better life.

"We are guilty of nothing except emigrating from our country... but we are treated as criminals and not as refugees," said Mohamed Abdullah, a 25-year old from Sudan.

He said he had been beaten and tortured during his detention in five different centers in Libya, and that he had nowhere to go for shelter or food.

Armed forces in Tripoli began a series of mass arrests a week ago, detaining more than 5,000 people in overcrowded detention centers as aid and rights groups voiced alarm.

On Friday, guards in a center killed at least six migrants there as the overcrowding led to chaos, the UN migration agency IOM said, and scores managed to flee the area before being detained again.

Many of the people waiting outside the UN center in Tripoli, some sleeping on the pavement, were wounded, with bandages on their heads, legs or hands. Some walked only with crutches or the help of friends.

They spoke of hunger, desperation and abuse. "I was beaten and humiliated a lot in prison. Many were beaten and tortured," said Matar Ahmed Ismail, 27, from Sudan.

Libya's Government of National Unity said it was "dealing with a complex issue in the illegal migration file, as it represents a human tragedy in

addition to the social, political and legal consequences locally and internationally.”

The UN refugee agency UNHCR said it was trying to help people waiting at the center and urged crowds there to disperse so it could assist the most vulnerable. It added it was ready to assist with humanitarian flights out of Libya.

Nadia Abdel Rahman came to Libya three years ago from Eritrea via Sudan with her husband, her son and her sister, brother-in-law and nephew, hoping to reach Europe by sea.

She said her husband had been seized by criminals who demanded a ransom but killed him even though she paid. Her brother-in-law died at sea when attempting to cross the Mediterranean.

She was arrested last week in the crackdown, she said. “We only want one thing, and that is to not live in Libya,” she said.

Mousa Koni, a member of Libya’s three-man Presidency Council, which acts as interim head of state, on Saturday said he had intervened with the Interior Ministry “to end this suffering.”



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