

Discourse Analysis of the Perception of 'Safety' in EU and Refugee Law

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Abstract : The concept and the meaning of safety is largely undermined in International and EU refugee law. While the Geneva Convention 1951 concentrates mainly on the principle of non-refoulment (no-return) and the idea of physical safety of refugees, countries continue to implement harmful readmission agreements that presume 'safe countries' for the hosting and return of the refugees. This research intends to use discourse analysis of the legal provisions and interviews with Syrian refugees, NGO workers, and refugee lawyers in Turkey to understand what 'safety' actually means and how law shapes the experiences of Syrians in Turkey (the country that hosts the largest population of Syrians and is a key partner of the EU-Turkey Agreement 2016). The preliminary findings reveal the competing meanings of safety (rights-based vs state interests approach). As the refugee policies continue to prioritize state interests/safety over human safety and human rights, it is extremely important to provide recommendations on how 'safety' should be defined in the refugee law in the future.

Keywords : human rights law, refugee law, human safety, EU-turkey agreement

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