

To Mr. Abdullah-bey  
Deputy Director  
Customs Office Ankara Gar  
TCDD Tesisleri İstanbul Yolu 6 Km  
Behiçbey/ANKARA  
Türkiye Cumhuriyeti/ Republic of Turkey

„Dresden helping Kobane“  
c/o Anja Osiander  
Alttrachau 31  
01139 Dresden  
Deutschland

Dresden, December 21, 2016

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**Please help us to help!**  
**Release the relief supplies for refugees in Greece!**

Dear Mr. Abdullah-bey,

we are appealing to you as a group of citizens from Dresden. We have come together in order to help some of those whose home is currently being ravined by war and terror. We are pledging to you not to block this help. It is up to you!

This is our story:

At the customs warehouse in Ankara Gar, a truck load of relief supplies from Dresden ist stuck. For more than a year, we collected donations in order to make this transport happen. Even pupils from a high school in Dresden gave more than 1.000 Euros from their savings to this cause. Our goal was to support the system of public health in Kobane, the most important town at the Syrian border to Turkey. As you know, in the winter of 2014/15, most of Kobane was destroyed in a battle against islamist extremists. That is why we wanted to organize help directly – from town to town, from people to people.

However, while we were still preparing for departure, the Turkish government gave orders to close the border at Kobane. So we changed our plan. We told ourselves: Our supplies can just as well be a help for refugees who are stuck in Turkey. The office of public health in Diyarbakir, the largest city in the region, gladly accepted our offer. In september 2016, our transport left Dresden for the long trip to Diyarbakir. Up until reaching Ankara, the transport proceeded smoothly. But then the office of health of the province of Ankara denied the permit to go further. So we got into contact with the office of public health in Diyarbakir again and agreed to have the donation returned to us.

Instead, we now intended to take the supplies to Greece. As you know, in the course of 2015, tens of thousands of refugees have arrived there who now are facing an uncertain future. They, too, are in urgent need of medical support. We spent weeks negotiating with your office about the details for having the donations returned to us; and the German embassy at Ankara supported our cause with much compassion. But when on December 13, 2016, our team arrived at your office at Ankara Gar, you personally withheld permission to return the supplies to us.

Dear Mr. Abdullah-bey,

the reason you gave for your objection was that you considered our supplies as wares which could be exported from Turkey exclusively aboard a vehicle with a permit for transit, in other words, through a shipping company. Certainly, nobody knows better than you how to apply the customs regulations of the Republic of Turkey to our case. Nonetheless, please consider the following details:

- When we imported the supplies into Turkey, the customs officers in Istanbul treated them as duty-free goods, which had not to be registered by customs and, accordingly, did not require shipment through a specifically licensed agent.
- An official from your own office personally assured the liaison officer from the German embassy in Ankara that our supplies were free to be recollected by anyone who was supplied with appropriate authorization from us and the office in Diyarbakir, respectively.
- On December 12, your colleagues at the customs office in Ankara Gar cooperated fully with our team in entering the proceedings for the return of our supplies. They prepared for one of the officers to accompany our team as an escort; and upon their recommendation, we even had a hole drilled into the side of our coach in order to apply a seal for securing the freight.

Dear Mr. Abdullah-bey,  
you have indicated to us that we could donate the supplies to the Republic of Turkey. However, please try to view this suggestion from our point of view. Imagine that you had spent more than a year trying to organize some action against the suffering of the refugees in our times. And then some German officials would approach you and tell you: „Now, we will take over and make use of these supplies as we deem appropriate...“ Do you not think that it would be better for all of us if we could support each other and thus multiply the good deeds which are so direly needed in our world today?

Dear Mr. Abdullah-bey,  
the young volunteer who went to Ankara in our name to recollect the relief supplies and take them to Greece lost his composure in the face of your rejection. Out of his disappointment, he insulted you with a four-letter word in English. We utterly regret this gaffe and ask pardon from you. Please forgive him, considering his youthful temper. In the past months, he spent a lot of time in the refugee camps in Greece; he has seen a lot of suffering; he himself also regrets this incident and asks pardon from you.

Dear Mr. Abdullah-bey,  
the trip to Ankara in December already was our second attempt to recover the relief supplies. We paid all travel expenses from our own pockets. We also approached more than 30 shipping companies in Germany, Greece and Turkey. But nobody was willing to take this job. Apparently, after the attempted coup d'état in Turkey in July, many shipping companies experienced far-reaching complications in dealing with Turkish customs and now are trying to avoid unforeseeable consequences.

We have no resources left. Therefore, we are appealing to you:  
Please find a way to lead this odyssey to a happy end!

It would already be a solution if someone could bring our supplies to the border crossing at Ipsala. There, the NGO DocMobile would be ready to take over. – A Turkish shipping company. A Turkish NGO. Perhaps even the Turkish Customs themselves. There are many who could help. If there is someone who coordinates it. We are convinced: You are the man who can make it happen.

Dear Mr. Abdullah-bey,  
we are living in dark times. Distrust is rampant; violence is spreading. We need to cooperate in order to stop this. We plead with you: Let us make it happen – together.

Help us to help!  
Release the relief supplies for refugees in Greece!  
It is up to you!

We take this opportunity to express our condolences for the most unfortunate events in Turkey.

Respectfully yours,

Anja Osiander

Fettah Cetin

Verena Schneider

Serpil Biryar

Heidemarie Franzke (Oma Heidi)

Angela Finsterbusch

P.S. With all due respect, we ask for your reply before January 11, 2017. This will be the final day for the storage of our supplies at the customs warehouse at Ankara Gar.