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ERITREA Four Eritreans murdered in Tunisian refugee camp on Libya border

Four Eritrean refugees were burned to death, and one was critically injured, after their tents were deliberately set on fire at a Tunisian refugee camp close to the Libyan border in the early hours of Sunday, May 22.

Ibrahim Suleman Ahmed, Ahmed Mohamed Saleh, Jamie Mohamed and Saleh Ismail had recently fled Libya, and were waiting to be resettled in a safe third country by the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Two Sudanese refugees have been arrested in connection with the deaths and remanded in custody.

According to reports, a few Sudanese refugees had been sexually harassing Eritrean female refugees in Shusha Camp, Ras Jedir. This generated tension in the camp as Eritrean men attempted to protect the women.

On Saturday, May 21, a Sudanese man reportedly entered a married couple's tent and tried to rape the woman. The Eritrean men who were nearby managed to stop him, and he was later heard saying that he would kill Eritreans in the camp.

The four victims of the blaze were not involved in the dispute and were murdered simply because of their nationality.

These are not the first murders to occur in Shusha camp. Although the UNHCR office in Tunisia is aware of these incidents, there is still no security in the camp, despite demands from refugees for greater protection. The non-governmental organization (NGO) Human Rights Concern-Eritrea (HRC-E) has been informed that the refugees in the camp are now extremely anxious following the recent murders, and the atmosphere remains very tense. Last night the Tunisian armed forces were forced to fire in the air as tensions boiled over between refugees of Arab and African descent.

Elsa Chyrum of HRC-E said, "We call on the Tunisian government to investigate this horrendous crime, bring the perpetrators of these and other crimes to justice, provide more security personnel in the camp to preserve law and order, and to transfer the most vulnerable groups, such as women, children and the infirm, to a safer camp. "

CSW's Advocacy Director Andrew Johnston said, "We offer our heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims. CSW urges the Tunisian government and the UNHCR to take urgent action to provide round-the-clock security in the camp, in order to protect vulnerable groups and prevent the tense situation from deteriorating further. Given last night's violence, we ask both authorities to also consider housing refugee communities that are hostile to one another in different camps. Swift intervention at this stage is vital to avoid further violence and loss of life."