

14. Dezember 2018 Flüchtlingsadventkalender

Sultan's Family Story, asylum-seekers in VIAL (Registration and Identification Centre in Chios, Greece; www.caritas.gr)

E.S. (woman, 36 y): My family consists currently of 4 members. In the past we were 5 but my 12-year-old daughter was killed in Iraq.

M.S. (man, 42 y): After this event we decided to leave Iraq and come to Europe for a better life.

E.S.: I also wanted to leave Iraq in order to be able to save my family & myself. I was threatened for my job and my beliefs from the military. I understood then, that I could no longer live there. We have been in the Island of Chios for 4 months and 51 days. I don't know how much we need to wait. I am confused.

M.S.: When we first arrived here I was very happy! We felt relieved and safe. In the beginning, we were sleeping in the tents but we did not mind. Even for the mice, the scorpions, the bad conditions. We were expecting that we will move soon...

E.S.: But our happiness did not last longer than 10 days. We understood that this situation would not change so I started to wonder why I even came here. I have heard that Europe is not dangerous, is civilized, people with good manners and professionalism. But the only thing I see is workers from 9am-5pm that do not care for our rights and just want to finish with their job.

I am a psychologist, and I have been working with UNICEF helping refugees arriving in Iraq as a social support focal point. I have never treated anyone like this. I do not understand why my family here is treated like this. We have spent so many hours in the services like EASO, UN, GAS (Greek Asylum Service), doing interviews and explaining again and again my story. No results. I took my "harta" (=papers in Greek) but I am still here. We are still here. I do not know why. I have so many questions and all the people say to me: "This is not my responsibility." Nobody answers to me with truth. The only one that I feel that cares for my family is CARITAS and 2 other psychologists from KEELPNO (National Centre of Disease Control and Prevention). They show big interest for us and they try to do the best.

M.S.: We have spent 3 months in the tent, in the dirt and 1 month in a container with other families. I regret to come here. I regret to be in Vial. I do not want to be here. I want this to end. People are always fighting; there is no good food; no clean place for us; the money that we take from UN is not enough to cover our needs. This is not a good life. I try to keep my family members safe and together but it is hard.

E.S.: My boys are not safe. I feel there is no future for them here; I push them to attend some classes from volunteers in the city center but it is not enough. Education is not enough; the food is not good; the hygiene is 0. I try to clean our clothes and dishes but everything around us is dirty and smell so bad, so again everything is dirty.

The camp is not safe. In the night people take substances (alcohol and drugs) and they have weapons. We are really afraid. We feel that the good people were trapped and the bad people took "harta" and go to the mainland. I was sincere from the first moment with everyone but I am still here. The most of the people lie but they go. I am so disappointed. I don't know how to be strong and keep my values for my family some times. I am tired to beg people to give me normal life and house. UN don't worry for us.

B.S. (boy, 9 years): I feel bad to be here. I don't like VIAL; everything is bad. I don't have any activities to do. Kids from Afghanistan and from Arabic countries are always fighting. I don't understand why. Even kids that we speak the same language tell me bad things for me, my brother and my family. They are bullying me because I have problem. I just like to play football in the court in the camp. It helps me forget and smile. I like football.

E.S.: I have a diagnosed blood microbe and I need proper conditions and medication. My son B.S. in the past had faced neurological problems but it was ok. Now, here, again he has this problem. Even though he is taking his medication the general situation does not help a lot, bad conditions, no hygiene, weird weather. We have so many reports, for me and my son, from the hospital of Chios that say to go to a better place in the mainland, better hospital and be transferred immediately in house but with no results.

M.S.: We had always had dignity. But here is not like that. We and I feel less than a normal person. Even the driver of the bus, he insults us all the time. All the refugees. He does not like them. I am a driver for big cars and I can tell he does not even have good driving skills. Sometimes, he sees the people asking for a lift, and even that the bus is empty he does not allow them to ride the bus. The people beg him, they even give him money but he does not want them.

E.S.: We take the bus to go to the city. I like the city. It helps me feel better and forget. The people there are kind and look at us as even, I feel again like a human. I understand why some local people do not like refugees. I also don't like most of the refugees. I see them steal from the properties of the people around the camp, fruits and stuff. They are thieves. Even the women and the kids. They steal everything when they have the opportunity and no one looks at them. Even my sons are complaining for them. I have tried hard to teach them the good and the bad and give them strong values but now I am not sure how I can protect them

from these attitudes and the bad words and language. We have all become vulnerable here.

I want to try every day for the best. I do not lose my hope, I want to invest in myself and my family, find a house and settle down. I want to start my life again. I want to help the refugees and work as psychologist again.