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The smugglers are playing with our lives. (www.caritas.gr)

Jawad from Afghanistan

"Sometimes we have nightmares about the journey. From Afghanistan, we have crossed the borders of Iran and Turkey by walking. Crossing the Iran border was so hard, we have walked for 18 hours. The smuggler lied to us, he said that we had the walk for 4 or 5 hours. When we approach the Iranian border, the police fired at us and we lost two families. My wife and my children were crying all the time. It was exhausting for them.

During the night we lost our 3 years old daughter, we were walking in the dark with other almost 80 people. The smuggler kept saying to walk fast and to not make noise. My wife was holding her hand but she lost her and she was pushed ahead by the other people. We had searched her for 20 minutes, I thought it was not real. It was like living in a horror movie. In the end, we found her and we arrived in Iran safe but we had to cross another border, the Iranian-Turkey one was even worse. Very high mountains, we were freezing but we kept walking and then finally we arrived in Turkey.

For one week we stayed in a house with other people waiting for the smuggler to come and bring us to take the boat. When we arrived at the seaside we saw an inflatable raft suited for 20 people. We were 50.

It was not a boat, it was a toy. The smugglers are playing with our lives.

You cannot reconsider the idea of not travel with that toy because it's too risky for your family, you have to jump in since the smugglers are threatening you. What should you do? You have only

to pray God that someone come to rescue and not be caught by the Turkish coast guard otherwise they will send you to jail. In the end, it is only a matter of fate. You have to be lucky to find the sea in good condition, you have to be lucky to not be caught by the Turkish coast guard and you have to be lucky to be rescued by someone. And we were lucky, we arrived safely on the shore of the Greek island of Lesbos".

Jawad is 45 years old husband and father. In Afghanistan he was an English and Spanish interpreter, he has worked for the NATO Spanish forces, the Afghan National Army, and for his job he was threatened by the Islamic radical groups. That's the reason why he left his country. The radical groups send him the videos of his colleagues decapitated. There was no choice for him, he must leave. Afghanistan is not a safe Country, the recent EASO country report has shown that the situation is worsening. Since 2017 when the United Nations Secretary-General changed its assessment from a country in a situation of "post-war conflict to a country undergoing a conflict that shows few signs of abating" the security situation is highly unstable. The local news is reporting every day suicides bomb attack, murders, assassinations, kidnapping. Since Jawad left Afghanistan two members of my family have been killed by the Isis, including a child. There is no security for the people if they have money they will leave otherwise they will stay in Afghanistan trying to survive.

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