

Rahim (16)

« Nous n'étions qu'à 10 mètres de l'île quand les garde-côtes nous ont trouvés [...] Nous étions si proches, nous pensions que nous allions y arriver. Mais le bateau des garde-côtes grecs nous a rattrapés. Nous avons crevé notre bateau et sauté à l'eau pour que les garde-côtes ne puissent pas nous remorquer jusqu'en Turquie, mais ils nous ont attrapés et fait monter sur leur bateau [...] Puis nous avons navigué pendant à peu près une demi-heure en direction de la Turquie [...] Ils ont mis un canot pneumatique à l'eau et ils nous ont poussés dedans. Ils nous ont aussi jeté deux rames et nous ont montré la direction du rivage. Puis ils sont partis. Ils nous ont simplement abandonnés sur place. »

(<https://jeunes.amnesty.be/jeunes/nos-campagnes-jeunes/migrants-et-refugies/temoignages-et-interviews/article/afghanistan-rahim>)

Majid

«Nous étions 400 personnes dans l'embarcation. Il y avait des hommes, des femmes; certaines étaient enceintes. Plusieurs personnes sont mortes durant le trajet. Nous le savions parce qu'ils ne bougeaient plus; ils étaient là, immobiles et il y avait cette odeur... D'autres, désespérés, se sont jetés par-dessus bord, n'ayant pas le courage d'affronter la réalité. La traversée a duré plusieurs jours. J'étais comme déjà mort. Le ciel se confondait avec la mer. A un moment, nous avons aperçu des garde-côtes ; nous étions tellement heureux ! Il s'agissait de Maltais. Ils nous ont dit de couper le moteur et nous ont remorqués pendant plusieurs heures. Nous avons alors cru que nous allions rejoindre la terre ferme. Hélas, il n'en a rien été, bien au contraire... Ils nous ont emmenés plus loin en mer et ils sont partis. Nous avons remis le moteur en marche et continué à avancer. Nous avons alors croisé la route d'autres garde-côtes, des Italiens cette fois. Ils nous ont demandé, eux aussi, de couper le moteur, mais nous ne les avons pas écoutés et sommes arrivés à Lampedusa. Quelle joie d'être enfin sur de la terre ferme et, surtout, d'être en vie. Mais certains étaient vraiment mal en point et avaient besoin de soins. A notre arrivée, des personnes nous ont examinés, sans rien nous dire, en nous laissant assis par terre, en file indienne. Aucun geste, aucune parole: rien. Nous avons été traités sans aucune humanité.

Les Européens pensent que nous sommes ici pour leur prendre quelque chose, mais ce n'est pas vrai. Beaucoup d'entre nous sont des étudiants, des médecins; nous avons tout perdu et jamais nous ne retrouverons ce que nous avons. Les migrants en Italie sont dans une situation terrible. Ils sont livrés à eux-mêmes, sans pouvoir se laver, sans manger. Ils peuvent avoir un repas s'ils parviennent à entrer en contact avec des associations et s'ils attendent pendant des heures. Ce sera leur seul repas de la journée.

Si vraiment l'Europe prône les valeurs inscrite dans la Déclaration des droits de l'homme, alors cela devrait concerner tout le monde de façon équitable. Moi, j'ai eu de la chance. Un peu plus d'un an après cet épisode, j'ai obtenu des papiers et je travaille maintenant dans un centre pour réfugiés. Je parle italien, autant par la voix que par les gestes; je m'intègre au fur et à mesure et je mélange finalement les cultures. C'est ce que nous devons partager, nos cultures. Cette diversité est une richesse.

Tout ce que je souhaite maintenant, c'est enfin avancer dans ma vie, d'une manière paisible et aider les personnes dans le besoin.»

(<https://jeunes.amnesty.be/jeunes/nos-campagnes-jeunes/migrants-et-refugies/temoignages-et-interviews/article/nigeria-majid>)

J

“Each person has their own way to experience and to bear the crossing of the Mediterranean Sea... They put us in a covered pick-up truck, we were a lot and really squeezed together. Four hours later we arrived in a very dark place. They put us in an abandoned house without any water or food all day long until 7 pm. Then we walked 5 hours up and down in the Turkish hills. Finally, we arrived on the shoreline. They inflated the dinghy in front of us. We left close to midnight. 1.5 hours later the Turkish coastguards stopped us on the sea and they brought us back to Turkey. We were 29 people on board. When they released us we went back to Izmir. I didn't have any strength anymore. The smugglers told me 'you have to leave.' Two days later we tried again. Same group, same way. Five hours of walking again. And again, we couldn't reach Greece. The big boats came close to our rubber boat to make big waves and they were yelling at us to leave and go back to Turkey. This time we spent one week in the police station. The third time, we arrived in Greek waters and called the Greek Coastguard, that came to pick us up. But we had to throw away our personal belongings because the boat was filling up with water. There was complete disorder on board, no organisation. After we had called them for the first time, we still waited three hours until they came to pick us up.”

Kobra (rescued by the Ocean Viking in September 2019)

My name is Kobra. I am 18 years old and I come from Somalia. I want to tell you the story of my rescue in the Mediterranean Sea on September 2019. I don't know how to find the words to describe the suffering I went through, and I don't want to remember what happened before I left Libya. I also never want to forget the moment, after nearly two days at sea, when we finally saw a small sailing-boat on the horizon that ended our suffering.

We were full of fear, because finally our phone, our only connection to the world, had stopped functioning and water was rapidly entering the boat. It was a miracle when we finally found this sail-boat. We were about 45-50 people in a blue rubber boat, and seven of us onboard were coming from Somalia. I never learned how to swim, so the idea of the boat flooding was a possible death sentence to me.

We were on the OCEAN VIKING for one week because no country wanted to take us in. This time was difficult, but it was much better than what we experienced before. The crew was always with us and they tried to support us however they could. We had enough food. We had a doctor whenever we felt sick. They even gave us clothing. We felt welcome.

Finally, Lampedusa decided to take us in. When we finally left the boat after such a long time at sea it was not as warm of a welcome. We received food only after being forced to give our fingerprints and we were brought to a dirty place with barbed wire. I could not stay in Italy; the conditions were so poor. Today I struggle to live in Germany with the fear of my fingerprints on record and that I will be deported back to Italy.

I will never forget the good people on these ships, who welcomed me before I arrived in Europe. They will stay in my memory. Maybe, one day I will meet them again. Until then I want to encourage them to continue what they are doing and I send them all my greetings.

(https://alarmphone.org/en/2020/04/08/struggles-of-women-on-the-move/?post_type_release_type=post)

P., 27 years old, from Nigeria, now in Italy.

"I was held in a detention centre in Libya. Men and women altogether in the same large room. Sometimes they would come and take one of the young girls. We prayed to God that they would be brought back. There are people here that take care of me. They come with me to the hospital for my check-ups. It is my first pregnancy. I am expecting a girl. I hope that she will be able to live in a quieter place than this. One that is more peaceful. My baby will be called Testimony."

(<https://www.msf.org/refugees-around-world-stories-survival-world-refugee-day>)

Agnes

"I left Eritrea four years ago with my husband. My husband was made to serve in the army, and he couldn't provide for us. If he left the army, he'd be put in jail. Many people go to jail for no reason in Eritrea. When we left we went to Sudan. We spent three years going from place to place, looking for work and trying to make enough money to come to Europe. Finally we made a bit of money, but it wasn't enough for all of us, so I left with my daughter. My husband couldn't come with us.

Crossing the desert between Sudan and Libya was very difficult. It took seven days, non-stop, in an overcrowded car. After crossing the border, we moved from one town to the next until we arrived in Tripoli. We travelled in containers, like animals or objects. It was very dark and hot in the containers. Many people fainted because of the heat, and some died. Libya is a very dangerous place. There are a lot of armed people. Some of them are Daesh. They kill a lot of people and carry out a lot of kidnappings.

When we arrived in Tripoli they put us in a house with 600 to 700 other people and locked us in. We had no water to wash ourselves, we had very little food and we were forced to sleep one upon the other. It was very difficult for my daughter – she fell sick many times. There was a lot of violence. I was beaten with bare hands, with sticks, with guns. If you move, they beat you. If you talk, they beat you. We spent two months like that, being beaten every day. They asked us to pay to go to Europe, so I paid US\$1,700 for me and my daughter. We were lucky because women and children were put on the deck of the boat. The people below were in the dark and it was really hot down there. I could hear some of them saying they couldn't breathe.

I knew that the journey would be very dangerous and difficult, especially for my daughter. But what was the alternative? We could not survive in Eritrea or Sudan. Our government does not allow people to leave. With our documents in Eritrea, there was no other way for us to get to Europe."

(<https://www.msf.org/mediterranean-migration-testimonials-refugees-rescued-msf-sar-operations>)

Letters from Refugees to the World No:6 Evacuate us from closed camps!

Voice of Unaccompanied minors

I am an unaccompanied minor, who covered thousands of kilometers over deserts and borders to come to Europe. The sky was like my father and the ground was my mother. I passed the distances, counting stars, lonely and dreaming of a bright future.

I came here in order to have a brighter future, but what is happening to me and the other minors like me, is that we are losing our hopes and our future looks dark. I have lived here in fear -- fear of losing my way, my courage, my goals and of becoming trapped by male wolves. So I prefer to live in the road instead of living with single men around.

Here the boys are used for achieving goals, like objects. Every night with many efforts we are trying to escape from here, hanging under trucks hoping to board on the ships going to the main land and, from there, to continue our journey. Each unsuccessful try is followed with harassment, even physical violence. Many of us live outside the camp's section reserved for minors. Yet even minors from that section pass their nights in single men's shelters instead. Nothing is free here, everything must be paid for. Even just staying in some one's tent, in order to have a shelter, has a price. In exchange we are asked to do such things as: find a girl for the night, find drugs, sell drugs, steal, sell stolen phones, threaten people or terrorize residents of the camp.

How can an unaccompanied minor be safe while each moment he may be trapped and be forced to commit actions that will put him in danger? We passed all the winter without a shelter to sleep in, without someone to guide us, to give us information and advice. Instead, we have been pushed, by older men, to do anything and be anywhere just to obtain a shelter or get some attention.

We cannot see an end to our situation. Even if we are moved to a special zone for unaccompanied minors, we would still need to be very careful to avoid becoming prey of domestic wolves. Alcohol drinking and getting drunk are ways used to be rescued from all disappointments. But all these problems are not only ours. The conditions are even harder for young unaccompanied girls. Listen to them! We are all considered as objects, objects of lust. The eyes of young boys, of old men and everybody are all on our body and are following us just to deceive. Even if they are in a safer part of the camps, many unaccompanied girls spend their nights in the tents of single boys and young men in order to earn money. Having no guardians, these girls are treated like tissue paper. Unaccompanied girls, as well as women, should seek for shelter only for themselves, even if it is just a simple summer tent for many days. Instead, they end up having a tent among many single boys and men who drink and get, endlessly, drunk. So anything can happen to those girls or women.

26/04/2020

<https://kein-mensch-ist-illegal-hh.blogspot.com/2020/05/letters-from-refugees-to-world-no6.html>

Milad (21)

Moria refugee camp, Greece, 19th of May

My name is Milad, 21 years old from Afghanistan. Before entering the European soil, I had some imaginations from Europe, for example, European countries respect a lot to human rights, so that Europe will be the best place to have a safe and comfortable life, but unfortunately, Moria refugee camp proved that it's nothing but an imagination, I realized that in the first days in Moria. And I've been in this hell for five months.

In Moria, at days I'm facing to the danger which is treating people's lives all around the world, COVID-19, which is treating my life as well because in this camp, unlike the rest of the world which people have the ability to protect themselves from this virus by washing their hands frequently, keeping their distance from each other or even having sufficient and suitable medical equipments and supplies to be far from getting infected by this virus, we don't have enough medical supplies, we don't have enough water to wash our hands, even we can't keep our distance between each other because of long lines like food lines, shower lines, toilet lines, market lines, Doctor lines or even ATM line, and the reason is that because it is an overcrowded camp. And at nights I'm facing to the danger of being injured or killed in huge fights between refugees, which keeps me awake for hours at nights. I have to be awake in nights when fights are happening because of my safety.

Europe was a strong big hope for me like a narrow bright light in the deepest terrifying darkness days of my life, but Moria proved that it was nothing but an imagination and took that light from me and took me to another deepest terrifying darkness days of my life again in another place.

<https://beyondeurope.net/1494/europe-nothing-but-a-shame-statements-by-youngsters-from-moria/>

Agnes

"Ich habe Eritrea vor vier Jahren mit meinem Mann verlassen. Mein Mann wurde in die Armee eingezogen und er konnte uns nicht versorgen. Würde er die Armee verlassen, käme er ins Gefängnis. Viele Menschen gehen in Eritrea ohne Grund ins Gefängnis.

Als wir aufbrachen, gingen wir in den Sudan. Wir verbrachten drei Jahre damit von Ort zu Ort zu ziehen, Arbeit zu suchen und zu versuchen genug Geld zu verdienen, um nach Europa zu kommen. Schließlich verdienten wir ein bisschen Geld, aber es reichte nicht für uns alle, also ging ich mit meiner Tochter weg. Mein Mann konnte nicht mit uns kommen. Die Wüste zwischen dem Sudan und Libyen zu durchqueren, war sehr schwierig. Es dauerte sieben Tage, non-stop, in einem überfüllten Auto. Nachdem wir die Grenze überquert hatten, zogen wir von einer Stadt zur nächsten, bis wir in Tripolis ankamen. Wir reisten in Containern – wie Tiere oder Gegenstände. In den Containern war es sehr dunkel und heiß. Viele Menschen wurden wegen der Hitze ohnmächtig, und einige starben.

Libyen ist ein sehr gefährlicher Ort. Es gibt viele bewaffnete Menschen. Einige von ihnen sind Daesh. Sie töten viele Menschen und führen eine Menge Entführungen durch. Als wir in Tripolis ankamen, steckten sie uns in ein Haus mit 600 bis 700 anderen Menschen und sperrten uns ein. Wir hatten kein Wasser, um uns zu waschen, wir hatten sehr wenig zu essen, und wir waren gezwungen, übereinander zu schlafen. Das war sehr schwierig für meine Tochter - sie wurde oft krank. Es gab sehr viel Gewalt. Ich wurde mit bloßen Händen geschlagen, mit Stöcken, mit Gewehren. Wenn du dich bewegst, schlagen sie dich. Wenn du redest, schlagen sie dich. Zwei Monate lang wurden wir jeden Tag geschlagen. Sie verlangten von uns Geld, um nach Europa zu gehen, also zahlte ich 1.700 US-Dollar für mich und meine Tochter. Wir hatten Glück, denn Frauen und Kinder wurden auf das Deck des Bootes gesetzt. Die Leute unten waren im Dunkeln, und es war wirklich heiß da unten. Ich konnte hören, wie einige von ihnen sagten, dass sie nicht atmen konnten.

Ich wusste, dass die Reise sehr gefährlich und schwierig sein würde, besonders für meine Tochter. Aber was war die Alternative? Wir könnten weder in Eritrea noch im Sudan überleben. Unsere Regierung erlaubt den Menschen nicht, das Land zu verlassen. Mit unseren Dokumenten in Eritrea gab es für uns keine andere Möglichkeit, nach Europa zu gelangen.

(<https://www.msf.org/mediterranean-migration-testimonials-refugees-rescued-msf-sar-operations>)

Milad (21)

Flüchtlingslager Moria, Griechenland, 19. Mai

Mein Name ist Milad, 21 Jahre alt, aus Afghanistan. Bevor ich den europäischen Boden betrat, hatte ich einige Vorstellungen davon, wie Europa sein würde. Zum Beispiel dachte ich, dass europäische Länder die Menschenrechte sehr respektieren und dass Europa der beste Ort für ein sicheres und bequemes Leben sein würde, aber leider bewies das Flüchtlingslager Moria, dass das alles reine Vorstellung war. Das wurde mir in den ersten Tagen in Moria klar. Und ich befinde mich seit fünf Monaten in dieser Hölle.

In Moria bin ich tagtäglich mit der Gefahr an COVID-19 zu erkranken konfrontiert. Die Menschen im Rest der Welt haben die Möglichkeit, sich vor diesem Virus zu schützen, indem sie sich häufig die Hände waschen, Abstand voneinander halten oder sogar über ausreichende und geeignete medizinische Geräte und Vorräte verfügen. Wir hier haben nicht genug medizinische Vorräte, wir haben nicht genug Wasser zum Händewaschen, wegen langer Schlangen wie Lebensmittel-, Dusch-, Toiletten-, Markt-, Arzt- oder sogar Geldautomatenschlangen können wir keinen Abstand zueinander halten, und der Grund dafür ist, dass es ein überfülltes Lager ist. Und nachts bin ich der Gefahr ausgesetzt, in körperlichen Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Geflüchteten verletzt oder getötet zu werden, was mich nachts stundenlang wach hält. Nachts, wenn die Kämpfe stattfinden, muss ich wegen meiner Sicherheit wach bleiben.

Europa war für mich eine starke, große Hoffnung wie ein starkes, helles Licht in den tiefsten, schrecklichsten und dunkelsten Tagen meines Lebens. Moria bewies mir, dass es nichts weiter als eine Einbildung war und nahm mir dieses Licht. Es führte mich an einem anderen Ort wieder in die tiefsten, schrecklichsten und dunkelsten Tage meines Lebens.

(<https://beyondeurope.net/1494/europe-nothing-but-a-shame-statements-by-youngsters-from-moria/>)