

JOURNEY BACK TO LESVOS 2

CREATING NETWORKS OF SOLIDARITY
AND STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM
OF MOVEMENT



2014

**WELCOME 2 EUROPE
YOUTH WITHOUT BORDERS**



➤ ABOUT

Youth without Borders (JoG) is an initiative of young refugees and their friends in Germany. What they share is that they, along with their friends and supporters, collectively campaign here and now against racism and impending deportation. The greater aim, besides practical everyday support, is to increase the possibilities of participation of young refugees and to allow them a voice in public, instead of speaking on their behalf. As affected young refugees we engage in discussions with politicians, organize campaigns, events and public projects and try to thereby sensitize the public and allow young people to participate politically. To this effect, JoG promotes the empowerment of young people.

📍 [HTTP://JOGSPACE.NET](http://jogspace.net)

Welcome to Europe (W2EU) was founded after the Nobordercamp in Lesvos in 2009 when 400 activists from all over Europe came to Lesvos to protest at the outer border of the European Union against the inhuman treatment of refugees. Welcome to Europe was born in a circus tent in the harbour of Mytilene that was used as an infopoint by many newcomers in this time and which was for some of us also the place of our first encounter. Welcome to Europe is trying to provide contacts to refugees in all European Countries via the webguide w2eu.info

📍 [HTTP://LESVOS.W2EU.NET](http://lesvos.w2eu.net)

The **Welcome Island** is a grassroots housing project with two flats in Athens (funded by private donations) that emerged as an idea out of the daily solidarity work and the contacts of Infomobile Greece as well as from the immediate needs of refugees for a secure place to stay. We have welcomed there during the passed three years refugees from Afghanistan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mauretania, Sudan and Syria.

📍 [HTTP://INFOMOBILE.W2EU.NET/ABOUT/WELCOME-ISLAND](http://infomobile.w2eu.net/about/welcome-island)

The **Infomobile Greece** is part of the w2eu network and grew as an idea out of the experience with the infopoint in Lesvos

📍 [HTTP://INFOMOBILE.W2EU.NET](http://infomobile.w2eu.net)

➤ INTRODUCTION

We came back to Lesbos in August 2014. We returned once again to the outer border of Europe which was for many of us the place of our first arrival here. Again it was a journey that was full of memories, full of new encounters with people who experience today what many of us have been facing in the past. In the following pages you will find many impressions from these days.

This year we were a very mixed group: There were young people who have already received a right to stay in Germany and Sweden and who came back to meet with those who didn't yet find a way out of Greece.

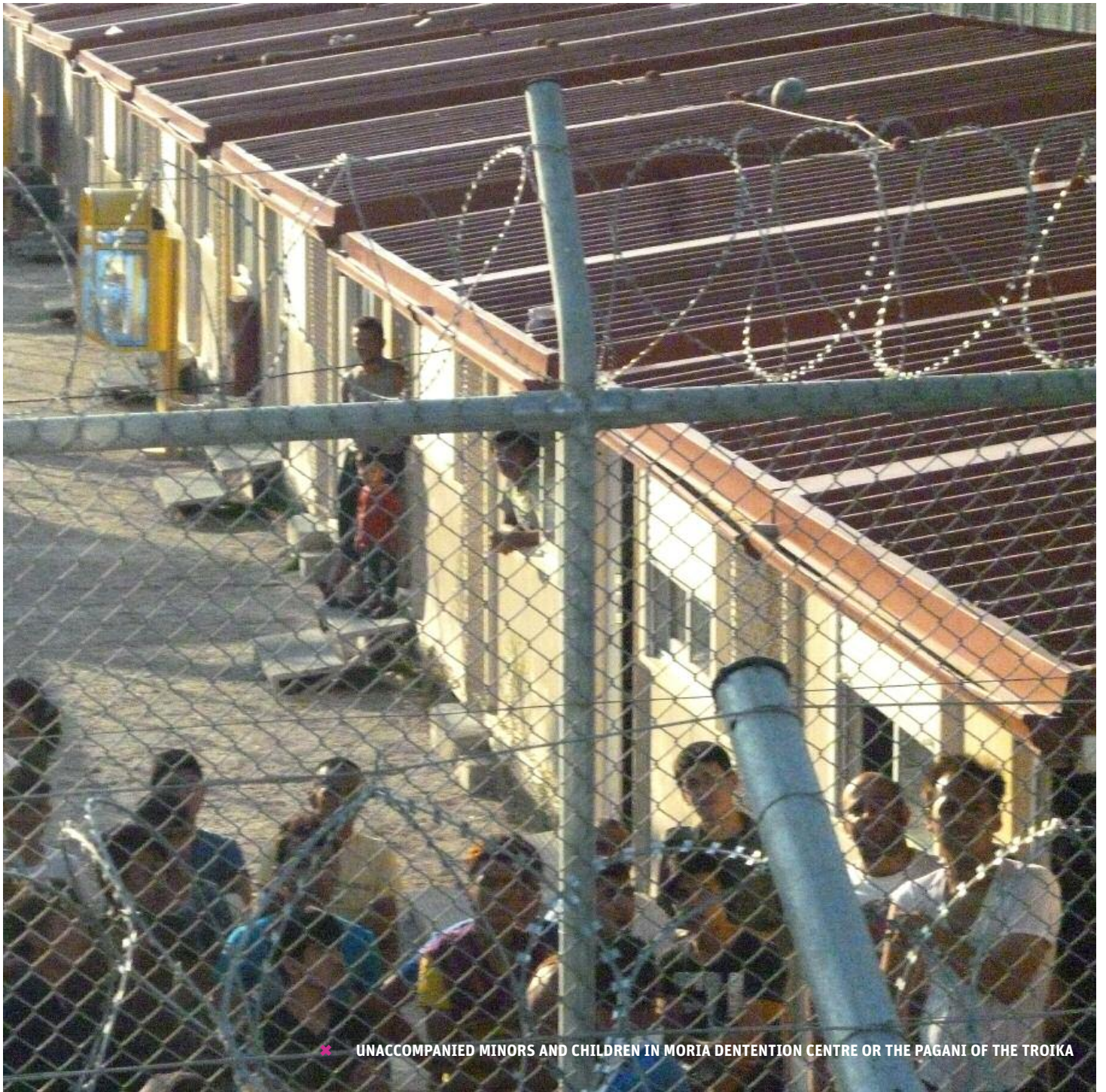
From Athens a whole group of refugees came who currently live in the ➤ **Welcome Island** and some who are friends we knew from our camping last year in Lesbos or from the tours in Greece and Turkey.

The trip was organized once again by ➤ **Youth without Borders (JOG)** and ➤ **Welcome to Europe (w2eu)**, together with many local friends.

We experienced incredible days on Lesbos, days full of memories of our own suffering but also our own success stories. We welcomed the newly arrived and we had many encounters at the harbour of Mytilene when people left to continue their journeys. We mourned those who didn't arrive but died at this border. We protested against the prison close to the village of Moria and we overcame the fence with music. We had a lot of incredible parties in PIKPA, the self organised welcome centre.

Finally, we promised to come back again! Until this border becomes history.

We want to begin this booklet with the impressions of Shafiq, who describes the motivation for this trip, which was very emotional for all of us, as follows. ★



✖ UNACCOMPANIED MINORS AND CHILDREN IN MORIA DETENTION CENTRE OR THE PAGANI OF THE TROIKA

SHAFIQS THOUGHTS
ABOUT THE
'BACK TO THE BORDER'
PROJECT 2014

► **»FIVE YEARS AGO
I WAS HERE BY MYSELF
AND DIDN'T KNOW
WHAT TO DO...«**

I find it important that we went back to Greece. For my own experience it is important because five years ago I was here by myself and in the same situation in Greece. I did not have the support of anybody who would help me and say: »you will make it to get out of here, don't worry.«

It was interesting to be able to talk to the people and be in a good mood, to dance, sing, play football and sometimes only to talk about the journey.

We are not able to get them out of the country but we can use our words to calm them down, to tell them not to be worried too much. I find this very important.

I am so happy that we made this trip back again. And I would be very happy to be part of it next time too.

It is for me so important because when I was in the same situation 5 years ago in Greece, I was always frightened. I was one and half months in Athens and I did not went out of the place I stayed and walked only up and down, not knowing what to do. It was like hell, I did not know how to get out of it. It was absolutely terrible. It was the worst experience of my life. I never felt so uncomfortable like during the time in Greece. That is why I am happy to be able to support now the people there and to tell them: »don't worry, everything will get better!«

When we were in Athens this time, all the memories came back. I thought five years ago I was here by myself and didn't know what to do. When I saw these people I felt like I knew exactly how they suffered and what they were going through.

Unfortunately it is like this, we can't do anything and we just tell them that one day they will manage to get out of Greece, just try to comfort them and give them hope with words.

When I heard that I have the opportunity to go back to Greece I thought it is a great chance to go on with my passion to help others. When I was there myself in the situation I had no help, there were no organisations to support or at least I didn't know any. Now we go there and help and I do the same here in Germany in my region. ★

SHAFIQ,
HAMBURG, DECEMBER 2014

✖ CREATING MEMORIES TOGETHER IN PIKPA



PIKPA

► »IT WAS A LONG LASTING MOMENT OF SHARED HOPE, SOLIDARITY AND STRENGTH«

PIKPA is a self-organised welcome center, run since December 2012 by local activists of Mytilene. Currently only asylum-seekers and persons applying for family reunification are staying there.

In the beginning, the open camp was used by the local network »village of all together« to provide shelter for the homeless refugees who were arriving on the island and were waiting to get registered by the police. When the local authorities started to arrest the newcomers and the new »first reception«-detention center in Moria was opened, PIKPA changed into a place hosting those released from detention who could not reach a ship on the day of release. In summer 2014, the numbers of newly arriving refugees increased to such a degree that the authorities could not manage to send all of them to Moria detention center and were obliged to transfer them to PIKPA. After having been arrested by the coastguards, the newly arriving migrants were transferred to PIKPA and afterwards brought to Moria. Some of us stayed in PIKPA a year ago during their own arrival in Europe.

**“FOR ME PIKPA MEANS ...
A REMINDER OF THE TOUGH TIMES!”**

During our camping some of us visited PIKPA regularly to in-

form the newly arriving people about their rights and possibilities as well as about PIKPA and self-organised life there. Thereby we got involved in the daily tasks of finding beds and clothes for the new ones, of helping to identify the sick and accompany them to the hospital, and of solving conflicts and so on.

It was great to be able to give back the idea of solidarity to the newly arriving people and also to welcome them. Especially for the ones among us who did not feel welcomed when they had arrived in Europe this meant a lot.

»When I will have reached the country, where I want to go and when I am safe there, then I will also come back, to support the newcomers – like you do. It is a very important work« one of our friends told us at the port of Mytilene.

The first time we visited PIKPA with the entire group was for the welcoming party in the beginning of our camp. There we found ourselves in the middle of a police transport operation. The police came several times to PIKPA to fill their car with people and carry them to Moria. For the ones of us coming from Germany and Sweden and whose experience of arrival in Europe is located in their past, it was a shocking image to see and hear how the police was treating the people. They were screaming the names, pushing people into the bus, pushing them out, controlling their names again etc. No human being should be treated like that. We were very angry and at the same time very sad. The ones of us still living in Greece and having the experience of arrival in Europe/Greece not so far back in the past, but more recent, were not so strongly saddened.

»They have treated me much much worse than this when I arrived for the first time on a Greek island. What we saw here today was almost friendly compared to our own experience. When I arrived I was insulted, sexually abused and I had to stay under completely miserable conditions in prison.«

SUCH DIFFERENT IMPRESSIONS FROM DIFFERENT MIGRATION EXPERIENCES!

After this it was very difficult to start having a party in PIKPA. The day was overshadowed by the vicious behaviour of the police. But we had to understand that the newly arriving

people on Lesbos need to go to the detention center to be registered in order to be able to leave the island afterwards. Without registration one gets no paper and without paper one cannot buy a ticket for the ferryboat to the mainland of Greece to continue. So the migrants were somehow longing for getting quickly out of PIKPA, quickly into Moria – in order to be quickly freed and able to proceed with their journey.

We started having live music from a small group of musicians amongst us. After a short while many of us were dancing and celebrating all together – newly arriving refugees and the ones coming back. With the music playing, the worries took a backseat – it was a long lasting moment of shared hope, solidarity and strength – for all of us it was like taking a breath with a big smile.

The next days we continued to visit PIKPA in small groups. Contacts and friendships were born and grew. Some people we first met in PIKPA we saw again in Moria (on the other side of the wall) during our protest. Others we met again after their release in the port where we could say goodbye for the moment.

»I had stayed in PIKPA that day you gave the party while the others from my group were already brought to the detention centre. When I was brought the next day to Moria detention I showed them a video from the party and they all said they wished to have been there too«, one of our new friends told us later at the harbour. We organised a football tournament in PIKPA with mixed teams of new arriviers and oldies. Everyone was thinking only of having fun and of getting some cold water to drink. Some of us played even without shoes as everyone just wanted to be part of it.

ZAHAR: »The refugees were very happy and everyone wanted to participate in the football tournament. After the dangerous journey they have behind them, they were very happy to be able just to play football. Unfortunately, I myself did not score. When I got the ball in the stomach all came and took care of me. Although they actually need help themselves and support.«

YASSIN: »Actually I am a goalkeeper, but there I played everywhere. It was so nice to see joy and happiness in the face of the migrants who were so tired. Football is always fun, but it's especially fun when you can wipe away for a few moments the worries of others and also your own while just playing.«

NEWROZ: »Through the football-tournament everyone of us – the newcomers, the ones already staying for some time in Lesbos and the ones coming from different European countries – had something in common. Without any problems. Everything was so simple. We just enjoyed the football tournament, enjoyed the moment. I do not run fast enough to be a really good striker. But there were some who are really good football-players. It was a great afternoon. And it was great to have girls playing in every team.«

ALI: »We played football with the newcomers to see a smile on their lips. We were divided into many different teams and started playing foot-

ball on the playground near the refugee camp in PIKPA. Everybody enjoyed the game and was happy and satisfied – their happiness was our happiness. After the game some guys, who had enjoyed playing very much, asked me if we could come back and play again due to them having no ball to play with. But unfortunately we were not able, because we had no more time. But they received a new ball from our group the next day to have some entertainment for the times they were in the camp.« ★

DONATIONS FOR PIKPA

- Village of all together
- Michael Aivaliotis
- IBAN: GR7901107620000076271413353
- BIC: ETHNGRAA



✕ ENJOYING A SAFE PLACE AFTER A HARD JOURNEY





✖ »WELCOME TO GREECE«,
THE GUIDE OF W2EU.INFO
WAS SHARED WITH ALL
NEWCOMERS



When I first arrived in Lesvos I was very small and was forced into the prison of Pagani with many other people. It was horrible for me.

After two months in prison we were brought to the Villa Azadi. It was much better there. We had people who took care of us, a cook, and a translator – there were people there for us. In prison we just got food and slept, nothing else. But in the Villa Azadi we were free! We could do everything we wanted, learn languages or exchange about our future plans and travels.

‘I arrived in Europe, why should I be in prison?’ was my thought. Just because I am a minor and a refugee?

When I heard that I have the opportunity to go back to Greece I thought it is a great chance to go on with my passion to help others. When I was there myself in the situation I had no help, there were no organisations to support or at least I didn’t know any. Now we go there and help and I do the same here in Germany in my region.

ABOUT MORIA DETENTION

When we came there the last time in October 2013 I got very sad when I saw all these minors being imprisoned and not being allowed to get out. This made me really upset and angry. I wanted to enter by all means possible in order to talk to them, but it was not possible.

It would be much better if the minors were in an open house and were taken care of.

Minors should not be locked into prison. They all come from countries where they made very bad experiences and then they finally come here to escape and are put into prison.... ★

HASANI

MEMORIES OF VILLA AZADI & PAGANI

➤ **»I ARRIVED IN EUROPE, WHY SHOULD I BE IN PRISON? JUST BECAUSE I AM A MINOR AND A REFUGEE?«**

When I arrived it was 2009. We were in Pagani and they wanted to keep us there for 3 months. But luckily after 33 days I got out. The time I was in prison was a catastrophe. We were locked inside all day long. Only twice a day we could briefly get into the fresh air in order to get our food. We had no water to drink, we were obliged to drink water from the only toilet. When somebody was hurt or sick they didn’t do anything. Not even a plaster they gave us.

Now they made a new prison. How they treated us was bad and it is a catastrophe if this happens now again.

If I could decide where the minors go, it would be better to have a house for minors where they are free, can breathe and learn languages.

The minors come to Europe with many hopes. Myself also, I believed when I got to Europe I can do this and that for my future. I had dreams. When I arrived in Mytilene and was put to prison I felt like a criminal and thought Europe is not like what I dreamed of. This made me terribly sad and got me down. ★

HAYDAR



✱ ONLY A FEW DAYS AFTER
OUR VISIT OUTSIDE OF MORIA
THE DETAINED UNACCOMPANIED
MINORS HELD A HUNGER
STRIKE
PROTESTING THEIR DEPRIVATION OF LIBERTY

On 26th of September 2013, the new so-called »first reception center« opened in Moria on the island of Lesbos. It is planned to become the second of its kind in Greece, following the example of the KEPY in Fylakio, Evros that opened earlier in the same year.

The Pagani of the Troika, as it is called to remind of former prisons and to disconnect it from the nearby Moria village, is a screening centre of the police with a mobile unit of the First Reception Service working inside. Only a few selected NGOs have access under the precondition not to share any information with the outside world. The term 'first reception' that is presented to civil society gives a false impression of an open, accessible place while it is nothing else than another new detention centre in the tradition of Amigdaleza's fenced containers. The only difference to the pre-removal centre at first sight is the detention duration. As stated by the law, detention should not exceed 25 days in First Reception Centres. In Moria procedures are adjusted to a KEPY as in the majority they do not remain longer than the prescribed period for a First Reception Centre. But detainees might be transferred to pre-removal detention centers such as Fylakio, Komotini, Corinth, Xanthi or Chios for example, where they could stay up to 18 months or more, if they are not readmitted to Turkey, deported or pushed to sign their »voluntary« return in the meanwhile.

Currently, a pre-removal detention center in Moria is being constructed right beside the running screening centre and the planned »first reception« center. It is built within the same fences and with the same containers. It was planned to open in July 2014 with a capacity of 750 people while the capacity of the »first reception« center is supposed to reach 250 places. Nonetheless, only detention is what has marked the character of the Pagani of the Troika since the beginning and there are mainly unaccompanied minors who have been locked up for more than 25 days awaiting a place in one of the rare open reception centres for them.

In the context of the second »back-to-the-border«-camp from Youth without Borders and the network Welcome to Europe, we organized a protest to on 10th of August 2014 in front of the Pagani of the Troika. We were about 80 people, mainly young refugees and migrants who gathered along the

THE NEW JAIL

► VOICES FROM THE OUTSIDE AND INSIDE OF MORIA

walls while Renovatio, a DJ and an open mic event were organized in front of the so unwelcoming »first reception center«.

Despite being physically separated by a 2-meter high wall and fences with barbed wire, the isolated 100 detainees in the inside got into contact with us in the outer world through singing, dancing and shouting slogans in various languages together with us for about two hours. The atmosphere was very powerful. As soon as we reached the prison many of the young activists among us who had spent themselves many times periods in detention in Greece climbed on the wall, while others were dancing in the street.

People who had met some days earlier in PIKPA, the self-organized open welcome center, now met again – some being outside, some being inside detention, while dancing together and shouting freedom in various languages. Some of us were inside this specific detention center a year ago. For them, it was at the same time very sad to see all the newcomers behind the fence and to see that the detention center had been expanded and grown, but it was also very powerful to be able to share hope and break the isolation.

New friendships, which had their starting point in PIKPA grew during the protest in front of the Pagani of the Troika and they will remain. Our story will continue..... ★

✕ ON THE WALLS OF MORIA DETENTION CENTRE/ THE PAGANI OF THE TROIKA



IMPRESSIONS OF OUR VISIT IN MORIA

► STATEMENTS

- No More Moria!!!!
- We came here to break the isolation in Moria-prison, hoping that it will be closed soon!
- It was a very good experience, because we made the people inside the prison happy, at least for that moment!
- One of us held a speech in front of the detention center and screamed »Azadi« at the end – all the people inside the prison responded with one very loud »Azadi«! I had tears in my eyes!
- I am very happy that everyone came together and united, from inside the detention center and from outside.
- The only thing I could see when I was standing on the wall of the prison was the laughter of the detainees. That made me very happy and it made me believe that even in prison life goes on. Because I was imprisoned myself, I know that feeling.
- On our journey back we saw many people who found themselves forced to break the laws of nature. They smoothed mountains and crossed seas to claim their human rights. Because of their claim for their rights, now they have to stay in prison as there are no human rights here.
- Again a lot of deep impressions – I have no words for it!
- I love to see teenagers laughing in prison.
- All the refugees that arrived in Greece thought that they arrived in Europe and that therefore all their problems were solved. But they don't understand yet, that they arrived in the hell of Europe. They don't understand that the life they were fighting for is yet far away and that they have still many fights to fight.
- It made me very happy that the boys were so happy ... even though they were in prison! ★

✖ CLIMBING THE WALLS TO BREAK ISOLATION



SINCE THE OPENING OF THE NEW
PAGANI OF THE TROIKA WE ASKED
REFUGEES HAVING PASSED THROUGH
THE PRISON ONE QUESTION

► »WHAT WAS YOUR WORST EXPERIENCE INSIDE MORIA DETENTION?«

READ MORE OF THE “MORIA-WORST”
QUOTE COLLECTION HERE

► <http://lesvos.w2eu.net/2014/06/30/lesvos-voices-from-inside-moria-the-new-pagani-of-troika/#more-413>

▷ THE SYRIAN WHO WAS HIT

He was a newcomer. He came from the war in Syria. He had no information on how the camp functions. Three times a day the police called all the people to stand in a line in order to count us. At 14.30 to 15 o'clock, all the people had to stand and the police counted. No one was allowed to be missing. When the police entered the container they found him sleeping. One policeman pulled him from the bed, screamed at him and hit him. This guy just didn't know he had to go out for counting. No one had told him, so he was not guilty. It was not his fault.

▷ THE LONG WALK AND STANDING IN THE QUEUE

For me the worst was when we walked all the way to Moria upon arriving on Lesbos. No one arrested us to bring us to prison. We had to come ourselves after an exhausting journey. Inside Moria the worst thing was that they ordered us to stand in a line and punished the ones who didn't come immediately by not giving them food.

▷ PUNISHMENT FOR PRAYING: NO FOOD

Once I was praying and as I finished I went to the queue, but the policeman told me to get out. Everyone got food apart from me. The officer said to me: »You don't get food today!« On that day I didn't eat anything.

▷ PUNISHMENT: NO ELECTRICITY

One young boy went out of his container to sit and smoke. The policeman yelled at him to go inside otherwise they would cut the electricity. Then they cut the electricity. They also cut the electricity of the Syrian woman and minors who were on hunger strike, because they were kept in detention so long despite being Syrians.

▷ NO HUMAN RIGHTS IN GREECE

When I arrived in Greece I didn't see any respect for human rights. We were not allowed to be heard. They say, because you arrived without papers you have no rights. When we wanted to say something, the translator said: »We cannot translate your words. I have to take a permission to do that. I am only allowed to translate what they tell you.« For me this is not a translator. A real translator has to translate in both directions. They should also translate what we say.



✖ "NO TO A NEW PAGANI" WE SAID DURING
OUR PROTEST IN MORIA VILLAGE.

▷ 18 MONTHS IN PRISON

When a person comes here as a refugee, without having seen Greece before, they put him in prison for 18 months without any reason. It is the worst punishment without reasons. Each person leaves his country for several reasons. We flee and when we arrive in Europe they put us in prison, while the family is left behind. When we heard we might stay 18 months in prison... We lost hope. The ones we left back wait that we arrive somewhere, start new lives and support them. They don't expect that we go for 18 months in prison without any reason. That's the worst we heard here.

▷ NOTHING TO DO

Inside the prison there is nothing to do to make the time pass. There are no books or anything. We had nothing. We were just sitting and thinking about our problems in Afghanistan, about being in prison. Our psychological situation got worse day by day. We were all just sitting and thinking what will happen. We only had one ball. The ball was our only help to stop thinking. But the place was too narrow. 30 days in prison we had nothing to do. So the whole time you think. You just think. You are in terrible psychological condition. When the ball flew over the fence once, the police didn't give it back to us for 5-6 hours. Then we had again nothing to change our minds. So we changed the game. We played volleyball instead of football so that the ball didn't fly over the fence so often anymore. We made a new rule: The one who kicks the ball out of the fence shouldn't play anymore for 2 days.

▷ OLD WOMAN PUNISHED

There was an old refugee woman. She was a 70 years old Afghan. We had a lot of psychological problems there, being imprisoned on so little space – men and women. That old woman could not stand, so she needed a chair to sit at the queue to get her meal. The policeman kicked the chair and said: »No, you can't sit, you have to stand!«



✖ FAREWELL AT THE PORT. THE
SHIP LEAVES FOR ATHENS

▷ HUNGER STRIKERS TRANSFERRED
TO 18 MONTH PRISON'

At some point we noticed that Syrian refugees were released sooner while we had to stay in prison. There was an Afghan couple, which stayed 30 days there. We saw them being 30 days there and we got scared we might stay also that long. We did a hunger strike to get free. We were too long in prison. We have problems in our countries. The police told us, if we wouldn't stop the hunger strike they would put us in prison so we got afraid and stopped the hunger strike. We thought, it is less bad to stay 5-6 days longer here than 18 months in another prison. Then the police came at 18 o'clock in the afternoon. They chose 20 of us. They read the names and told the ones chosen they should get prepared to get free. We were so happy for them at first, but then they were transferred and the next morning they called and said they were in 'a prison for 18 months'. They took them with handcuffs. We got very scared that they might take us too, but we probably were just luckier so they let us free. This is not a first reception. It is a prison.

▷ PUSHED BACK, STOLEN BELONGINGS

The coast guard took our money, the mobile phones, our rings and watches and pushed us back to Turkey. Everyone had 300-1.000 dollars. The Greeks took everything. Then they pushed them back to Turkey. There were two women in prison in Turkey who said they had beaten them when they pushed them back. They also pushed back a family that is in Moria. They have four children and they are still in Moria. One woman who got scared and started screaming, was hit. The faces of everyone were full of blood. Why do they do that to refugees? They beat a minor and then they were yelling at us, because he had tried to escape.

▷ WAITING OUTSIDE AND NOT ENOUGH BEDS

When we arrived in the camp, the police let us wait outside for three hours. It was very cold. It was bad. Afterwards, we entered in the place and they told us to find beds. There were not enough beds. We had to either sleep together in one bed or on the floor.



✖ NEW ARRIVING REFUGEES BEHIND THE BARS IN THE PORT OF MYTILENE.
ONLY A FEW METERS AWAY TOURISTS COME AND GO WITH THE FERRY TO TURKEY

NO PRISON FOR REFUGEES

➤ REFLECTIONS FROM THE FIRST DETAINEE OF MORIA

What can I do for the people who are imprisoned here? What can I do for closing this place? In this prison a lot of people will be locked up for an unknown time and no one can tell them how long they will be there for.

There is no place for leisure time. It will be a hard time for them.

They will be under a lot of pressure.

What can I do for them?

Last year, in 2013, Moria prison opened. The first 10 people in this prison were: Hadi, Farid, Moein, Hussein, Mohamad, Ezat, Mustafa, Rajab, Hamed and me.

We arrived in Mytilene after so many difficult days of homelessness and sleeplessness. When we arrived in PIKPA we felt comfortable, like arriving in a new home. But after a few days, this beautiful first impression of Greece turned into hell which we could never have imagined.

When the police took us from there we first thought they were transferring us to an open camp for refugees but when we reached Moria we understood we were in a prison. From the first moment they treated us like criminals behind bars.

This camp had 7 containers for the prisoners and 3 containers for the police and one for the UN and the doctors. Their containers were separated from ours.

Every room had 14 beds, one bathroom and toilet. The sanitary infrastructure was not working properly. Every time when we used the washbasin sewage water was running into our room. It was late summer and the room was hot like hell during the day. When we complained to the police and the director about all the problems they treated us even worse. They behaved as if we were animals and were replying to us with ugly words. Thanks god after 15 days we were finally released.

A year has passed by since then and I came back to Moria. What I see now is much worse. It saddened me. It made me feel tremendously sorry. I asked myself what is going on here and what will happen to these new prisoners?

Within one year the prison grew so much bigger. I could not have imagined that. There are so many containers, fences and security guards now just to stop refugees from escaping.

My first thought was that this prison is a mad place. For how many people can it be made and for how long are they supposed to stay there? Looking at it the only answer is that the government obviously wants to lock up many refugees and for a long time – more than 18 months.

I was among the first in this prison and I feel deeply saddened about what I see now. ★

HESAM



SHAHER
SYRIEN



SHAFIQ
AFGHANISTAN



Just Wanted to
find a place to study!
because it was not possible
to study in my home country
JEK From AFG

JEK
AFGHANISTAN



KASIM
AFGHANISTAN



NURI
NORD-
KAUKASUS



2014, 8, 7

اسم من رضا مرسوی است.

متولد ایران ۲۲ ساله هستم.

در کشوری که وقتی که هیچ ارزشی برای انسان یا همان جسم ندارد.

چطور میشوید مانند وزننگ کرد؟ و دلیل اینکه من از ایران به سمت اروپا آمدم این بوده که

هیچ ارزشی و امنیت نداشتم در آنجا هر حال همانی بود که من دلیل که مدتی در آنجا بودم چون که اتفاقا

بودم اما در آنجا دیدم که هیچ ارزشی در آنجا نیست و هیچ کس به من توجه نمی کند و هیچ کس به من توجه نمی کند.

وقتی رسیدم به یونان آمدم و چون که من هیچ کس به من توجه نمی کند و هیچ کس به من توجه نمی کند.

حقوق بشم و آزادی در یونان هست و من به من توجه نمی کند و هیچ کس به من توجه نمی کند.

یا آزادی برای انسانها و حقوق آنها و من به من توجه نمی کند و هیچ کس به من توجه نمی کند.

امیدوارم در جایی به من توجه کنند و من به من توجه نمی کند و هیچ کس به من توجه نمی کند.

این حق من است و من به من توجه نمی کند و هیچ کس به من توجه نمی کند.

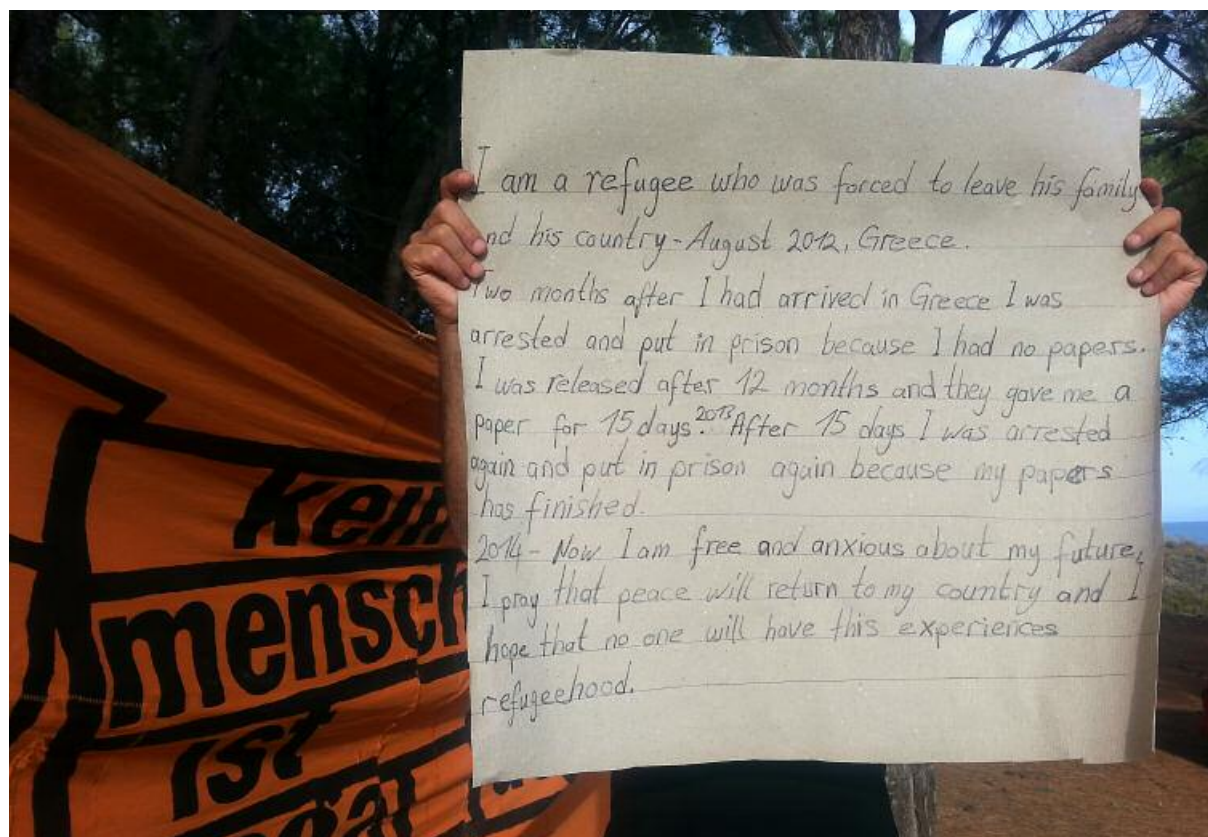
REZA
AFGHANISTAN



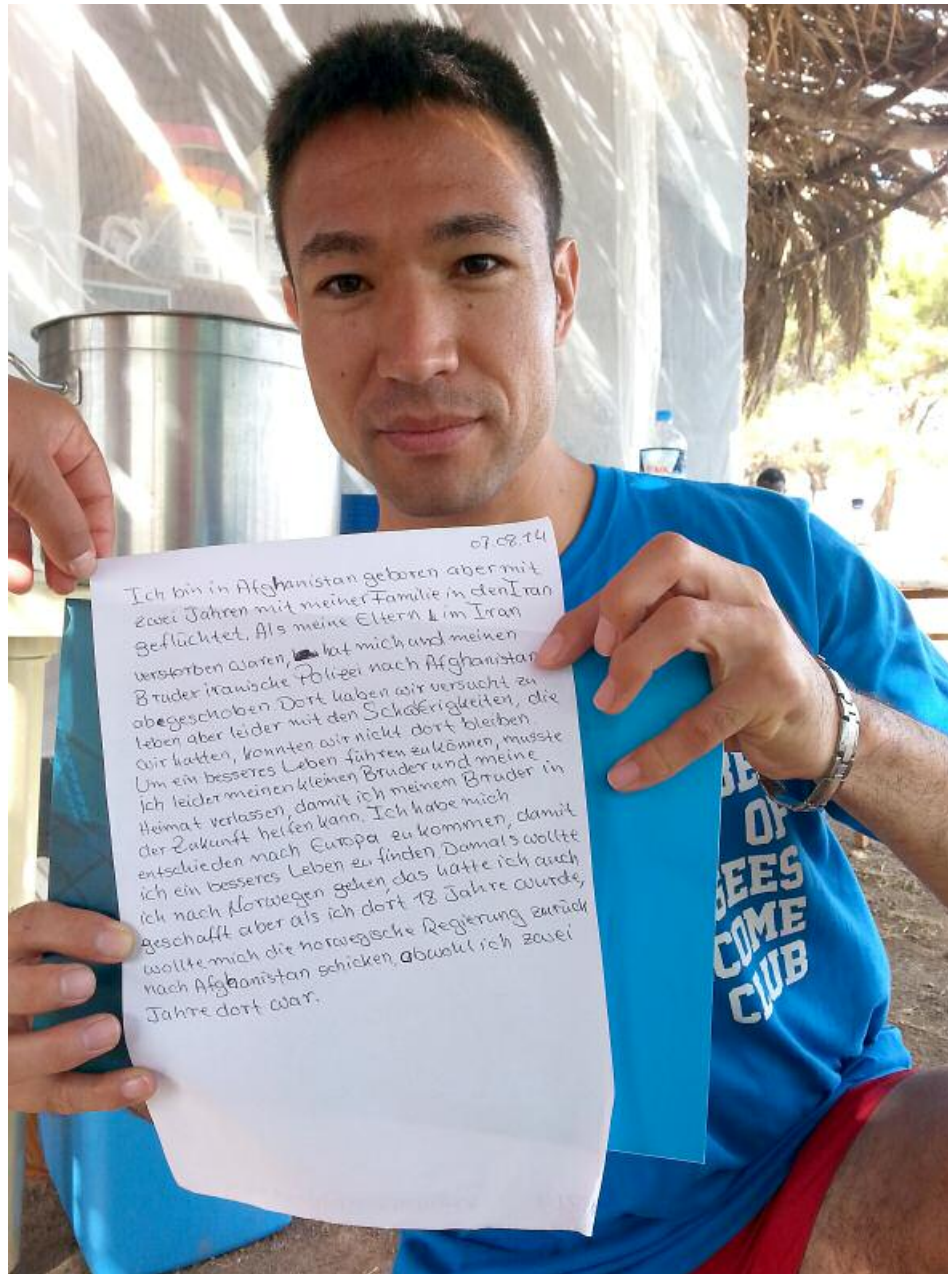
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SUDAN



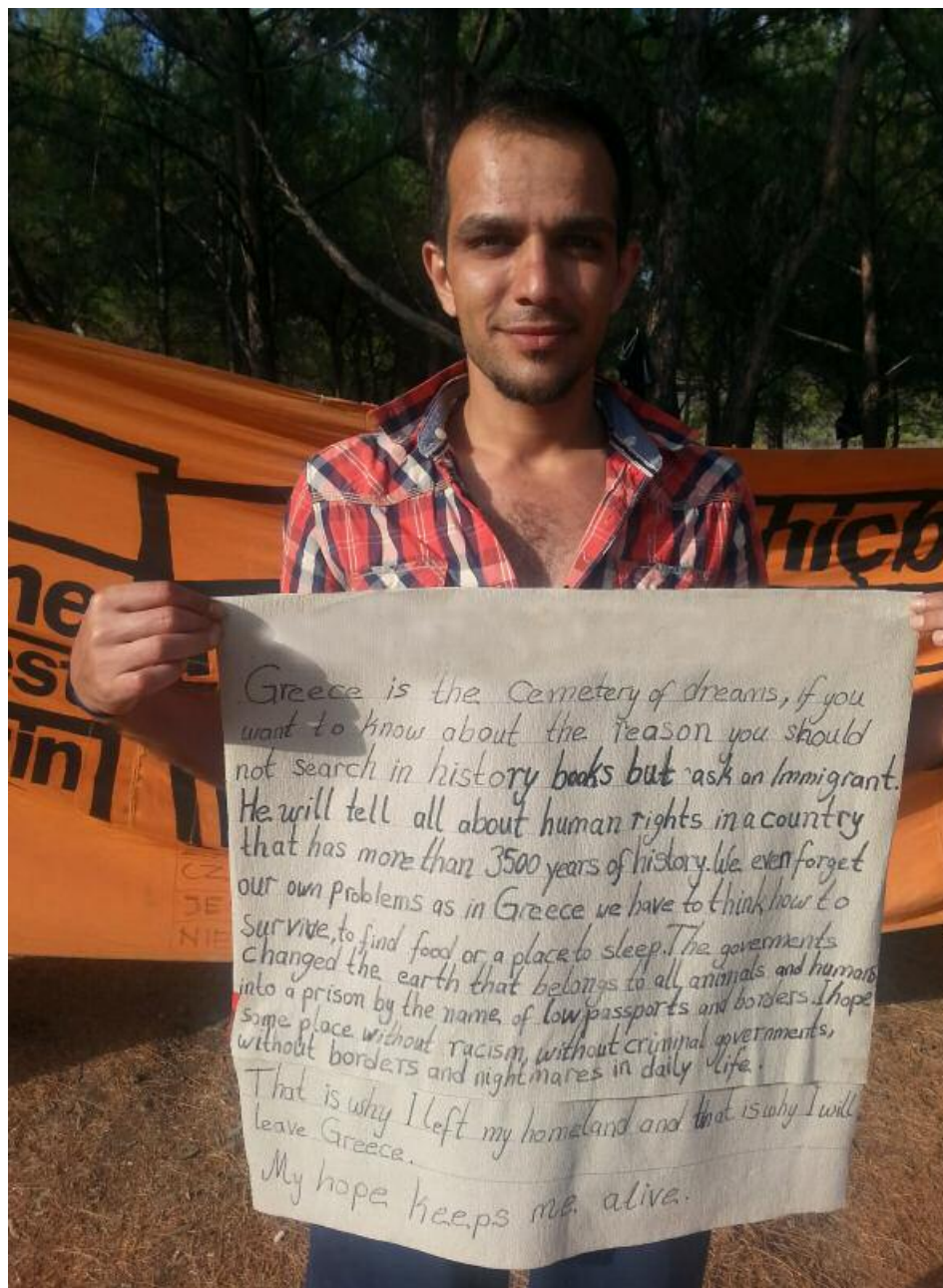
JANE
DEUTSCHLAND



SAID
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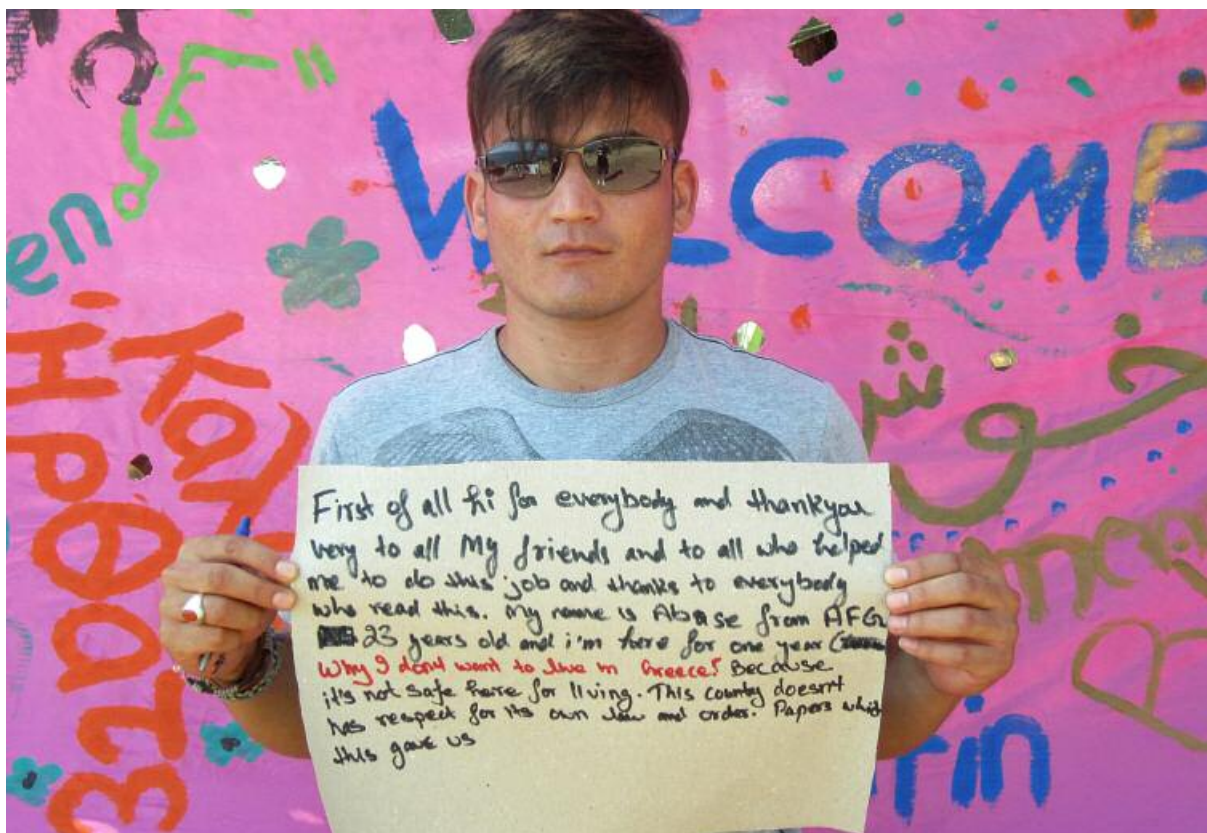


HAIDAR
AFGHANISTAN



Greece is the cemetery of dreams, if you want to know about the reason you should not search in history books but ask an immigrant. He will tell all about human rights in a country that has more than 3500 years of history. We even forget our own problems as in Greece we have to think how to survive, to find food or a place to sleep. The governments changed the earth that belongs to all animals and humans into a prison by the name of low passports and borders. I hope some place without racism, without criminal governments, without borders and nightmares in daily life. That is why I left my homeland and that is why I will leave Greece. My hope keeps me alive.

MANSOOR
AFGHANISTAN



ABBAS
AFGHANISTAN



HAMID
AFGHANISTAN



RESISTANCE AGAINST DETENTION

➤ »WE MANAGED TO TURN HELL INTO HEAVEN«

When I was asked whether I would like to go back to the country that made me at that time feel criminal just for being on its soil, I hesitated many times because I just wanted to forget that bad experience. Later on, I decided, after long contemplation, to go back to Greece.

You do not feel the dark side of Greece if you are a tourist there. Only refugees can feel it and experience it with their own eyes. That is why I decided to go back there because I wanted to ease the plight of refugees who are held in awful prisons, called »first reception centres«.

I don't want to beat around the bush: This country is hell for refugees. This country keeps sending a clear message to refugees, which is: »Do not come here – You are not welcome«. Of course they do not tell you this and they do not spell it out to you but their concentration camps are the message. That is why in the summer of 2014, we managed to turn »Moria first reception detention centre« in Lesbos into a welcome centre. We managed to turn hell into heaven.

We were a group of refugees from different nationalities. We were wearing T-shirts which said »Member of Welcome Refugee Club«. These words were not just logos but we turned them into actions and as actions speak louder than words, we, as well as some activists, managed to turn despair into hope through making the most wonderful party outside Moria prison. It was not only a party, it was, err, I do not know not how


to describe it. That feeling was unforgettable because we managed to break isolation despite the tall walls and fences built between inside and outside that prison.

We climbed on those stupid walls and fences; we started chanting »Azadi«. We repeated it over and over again. The refugees inside responded loudly with the same lovely chanting. The tone of »Azadi« broke their thick walls. The rhythm of »Azadi« has burst into the ears of Moria security ordering them to close down this bloody prison.

We were overjoyed because we gave hope to the anguished people inside. This prison will be closed down. We need first to believe that this is going to happen. Sooner or later this prison WILL BE closed down and will end in the dustbin of history. We do not foresee or raise high expectations but we rather make it an aim to be achieved.

Finally, I would like to say what I learnt there. When I learnt the word »beauty« I thought it only means: »to look at someone or something that gives you great pleasure«. It appears I was wrong. After our supportive and break-isolation Moria party, I now realized that beauty means solidarity. I now discovered that solidarity is the most beautiful thing on earth. ★

HAMBURG 04.01.2015
KARIM

A group of young men are dancing at night under a thatched roof structure, illuminated by warm string lights. The scene is lively, with several men in the foreground and background, some wearing t-shirts and shorts. The atmosphere appears to be one of celebration or social gathering.

*The Greek police calls us crazy,
because we are homeless migrants
in their country
But it's ok,
hard times will pass by.*

*We came here as guests,
but you threw us in the prison
But it's ok,
hard times will pass by.*

*You were telling us about human rights,
not about homelessness in exile.
A young refugee
imprisoned at the borders...
Refugees dying in your seas.*

You are responsible for all this bad luck!

➤ **RAP FROM FARID, PERFORMED IN
AUGUST 2014 IN FRONT OF MORIA
DETENTION CENTER**

MUSIC AND CONCERTS

► »IT WAS POWER AND CREATIVITY AGAINST THE INHUMAN SYSTEM AT THE OUTER BORDERS.«

Music has been an important part of our journey. Listening to music, dancing together, playing songs and singing connects also people who do not have the same language. And it helps also to regain power and energy after hard experiences.

Two music-groups have been with us for a part of our journey.

The young »lurz sistas« had a very special concert in PIKPA, where we welcomed the newcomers and celebrated the new contacts and friendships.

Before they started, we all had to watch the brutal coast guards while they brought the people into prison to register them. They shouted very loud, they put the people into the hot overcrowded bus, let them wait, put them out again... – all that after a long journey with very hot temperatures, old people and small children. We all had to watch without any possibility to change something and we had been very frustrated and felt helpless, because we could not do anything with our rage.

The following concert was a very good event to remember that we are all together, to feel that this evening is a challenge for us all to continue our work. It was power and creativity against the inhuman system at the outer borders.

We heard later, that the people spoke about that evening for a long time in the Paganai of the Troika and showed the pictures they made. So they could carry some of the common power and energy for the future journeys.

RENOVATIO, a group from Albanians living in Greece, came to spend some days with us and they had a wonderful gig at the beach in Xaramida, where we had our campsite. We invited the people from the village to join us for this evening. As refugees, RENOVATIO know the situation from their own experience and they are active in the antiracist network in Greece. One of the members could not take part because he was deported to Albania. The group tries to bring him back now. Their music accompanied our different actions, also in Moria and in PIKPA and we will be happy to meet them again next year in Mytilene. ★

RAP AGAINST BORDERS

► RENOVATIO LYRICS

STRANGE THINGS

Our world is being destroyed, see how it burns
you talk about life as you deliver death
military planes live on television
small children crying having lost their parents
the world is falling apart,
that's not the peoples fault
while we travel to the stars,
the moon shivers in tears
you people are thirsty for blood and glory
i want to be heard, i want to tell the story
in the skies and the earth,
everywhere to be heard
down on my knees as i send my gratitude
to those who're giving love
to those who're feeling loss
to those writing lyrics
and singing their songs
it's not only about my country,
or here where i grew up
i'm talking about our planet
that's being messed up
here where it all started, here it's gonna end
this is our planet, it is our to save
Joni: Talking all day long,
on what's wright and wrong
glorifying race and nation
burning forests while swimming in money
can't find a reasonable explanation.
Your heads are like empty wastelands

I just had a revelation
but there is a way to see things bright and clear
it's called hip hop and it will bring you near
checking reality through different eyes
with those who suffer the basics to provide
and now i want your full attention
we're not alone, antifa included
hearts full with feelings,
demands concluded not easy to fulfill,
as you keep collecting those big fat bills.

Strange things happening in our planet
got to raise your voice, got to make amendments
Strange compromise
between earth and humans
strange how you still giving
votes to the ungrateful

Joni: and if you don't like
what was done and said
you can just go and....
i can't tell you the rest

Bledi: maybe another time
it's turning back again
the world's a chess game
win or lose, the same
still talking of change
got your oil and money schemes
as the people are starving
like a rope around my neck
the debts keep rising

Joni: the message has been sent
the earth's burning again
attention to be paid
people of every age
i'm still on the stage
sending you my love
healing wounds with words
extinguishing fires that burn
signing with my name,
they're the ones to blame
don't listen to what they say
i never looked away
respect's gotta be earned

Joni: And i'm paying attention....
Bledi: keep paying attention...
Joni: Yoo get your hands up.....
Bledi:keep your hands up....
Joni: say it loud and clear.....
Bledi: yoo loud and clear....
Joni: tonight it's not to late..
Bledi:tonight it's not to late...

Strange things happening in our planet
got to reise your voice,
got to make amendments
Strange compromise
between earth and humans
strange how you still giving votes
to the ungrateful ★

IT'S A SHAME

Look what's going on, such a shame
the whole humanity sitting silent
the world is covered in lies
politicians running over our lives
empty people with no soul
only money as their goal
no difference from the machines
if you know what i mean...
you know what i mean...

Joni: they try every way they can
to control us, just like puppets in their hands
they're just playing
and those who resist are but a threat
got to run as far they can
from this prison hole called life
things labeled necessary
are destroying humanity
what you see and what you hear just a lie
GOVERNMENTS ARE THE REAL TERRORISTS
got a one way ticket to disaster
breathing poison in the air
vaccinating populations for salvation
as we sleep in slavery.
How many more have to be sacrificed
are you prepared to look at the future
the ballots will come out soon
HOW MANY ARE READY TO JOIN US??

everyday paying new dues
but their time is coming soon

some day we will pay
for the air and the moon
wondering how we got in this mess.
We're not wonder makers
just looking you straight in the eyes
telling it how it is
got used to the dark, it don't scare me
ready to die to save a brothers life

don't wanna be told how to live
what to do, what to say
being a servant to their greed
following rules that are unjust
got the power to stand tall
change this world with my bare hands
sing along if you feel the same
IN THIS STRUGGLE I NEED YOU BY MY SIDE

Look what's going on, such a shame
the whole humanity sitting silent
the world is covered in lies
politicians running over our lives
empty people with no soul
only money as their goal
no difference from the machines
if you know what i mean...
you know what i mean...

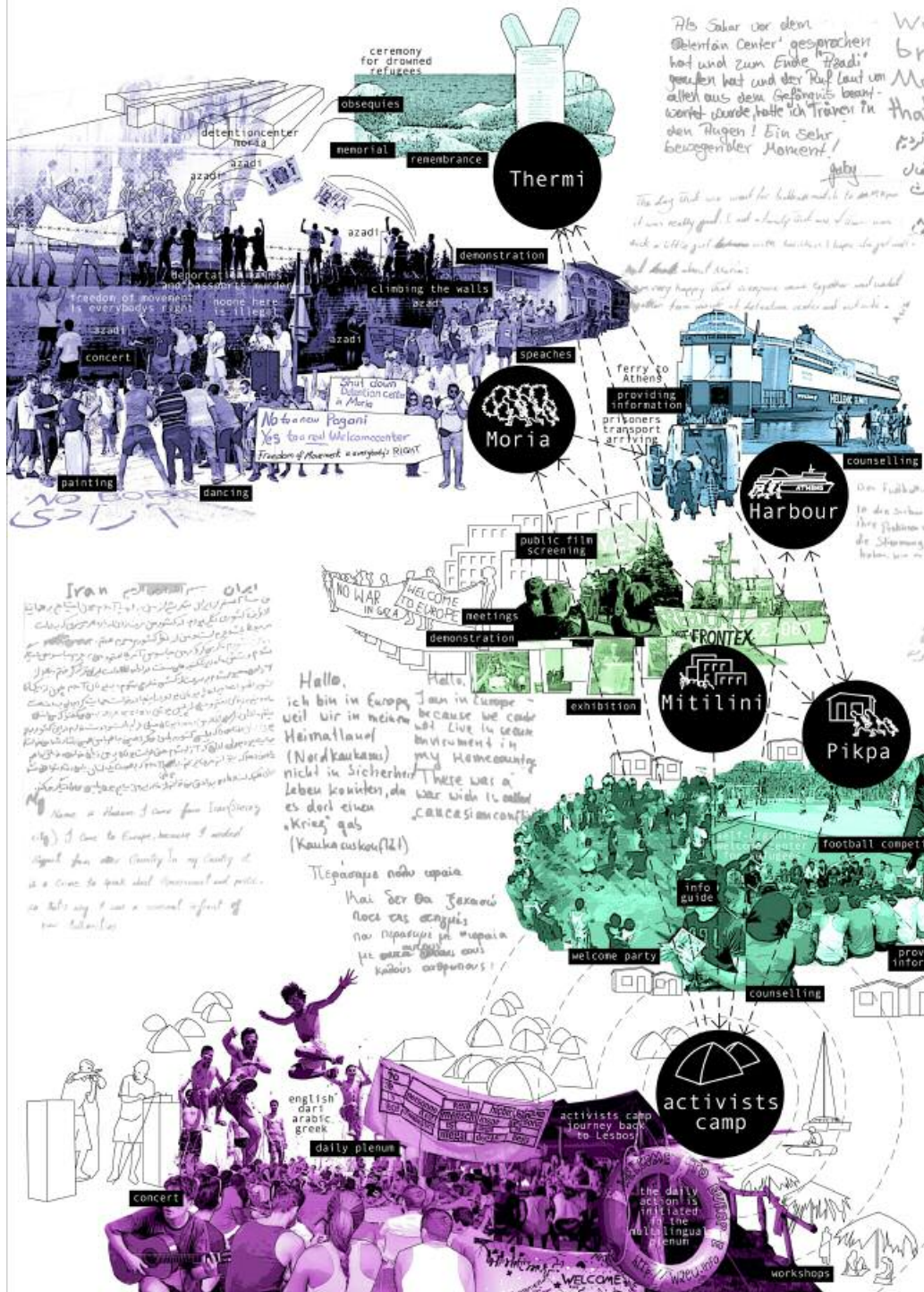
Bledi: time stands still, same day and age
it's not over that's for sure
debts, unemployment and then a demo
chanting altogether in rhyme
everybody knows something's gotta change
can't go on looting our lives

makes me wanna scream,
SCREAM WITH ME
can't fly with broken wings

so give me your hand coz united we stand
we'll never be outnumbered
from those bastards that are robbing our lives
i want to see them on their knees!!!
every month new laws being passed
they're stealing the dow, blaming it on us
gotta to have our lives back,
and all that you stole
our everything, our dreams but you want it all

you're so horrible, can't even call you human
sucking up our blood, feeding us with lies
afraid of the truth and poverty
coz they'll lead to a rebellion
poor hungry people sleeping in alleys
as you degenerates swim in money
i don't give a damn about the rich and famous
what about those that you left homeless
they wanna control every inch of our lives
can't seem to comprehend were humans,
not numbers
contaminating everything they touch
LET'S BREAK INTO THEIR OFFICES,
i wanna see them run.
Your tiny little eyes, looking so afraid
fear nothing my precious,
i'm always gonna be there
fear nothing my precious, nothing and none
didn't bring you into this world to give up wit-
hout a fight ★

✕ MAP OF ACTIVITIES



come her to
peak is lation in
prison hoping
soon it is closed.

زمانکه مار غنیمت فو تبان یارانی
یکه هانی که تازه آمده بودند حیاتی
نمیدیدند چونان بدون مرده
نمید که آری اجساد فرست نماند
روان به ملک طهر

CTIS 6128655 DEF 0607010
17140057 TO 0607010 0607010
0607010 0607010 0607010
17140057 TO 0607010 0607010

I am happy that I am in the same place as you
Some time ago in the same place as you

I had a very good time because I had the things I like
The prison happy at last for once

Amman Spital was taken all the things
Amman Spital was taken all the things
Amman Spital was taken all the things

تأ تامة و لوان من
مستويات سبعة حلية. فادرت
مستويات سبعة حلية. فادرت
مستويات سبعة حلية. فادرت

action
nation
nation

فرماندهای براند کورین
فرماندهای براند کورین
فرماندهای براند کورین

أنا هبة من السودان حلي
أنا هبة من السودان حلي
أنا هبة من السودان حلي

where we could be the prison the only thing
where we could be the prison the only thing
where we could be the prison the only thing

I am Hiba from
Sudan I had to leave my
country to escape from
the war and hunger
and bad education

First of all I thank everybody and thank you
very to all my friends and to all who helped
me who do this job and choose to everybody
who read this. My name is Hiba from Africa
25 years old and I am here for one year
Why I am here in prison because
it's not safe for living. This country doesn't
have respect for the human rights and order. Papers that
I have are not valid.

من السودان حلي
من السودان حلي
من السودان حلي

Halle, Ich bin Shafiq
Ich bin in Europa, weil es
kein Heimatland gibt
Halle, Ich bin Shafiq
Ich bin in Europa, weil es
kein Heimatland gibt

No more
Moria
Sahar
ON THE WAY TO FREEDOM
BEHOLD THE POWER OF FREEDOM

Again a lot of deep
impressions - I have no
words for it!

11/8/2014

activists
camp

Pikpa

Mitilini

Harbour

Moria

Thermi

initiated by the
participants of
journey back to
Lesbos 2014

the campsite
journey back to
Lesbos 2014

self-organised
welcomecenter for
new arriving
refugees

capital city of
Lesbos (Greece)

Harbour of Mitilini
from where refugees
need to take the
ferry to Athens

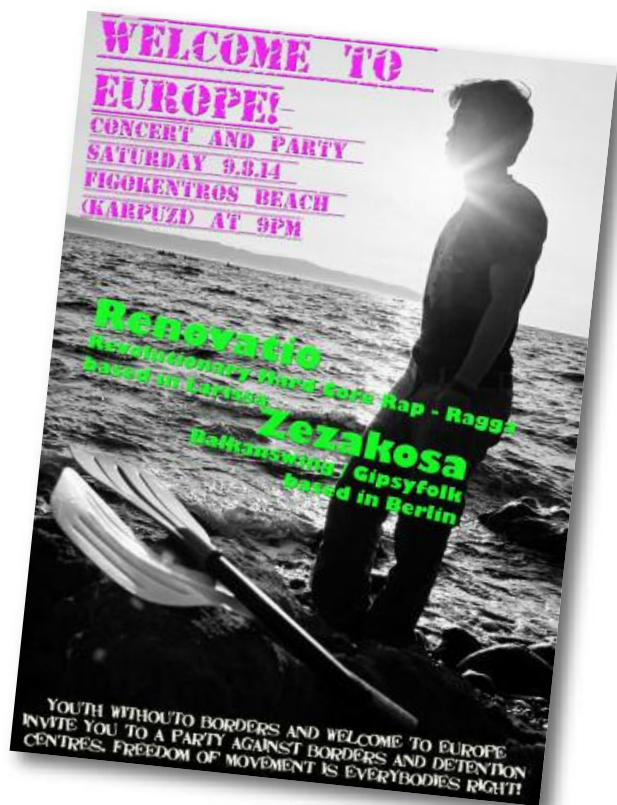
'first reception
center' in the
village of Moria,
where new arriving
refugees are
imprisoned

the village Thermi,
where refugees
drowned during the
attempt to reach
Europe by boat

map of action
journey back to Lesbos

map of action
journey back to Lesbos





JONI RENOVATIO

► »SINCE THERE ARE NO BORDERS IN THE SKY, WHY SHOULD THERE BE ON EARTH?«

It's been now more than 20 years since the main immigration periods from Albania towards Greece. People moved in search for a better life, but it was a brutal process leaving marks on our minds and bodies. Many didn't make it. They were captured, tortured and deported, but some of us did.

In a country overwhelmed by xenophobia and racism, it's not easy to build a safe and peaceful life. The exploitation as a cheap labor force was to be expected. The bureaucracy regarding our documents is unbelievably hard. Residence permits, green cards, red cards and insurance stamps... They are the hardest to get. At the end of the year you tremble with the idea that it's not going to be enough stamps to secure your papers for the next year.

Our friend and member of this band was caught up in this trap. Because of the ongoing financial crisis he was left unemployed. As a foreigner in Greece that means your deportation as residence permits are tied to employment.

So for some months now we started a harsh juridical battle trying to keep our friend here. We had to pay for lawyers, for trial expenses that sum up to more than 2000 euros. Too much for a jobless man to pay.

Our band stands in solidarity with our comrade and crew member. Every penny from the CD's we sell goes for that trial. Also we collect money in every event we make from people who want to help us in these times of barbarity. ★

✖ COMING TOGETHER AFTER THE LONG JOURNEYS, AFTER FINDING PLACES OF ARRIVAL AND THEN GOING BACK TO GREECE TO SUPPORT THE NEWCOMERS – THIS FORM OF SOLIDARITY CREATES A LOT OF ENERGY AND JOY





✖ SOLIDARITY GIVES THE
POSSIBILITY TO REACH EVERYTHING

FAREWELL TO THE
REFUGEES RELEASED FROM MORIA

➤ »I WILL
COME BACK LIKE YOU
TO WELCOME THE
NEXT NEWCOMERS!«

Wednesday, 6th of August 2014, first day at the harbour of Mytilene: When I started telling the people my own story, that I came here via Greece and have been here very long, it made a difference – it has changed our relation immediately.

I had all the memories from the past – it was exactly this harbour and it was exactly this place of my arrival.

But the difference was:

When I arrived here, nobody was there to explain anything to me or to say welcome. We are now here in Mytilene on our second journey back to the border.

Within our group of activists from various countries – with many of us having arrived in Europe via the Greek islands – we decided to go to the harbour daily to meet with people who have been released from the refugee-prison in the Pagani of the Troika and sought to leave for Athens.

On the first day we met 24 people, all of them Afghan refugees.

After their arrival on the island by boat they were imprisoned in the Pagani of the Troika. From there they were directly transferred by a police-van to the harbour.

Most of them had been imprisoned for about one and a half weeks – and all of them were quite happy to be able to continue their trip.

These days there are daily releases from the prison as there are daily arrivals, too and people try to continue their trip with the ferries going to Athens.

Upon release they receive a white paper (deportation order), which says that they have to leave the country within 30 days. When the 30 days are over, they become again undocumented and only for this reason they have to fear again imprisonment up to 18 months and more.

During our meetings at the port, we did two video interviews with people who told us how bad the situation in the prison in Moria was.

They complained about insufficient food (only biscuits in the morning and old noodles that made people sick for lunch) and especially about hygiene problems. They said that the showers and toilets were not working properly; when they used them, water spilled into the rooms.

They told us that police forces ill-treated them and insulted them in a racist way. The food was given to them by throwing it in front of their feet as if they were dogs.

Also, they felt that the way in which they were transported to the harbour was not how human beings should be treated.

In the beginning, I was very happy when I was standing there waving them goodbye, but then I have started to worry about their future. Who will they meet to assist them in the many difficulties awaiting them in Athens and on their further way?

I have started to be sad in the same moment: so many questions and so many problems they will face until they reach their destination.

The many question they had could only be addressed shortly due to time pressure:

What is the best way out of Greece?

What happens if I am fingerprinted in other European countries on the way to my final destination?

Is Norway still the best place for Afghan refugees? Underage refugees had heard about examinations by doctors to change their age into being adults and they were afraid of that.

They asked many questions about the situation in different European countries and we told them about our own experiences.

Some knew quite clearly where they wanted to go, but they did not have enough information. With some people, who wanted to go to Germany, we exchanged contacts and we will keep in touch to welcome them and assist them there, if they have more questions or concrete needs.

We also explained to them how to apply for asylum in Greece and other things they wanted to know about Greece.

Many of those we had met here during our last trip in October in 2013 were again imprisoned in one of the mass pre-removal detention centers on the mainland like Xanthi or Komotini.

Only a few of them were released up to now, due to their chance to enter the asylum system or being finally recognized as unaccompanied minors. Many remain detained and will stay 18 months or more.

I speak Greek and so I also helped people for example to buy their tickets. It is a lot of stress for the people that they have maybe enough Dollars, but no Euros in their pocket and they don't know how to change it and where to stay. It is very important for them to continue their trip all together and not to leave family members or friends behind.

It is one of our most important tasks that people go to the port every day.

Before the ship left, we took some farewell-photos and then we stood there in the harbour and waved farewell.

We have become somehow attached to these people in a very short time. What gave the people confidence was that we ourselves had been going through this hardship and came back to help others.

And some of them said: when I make it myself, I will come back like you to welcome the next newcomers! ★

TO OVERCOME THIS MURDEROUS
REGIME AND TO TEAR DOWN ITS
DEADLY BORDERS

► **MEMORIAL FOR
THOSE WHO DROWNED
AT THE EUROPEAN
BORDER IN GREECE**

In August 2014 we gathered once again in Thermi on the Greek island of Lesbos to commemorate the dead of the European border regime. This time a young Afghan man was with us whose brother had died near Lesbos only a few weeks before. The dying has not ceased along this border since October last year when we came to Thermi for the first time to commemorate and grieve. In a shipwreck on the 20th of January 2014, eight children and three women died. Their vessel had sunk near the Greek island Farmakonisi while being dragged by Greek coast guards during a push-back operation. The Greek authorities concluded the investigation of the case in August – there will be no trial in Greece. The survivors and relatives were shocked and decided to bring charges before the European court of human rights. The question remains: who is taking responsibility for those who are not victims of tragic circumstances but who lost their lives due to the murderous practices of external border control. These push-back operations are continuously practiced, frequently risking human lives.

Commemorating the dead of this border is also a denouncement of these murderous policies and practices. Those commemorated are not the victims of a natural catastrophe; they are the dead of a border regime for which some are politically responsible. Simply said: if it had been possible for them to just buy a ferry ticket and to move wherever they wanted and needed to, they would certainly be still alive. All those for whom we grieve during the commemoration at the border lost their lives due to a senseless border regime. As residents of Europe and also as survivors we regard it as our task to recall this simple reality. This means that the process of commemorating allows, alongside sadness, also room for various other feelings related to this dying. Besides sadness many of us feel anger which strives for radical changes. This is what we say in every commemoration in Greece: We will never forget. Facing this sorrow, the only possible promise is that we will try our best to overcome this murderous border regime and to tear down its deadly borders.

As the network »Welcome to Europe« (w2eu) we seek for years now collectively and in close cooperation with other structures and people to develop a culture of commemoration

✖ THOUGHTS ABOUT A TRAGIC LOSS. K. SAYS GOODBYE TO HIS BROTHER



WATCH THE MED ALARM PHONE

- <http://www.watchthemed.net/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Watch-The-Med/142123319326364>

REPORT »LOST AT BORDERS« (2012)

- <http://infomobile.w2eu.net/2012/01/16/lost-at-border-a-journey-to-the-lost-and-the-dead-of-the-greek-borders>

in Greece. We gather for commemorations with different forms of consternation, in remembrance of those who died at the borders of 'Fortress Europe' when trying to overcome them. Here the relatives of the dead have priority but we also seek to involve those who live locally and who are concerned with the dead. Besides commemorating the dead, the situation of the survivors is also of great importance to us and, relatedly, the stories of their rescuers. We have made the experience that our form of commemorating places its own emphases. But has to take into consideration local realities, cultures and power relations.

The event in Thermi in August 2014 during our Back to the Borders journey was part of a series of attempts since 2010 which sought to create forms of commemoration:

▷ In **2009 at a secluded ledge in Korakas**, along the northern coast of the Greek island of Lesbos, two mothers and five children died. Of the children on the boat one infant was rescued by a fisherman who jumped into the water and came to its rescue. Also both parents survived the tragedy. Together with this family and the fisherman who rescued them we discussed in detail our plan to erect a commemorative plaque at the place of the shipwreck. It hence came to an encounter between the rescuer and the rescued which presumably would not have occurred otherwise. Refugees who shared the cultural background of the dead took part in composing of the plaque. The rescued family was present and sent photos of the commemorative plaque and the commemoration to the relatives known to them and other survivors.

▷ In **2011**, in order to commemorate the many disappeared and dead at the Evros border between Turkey and Greece, we designed a fountain along a road frequently travelled on by refugees. As it was a public fountain we informed the local mayor who, while not giving his consent, was at least informed. The commemoration was distinctly shaped by those who had lost or were missing relatives along this border. Besides, it was shaped by local and international indignation about the disgracefully burying of hundreds of refugees who had died in the border river of Evros. The mass grave in that region had

been discovered by w2eu activists when searching for the missing in 2010. During the memorial service, a man from Kenya held a moving speech. His wife had died in her attempt to follow him to Greece in the border river. We also read out the letter of a mother of three children whose husband had disappeared there and remained unfound. The service and the alteration of the fountain would not have been possible without the personal support of local residents.

▷ In **autumn 2013** we commemorated at the east coast of Lesbos the many dead refugees around the island. We had chosen the spot together with members of the local club of fishermen who have recovered many living and dead refugees, and in accord with selected local politicians. The protagonists that day were the relatives of the people on the commemorative plaque who arrived from Athens to commemorate their relatives, including four little children who drowned in 2013. The commemoration was shaped by those who had taken that

path of migration and survived but witnessed how many friends and relatives died during that dangerous journey. Affected fishermen also took part. The commemorative plaque, fixed to two wooden paddles could only endure the winter due to the close collaboration with the fishermen. During our visit in 2014 they showed interest to further collaborate, also considering their personal hardships when recovering of the dead in the sea.

▷ We gathered in Thermi once again in **August 2014** during the second Back to the Borders journey in August 2014 as, sadly, again people had lost their lives near Lesbos since our memorial in October 2013. The brother of a deceased Afghan boy who died in his search for Miltilini shaped this memorial service together with us.

For some years now, some local activists, partly refugees themselves, take care of the burials and the graves at the ce-



✕ DINNER AT THE
CAMPSITE IN CHARAMIDA



metry in Mytilene, as much as their strength allows. They are also an important connection between the desperately searching relatives of missing people and the administration that deals with the dead. They support them in their search but also in the transfer of identified dead refugees to the places of origin of the relatives.

In collaboration with them and the local fishermen but also with **'Youth without Borders'** activists from Germany with whom we erected the commemorative plaque at the east coast of Lesbos in October 2013, the idea emerged to create a fountain with drinking water for fishermen and passers-by at the site of the provisionally erected plaque. For the local fishermen such a memorial fountain is important since the provisional site of commemoration had already prompted visitors to pause and think.

This idea was furthered after the commemoration during the second Back the Border journey in August 2014 together with the brother of the Afghan boy who died near Lesbos. It is now clear that the memorial fountain will be built at the site of the existing commemorative plaque and that it should resemble local fountains in its form. Since the brother of the deceased works as stonemason in France, he offered to engrave

the names of the eight deceased in characters of their native language onto small marble plaques in order to attach these to the fountain. As part of the Back to Lesbos journey 2015 we hope to inaugurate the fountain together with relatives and local activists.

By now, many of us have drawn further conclusions from the continuously recurring commemorating of border deaths. Together with many others, we are part of an Alarm Phone for boat refugees which seeks to stop the letting-die and hinder push-back operations. We agree that the letting-die, the human rights violations and the push-back operations practiced by the EU border control agency Frontex and coast guards in all regions of the Mediterranean Sea have to be stopped.

We need a civil society network on both sides of the Mediterranean Sea that is able to create political pressure to support the lives and the rights of boat refugees and we want to be part of this network. For us this is a first step toward a Mediterranean region that is not characterised by a deadly border regime but by solidarity and the right for protection and the freedom of movement. The Watch the Med Alarm Phone is permanently reachable for refugees in distress since the 11th of October 2014. ★

IMPRESSIONS FROM THE FINAL PLENARYS

► FROM LAUGHTER TO TEARS, FROM HAPPINESS TO SADNESS...

We knew before that it would be great but we had no idea how great it really would be! We liked very much going to Pikpa and to Moria. It was a very good experience. And it would have been even better if the people inside the prison could have come out to be with us. I wish that more things like that happen and that all people will be free.

► It made me very sad to see how the police in Pikpa treated the people there. It was a very nice experience to go to the prison and see the people dancing and to change the feeling of imprisonment for one moment.

► I have the feeling that our group is growing, that there is something new with a good basis.

► I hope to come back next year and to help more refugees so that we can meet them again in another country. I think it is a mission for everyone to help each other and to give advice.

► The great experience in Moria was only possible due to the participation of all the young people who had the same experience of being imprisoned.

► It was very special for me that we welcomed refugees at the external borders and that we could give them advice for their journeys.

► It was a very big moment of creativity to turn the fucking detention center in the middle of nowhere into a place of protest, dance and communication. Thank you very much for that.

► The most impressive was to see some of the young refugees of our group advising the newcomers in Pikpa in a very friendly and serious way. It was also good to see how many people took responsibility for all the work, which had to be done.

► I am very, very, very happy to be here; these have been the greatest days in my life, really.

► I hope not to see some of you next year because I hope you will have left Greece by then and you will be in the process to settle down in another country. And then we will meet the next year again here.

► When I was a refugee and arrived in Europe I didn't get support. So I hope we will continue with what we do because it is very important for the people.

► I am really happy to be here and I am happy that I could share emotions with the people in Moria. I have been in Paganini and no one said welcome. It feels very good to share the emotions now with others.

► I really want to continue supporting others because now I have some good experience with that.



▷ I am very happy to be here. I am member in another group also, but they spoke a lot but did not do much – we did much together! We showed that no nation is better than the other, that we are equal.

▷ From laughter to tears, from happiness to sadness, from learning new things and sharing experiences it has been a wonderful experience.

▷ I want to be a traveler in this journey again.

▷ There is lots of work to do for us so that no one has to risk his life anymore to come to Europe. I hope we will achieve it.

▷ I hope we can do more things in the next camp and close the detention camp.

▷ Day after day, hour after hour, minute after minute, second after second I learn that solidarity is so beautiful with you.

▷ Thank you to all the groups who supported me to be here. I found a very open atmosphere. It was my best experience after spending 5 years in a very bad situation.

▷ Dimitri from the bar: It was a very extra-ordinary experience with the group. I was so happy to have the group here and I was really impressed by all the people. The most important thing is to give refugees hope and respect I believe. My family also once fled from another country.

✖ RENOVATIO CONCERT IN FRONT OF THE PAGANI OF THE TROIKA



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UNACCOMPANIED
MINORS CAUGHT UP
BETWEEN PRISONS
AND THE GREEK STREETS

► **»WE NEED FREEDOM,
NOT PRISONS!«**

In summer 2014 we came back to Mytilene on our »Journey Back« as former unaccompanied minor refugees who had once arrived on this island where we made our first steps in Europe. Many of us have been detained in Pagani, some also in the Pagani of the Troika. Some stayed in the Villa Azadi and others in PIKPA. During our summer camp this year, we met many underage newcomers and we welcomed them in PIKPA. We met them again in the Moria detention centre and then at the port when a few were released with their families and left the island. Now, we are back in our homes and in our daily routines. Here we have to confront also a lot of problems in our own lives. We have to fight for our rights every day but more on an institutional level.

Yet we want to send back our voices to Mytilene, as we think of our friends who are still back in Greece. What we see going on in Greece today is inhuman, terrifying and it makes us furious as we have suffered a lot there too some time ago but we were hoping for improvements and were not expecting such worsening of the situation for refugees and specifically for minors. Reception centres for unaccompanied minors are closing instead of opening. Villa Azadis' closure was only the beginning of the end of the reception regime. With 350 places nationwide there are too few places available for minors at the moment, even before the system is most likely to break down in the beginning of 2015.

Unaccompanied minors are forced to wait in prisons »for their own protection« as a better alternative to the streets, the state says. They are imprisoned »in order to be transferred to a reception centre« as soon as a place becomes available. Currently this might take 3-5 months of waiting time in detention but it might get even longer in 2015 when more reception centres will close down! Minors are not being released but transferred with handcuffs to other detention centres in Athens – like Allodapon and Amygdaleza in Attica area. Already this summer our friends were on hunger strike in Lesvos, in Samos and Athens. There were minors inflicting harm on themselves in these detention centres to fight for their freedom.

The long detention periods for unaccompanied minors deter them from registering themselves upon arrival as minors.

Instead, many of them register as adults hoping to escape thereby detention. Unfortunately, many adults are sent to pre-removal detention centres directly upon arrival where they are kept for 18 months or more. Until today there is no generalised functioning age-assessment system applied in Greece that would allow them to prove their young age and be released. There are also no legal guarantees. Thus, there are hundreds of minors currently detained, unable to prove their age.

As there is no reception system adjusted to the real needs of unaccompanied minors in Greece who in their majority are in transit and plan to reach other countries to rejoin their families and friends, minors do usually not stay in the reception centres. If they leave, the NGOs responsible for the accommodation report them as missing – a bureaucratic act, which exposes them to the risk of their second arrest. Some of our friends, who spent a few months in detention upon arrival already, are currently detained again with the aim »to be sent to a reception centre«.

Outside of the reception system, minors have no access to the asylum system in Greece. They have no opportunity to

seek protection as soon as they leave the reception centres and they have no opportunity to get access to family reunification procedures, too. Finally, by the turn of the year many of these minors became 18 as Greek authorities register them usually as born on the 1st of January. Minors who are detained awaiting a place in a reception centre will then not be released but as they become adults their detention duration will turn into 18 months and more and they will be then held with the aim to be deported.

While we could welcome nowadays a few of our summer friends in Germany, we are at the same time thinking strongly of our brothers and sisters left behind.

We want to shout out these problems to the world. We want Europe to look at what they do with their policies and their funds to underage children who are escaping conflict and hunger. More than that we want to do something for the ones we know and the ones we don't know yet by fundraising for legal aid. We have decided to show our solidarity practically to support a few detained unaccompanied minors – as many as we can afford by your donation. So please be part of it! ★

► EDITORIAL

YOUTH WITHOUT BORDERS

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Webguide for Refugees and Migrants | 📞 <http://w2eu.info>

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Youth without Borders & Welcome to Europe

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