
A MEMORY WITHOUT EVIDENCE

A collaborative newspaper publication

A Memory Without Evidence is a newspaper publication featuring histories and narratives of people on the move and refugees who have traversed the Balkan refugee route and managed to reach the European Union. Created through a series of workshops and dialogues with displaced communities, the collaborative newspaper presents the stories of those who have traded their imprisonment behind the razor wire, land mines, and systemic violence that was enforced upon them on the Balkan refugee route for being held captive by the EU asylum system. For many involved in the creation of the newspaper, the struggle for their existence, recognition, and freedom does not end once they reach their desired safe haven but remains a distant prospect.

“As refugees”, Mohamad Abdul Monaem mentioned during the making of the publication, “we have lost all of our history and documents. And we keep a memory without evidence”. Longing for a place to belong and for a sense of community is thus the common thread in their writings. Yet, the contributing authors not only aspire to gain acceptance and inclusion, but they also critically address the systemic issues imposed upon them.

Challenging the portrayal of refugees as passive victims of decontextualized violence, the newspaper introduces vocal, articulated, and thoughtful deliberations of displaced people, whose experiences address the systemic issues that are closely

related to the universal figure of a person on the move. The concerns over attritional violence, racism, and class struggle as well as the history and future of migration and everyday life in refugee camps are vividly present in the contributions. *A Memory Without Evidence* comprises the visual documentation of what migrants experience as the early stages of life as asylum seekers and refugees as well as testimonies, articles, poetry, and oral history narratives from the perspective of those who have only recently found their refuge. The writings are divided into three segments—In Prisons and Camps; Born in a Line of Displaced; and 4517 Kilometres Later—each offering a critical, poetic, and in-depth reflection on different questions related to displacement and exile.



The Feeling of Europe

Zied Abdellaoui

The feeling of Europe is the feeling of *sans-domicile*, of being without a home. It is a beautiful place, but I cannot really see it. Because I don't have the right papers, I don't really have the right to live ... As if I don't exist in this world.

There is a big wish in me to erase some hours of the day. I think that is how the homeless start drinking. They want to erase some hours of the day. As for me, I wish to erase those from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. Because they are very sad hours. I have nothing to do. I can't do anything, and everything is up to my imagination. In litera-

ture, they say, those who have a strong imagination can leave. But our life is a material life. Our history is material history. After spending three years and eight months on the Balkan refugee route, living in forests and abandoned buildings, the one thing I do not need is more imagination.

And so, I wish I had the right to study. The right to work. The right to sleep. And the right to keep on living. A baby doesn't have to prove its existence because its rights are, as they say in French, *essentiel*. They come from nature. Yet, after thirty-eight years, I still have to prove that I exist.

And all the people in the refugee camp, in which I currently live are like me. This is the case of being a migrant.

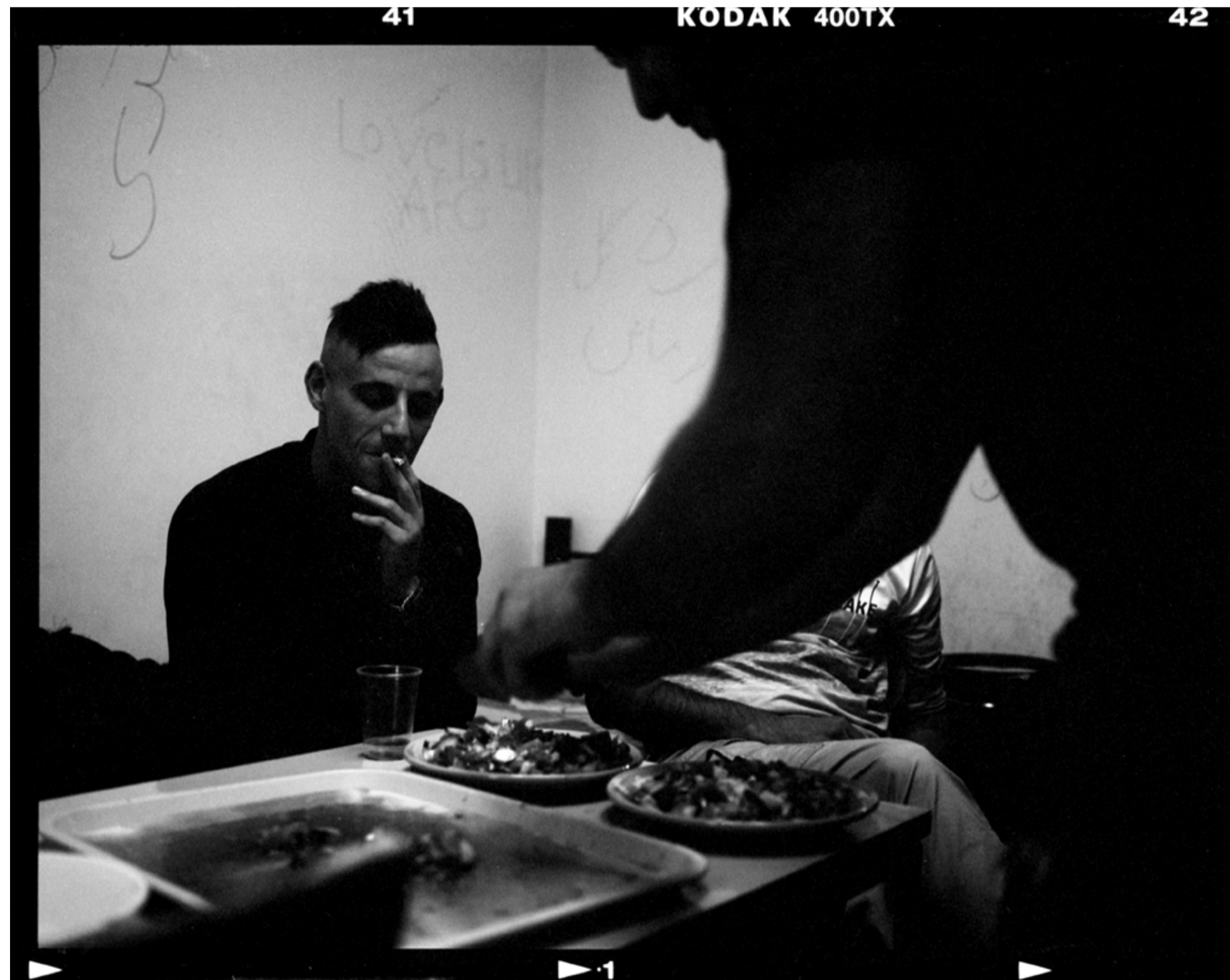
I'm waiting. Just waiting. And I'm thinking about my life, how I'm losing my sense of being like this. I left Tunisia, my parents—my roots—after the revolution, which I believe has failed. I left Tunisia to finish *my own* revolution and find my own intellectual body inside myself. But I didn't find it in Europe: Where is the Europe of luminous ideas?

The authorities say that my journey in Switzerland is *provisorisch*. Recently, my stay was temporarily extended. I would certainly like to stay in Switzerland, but they make sure to tell us every day, *you are not Swiss. Don't compare yourselves to us, you don't have the same rights as we do ...* You know, they tell us the truth. And I need this kind of realism in my life. It's very dry and very cold, but I need it. Every day, the system here explains that you are not Swiss. For me, this is a kind of maturity. Before I came to Europe, I had faith in a kind of leftist naïveté about human rights. I believed that all people are born free and equal before the law. But real life is obviously not about human rights, at least not for everyone. When you become mature, you start to understand this. Human rights are a utopian idea. In reality, they are a capricious concept—human rights of some people are worth more than those of others. Life is more complicated than the Geneva Convention. Being a migrant has made me understand this.

And so, my future is unclear. As an asylum seeker, you just stay in the refugee camp, and you wait. And you eat rice. Rice in the morning, rice for lunch, and rice for dinner. And wait. Wait for one day to be over, wait for another day to start again. Wait for the decision of the administration in charge of your fate. Now I have been waiting for four months: August, September, October, November. Let's see if December brings a decision. Or maybe January will.

Waiting, waiting, waiting, waiting. Europe has finally killed the revolution inside me.

Europe has finally killed the revolution inside me.



Zied Abdellaoui is an asylum seeker from Tunisia. He studied political sciences and travelled 4517 kilometres back and forth on the Balkan refugee route before reaching Europe almost four years later.

I am tired

Desmond Happy

I don't know how long I am to keep on trying I don't know if I can keep trying anymore for I am really tired I am tired of being scared anytime I see the police I am tired of the scary nightmare I am tired of crying my eyes out whenever I have those scary nightmares I am tired of waking up in the middle of the night while others are fast asleep I am tired of the pain I feel every morning as if I was doing some job in my sleep I am tired of not always feeling safe I am tired of always thinking that I need to be on the move I am tired of always feeling that am not welcome I am

tired of people looking down on me I am tired of being judged by people I am tired of people not believing my stories I am tired of the wickedness of the world I am tired of people using us refugees as an instrument of practising evil I am tired of the European Union putting us in the grind of exploitation I am tired of being seen as less human I am tired of being used to show off who is more powerful I am tired of people being ugly to us refugees I am tired I am tired I am tired.

Desmond Happy is an asylum seeker and poet from Cameroon.

We Remembered the Words

Zahra and Yasmin

We left our home two years ago. Our lives became unbearable and unsafe. We had to flee.

We had to flee the regime that oppressed us. And we had to flee my husband, who was more brutal than the system we lived in. He beat me black and blue, broke my bones. Told me he would kill me. He made sure we would not feel safe anywhere we went. He told me his *lessons* would follow us wherever we went. When I think back about our times in Iran, I see my abusive husband's words sounded like a prophecy.

We spent months trying to make it to Europe. Our idea was to go to Germany, where I could find work as an engineer and my daughter could continue with her studies. Once we made it from Iran to Turkey and then to the doorsteps of Europe, we paid someone to take us in their truck and drive us through the last borders we needed to cross, but we were caught and returned to the Balkans. We later paid a smuggler to take us with his car, but he took our money and left us in the middle of nowhere. Without any means left, we tried walking in the woods with an Afghani family with small children that we'd met along the way. After four days of walking and hiding,

someone started shooting at us. We heard shouting and some more gun shots. We were caught by a patrol. We asked for asylum, but we met their sticks and fists instead. *Europe is not for you*, a policeman that looked younger than my daughter told me. Then they drove us in a van and sent us back over the border to Bosnia.

Our life has been defined by hiding. Hiding from the regime, hiding from violence, hiding from police, and hiding from the memories of what we have witnessed on our way to Europe. We've been hiding from the patriarchy our entire lives, but it finds us everywhere we go.

A few months ago, as the winter passed and nights became warmer, we managed to traverse the route on foot again and reached Italy. When we asked for asylum, they drove us to a refugee camp. We've been living in a room with two other families, awaiting further procedures. I fear what lies ahead of us.

Europe is not for you. I remember the words.

Europe is not for you. I don't dare to dream anymore.

Zahra and Yasmin (pseudonym) are Iranian refugees who wished to remain anonymous. They spent almost a year on the Balkan refugee route before they reached Europe.

Dialogue in Room 031

Soufian Hassan & Mohammed Khan

Je vis dans le camp. C'est très déprimant.

All I want is to sleep.

Il y a un million de personnes ici.

I haven't slept since I left Kashmir five years ago.

Les gens vont et viennent.

Just to sleep.

Cela change tous les jours.

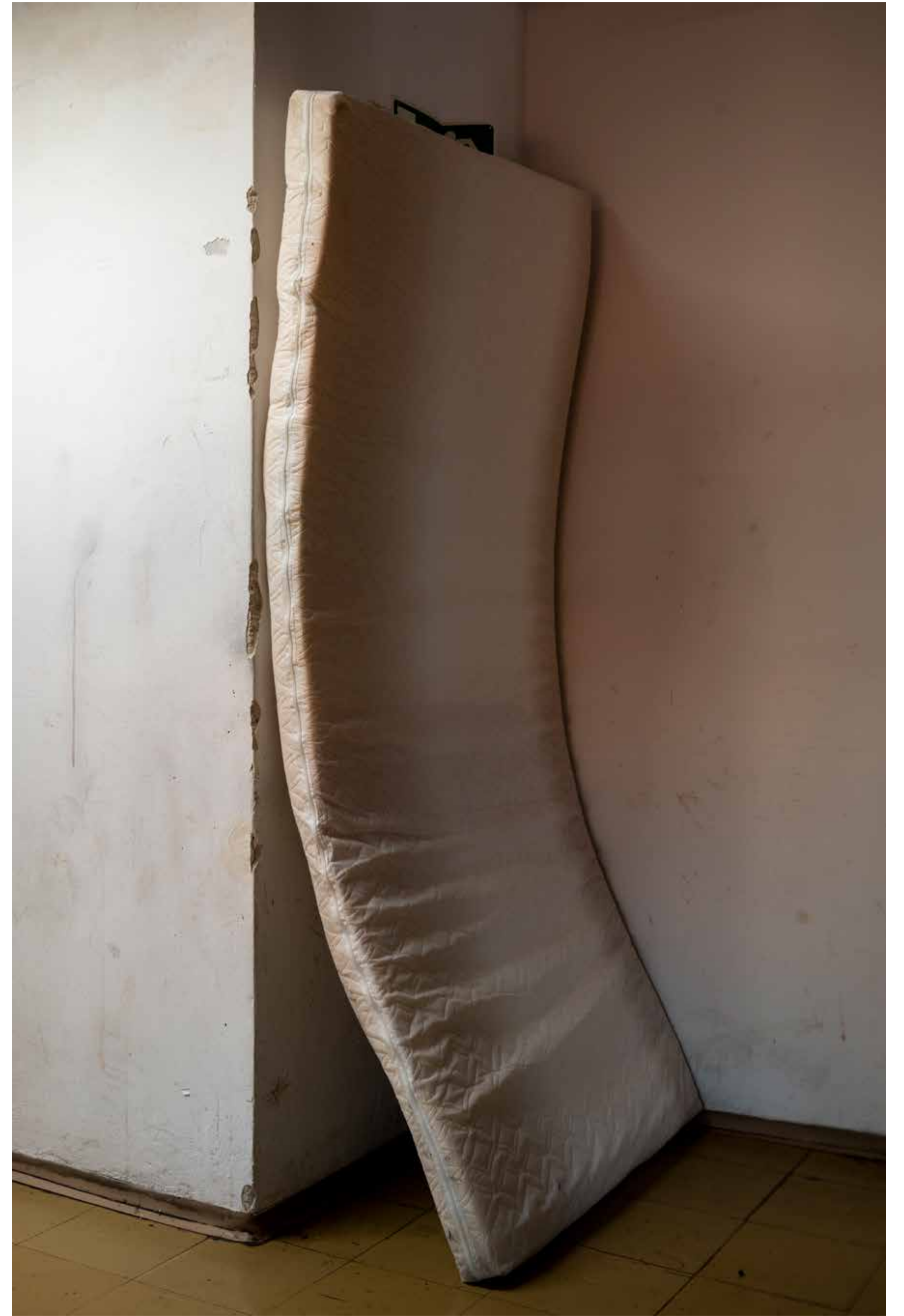
This is all I want ...

Seuls quelques-uns y restent.

Just to be able to sleep.

Soufian Hassan is an asylum seeker from Morocco. He spent over a year on the Balkan route.

Mohammed Khan is an asylum seeker from Kashmir. He spent a year and a half on the Balkan route.





My dream was to go to Germany
But after years of waiting
in a refugee camp, my dream is rather
to see my country empowered

Alzheimer's

Mohamad Abdul Monaem

On a night of endless oblivion
I introduce my self to my self
—You're a little over fifty
—I was born beneath winds howling through a
tin roof

And who are you? I ask my self, and my self re-
plies
—Third child of a refugee father and a mother
the same; two children, two parents, and two
grandparents arriving at a camp built in haste by
those fleeing death

Then my self says
—Then I am born of a line of the displaced
Time wouldn't let me see my grandfather
Night crow carried him to its nest long before I
was born
Or perhaps, out of sheer longing,
It was he who flew away with the crow

I wish I could meet him, return to the me that I
am, there
And exchange a grandfather and grandson's
words
He'd tell me the colour of the sea at night
Share the secret scents of desire in my grand-
mother's dresses,
Which, being young, I wouldn't yet understand
And tell me about morning coffee and the jas-
mine flower's night-time moods

If I'd met him I'd have asked:
—Grandfather, son of Haifa and Mount Carmel,
Why did you go? Why didn't you die before me,
there?
Grandpa, open your chest, let's lay out the pos-
sibilities
If you hadn't feared for your son's life and shel-
tered in the waves
Then come out again, imagine, Grandpa, im-
agine
You'd be on the slopes of Reuben Mountain with
a grave overlooking the sea
She'd be beside you in her grave praising God,
and cursing you
My father—I mean your son—would be beside
you, and perhaps my mother too
And perhaps close by would be kind Rachel,
on her gravestone the words *I am the mother of
Suleiman to whom I never gave birth*
And me, imagine me now, Grandfather, sipping
my evenings on the balcony overlooking Riviera
Street and the port

Gathering up, from the blue horizon, the ships
of the Jewish diaspora
Throwing Mother's dry bread to the seagulls
nearby
Bidding farewell to the white sails departing the
skies of your wise crow
I might speak to you in Arabic or Hebrew as a
matter of course, and we'd discuss the burial of
Abel
—What would you have done, Grandfather,
what would you have done?
If you hadn't ignored the newspaper that day,
tossed it hastily aside
If you hadn't forgotten to charge the radio bat-
teries
You'd have read or heard that two generals were
preparing to squeeze our lemons and oranges
over the Messiah's fish
What would you have done, Grandfather, what
would you have done?
From tent to tent you moved
From corrugated iron to corrugated iron we
went
Cure us of the sick distances between us, once
with forgetting, once with poetry
We pass the time with the scent of wild thyme
and shepherds' flutes
For seventy years, Grandfather, we haven't car-
ried our shadow over the earth
It races ahead of us like hope, and we follow, then
toss it behind us like memory, and identity is lost
False idols on this earth uproot us from horizon
to sea, tent to diaspora
We loved every soil we set foot on
We even loved our tent poles, scratched love-
hearts and cupid's arrows into them
Made them into homelands for the vagrant sun,
so at night she wouldn't sleep alone

What would you have done, Grandfather, what
would you have done?
Snipers shot the guy ropes of our tents and we're
still journeying on

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Translated from Arabic by Katharine Halls.

Mohamad Abdul Monaem is a Syrian poet, writer, and publisher of Palestinian origin. He founded his publishing house in 1996 and published several collections of poems. After his home in Aleppo was demolished in the civil war, he fled with his family and found refuge in Slovenia.





Scattered Around the World

Etaf Abdulrahman

Allow me to introduce myself; I am Etaf Abdulrahman, a sixty-four-year-old Palestinian hailing from the Gaza Strip. My journey began in a large and loving family, where I held the esteemed position of the eldest among twelve siblings—eight sisters and four brothers. In the absence of the harrowing realities of the military occupation, I would proudly declare that my life, surrounded by family, was truly beautiful.

My father was a well-travelled man, working as a certified photographer for the British-Indian International Emergency Forces during the British Mandate in Palestine. This experience led him to learn English and Hindi. Later, he established his own studio in the Gaza Strip, becoming one of the leading photographers, gaining local recognition and fame for his remarkable skills. In the old days, my father earned the endearing nickname “the father of the girls” after my mother gave birth to five daughters in succession, without a single boy. During the time of war, having a son held a special significance because it meant having a supporting breadwinner and protector, a role that I easily filled until my mother finally gave birth to my first brother, followed by three more.

Life was blissfully uncomplicated. After school, I would eagerly head to my father's studio every day, taking on the responsibility of package deliveries, organising appointments with clients and managing bookings for significant events, be it official gatherings like conferences with the UN or joyous celebrations like weddings, engagements, and graduations. Amidst this bustling environment, the rooftop of our house became my favourite sanctuary. It was there that I delved into the art of developing photos in the darkroom, witnessing the faces of strangers come to life through the magical process. My father wore his heart on his sleeve and loved my mother unconditionally. Despite societal pressures to consider marrying another woman due to my mother giving birth to baby girls, he vehemently refused to entertain such thoughts. He ardently defended her, asserting that the gender of a child was determined by the man, and he would never allow anyone else to raise his beloved children. Their story carved my image of love, the only perception I held when I married at the tender age of seventeen to a relative twelve years my senior. He was a handsome man, visiting his family from Libya, where he worked. However,



when the 1967 war erupted, he was studying in Egypt and lost his resident status in Palestine. The political reality of those times eluded my young mind, and I could not fathom the implications it would have on our lives. Eventually, we embarked on a journey together in another troubled country—Libya.

In 1976, as I settled into our new home, the promise of continuing my education beckoned, but that dream soon faded when I welcomed my first child, followed by five more over the course of thirteen years. Despite the shifting trajectory, I made it a point to take my six children—three girls and three boys—to Palestine every summer, ensuring they stayed connected

to their roots and culture. Life in Libya became increasingly arduous after the Lockerbie crisis, with the country under siege. In this challenging environment, I had to run my own business from home as a hair stylist and clothes designer to support my family and feel somewhat economically independent. While I cherished wonderful memories with my children, the distance from my family left me feeling constrained by a profound sense of loneliness.

During the early nineties, the signing of the Oslo Accords had a profound impact, sending shockwaves throughout the Arab world, particularly among Palestinian refugees living in exile. In a defiant gesture to protest the accords and

demonstrate disapproval of the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) decision to sign with Israel, Gaddafi expelled around 30,000 Palestinians. His message was clear: The accords would not bring any benefits to the Palestinians, nor would they grant millions in exile the right to return.

Regrettably, even if Gaddafi's point held some truth, his actions came at the expense of defenceless refugees. Thousands found themselves stranded at the borders between Egypt and Libya, with the powerless PLO unable to extend aid. The dire situation led to our expulsion from Libya in 1995. As a consequence, only my children and I could return to Gaza, possessing Palestin-

ian national IDs. However, my husband stayed behind with the exceptional approval of the Libyan authorities after Israel nullified his right to reside in Palestine following the 1967 war. For eight long years, we were separated, and then finally, when the father of my children was granted family reunification by Israel to join us, our marriage fell apart.

Once again, I found myself embarking on a new journey, this time as a single mother raising six children with no job or academic qualifications. With the support of my family, I mustered the courage to enrol in university and pursue studies in Community Development. Commencing my education at the age of thirty-eight while shoul-

dering the responsibilities of caring for my six children, was undeniably tough. Nevertheless, fortune smiled upon me as my two older children also attended the university at the same time, creating a time of both extreme adversity and familial unity. In this challenging period, my children played a pivotal role in empowering me to be the best student I could be. After my lectures, they eagerly assisted me with assignments, tackling subjects like English, Economics, and Calculus together. Juggling a job and the responsibilities as a parent, I persevered and successfully graduated in five years. This achievement stands as a cherished milestone, symbolising a triumphant victory over adversity.

Following Hamas' victory and subsequent rule of the Gaza Strip in 2006, life took a devastating turn for us. The region bore the brunt of successive wars, enduring relentless Israeli bombings that targeted buildings, streets, institutions, and innocent lives. Basic necessities became scarce; there was no drinkable water, electricity, gas, infrastructure, or job opportunities. For the past fifteen years, the Gaza Strip has been stifled by a suffocating siege, leaving its inhabitants in a miserable state. Amidst the hardships, a glimmer of hope emerged as my daughters were granted scholarships to study abroad, offering them a chance to build their careers in safer environments. Likewise, my three sons got married and found their paths outside Gaza. I was finally able to reunite with my middle son in Slovenia far from the horrors of war. Once granted asylum and having established himself in Slovenia, my son took the necessary steps to reunite our family. Thus, on the 13th of June 2021, his wife and children and I arrived in Slovenia, ready to begin a new chapter in our lives. However, finding suitable housing for a family of five proved to be a challenging task. Eventually, we found an apartment in the picturesque town of Vrhnika, located about 30 km away from the capital, Ljubljana.

The initial days were riddled with difficulties as we encountered language barriers, cultural differences, and the need to integrate into a society that was foreign to us. We were faced with diverse customs, traditions, and religious practices that demanded our understanding and adaptation. Nevertheless, with the passage of time, we gradually adapted, and life began to ease its grip on us. Being an elderly individual, I faced

specific challenges with language acquisition. Unfortunately, the government only provides language courses for individuals below the age of sixty, leaving me without official support in this regard. Instead, I received modest financial aid, which proved insufficient for a decent life. Nonetheless, I am determined to overcome my fear of speaking Slovenian, despite its complexity. I navigate the city independently, utilising public transportation and even mastering the use of Google Maps to guide me through unfamiliar streets.

In an intriguing twist of fate, we found an unexpected connection in Slovenia. A family friend, a Slovenian photographer, visited the Gaza Strip for a few weeks after the Israeli war in 2014, which lasted for fifty-three days, and he had experienced first-hand the challenges faced by the people, their land, and their culture. He was very young at the time, and we had bid him farewell when he returned to Slovenia, never imagining that our paths would cross again. The idea of leaving Palestine and seeking asylum in a country previously unknown to me was beyond my wildest dreams. On a fortuitous day in Ljubljana, fate reunited us at a daily centre for refugees. As we stood face to face, uncertain of each other's identity, our conversation unfolded like a tapestry of long-lost connections:

Me: Have you ever visited the Gaza Strip?

Jošt: Yes!

Me: Do you happen to know a girl named Ebaa?

Jošt: Yes!

Me: And what about a young man named Ahmed?

Jošt: Ah, yes! I know Mido!

Me: Well, then, you should know that I am their mother.

Jošt: Really? This is unbelievable! When did you arrive in Slovenia?

Me: It's been three months.

Jošt: Why didn't you tell me?

As we met unexpectedly, the moment was charged with emotion, and the joy of finding each other amidst unfamiliar surroundings was palpable. The encounter served as a reminder of the profound ties that can bind people across borders and distances.

I earnestly hope that the Slovenian government will recognise the importance of supporting the

elderly and extend language courses to facilitate their integration into Slovenian society. Our decision to leave our homeland was not a voluntary one; rather, it was a desperate attempt to escape the ravages of war, injustice, and the unbearable conditions we faced. We carry the weight of the unjust world's double standards, which often overlook the struggles of the oppressed. Numerous Palestinian families are grappling with the heart-wrenching reality of having their children seek refuge in different parts of the world. Tragically, many young souls have lost their lives attempting perilous journeys by sea or through treacherous forests, all in pursuit of finding safety in Europe. I, too, felt the overwhelming anguish and fear that gripped my heart as my son embarked on a perilous journey in search of asylum, a quest for safety above all else.

The pain of countless Palestinian families is immeasurable, as their children face immense dangers and uncertainties while seeking a safe haven. The world needs to recognise and address this humanitarian crisis with empathy and compassion, ensuring that every person fleeing from conflict and persecution finds the sanctuary they so desperately seek.

In an ideal world, global leaders would take a resolute stance on the cause of Palestine, just as they do in other matters of injustice, such as their opposition to Putin and Russia. The issues of injustice are interconnected, and the pursuit of a fair and equitable world should unite us all. My heartfelt wish is for peace to reign over the earth, for wars to cease, for immigrants to return to their stolen homelands, and for the entire world to find solace in peace and security. May compassion, empathy, and understanding guide our path towards a better tomorrow.

Etaf Abdelrahman worked as a social worker at a high school in the Gaza Strip. Fleeing scarcity and war, she found refuge in Slovenia, where she currently resides.





A Letter from a Migrant to Himself

Desmond Happy

Dear me,

Right now, I know it's really, really hard. You're probably staring at yourself at this moment and crying your eyes out asking yourself many questions such as: "Why did I do this? This is not how I imagined". I'm here to tell you that you're doing this for the past me and probably preparing a better future me. We have faith in you, and we know it's very hard. We want you to remember the time when you took your first step all by yourself. Remember how scared you were? We want you to think about it now for that's some of the best memories you have ever had. It would have never been possible if you hadn't taken the chance and done it alone. It's going to be okay, and it's going to be worth it. We love you and want you to know that we love all the things you're doing, you're strong and brave for doing the things you're doing. Hang on in there and make a big difference between your childhood self and present self. Always remember that you must go through darkness to appreciate the light that awaits you.

We love you.

Monologue in Room 105

Afran Ahmadi

I was a little boy when my family moved to Sweden. We lived there for five years. We lived together our entire lives, mama, papa, my brothers, and sisters. I finished my third grade there and visited the same elementary school as my sisters, while my parents and older brother all had work in the neighbourhood where we lived. Then immigration officers caught us twelve years ago and deported us back to Syria. It was just before the civil war broke out. They deported us all the way back to Kurdistan, a place I don't even remember from my childhood because I was just over three years old when we left. Ever since, my goal has been to go back to Sweden, back to the only life I've known.

Just because I was not born in Sweden, all of a sudden people think I will take, not make, and not be useful to society. I won't take from anyone, I just want to return to my own life. I want to return to help develop the country I grew up in. They can deport me how many times they want, my goal will always be to return to Sweden, to a place where I grew up, where I have friends, where I've left my life. I was proud to say I was Swedish, and I know one day I will be able to say it again. I'm Swedish. It has taken me twelve years of trying to come back so far, but I know one day I will make it. I know no other life.

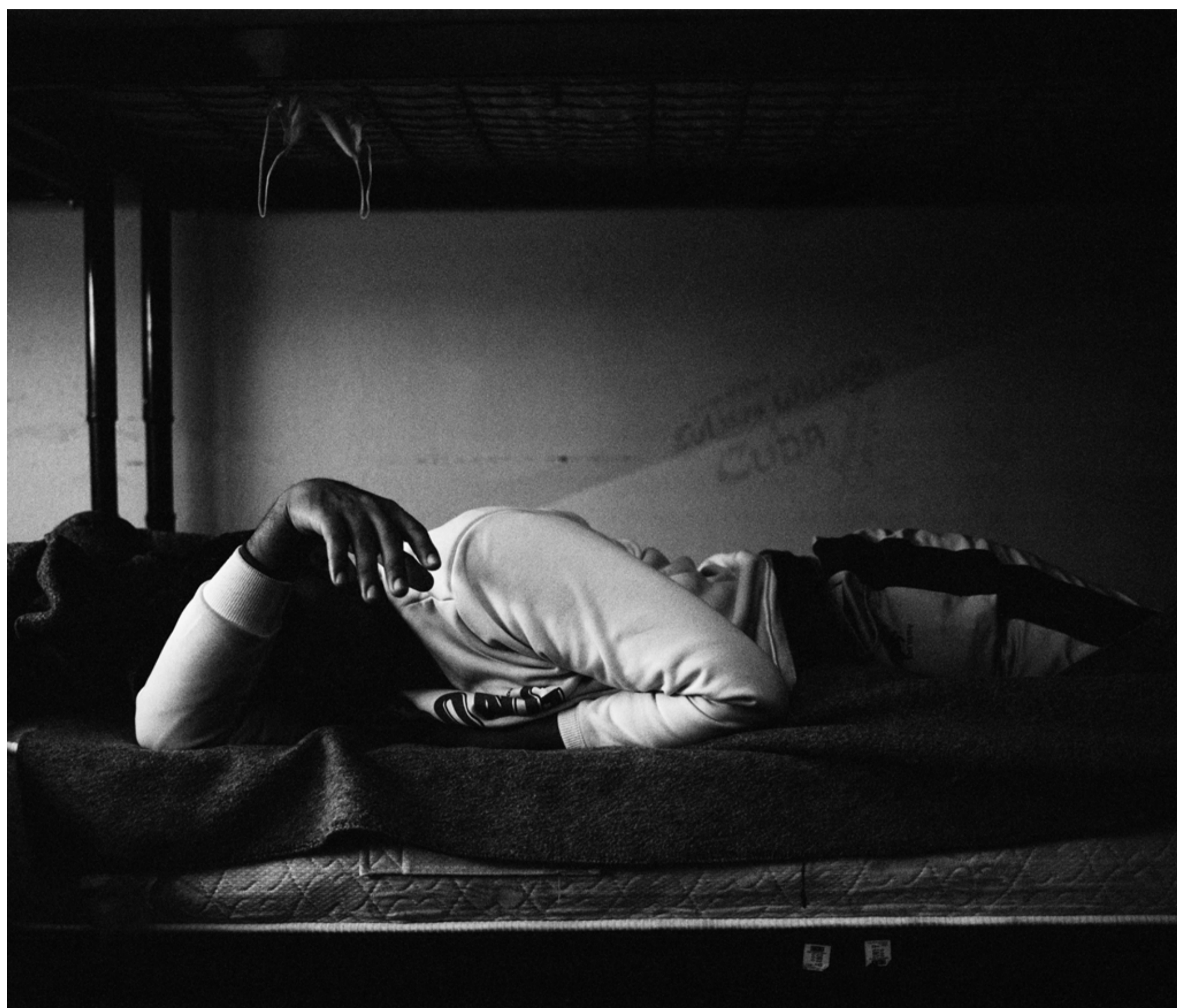
Afran Ahmadi is a Kurdish asylum seeker who was born in Syria but grew up in Sweden.

I know no other life.



New Definition, Different Policy: Refugee or Human?

Mohamad Abdul Monaem



Those working in governmental or non-governmental organisations know that a *refugee* is an expression describing someone who has crossed the borders from one country to another either in search of protection or looking for a better life. This standard definition is used within legal and political institutions that operate surrounded by the wall of international law, and it is often even used by those interested in painting the issue of migration and asylum as an exclusively economic one or perhaps, at a stretch, a humanitarian one.

I would like to broaden this picture a little here, just to show that an indirect reason for viewing refugees as originating from Third World countries and moving towards the developed world (Europe) is the idea and strategy of Orientalism. For about two hundred years, the latter has worked to paint societies in the Third World as backward and unable to develop while presenting the developed world as one of ideals, morals, rights and freedoms. This created a perception that the East and West operated in different ages, and letting the imagination on both sides roam widely, even though they were tackling the same issue. The idea of migration or asylum started before the wars broke out in the countries of the Middle East; it originated in pursuing the goal of arriving in the developed world and living in it, an idea that created in people a very negative image of their own societies as well as a diametrically opposite picture of the West, which they imagined as paradise.

The moment a refugee enters the Eurozone or the European Union, they experience a civilisational shock, a consequence of their prior belief that they are from a backward country. Dealing with modern technology becomes frustrating, and the frustration is further aggravated by bureaucracy and the administrative complexities of European life. We are, at this point, faced with two levels of relationships: the first is the relationship between the refugee and the host country, which with its administrative and philosophical structure determines the refugee's class and social position. The second relationship is one of the new environment towards the refugee, and this usually comes from a higher social standing on which the environment practices its natural cultural activities and the less developed infrastructure of the migrant, unfamiliar with the environment's laws and existing social relations.

This is different from the linguistic barrier that separates them and which may last long years before refugee master the language sufficiently to be able to convey their opinions or desires, or what they want in the new society. The question of integration into the new society thus becomes nothing more than an opportunity for the refugee to find work or social assistance in tending to their essential life needs. The moment these needs are met, the refugee will rush directly to search for an identity they want for their life and participate in cultural life beyond the opportunities offered occasionally to present their culture through cooking shows or concerts which, despite allowing them to express themselves and their cultural particularity, leave them feeling isolated, the direct consequence of which is a society closed to immigrants and refugees.

Of course, it is not easy to overcome all these walls and create circumstances ideal for working with the situation, that is, asylum and migration. I do believe, however, that it is upon us to understand the nature of this new psychological structure and to work with it as if it didn't require a special approach—and to look at refugees as full-fledged members of society. Look at nature, for example, to see if there are possibilities to derive new ideas from it. To give an example, if we look at migratory birds (that travel) from west to east or the other way round, perhaps we will notice a detour in their path, adjustments in how they build their nests, or a shift in the language they use to communicate with endemic birds. This proposal itself might appear to be very naïve because animals, as we people believe, do not have cultural, moral, political, or economic depth. However, we also do not see them having demarcation lines that would make their summer or winter movements impossible or exceedingly difficult, requiring papers and visas. Turning to history, we soon discover that no one's roots belong to a particular nation or a particular state. Throughout history, we have been moving among each other, mixing through migration, war, trade ... The problem I am talking about here is the definition of a refugee: one who is not a citizen, but rather a human being who has crossed closed borders to enter a new society, even if—in time—they will acquire papers similar to those of a citizen. And yet, they remain a foreigner and are viewed as such even generations later. It surprises me that a car, a Mercedes or a Fiat, or any other brand becomes

a *citizen* within minutes and circulates the streets of a new country, carrying an identification card. Or how we eat Chinese rice or Indian curry, or English stew and call it delicious. It seems that if were a commodity, it would be easier for us than to remain a human being with a brain and a heart. So, do we perhaps need a new definition here for a refugee? I would insist, we should simply be called human beings instead.

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Translated from Arabic by Barbara Skubic.

**We
should
simply
be called
human
beings
instead.**

Looking for the Karl Marx of the 21st Century

Zied Abdellaoui

You have to be good.
You have to be quiet in order to be good.

No political participation.
No attending of demonstrations.

If you are born a migrant, the system forces you to be silent.

Therefore, we have to look at the theories of class struggle once again. We are born into our situation and cannot become anything we want. It's a closed club. The son of a doctor will become a doctor. The son of a migrant will be a migrant. Your situation is the same, no matter what country you end up in—nothing has changed for me whether I was in Greece, Austria, Switzerland, or

France. After years of living precariously in Europe, I know that there is no point in discussing only racism, but class—the class of migrants and displaced people, and of the *sans-papier*.

The story and history of migration in Europe is the story of its past. And it will definitely be the story of its future. Europe was built on immigration, and it will continue to thrive and depend on migrants, their workforce, their culture, and even their philosophy. The world will continue to migrate, and we will continue to migrate with it. It doesn't take me much time to decide to hit the road. For a migrant to move from country to country is like for a journalist to go from topic to topic. I will go wherever I feel is the safest, wherever I feel I will find my sense of community. The notion of time and space has become very distorted since I decided to flee my country five years ago. The notion of time and space is very relative for all of us, migrants.

Regardless of the border regimes and politicians trying to stop migration into Europe, the old

continent today needs people, many without papers, to fill the gaps in the labour market and do the dirty jobs that no one else will do and work endless hours to ensure the comfort of *the citizens*. It's in the interest of the state and of the entire Europe to have a class of migrants, a class of tired people.

The state wants to keep us tired
in order to keep us silent.

Silent people don't revolt. But I refuse to be silent.

That is why we have to find the Karl Marx of the 21st century.

Editors

Zied Abdellaoui
Jošt Franko

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Photo Editor

Etaf Abdelrahman

Proofreading

Manca Gašperšič

Images

Jošt Franko

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