

**“We were persecuted in our home countries,
now we are persecuted here!”**

N., from Eritrea
23rd of May 2011, Komunisia

N. spent a very long time in the mountains of Igoumenitsa. With 10 months he belongs to the experienced men on the mountain. He has been deported from Italy several times. Still he never lost his hope that one day he will get out. “I promise to see you in a better place,” N. says and his eyes are full of energy.

How long are you in Igoumenitsa?

In Komunisia here? I have longer than ten months. More than ten months here!

What did you expect from coming here to Igoumenitsa?

You know, the reason for my coming to Komunisia, I am suffering too much bad in this country. I need to leave this country. For this reason I came to Komunisia. Unfortunately, during these days we are suffering from a very bad situation: from the police and from the racist people, from the civil society here in Komunisia.

It was better ten months before compared to now, how was it?

Before, we were living in a better situation but now during these days we are living a very bad situation. We are suffering. Even the food ... it is too much difficult for us to get food. For example, if you want to get food from the supermarket the police they will arrest you and they will take all the food from you, which you buy it from supermarket and throw it into *skoupidia* (Greek: rubbish). Second, they will send you immediately to the prison.

Just because you wanted to take food?

Yeah, only for food. This is our problem.

What do you eat then?

You know, just now here there are some people with us they have two days / one and half day that they never eat at all. They never eat at all! For example, I have my friend yesterday since morning time until night time at one o'clock the police they never give him a chance... by secret ways they want to enter the town so that they get some food. They never eat for one day or one day and half.

How difficult is it to collect the money to buy food?

All of us we have no money at all, you know. We collect this money by sharing everyone one Euro, 50 Cent, 20 Cent. We collect all this money so that to give it to somebody to go to the supermarket. To bring to us food or to go to the bakery to bring for us bread. Before two days we were waiting for our friends here to bring us food. We are still waiting for him, but unfortunately he never came. Today at morning time he called us from the prison. He says, that I am in the prison. The police they will send him to prison directly from the supermarket and they

took all the things he bought and they throw it in the skoupidia.

Also, there was an old man with us, his name is Ahmad, this guy at morning he can see but at night-time he cannot see at all. He becomes almost blind. This old man he went to the supermarket to buy milk. When he entered the supermarket the police came to him and they said: 'Put all the things down. Don't take anything from the supermarket!' Immediately they took him from the supermarket and send him to prison. Just now they took him to another prison - from Komunisia to Florina. In Florina the police they said to him: 'We don't have any money for your transport. Until now he is walking with his foot. Yesterday he called us. He said there are so many dogs, they follow him and they want to bite him. He said that, it is too much difficult for him to come back to Komunisia.

You yourself, you have also been arrested?

Yes, I myself two times I have been arrested. One day they arrested me from the bakery. I take bread from the baker and the police they will send me. And another time I needed to go to the hospital. Also the police saw me. I left the hospital...also they will send me to the prison.

Can you describe this experience that you walked from Florina until Komunisia?

Unfortunately when the police send me to Florina, when they take a life from Florina I have no any money for transportation. Four days I come on foot from Kasarakasia. Kasarakasia exactly this is a small village in Florina and nearly of Yugoslavia and Albania. We are three persons. We come from Florina until Ioannena four days on foot.

What do you suggest as a solution?

We are suffering from very bad situation. No one can eat. Now we are arrested in mountain. We stay in the mountain. Just like the monkey. For 20 days or 21 days in mountains. Now, there is too much difficulties for us. It is too much difficult for us to go buy food from supermarket. I hope from the police, that they allow us to go one hour or two hours to supermarket to take food, no problem. But just now we are too afraid to go to supermarket. I hope that the police give us the chance just one hours or two hours to get food from supermarket.

I myself I am one from the black people. Our problem, our coming here to Komunisia is only for to leave this country. You know that the situation in this country is too much bad. We are in need to go from here. We are really persecuted in our home countries. The life, which you get it here in Greek is too much bad with us. Worse than Third World country. We were persecuted but were living in very good situation, in very good situation before. Even the refugees whom they are living in Third World countries they are living in very good situation. Here we are living just like animals. Like animals! There is no human rights here. The police will never respect human rights. At last god he created all of us - even black people and white people. At last all of us god created us. It is supposed to be. The Greek police they will know that. We are human beings like them. But the police people and the racist people they never respect the human rights here.

I myself I have been as a refugee in Sudan. I left from my country because I have very big problem there. I am condemned to death at the international court in my home country. For this reason I escape. I came another country. I seek asylum with United

Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. I have been living in camp, open camp. I am studying in this country which I seek asylum for six years. Even the university, I studied in university there. I am graduated as electrical engineer. I have worked in this country for three years and half. And despite of the fact that we have been suffering from a little problems, we didn't feel one day that we are persecuted. We consider our selves just like the civilians of this country. See the deals in Third World country and see the deals in Europe here. According to my own imagination, I don't think Greece is Europe. I hope to be in Third World country. I hope that I will be deported in Third World country. We are really persecuted people in our homes. Until here they are following us. We escaped from our country because of persecution, but also we are suffering from other things here.

We have our friend he die here. Nearly to port here. But unfortunately the police they allow the driver which he kill my friend to go. No problem? Why did they allow the driver go? This guy which he is dead, he is not human being? He is human being. But here there is no human rights. You know that. Why the police they allow this driver go? He killed our friend here. We are suffering from so many problems here. We are really persecuted people here. We are suffering from very bad persecution in our home country and in Greece country!

My friend he died. He needed to cross the road. The driver he shoot him by car; he accident with him by car. He died. He died here and we go to the police, to the asfalia to explain to them. We gave them the number of the car. We said to them this is the car. They take fiche. He was one of our friends. The police he said to us: 'Ok, no

problem. Wait!' We wait two days, three days... Even we call somebody, he come from Athens representing the UNHCR in Greece. He come here and he knows that...

Look! I am talking to you now and see the people the police is following them. Now, now the police are following them.

This guy that he is dead, he is from Sudan. We call also someone who is working for the embassy of Sudan. He come here and he talk to us, he talk to the police. We took this guy, which he is dead from Komunisia to Ioannena and we took him to the grave in Ioannena. We buy it 2.500 for him. 2.500 Euro so that to give us chance to put him here in Ioannena – in Greece! We made a sharing all of us. We buy it 2.500 Euro from the government of Greece.

Why do you think did the police not find the driver?

I am not talking by myself. I am talking representative for all immigrants, I mean from various countries: Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea... all... Marrocco, Algeria... all of them. Maybe this happened to somebody who is from Sudan, but this could happen for me, for another person. The police here never respect us. We respect the police and we respect the rules of the police. But the police will never respect us!

Does this make you loose hope, or make you think that you want to go back?

According to my imagination, the police they do this, because they need us to go back to our home country. But we are persecuted in our home country. If we are not persecuted in our home country can we stay here on the mountain just like monkeys? Even if

the monkey sometimes leaves the mountain, here the police never allows us! We are really persecuted people in our home country. The police they maybe need us to go from Greece to return back to our home country. If we are not really persecuted person in our home country why we stay in the mountain? Immediately we would return back to our home country.

What are your biggest fears?

The biggest fear, first, we have from the prison. See, see now, you see the police following some people, you see? ... Very fear for us prison! They send us to prison. Yes, we know ourselves, that we enter without documents. All the police will give us *hartia* (Greek: paper, it is a deportation order valid for 30 days). The police will give you Hartia for one month, two months, three months...to leave this country. If today you come out of the prison and the police catches you in same day, immediately they will send you again to prison. Here, there is no any rule here. There is no any rule here!

What do you wish?

For me, for everyone living here in Greece not only for us here on the mountain, all the ones living here in various towns in Greece, I hope that to leave this country, to go from this country! Because I am sure, even the people, who are now living in Athens are in a bad situation. You know, I hear very bad information about Athens. I heard very bad information. Just now, just during these days the racist they will make so many problems with the immigrants people or with the refugees people in Athens, in Komunisia, in various country. For me I wish that, all those people that they are immigrants, they leave this

country out. This is my hoping to them.

How can you protect yourselves?

Here we have not any protection. Everyone he protect himself. Three weeks ago there is a great demonstration here. The racist they make a demonstration here against us. And we know that there is a demonstration against us and we have some other people form another organization they help us, they come here and they tell us: 'Today racist people they will make a demonstration against you. Don't go down near control so as to join yourselves with them. Maybe they will make problem with you.' We respect the saying of the organisation. We did not go to them. We stay on the mountain. There are only some people of us they are still playing football down. We didn't join the Greeks, but the racist they come to the mountain and they fight with us. They throw us by stones and despite of the fact that the police is supposed to protect us, the police they will be with the civilians of Greece against us.

There is no any protection for us here! Everyone protects himself. Now we are living in mountain. We are living in mountain! The snakes living with us, the rats living with us, the scorpions living with us. Believe me, when the night-time comes we are never able to sleep. First, we are afraid from the police. Second, we are afraid from the second police. Second police it means: the snakes, the scorpions, the rats and all the other animals living with us here on the mountain. From 8 o'clock in the night-time until 7 o'clock in the morning time, we are not sleeping at all. Maybe in the morning hours we will get one hours or two hours of sleep. But the rest of the day...no we are never sleep at all. We are watching what happens with the

police. We expect the police. We really feel persecution here. Of the police... We are afraid from the police, we are afraid from the asfalia (Greek: civil police). We expect them at any time on the mountain.

What is your worst thing you experience here?

There are so many people, if you see them they are youngest people, but because of the hunger, the bad situation, never sleeping, they are destroyed already. They become just like old men, because they are thinking, they are afraid of the police, they are afraid from the very bad situation here.

Where do you want to go, in which country?

I want to go British, German, Sweden or Norway, because these are progressing countries. We will get human rights there. We will get good deal there, I think. We are feeling there are human rights in various countries, but here in Greece... We were living better in Africa! Better than Greece. Greece is too much bad!

What do you wish from the Greek people?

I know they don't want us. I said to you, they don't want us to stay in their home country. And we don't want to stay in Greece. We come here so that to leave this country. First, we come from our home country because we are persecuted people in our home country. We escape from the persecution in our home country and we come here to Greece and we get the persecution again – there is real persecution in front of us. How should we seek asylum in Greece? I can't seek asylum in Greece! I saw so, so many

persons who seek for asylum in Greece, but the government in Greece they give you only a Red Card. Sometimes I saw that the police they will take the red card of some people, they will torn it and they will send him to the prison. It means that this red card do nothing for you, can never protect you. How to get asylum here?

We have no house, we live just like homeless people. Homeless people in Africa, in Third World country, better than us! Better than us in Greece.

What I need from the Greeks: We don't want to stay with you in Greece. All of us... Thus, the only thing that we need is to allow us to go from your home country. Only this I need from you. Because the Greek people they never respect the human rights.

Did ever a racist attack you?

Two times. Two times, and so many times I escape from them. So many times I escape from them. And now I have someone who is my friend. He is from Somalia. The racist they attacked him inside the town and they broke his mouth. Just now he is in hospital. He went to Athens to cure himself.

Are you trying to go to get food at the moment?

No, I am afraid. I am afraid I don't try every day to go. You know when night time arrives, immediately I am not going to go. Not at morning time. Because we have no protection! Even if the police they sometimes they saw people beating you they are just watching.

And you try every day to go to Italy?

Every day I try. Every day. Since morning time until night time I am trying. If I get a chance, I will go! Four times they deported me from Italy.

And we have so many people here they deport them 5 times, 6 times. When they deport you, they will put you in the prison here. Then they will send you to a prison far away. Why they send us to prison? They never want to give us travel documents. They don't want to give us documents to leave their country by legal way. We are in need to go by illegal way. If you go by illegal way, if the Italian government, - meaning the Italian police - they saw you and deport you to Greece, here the government, the police government, they will send you to the prison. Sometimes you spent 2 months, 3 months in prison. There is no rule! Sometimes you spent 1 day, 2 days. Then they will give you free to go. But here there is no rule. There is no law. Sometimes you spend 6 months; sometimes you spend 7 months. According to the law of the police; according to their moods.

There are people here that have been deported from other European countries?

More! We have more. Just now there is two people who have been deported 5 months ago from Belgium. Also, did you know France? They deport many people from France before. 9 months ago.

Is there something that makes you happy?

I myself will be happy when I leave from Greece - when I leave from Greece, when I leave from Komunisia! But this town I never forget it because I am living very difficult life in this town.

Thank you!

more information: <http://infomobile.w2eu.net>