

**SEARCHING HOME -
HOMES LOST**



*Ten people who lost what was their home to war,
conflict, and other life-threatening conditions...*

*Ten people who were forced to escape and who
decided to try to search and create another home
somewhere else in safety and peace...*

*Ten people, who are mothers, fathers, brothers,
sisters and children of someone...*

*Ten people with talents, professions, passions
and dreams...*

Ten people living in Greece for some moments...

Ten people without a shelter...

*And one person, who lost his home during the
economic crisis in Greece.*



no home

The loss of 'home' in one country combined with the current lack of a 'home' in the broader sense in Greece but also in its simple meaning as a shelter, for displaced people have multiple implications on their daily life, their wellbeing and the transformation of their identities.

Repressive migration policies as implemented at the external borders of Europe, may destroy even the last sense of what each understands as being somewhere at home. But the images and feelings connected to the home left behind or the imaginary, the idealised or even utopian home that may never have existed, are being kept alive in peoples hearts with extraordinary care and cannot be taken away.

While millions of aid, have been flowing into Greece amongst others for the accommodation of the people arriving at the European shores, both Greece and indirectly the EU are not able to offer a dignified shelter.

At the same time *uprooted* and *en route*, while searching safety, peace and a spark of future, most refugees in Greece face displacement and inhuman living conditions from the very first moment they put their steps on what some with false pride call European territory. Many times this corresponds *de facto* to the lack of a dignified and safe shelter for weeks if not months. Sometimes, it even means

sleeping rough and without anything while being exposed to all kinds of dangers, like violence and exploitation.

In the beginning of 2018, still hundreds of refugees – among them many children, pregnant ladies, elderly, disabled, sick and other vulnerable persons - are living in summer tents in the so-called hotspots on the Aegean Islands while it is winter. It is unknown how many live unofficially in the mass container camps on the mainland lacking access to any support services, social benefits and even food and how many try to survive the cold in abandoned construction sites, fabrics and old ruins; or simply, on the streets and in public parks and squares.

'Without a home' feel not only the ones who are dumped in dehumanizing precarious conditions in camps far from the local society, but also the ones completely excluded, the *clandestines*, who take other paths and are not yet identified and registered, who have not yet the permit to move.

The ruling system tries to impose a regime of control, containment, the selection of people in the 'wanted' and the 'unwanted' and finally the deportation of the latter. It punishes the ones who don't obey the rules of the state with further exclusion, pushing them at the margins of the urban societies; creating borders in the cities.

A host country, which cannot host; torn apart by the struggle to survive the harsh austerity measures imposed by the Troikas since the beginning of the economic crisis, Greece in reality remains a transit for most displaced people. In fact, in these times also more and more Greeks are ending up on the streets without a shelter. There are no funds for these people – the ones who were kicked out of the ruling system. In this light, it is no wonder, that the lack of future prospects and of any kind of support - such as a shelter - for people who finally get the right to stay, pushes them also out and to the North of the continent and along with them, many Greeks leave too.

It is in the cities, where all these people try to develop alternative strategies to survive for the moment, where they continue their struggles for the right to stay and freedom of movement at the same time. Where workers struggle for equal opportunities against any form of discrimination.

Let's stand together! Let's eat together! Let's live together!

Reclaim the streets, reclaim the cities!

w2eu

* In the following, names have been changed where requested.



Louis, student of social sciences

I am 22 years old. I am a good football player. In my future I wish to study human rights law in order to help other people. Also I think it is good for me because I am good in talking. But my real dream is to become a famous football player and play with Paul Pogba.

What I miss from my home is my mother, because she died when I was small. I carry her photo with me. Also my father died. He wanted me to play football.

Since I left my country I have no home. In Greece it is now 4 or 5 months I am homeless in Athens. I came without permit from Lesbos Island. I could not live there longer in the tent. Then I managed to transfer my case here and I applied for asylum. I tried a lot to find a place. I went to many organisations. They gave me the asylum seekers card. Still I sleep in the park.

Sometimes I walk around in the nights when it is very cold. I don't feel safe there. I sleep there alone.

Home is where I am free.

Yasmin, home-maker and caring mother

I studied 6 years in school. I love cooking. What I am most proud of is the upbringing of my children.

I am uprooted and homeless since three years now – ever since we had to flee home. Most of the times I am worried and I think how long we will have to survive like this on the way without knowing when we will arrive. I spend all my time thinking.

My dream is to be with all my family together and to see my husband again.

Home means stability.

Kawa, construction worker and father

I am a gifted football player.

Before we had to leave home, I was also very proud of my work, but now I do not have work anymore. We do not have anything anymore. Just ourselves.

I cannot express in words what meaning 'home' has to me, but it is a beautiful thing in my thoughts.

My family and me; we have lived all our lives in refugee camps, but we are really homeless since three years now since we escaped Kurdistan. We are double homeless because we had to escape home and are left in a world in between. We haven't arrived. But we are also homeless, meaning really without a house.

We have been trying to find accommodation in Athens, but the camps don't accept us, and the organisations tell us we need to wait for a flat. We have no

money and no place. Friends pay a room for us for now. But what will be tomorrow? The only thing of great value is my family and I live for them and with them every day.

My dream is to see my family in a house where they feel home, because they have been tortured by the bad living conditions we suffer so much until today.

Nila, painter, student of English language and mother of three kids

I am a painter and a student of English language. I can draw very beautiful things. The thing I most proud of is my family.

I am homeless now since two months. I arrived after many difficulties to Greece. Since I am in Athens I try to register for asylum. But it is very difficult. I called Skype many times without success. As I have no papers, I also have no place to stay. Some people help my kids and me, so we are their guests. But we don't know for

how long this will be an option and we always feel bad to bother them. The biggest problem is that I have three kids and they have needs. There are expenses I need to cover and I have no house, no money and nothing.

Home for me is half of my life.

My dream is to finally settle down with my family and to hang my paintings on my own walls.

Mohammed, underage pupil who wants to continue his studies

I am 16 years old. In my country I studied English and Arabic. I want to go to school. But I have no home and no support here.

I am proud to be alive, because it's difficult to live.

I am one and half month homeless in Athens. Before I was in a camp for minors in Lesbos. My sister is in Norway. I stopped

the family reunification when I was in Lesbos because it took so many months. I decided to ask for asylum in Greece.

The only support I have is the food I take one time daily in an organization in Exarhia. And some friends let me sleep at their homes when it's very cold. When you are the night at the street you cannot sleep. Just after 2 o'clock you can take a little rest. Then in the morning you wake up and see the other people going to work, to school. In this moment I ask myself what is my future.

Sometimes I think to go to my country and die there. I have pain in my body, because the Jihadists in my country tortured me. When it's cold in the street, this pain is more intensive.

My dream is to help other people and my family. I dream to live in Germany. In my country people were saying that Germany is a good country. I also like Germany because of the world cup. I am good

playing football. I also sing very nice and play guitar. In the minors home I used to sing.

Home are the places to sleep, to take rest, take a shower, cook, and play games.

Abdella, construction worker

My profession in Somalia was to build homes. I worked like a builder. I am proud that this was my first job. My dream is to be an engineer and live in France.

Since 1 month I am homeless. I was living before in a tent in the hot spot of Samos. The situation there was very bad. This was the reason I left. Psychologically my situation was very bad. This was also the reason why I missed my interview in the beginning of December.

Sleeping in the street is not safe. Sometimes people attack me because of my colour or maybe also for other reasons.

Actually, I really don't know why... But most of the times I cannot sleep at night.

My psychology is very bad. I had very bad experiences of violence in my country. During the day I move from one square to the other. Then I go to the organizations to find food and clothes.

My priority now is to find a shelter and also to find a way to make the interview I missed. I need the help of a psychologist and a lawyer.

Home is the first step in life. If you have a home and food you can live.

Giorgos, DJ

I am 43 years old and more than three years without a home. Family problems forced me to the street. I felt more security in the streets than in my home. Because of the long lasting crisis in Greece, I cannot find a job. I just worked a few months in a program for jobless people.

There is no help from the state. Not just for me but also for many other people. Just friends and organizations support us.

There is no change if I go to a place for the homeless. They ask for so many papers. It can take many months until you get a bed there.

The situation in the streets is very difficult. You have to be very hard to survive. In the night you don't sleep, really. You are always on alert. You don't know the people around you. They are different kinds of people than the ones you see during the day.

I live now in an abandoned house together with other homeless people, Greeks and foreigners. During the day I try to go to places, which are warm. If I have some money I go to a coffee shop and stay there for some hours and I think.

My dream is to be healthy, to find a job, to solve my family problems and to find a home again. I also think to write a book about the situation as a homeless person.

I will never forget these years in the streets. The homeless people are not “lost ships” (χαμένα καράβια) but people with goals and visions.

One thing I can do very well is to put music. I like it because I can communicate with the people in this way. In the past I worked as a DJ and I liked it very much.

I am proud that although my situation is very difficult, I didn't fall. I kept my dignity.

Home for me is the place where you can rest, your personal space, the place where you can have your own life.

Sona, student of accounting

I studied for 9 years in Syria. I am really good in accounting.

In my life I never did something to be proud of, because I was born into a bleak life.

Home for me is the heart of the family.

I am homeless for five months now. I live under very bad conditions in a place I officially don't exist. I am with my children all the day trying to pass the hours and to take care of them in the best way, while we depend on the help of others even for satisfying our hunger.

My dream is to be able to provide my children with everything they need and they dream of and to be in my own house with them far from war.

Ali, self-taught DJ

I was living in Samos in a tent. But I decided to escape from the island because the conditions were very bad. I couldn't see a doctor; I couldn't speak with a

psychologist there. I went to an organization here in Athens and they search for my file in Samos. They told me that my asylum request has been accepted and now I have asylum status in Greece. But I still have not the documents to prove it.

I am four months homeless. I have no information about the camps and how to ask for a shelter there. I am not proud for anything. I cannot survive in the cold. I need help to find a place to stay and food. We always sleep in the same place. Here you know which the bad people are and we avoid speaking to them. In another place we don't know which the dangerous persons are.

Jihadists tortured me in my country. I used to work like a DJ. I learned this job watching the others doing it. Now I would like to learn another profession.

My dream is to have a good life, in a good country. Life in Greece is very hard.

Home is the start and the end for all things. If you don't have a home you are not a human being. You have no human rights.

Hala and Reda with their newborn baby, teacher and professional football player

We entered Greece in August 2017. We were one month in a tent in the hotspot Moria while I was pregnant. Then they brought us to a container, which we shared with another family. The UN told us they would bring us to an apartment but we were never told when.

We couldn't wait. We had the permit to leave the island and we decided to go to Athens hoping that living conditions would improve there. At the beginning we stayed in cheap hotels but then our money finished. I was in a proceeded pregnancy. We had no place to stay anymore.

Friends hosted me in their home during these nights. But my husband had to stay

outside on the streets. He went to restaurants and cafes trying to stay warm and avoiding to sleep in the nights. A Kurdish man found us in the streets and brought us to a squat where we got a room. There is no hot water and the conditions are better but not ideal for our newborn baby.

We dream to have our own place to stay, a normal life like the one of the Greek people. When we sometimes speak about our future and how it might be, we get happy with this thought. All the day we are thinking how to get a real home.

We are proud of our newborn baby, this is the only thing we are proud of.

Zahir, thai and chinese food cook

I don't know of what to be proud of. But I want to thank the people that helped me. I am from Afghanistan and since six years I try to find safety.

Living without a home is difficult. Home means protection. A tent is not a home.

I am without a home since exactly one year. Four months I live in a tent now in a camp made with European money. It affects my soul in a bad way to live like that. I don't own anything. I have no money. I cannot go anywhere. I just sit in my tent all the day. I have to toilet and no bathroom. When there are fights, everything gets destroyed and I even lose this tent over and over again.

In this period , everyday it rains into the tent and my clothes get wet. But the worst thing is there is no safety here. When I close my eyes, I don't know what will happen next. My heart is never calm.

The wish of my life is to arrive at my destination, to work, and to help my mother. I miss her and my heart pains, because I cannot help her.









This booklet is dedicated to all the people without a home and to all the solidarity projects and people who create homes.

It is dedicated to a welcoming world where we can all live together!

For refugee squats and solidarity houses!

Close the camps – open homes!
Freedom of movement for all!
No one is illegal!

w2eu / infomobile Greece

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