



Kavala, (**Northern Lights**), 6 December 2021



**Erhan, 20.**

I am from Khoy, Iran.

I left at the end of 2016. I left because I am a Christian. Iran is a Muslim country and it is very difficult because if they found out I was a Christian, the police would jail me, or may even kill me. My grandmother is a Christian and because of her our family is.

The general situation in the country is very bad. So many people are dead, killed by the police.

We came to Turkey, then two months later to Lesbos. We travelled from Khoy by car but we didn't have passports. We had to walk lots of distance to avoid police. The journey was difficult, mainly because if we were seen, people would come after us with guns and take us. We had to escape.

We went to Izmir straight away.

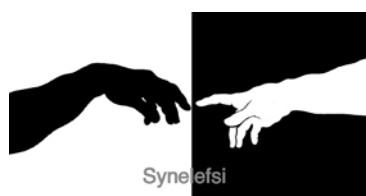
We tried to cross quickly to Lesbos, but it was impossible. We tried so many times, but we kept being stopped. The first time, the police caught us and they locked us up for a month. They caught us two or three times more, and we were always taken away from Izmir, but we went back each time because we had to.

Finally, we got put on a boat by someone we paid. We got into Lesbos and we stayed there for almost a year. At the end of 2017, we came here.

It's very hard here. Kavala is a nice city, but it's really hard to live here.

We don't get any money. I can't continue my education. We have no money or cash card.

I went to school here for two months when I first got here. But I couldn't speak Greek. People did try hard to help me at school, the teachers, but I couldn't understand. I only spoke English and Farsi, and there was only one of the five teachers who could speak any English.





I would like to try to go to university. I want to study business. I used to think engineering, but I think business is good and I would like to be successful. When you have no money, I think it makes you need to get money more.

I had a double rejection in my application, about a year ago. I have just got a private lawyer to try to help me. But the case hearing keeps being postponed, two to three times now. It happened because of COVID but then I was supposed to have a hearing on 22 October which was postponed again. But I don't know why this time.

They said there were too many cases. I am hoping this time it will happen. It's scheduled for 21 January 2022. More than a year and a half since the rejection.

For food, of course we all have to find work. I worked picking olives and kiwis for 10-20 days. It's short-term work, of course, but it's all we can find. It helped us, though. It's so hard because if we need a doctor we cannot get one.

And my mother and I get tired. We have thyroid issues and we need medicine for that. My father has some breathing issues and he needs to take medicine as well.

My sister is 14. She works really hard at school. She really likes it and she speaks four languages. But she has problems. My father and I have AMKA and we are vaccinated against COVID. But my sister doesn't have it and she hasn't been allowed to get the vaccine. She has to do self-tests to be able to attend school. But she does them. Everything they ask, so she can go. She's really good.

But we have no ID card. My lawyer is good, but most people say it's not looking good for us. I don't know what will happen. We left Iran because we were afraid for our lives. Things haven't changed there, so how can we go back? To be attacked? I am just waiting for news now.

I think I would like to go to University in Germany or the Netherlands. But maybe my family would like to stay here I think. We don't really talk about what we would like to do.

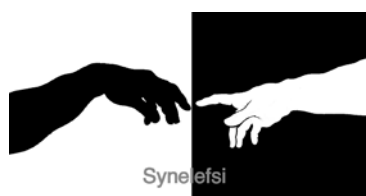
I help here volunteering with Northern Lights. I help with translation. I do it because I learned English in Iran and kept studying and it's really good because I can't do anything except stay in the camp. It's very boring, so it's very good to do something, to do work here that's worthwhile. I have made friends and it's really a good thing.

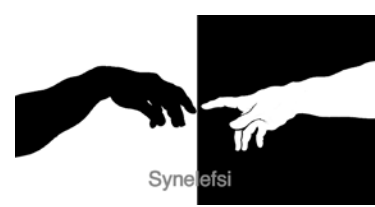
I really just want things to be OK for my family. We have gone short of medicines, we don't get any food. Some of our neighbours help us, but the government doesn't and the NGOs can't because of our situation. Northern Lights helps us.

*Kavala, 28 March 2022*

About the war. People are fearing world war three might happen. We are the same as other people for that. We have the same fears.

I didn't have war in my country.





But for Afghan people it's very similar.

I have friends in Germany. There, the organisations are giving everything Ukrainian people need, but they don't give it to my friends. And they came from war as well.

I don't expect so much. But for them, it's not fair, if the EU helps other people, but not them.

Things are really hard here because we have no money and no decision, no new hearings. They can take a passport, Ukrainian people: that's really good for them. They should have it. But people here, we have nothing. We can't go anywhere or do anything.



So, it does remind us.

They are changing the rooms in the camp for Ukrainian people. And some of us are being moved from where we live.

There is a new camp section and old camp section, and people are being moved from the new to the old, to make way for Ukrainian people. People feel sad about this. We know this is happening. We read the news, and see what is happening.

It's important for Ukrainian people to be helped. But we all need help.

It's really sad for us. It's not even a cause of anger, but of sadness.

It's really sad. It's as if if you have blue eyes you get help. If you have brown eyes, you get no help. Ukrainian people need help. We all know that. We want for them to have it.

But we need help. I have no passport. We need help just to live our lives. So there is some anger, too, in the way people feel.

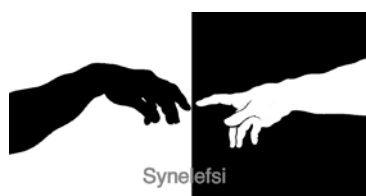
People have been and are waiting so long for passports that our permission to travel runs out so when we get a passport we still can't travel.

I have been here six years. I am trying to go to a psychiatrist because it has been so bad.

Why is it all taking so long?

We do see people from Ukraine here. We really care about them. They come from a war. They didn't do anything wrong. Everything... everyone is human. We just want to be treated the same way.

I want to study. To go to school. I should have done this already. I have been here six years.





I came here at the end of 2016. I went to Moria. There were 5,000 people there, from so many countries. It was not safe there. Fighting was happening, people were so angry, because conditions were so hard. There were fights between people.

I was there for a month and a half. It was so cold. We were in a tent. It was really cold. I was 17, but my sister was only nine years old.

So many people were dying from the cold. People were making fires and the fires killed them. People were injured in fights.

They were mainly between Arabs and Afghans, so much. It was mainly single people fighting.

We came to Kara Tepe, and were there for eight or nine months. That was better, not so much fighting. It was a better camp, with more space. There was enough for everyone there. It was better, easier.

Then, we went to Athens, then to Kavala. It was good. Some people are there we knew from Kara Tepe.

Very quickly, lots of people came. Now, it is better because it's cleaner.

But the camp is not really good.

We started in a tent, then we were in a small room.

I don't want to think about Moria again. It was so bad. It should have been better for people coming to Greece.

We don't... we have enough space now. But it's a camp. This is where we are. We are in another country, but we really would like to have a home like Greek people and others have. Because we are human like them.

I hope in the future it will change for us. We have to see what's going to happen.

