

Bienvenue
Benvenuto
Welcome
Willkommen
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خوش آمدید

Newspaper of discussion and news about migrants struggles

مرحبا

#3+

2016 January 23

Every day the noose that is strangling migrants tightens

The violence against us is daily
Whenever we try to demonstrate, police close off the entrance
When we ask for the reason there is no response...
Pervasive racism and discrimination prevent people from entering the town...
And allow others to go there ...
At any moment, with no prior warning and no reason, the police spray you and burn your face with gas...

The JUNGLE is a huge prison, in the name of humanity!
Humiliation is everywhere, resentment and anger touch everyone...
We are forbidden from entering the town, the border is locked ... the horizon is obstructed
Here no voice can be heard! Except for that of violence, used against us by the same authorities who are meant to «prevent violence» and uphold justice!?

Here, like in a constant thick fog, we can see in the expressionless, drawn faces sadness, exhaustion and suffering.

Here are the migrants in their unending struggle between the railway lines and the harbor...
All come and go on foot, very few bikes...

This struggle could end in Dover, but that is practically impossible... It will more likely either end at the police station (or in jail), or with a return to the slum of the Jungle... or at the clinic to look for crutches and heal the wounds inflicted by the free and plentiful beatings from combat boots or police batons, to prevent you from trying again ... or it could end with death in a road accident in town !

And, as usual, the driver who ran over the migrant pedestrian will have fled and the police won't find them, or won't even try to... and many other ordeals and dangers ... the list is pretty long and not complete??? !!!

Miserably daily scenes ... sad and shameful in this country of human rights, this land of asylum, this so-called model for humanity ... !!!

Here (problematic) questions go without even the beginning of an answer ...
Why does France accept money from the United Kingdom to close the common border? Does this mean the European Union has no actual principles? Is it normal to violate international law?

Why doesn't the Union officially declare the closure of its borders to refugees? Or why does it not condemn the violation of refugee's rights?
Why does the UK pay... and why does the EU remain silent?!
Why does France carry out the UK's agenda against migrants?
Are those interests more important for France than values and human rights?!

Using the carrot and the stick, switching between hypothetical proposals and intimidation through terror, the authorities promise and preach shelters and emergency housing, but would those change anything about the situation? Certainly not!

During a meeting with officials from the Ministry of Immigration, they boast that France remains the best choice, even though the majority of applications for asylum are rejected. They continue despite those contradictions to urge that asylum applications are made in France... no-one here is unaware that the majority of them are

refused

Strange how many act in such a cold manner, with no further consideration, not even trying to understand why one might choose one country rather than another.

The migrants, however, know that agreements to force them to stay in the first EU country they entered are in place, although everyone knows this is impossible... Furthermore, it is normal and natural that for the migrants (migrants-refugees-exiled) there are other criteria: Language, culture and history are the factors that guide their choice, but who understands that?

Misery is institutionalized and consciously imposed on all who find themselves in Calais. Nothing about this is new. The borders are closed by police squads, army battalions, militias of security guards, ferocious police dogs, walls with barriers and barbed wire. So that the tranquility of the queen may not be disturbed by those who are considered monkeys.

There is resentment that overcrowding is certain... The new camp will not change anything about this reality.

Police forbid demonstrations to demand that our rights are respected, they quickly block the only access point to the Jungle, so that no-one can go into the town...

All that remains is the migrants' hope, nothing else... neither France, nor the European Union, nor the United Nations

Who will find the right words for their Rights
But the migrants ask: Where is French society and its organizations???
Do European societies listen more to the politicians than to the logic of reason and heart, and of humanism!!! ???

Here in Calais all things such as liberty, justice and humanity are lost, misplaced for good.
So, what remains?
Calais...

Here, where the borders are closed...
Cold and rain, long queues, pushing and shoving, for the toilets,
and also for the only meal of the day...
People are also enduring the cold to get Wi-Fi, hoping to get news from their relatives and loved ones...

The long queues to get the help offered by associations and volunteers are all miserable

scenes, again with shoving and more...

The medical clinics are also overwhelmed with queues to get tickets...

an epidemic of illnesses caused by the cold...

Everyone uses reclaimed wood for heating and cooking, which releases black, toxic, polluting fumes...

Inside the makeshift tents there are candles, and those fumes are inhaled too, and sometimes a tarp catches fire, which is even worse when the tents that have no windows...

In the Jungle you constantly see the victims of the train, of falls, of State violence; those scenes and sights are everywhere.

Unjustified and unjustifiable violence...

Many are psychologically devastated, a lot of depression, despondency, and other problems and sufferings linked to the survival conditions...
Calais, where the police prohibit demonstrations and rallies... denying the migrants all expression of the desperation and anger that they live...

As long as the borders stay closed, everything is subject to the unknown...

And now there is the plan to build a new camp on the camp itself! To protect them from the cold, or to control the refugees? And how many places will there be for how many of those who are here?...
Questions: Are the refugees looking for a spot where the border is open? Or have they come all the way here to live in a better organized camp!?

The police send the migrants who try to cross to jail, they are detained for days and sometimes much longer, they are removed to prisons on the other side of the country, at the Spanish, Swiss and other borders... But that does not remove them from violence and hardship, quite the opposite. On the other hand, it does remove them further and further from human and humanitarian rights, from the right of asylum, to move freely and to settle in the country of one's choice...

Testimony from a migrant who spent many weeks in the Calais Jungle

THIS NEWSPAPER IS WRITTEN BY MIGRANTS AND PEOPLE IN SOLIDARITY WITH THEIR STRUGGLE. IT'S SPREAD IN FRENCH, ARABIC, ENGLISH AND FARSI, IN THE SHELTERS, DURING DEMONSTRATIONS AND ON CAMPMENTS IN PARIS REGION AND BEYOND.

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For migrants, it's impossible to settle or to circulate

Since 21 November 2015 and Merhaba 3 (this newspaper) much has happened in Paris, but the situation remains just as unbearable and far from the promises made by the City of Paris and the prefecture during evacuations of encampments and occupied buildings.

Housing: hiding away and dispersal instead of hospitality

Although additional shelter was opened thanks to the determined struggle of migrants at the encampments and the occupied school, the problems that had started to appear at the shelters have gotten worse. Thus, after the successive evacuations and "sheltering," living and reception conditions have led migrants to denounce unbearable situations:

Despite the promises, administrative files of individuals seeking asylum aren't followed up. Certain employees and neighbors behave in a racist way and make racist remarks to the people sheltered. In many centers people see their liberties limited: no visits allowed, strict rules regarding entry and exit and surveillance of circulation, expression concerning living conditions forbidden... Their rooms or their belongings can be searched and, sometimes, there's not enough to eat or the food is inappropriate or stale!

In two centers, the migrants went on hunger strike. The response to one of the strikes was the arrest of 20 migrants on hunger strike for two days, who were first taken to the police station where their identities were verified and their fingerprints taken, and then in the middle of the night thrown out of the center in which they had been sheltered.

Again in the street they regrouped at an encampment in place de la République where they found other migrants who had been left out of previous "humanitarian" evacuation operations, or had returned voluntarily from their shelter centers (located so far outside of Paris it wasn't possible for them to pursue their asylum application process) or who had been kicked out of them for having spent two nights elsewhere, or new arrivals in France who hadn't had the time to file their asylum request or who had found no places at a center for asylum seekers.

Everyone mobilized and struggling, in the cold, to demand... places in a shelter. Pending the legalization of their situation.

In other centers, the fact that migrants are mobilized and publicly expose their difficulties and the flouting of their liberties in these shelters that are supposed to serve as a refuge facilitated certain improvements in daily conditions (such as obtaining heating in a center where the heating didn't work).

But everywhere there's the constant threat of having to return to the street, knowing that in any event several centers have said that the specific accommodation for refugees will end 31 March.

Everyone concerned is thus being subject to one thing: uncertainty. It's a State policy which seeks to hide affliction at all costs by clearing encampments and isolating individuals. No question of allowing refugees to regroup or fight for their rights! These last weeks, certain of the last people evacuated were sent directly to hotels, without any guarantee of the duration of shelter: they haven't been assured of anything!

In addition to the State policy – and it's striking – the conditions at the centers vary greatly: some are less authoritarian than others: there aren't guardians, relations with staff are better, visits are permitted... This indicates that in addition to the State and prefecture's policy there are also intermediary levels and directors of centers who deliberately seek to humiliate migrants and not consider their situation.

Similarly, OFII is the service responsible for the transport tickets that are supposed to be available but which aren't, and it doesn't want to hear about this.

An administrative system designed not to function?

The other dimension of the situation, in addition to shelter, is, for a majority of the people concerned, asylum request. The situation is just as catastrophic in terms of the filing of the request as it is regarding the treatment of it: after the reform 1 November reception agencies were closed for several weeks! And sometimes there are surprise closings, without informing the people concerned. These agencies have opening hours and reception capacities unsuited for what they have to do: people wait sometimes from midnight in front of them hoping to enter in the morning! This situation is such that the turnaround which should be three days is now three months.

The institutions which take charge of the asylum seekers get a budget for doing so: but they don't necessarily fulfil the mission they're financed for, such as orientation and the translation of administrative documents.

Also, the disbursement of ATA (the temporary allocation during the waiting period, whose disbursement is also OFII's responsibility) was simply cut for several weeks for hundreds of people!

Finally, since 1 November increasing numbers of people are receiving accelerated treatment of their asylum requests, a procedure which diminishes even more their chances of obtaining it, as this rapid procedure functions as a "sub-procedure" reserved for individuals whose demands are "considered implausible."

Despite the governmental speechmaking at Calais – affirming it will no longer be possible to cross the Channel, calling for asylum requests to be filed in France, otherwise deportation will be inevitable – what we see of the system of receiving migrants wishing to settle in France clearly shows that there's no political willingness for it and that, on the contrary, everything is done to keep the maximum number of people in a situation of illegality.

Faced with this pathetic policy, let's keep mobilized and support the migrants.

Against boundaries. For free movement and free settlement.

The next Merhaba will discuss the fight of the migrants in centers and the reception of asylum seekers.

New asylum legislation: how to trap asylum seekers?

Since 29 July 2015 France has adopted a new law on asylum in order to modify its legislation to conform to European law. This law is presented as simplifying the procedure, and above all as shortening delays, all obviously to the advantage of asylum seekers. The reality, however, is entirely different. In each issue we will try to explain part of this incomprehensible law.

HOW TO APPLY FOR ASYLUM?

In terms of access to the procedure, everything has changed. The law talks about a one-stop-shop, which is supposedly easier as it brings together everything in one place.

However, before going to this one-stop-shop that combines the prefecture and OFII (a body attached to the interior ministry), one has to present oneself somewhere else. One better get up early to figure out where this first place where one is required to present oneself might be, because it is practically impossible to find that information.

Once one has found it after all, it turns out that first of all one has to go to the prefecture (although the preliminary obligation of registering a legal address has been scrapped). One has to go to a 'reception platform' managed by an external provider (an association subcontracted and paid by the administration), often large management structures such as France Terre d'asile, Coallia or the French Red Cross. Previously foreigners had to spend the night in front of the prefecture to be lucky enough to be received. From November on they have to queue in the same way elsewhere, in front of an association paid to fill out forms and gather information. How does this constitute any change for asylum seekers, especially since after a variable number of people (30 or 40 depending on the day), the Paris platform closes its doors. The queue starts earlier and earlier, starting around midnight, 11pm for an opening time of 9am.

Thus, while the new law stipulates that an asylum application has to be submitted within 3 days, it requires in reality already a lot of patience in front of the reception platforms and the willingness to sleep outside for several nights. For while France may have adopted the European rule of registering asylum applications within 3 days, the small, but

very pernicious detail is that this period starts at the moment one enters the reception platform.

The reception platforms play an administrative role. No real support work is envisaged. Above all they have to gather all information in order to pass it on to the prefecture. Their role is clearer than previously; they are service providers of the administration. It is not insignificant that the administration lets associations handle this work. For the information they have to gather is very important for the subsequent procedure and one is more inclined to confide in an association than in an official of the prefecture. Those questions determine whether France can try to send the asylum seeker back to another country. Indeed, the association will ask the asylum seeker questions about their route in order to see if they can apply the Dublin regulation. Afterward fingerprints are taken at the prefecture, but it is the platform that collects information that can then be used by the prefecture to justify this deportation to another European Union country.

Those questions also allow the administration to determine whether they can apply an expeditious procedure called 'accelerated procedure'. When one is subject to this extremely fast asylum procedure, one is very unlikely to be granted asylum. This procedure can be applied, if one does not cooperate with the administration. That is, if one does not want to reply to the questions, if one lies about one's route or one's situation, if one does not say that one has tried to seek asylum in another country, if one has altered one's fingerprints, if one has applied for asylum after 120 days... The new law has increased the number of cases subject to the expeditious procedure. However, those situations are very common and not caused by bad intent on the part of the asylum seeker, but by their extremely precarious circumstances before they are able to actually access the procedure.