



**NOT  
FOR**

**SALE**

about the border “crisis” on Lesbos



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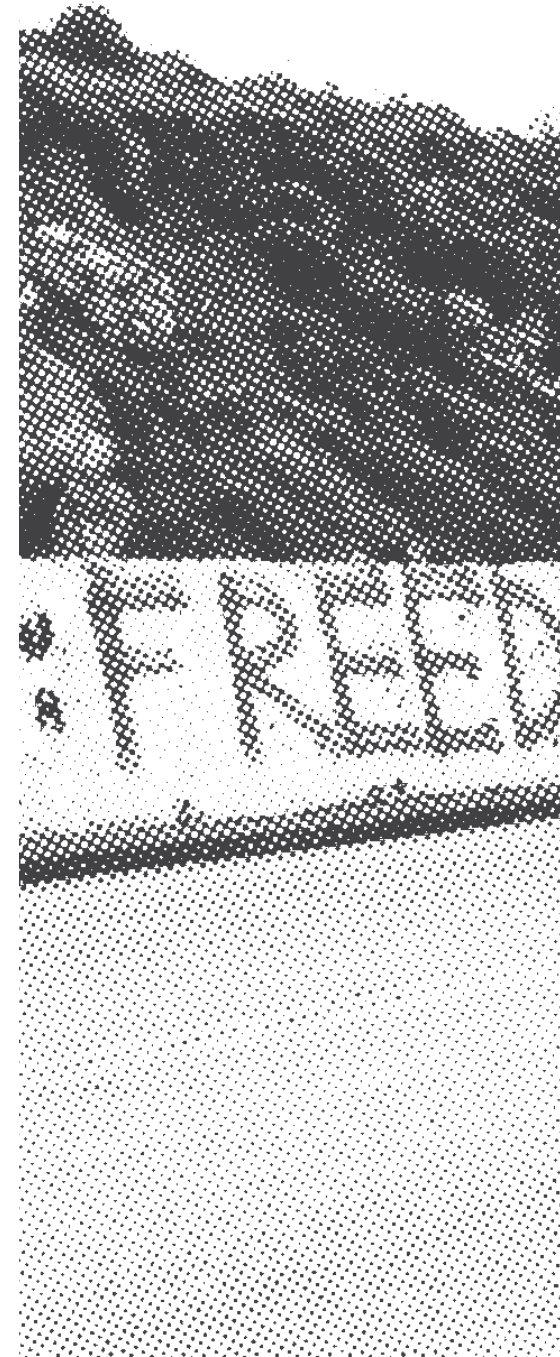
## INTRO

This publication is an attempt to challenge the existing mainstream discourses about the border 'crisis' on Lesvos. It is a collection of writings by people that live or have lived on Lesvos, people that experienced the border regime first-hand and people that witnessed and fought. The opinions expressed in this introduction are not necessarily shared by all contributors.

Since dramatic images of overcrowded rubber boats with migrants arriving to the shores of Lesvos started to dominate the media in 2015, we found that two main discourses developed.

On one side, mainstream media and politicians adopted a full-out clear anti-migration discourse. While we refuse to blame European populism for a structural system of self-serving hypocrisy, both on the so-called left as well as on the right, we do see an alarming increase in xenophobic and fascist expressions and policies over the years. Right-wing parties have conveniently used the arrival of migrants by spreading fake news and fear-installing propaganda, dehumanizing migrants and manipulating citizens to vote for some kind of authoritarian protector. The fear for an invasion of dangerous intruders who threaten the 'European way of life' leads for many to a kind of scared xenophobic nationalism with an extremely simplified imaginary of 'the other'.

On the other side there is the humanitarian discourse of international human rights organizations, the UN and NGOs. Here,



human rights and compassion are the leading principles. The external communications of the UNHCR and NGOs are in itself dubious because they pretend to raise awareness while their aim is to raise funds. Besides, their operations and existence often rely on the Greek state and/or the European Commission, which inevitably leads to self-censorship and strategically selected information.

We find that the existing human rights discourse remains vastly incapable of addressing and challenging the immense scale of structural violence and dehumanizing practices that are perpetuated against people by many governments on a daily basis.

Europe historically promotes itself as a beacon for human rights and speaks the jargon well, but systematically denies the rights of migrants and cleverly outsources large-scale and structural crimes against humanity. As part of a widely criticized EU-Turkey deal, Europe pays billions of euros to Turkey to forcibly keep migrants there and to enable fast-track deportations ('return') of people that reach the Greek islands by boat. Other fishy anti-migration deals are made with Libya, Ethiopia and Niger. It doesn't take much to understand that Turkey is not a safe country for migrants at all, and that bribing nation-states to build prisons does nothing more than further endangering already vulnerable people. While the European Union may be acting within their self-defined legal frameworks of international law and human rights, their policies and legislations look strikingly criminal.

It is a human right to seek and to enjoy asylum from persecution in another country. Indeed, most people who arrive to Lesbos forcibly get their fingerprints taken and 'enjoy the right' to apply for asylum. The institutions entrusted with the task to decide whether or not somebody is persecuted are the Greek Asylum Service (GAS) and the European Asylum Support Office (EASO). Inevitably these institutions operate within a clear anti-migration ideology, and unsurprisingly most people are rejected. Appeal is possible, but difficult, and may be entirely banned in the near future. Within this framework, humane deportations are possible and even desired.

We refuse the type of human rights that only signify when it's convenient and profitable for the existing power. We don't need better camps; we need a world in which people are never put in cages. We don't need the right to apply for asylum; we need open borders and unconditional freedom of movement for all. We don't need the right to a nationality, we need extermination of nationalism and the destruction of all nation-states that feed on that. And as long as the right to not be subjected to arbitrary arrest and detention can be denied just because of a nationality, we don't need that either. Not a single deportation can be justified. Nor a single migrant in prison based on their nationality, nor a single death in the Mediterranean sea.

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## THE DEATH OF DREAMS

Nine months ago, it was a night like other nights. There was a fight in the camp between a few people that lasted for more than two hours. The fight started between two people and after a while others in the camp got involved. It all started because of the bad conditions of the people who have to live in the camp. Some have mental issues, because they live in these terrible conditions and do not have any mental support.

The police was present and they saw what happened. I felt terrible this night, especially when I saw that the children were holding onto their moms, they were very scared and crying. But for the police it was a special night. They were laughing about the people. For them it was like watching an online movie. We were asking them for help but they were only laughing at us, taking photos and recording us.

Finally, they rushed in the camp but to the people who were not involved in that fight, and they attacked the innocent people. We did not have any place to go, we were about 18 persons and I was one of them. The police took us to the police station, hit us, treated us very badly and called us aggressors. For several hours our hands and our feet were handcuffed. We could not communicate with them because we did not know their language and they opened a file for each of us for no reason. After the paperwork they separated us and put us in different cells.

Before going into the cell, I thought we were the only people there for no reason, but when I went inside, I saw many people

who were there for the same reason. The prison was full of refugees. The Greek police does this to people like us in order to show their power, to show that justice does not exist here. I asked the other people why they are in the prison. It was because of small things. Most of them were not Greek. We only committed the crime that we were born in Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. I also saw plenty of other people who were arrested for the same reason like me and they had been in the prison for many years.

Afterwards, the court recognized them as innocent. I do not know if it is fine to put innocent people in prison and open a file for them in the police station or in the court, when in the end it was for nothing, for no crimes. I do not know what the Greek government will achieve with this kind of things.

The European Union and the people who are in power are always talking about human rights and they are going around the world to 'protect' human rights. They say that everyone should have freedom and everyone has to be free. I find it very strange that they are not looking at Greece which is a part of them. In this country that is part of the European Union you can see the most vulnerable people who have been forced to leave their home country and are seeking for asylum and looking for a shelter. But this country is using them for their benefits and they are taking the people's freedom to do their business. They are keeping the refugees here because they think they can improve their economy. I am sure this plan will not work.

Whatever you read here, it came from my

heart. The people lost their freedom because of being a refugee and they lost their dreams inside the democratic prison. And we know that there are some nice humans who are trying to help others. Those people who are helping the others, they do not care where people come from, where they have been born, what are their religion and believes. They believe that we are all the same and we should help each other. In the end I hope they are going to stop making business with the humans. I hope one day I can see that everyone is equal. It is a shame to see what is happening with people's life.

*Chios Prison, 14th March 2019*



## DEPORTATION AS A BUSINESS MODEL

The European Border and Coast Guard Agency, better known as Frontex, supports the operational implementation of the deportations under the EU-Turkey statement. This means that the agency is responsible for deploying so-called “forced-return escorts” that support the Greek authorities with deportations. Frontex supports the Greek authorities with technical assistance in terms of organizing means of transportation, operational coordination and financial resources of return operations. Frontex has agreements with various commercial tourist companies to facilitate deportations from Lesbos to Turkey. In this article we will discuss this business model of deportation to illustrate how commercial interest and migration management coalesce.

### Frontex and “return” operations

Frontex was established in 2004 as a European agency for the management of operational cooperation at the external borders of the European Schengen area. The main mission of the agency was to support EU member states in implementing EU rules on external border controls and in coordinating cooperation between member states in external border management. In the wake of the long summer of migration 2015, the European Commission questioned the effectiveness of the agency. In 2016, the mandate of the agency was extended and the agency became a fully-fledged border and coast guard agency. This new mandate extended role of the agency and allows Frontex to assist mem-

ber states both operationally and technically with deportations. A Return Office was established that could deploy Return Intervention Teams composed of escorting and monitoring agents, and specialists dealing with related technical aspects of deportations. The agency also actively participates with EU and third-country negotiations on deportations and has a high level of autonomy. This means that Frontex should not be seen as merely a passive facilitator. Rather, Frontex is a high-ranking and influential player that actively engages within and shapes the EU-Turkey deportation regime.

Frontex supports the operational implementation of the deportations under the EU-Turkey statement. When the Greek authorities issue a “readmission” procedure, the Hellenic Police sends a request to Frontex for supporting and organizing the “readmission operation”. Frontex is responsible for deploying so-called Forced-Return Escorts, “an official of a competent national authority of a member state, who carries out escorting duties for the return of third country nationals” to support Greek return escorts during readmission procedures. As the name suggests, their task is to “escort” people, who are subject to a return decision, to be handed over to the third country authorities, in the case of EU-Turkey statement, the Turkish authorities.

Frontex return escorts always operate in the presence and under the supervision of Greek authorities. The Greek authorities are responsible for the readmission decisions and the legal procedures concerning the deportation. Because Fron-

tex always operates in presence of Greek Return Escorts and Greek state officials, the agency clearly positions itself outside the legal procedures of the return decision and frames itself as facilitator. However, in fact, the agency facilitates arbitrary deportations that it should be held accountable for. Through our support work on Lesbos we witnessed how people with serious health issues and people who are still in their asylum procedure have been deported. We also witnessed how people who are still in their asylum procedure were listed people on a deportation list. This means that as one of the main facilitators of deportations on Lesbos, Frontex expedite illegal practices.

### Commercial companies and deportations

Frontex offers technical assistance and organizes the operational coordination of deportations. For example, the agency organizes and finances the transportation for deportations. Internal procurement documents and tender contracts show that Frontex closely collaborates with Greek tourist companies to execute deportations. For example, in 2016 the travel company Lesvorama received a 127,300 EUR contract with Frontex to transport deportees by ferry. Furthermore, Pantelopoulos Panagiotis, owner of PAN Tours Greece received two awarded contracts of respectively 42,470 EUR and 620,000 EUR to transport people by sea and by land.

Most recently, since the beginning of 2018, Frontex signed several contracts with commercial tourist companies to facilitate services that are needed “in sup-



port to law enforcement operational activities. The services are mainly associated with the corresponding transfers by sea between one designated port of departure in Greece and one designated port of arrival in Greece/Turkey”.

-*Pantelopoulos Panagiotis*, owner of *PAN Tours* was awarded with a 1-million EUR contract to transport people from Chios to Cesme (Turkey).

-*Sunrise Lines E.P.E. (Ltd)* has a 2-million-euro contract to transport people from Lesbos to Dikili (Turkey).

-*Samuwell Limited* was awarded with a 1-million-euro contract to transport people from Kos to Gulluk (Turkey).

### **Deportation as a new business model**

In 2018, we requested over 30 documents from Frontex under the Freedom of Information Act. Although much of the information we requested was redacted, the documents show that between 2016 and 2018 (until 24.07.2018) Frontex chartered 77 ferry boats, 33 charter flights and 115 buses for deportations from the Greek Hotspots to Turkey. Based on the requested documents, the logistical costs of ferry deportations can be estimated around 660.358,00 Euro. However, it must be noted that this is a rough calculation as most probably, many more financial resources are spent due to frequent cancellations of deportations, wages of Frontex personnel, transport from other Greek islands to removal centres, and so on.

We do not have any information about the

costs of deportations by plane, which are most likely more expensive. Therefore, the presented costs of deportation are actually much lower than the actual costs. Yet, the presented data exposes the enormous investment of energy and resources to deport people who search for a better life. In other words, the EU-Turkey deportation regime operates with huge fi

nancial resources, thereby creating a new business model and financial incentive for private companies. This privatization of certain phases of the deportation process is a development we should continue to critically observe, because it could create another precedent to deregulate European migration management. A precedent that could further collide migration management and human rights that further alienates the accountability of national and European authorities from their responsibilities in these processes.

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dm-aegean.bordermonitoring.eu*

## **THE LESVOS REFUGEE CRISIS AS DISASTER CAPITALISM**

Over the spring of 2015, refugee arrivals to Europe started recording an unprecedented increase. The vast majority of these refugees arrived to Greece, and foremost, to the Eastern Aegean Islands, Lesbos, Chios, Samos, and Kos. By the end of 2015, the island of Lesbos alone had seen the arrival of around half a million refugees. Much like any other “disaster,” the European refugee crisis has been exploited for political and economic purposes. Policy makers both within and beyond Europe have evoked the trope of a “crisis” to push for more restrictive, selective, and securitized immigration and border regimes. Meanwhile, commercial actors have secured profits through providing technology and infrastructure to strengthen border enforcement, but also through providing services that have aided states to house, to feed, to administer, to detain, and eventually also to deport, arriving refugees. In critical entry points along the EU’s external border, where a more immediate humanitarian crisis has been (and partly still is) unfolding, a whole array of nonstate actors have been contracted to provide services in receiving, holding and detaining facilities.

On the island of Lesbos, where the fieldwork for this study was conducted, local authorities, communities and activists were largely left to handle the initial stages of the refugee crisis. The autumn of 2015, however, saw the mobilization of a large number of non-state actors to the island.





The private security company G4S was, for example, contracted to run the security in the European Union Hotspot of Moria and private travel agencies and shipping companies transported refugees from the Island to the Greek mainland. Besides these larger commercial players, local entrepreneurs tapped into new markets created by the crisis through providing food, goods, housing, and services to refugees and personnel involved in managing the crisis. With state-led efforts largely focused on surveilling, controlling, and securing the border, the bulk of the humanitarian relief work has been (formally or informally) outsourced to non-state actors. By January 2016, the local authorities in Lesbos reported that over 80 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were running operations throughout the island, aided by several thousand volunteers. The unfolding emergency further attracted journalists, photographers, celebrities, artists, filmmakers, activists, researchers, as well as “voluntourists.” The scenes in sites throughout Lesbos during the peak of the crisis can, quite frankly, be described as a “spectacle” that rendered not only the absurdities of the European Union’s border regime painfully visible but also how the crisis had become “big business.”

In the following paper I approach this ‘business’ aspect of the refugee crisis. More specifically, I am interested in discussing how processes of extraction in relation to the crisis center on the bodies and hardships of arriving refugees. A growing body of work highlights how neo-liberal logics increasingly underpin the broader govern-

ance of contemporary borders. Part of this is visible in the outsourcing and privatization of key functions in border enforcement, leading to an increasing reliance on on a whole array of private actors in efforts to deter, curb, and manage “illegal” immigration. As migrants and refugees attempt to cross these increasingly selective, restrictive, and securitized borders, their journeys, waiting, detention, relations, suffrage—and even deaths—have become a profitable business for various actors. Ruben Andersson proposes that we can therefore think of borders as representing “extreme zones” of profit extraction—where human lives are being “expelled and mobilized” as economic assets. In this “predatory bio-economy,” as he terms it, it is therefore essentially “the very vitality—and, above all, misery—of human life itself” that is being commoditized.

The usual suspects in such processes are the corporate actors who supply the technology, the know-how, and the personnel for border surveillance and enforcement. This includes private security companies, defense contractors, and others that have made the detection, detention, and deportation of “illegal” border crosses their core business idea. And yet, as indicated in the brief snapshot from Lesbos above, the border/migration industrial complex also includes the many different actors that perform humanitarian relief work in critical border sites. While these are often motivated by an entirely different set of objectives relative to the commercial players, they do nonetheless, as critical scholars of humanitarian border work have under-

lined, constitute an institutional feature of the way contemporary border regimes are governed and sustained.

There are several interesting aspects of the humanitarian response in Lesbos. One, mentioned in the introduction to this essay, has to do with how major humanitarian players mobilized resources to Lesbos during the autumn of 2015. This development transformed refugee reception on the island, as the know-how and material resources brought by large international NGOs replaced the largely informal systems of reception run by local activists and groups. Astonished, and sometimes also angered, local actors watched how organizations like the International Rescue Committee (IRC), with annual operating revenues approaching 740 million USD, swept in to erect camps and other forms of infrastructure across the island. While private donations are a major source of funding for organizations like the IRC, the European Union also (belatedly) released funding to the organization providing emergency support in the Greek islands. European Commission documents, dated December 2017, reveal how 481 million Euros have been allocated to UN agencies and NGOs active in Greece, and key recipients among the NGOs are the Danish Refugee Council, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the IRC, and Oxfam.

In Lesbos, the resources of these major organizations were centered at the arrival, registration, and holding sites across the island. Prior to the EU–Turkey State-

ment, arriving refugees formally registered and temporarily stayed at the First Reception Center of Moria, located a few miles outside of the island capital of Mytilini. Walking around the Moria camp in January 2016 we observed frantic activity both within and outside the camp. At this point the Moria camp, much resembling some form of high security prison with high walls and several layers of barbed wire fence, hosted several thousand people. Due to the vast number of daily arrivals, the camp’s capacity was, however, far from sufficient, causing an informal camp, run by both the larger actors as well as small-scale and ad hoc initiatives, to grow on the adjacent hill. This hill now featured tents of various sizes, a clinic, a child-friendly area, restrooms, a mosque, soup kitchens, and a “tea house.” Along the road facing the hill and the camp, taxis, minivans, and busses are parked. Here some food trucks and make-do cafés also serve food and drinks. Walking toward the main entry gate there was also a small stall offering sim-cards that read “Vodafone.”

As Naomi Klein has noted in her account of post-tsunami reconstruction in Sri Lanka, a striking feature in Lesbos was the “branding” of humanitarian spaces. Apart from professionals walking around in branded vests, everything from rubbish bins to refugee housing units, blankets, buses, toilets and information boards, carried the labels of organizations. The Kara Tepe camp a few miles from Moria, hosting families and other “vulnerable” groups of refugees, almost resembled a “theme park” for humanitarian emergency re-

lief—with the names and symbols of organizations attached to almost every piece of infrastructure. The camp staff informed us that the rationale for this was for the benefit of the refugees (in order for them to identify which organizations provided which services); however, the branding of these spaces needs to be seen in the broader context of the marketization of humanitarian action. Making their contributions “on the ground” visible (as well as auditable) to major funders is central to the operations of these organizations. Beyond branding, such visibility was further ensured through an active online and media presence—aided also by the use of “famous faces” rallying support for their activities. For example, in June 2016, the IRC brought part of the cast of the American TV series *Game of Thrones* to the island to launch their “Rescue Has No Boundaries” campaign. Online viewers were asked to join the cast in raising funds to the IRC “in making a real difference.” A few months earlier, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees brought Special Envoy and American actress Angelina Jolie to Lesvos. Surrounded by large numbers of journalists and photographers she made a visit to the Moria camp.

The problems with staging humanitarian emergencies within the realm of “show business” are, no doubt, substantial. Critical scholars of humanitarian communication have long argued that celebrity advocacy premiers short-term and consumerist forms of engagement from the public—over longer-term systemic demands for change. In the context of the refugee cri-

sis, and for the purposes of this essay, it also important to note how celebrity advocacy has been a way for humanitarian players to effectively exploit and couple market logics with the theatrics of disaster. In videos shot in the most dramatic locations, along the beaches and squalid camp facilities, celebrities have here traded their “fame” for “donations” to those who “actually do something.”

The theatrical dynamics of disaster exploited in such funding strategies from large as well as small organizations in Lesvos would soon also come into conflict with the branding of the island as a tourism destination. For local communities, the explosion in dramatic images from the beaches and camps of Lesvos were seen as posing a direct threat to their livelihoods. In the face of declining tourism, local volunteers and groupings repeatedly pled with international actors to take caution in how the island was being portrayed. As one woman expressed it in a meeting we attended, “We still have to be here and try to make a living” once the international volunteers and professionals have returned home, or have moved on to the next crisis zone.

While it is hardly surprising that already large corporate-like NGOs have relied on marketized logics to sustain (and expand) their activities during the crisis, it is perhaps more interesting to take a closer look at the more sophisticated ways in which predatory and neo-liberal logics came to underpin the operations of the many small-scale, grassroots groups and

initiatives that performed emergency relief across Lesvos. As several scholars have noted, the proliferation of many smaller and informal initiatives has been a defining feature of the public’s response to the EU’s (mis)management of the crisis. Many of these initiatives emerged in direct response to the unfolding emergency, and among the thousands of “volunteers” arriving to Lesvos, there were political activists, students, medical professionals, carpenters, members of faith-based groups, musicians, filmmakers, and so on. Many members of such smaller-scale and in/formal initiatives were eager to distinguish themselves from the humanitarian giants—perhaps especially from the corporate elements of their activities and campaigning. In order to sustain their activities, however, many of these groups also relied on private donations from sympathetic “spectators” in their country of origin or elsewhere.

During the peak months of the crisis social media platforms saw the vast proliferation of (crowd) funding calls from individuals and initiatives running activities in Lesvos. Much like the humanitarian professional agencies, such calls were often amplified through exploiting the theatrics of disaster—placing the suffering of arriving refugees front and center of graphic images as well as texts. A story that kept resurfacing during our field visits to Lesvos was, for example, how people would take selfies with refugees, and their children, directly upon their arrival to the beaches. Local activists also spoke of people arriving for brief, or even momentary, visits to snap pictures of themselves together with refu-

gees in the midst of the chaos when overcrowded rubber dinghies were arriving.

In the village of Molyvos, a key entry point for refugees in the north of the island, the chair of the local Council explained how local residents had been “really amazed” with the photos taken by different actors along the nearby beaches. “They were trying to capitalize on the situation,” he said, “I would never take a photo with a baby in my arms!” While being critical of the way that organizations and movements came to the island to “harvest the benefits” of crisis, he simultaneously recognized that this situation was grounded in the state’s failure to provide decent reception conditions for those seeking protection in Europe.

For groups with limited budgets, selfies thus provided an “easy” and “low-budget” means to communicate their physical presence in the midst of the “drama,” which, in turn, worked to legitimize their financial claims. While the “dramatized” calls for funding from in/formal groupings in Lesvos is—no doubt—a testament to the desperate situation facing arriving refugees, these selfies—quite literally—place the refugee body at the center of value extraction processes. In many ways such strategies play on the same consumerist-oriented and neo-liberal ways of approaching emergency relief as the humanitarian giants exhibit. Refugees arriving to the islands here constitute “ideal victims”—deprived of rights, dignity, and agency—but in need of rescue (quite literally).

Lilie Chouliaraki proposes that we can understand these selfies with refugees in the context of the crisis as a technology of power that reinforces the “othering” of refugees—through the effective coupling of geopolitical and symbolic bordering practices. In order to fully grasp the meaning of this in the context of humanitarian action in Lesvos we need to revisit the works of scholars like Polly Pallister-Wilkins and William Walters, who have suggested that humanitarian border work often finds itself “complicit” with processes that center on exclusion and expulsion rather than with humanitarian ideals. As such, humanitarianism is being operationalized to manage, neutralize, or even “normalize” (failing) border management practices.

The actors involved in humanitarian relief work in Lesvos and beyond have clearly played a fundamentally important role in saving lives and upholding some form of decency and dignity in Europe’s (mis) management of the event we now know as the “refugee crisis.” It is important to recognize the role of these efforts—and the political importance of the many “solidarity encounters” such work has involved. The neo-liberal and predatory logics that underpin the European border regime, however, forces all actors—pretty much no matter their original intent—to run their operations in accordance with these logics. This has profound implications also for processes of extraction in relation to humanitarian border work more broadly, and during the time of crisis in particular.

The state’s withdrawal from key func-

tions at the border—including for provisions of basic humanitarian relief, opens up a “market” in which actors compete for the sympathy, trust, and funds from public as well as private donors. In doing this, groups of various kinds not only rely on established (racialized as well as gendered) grids of intelligibility in the portrayal of human suffering and the actors who “actually do something”—but also on consumerist forms of humanitarianism (and even solidarity work) that reinforce neo-liberal logics. The theatrics of disaster, again, clearly play an important role in such processes—and the fact that refugees arrived to beaches in overcrowded rubber dinghies here provided an almost unprecedented opportunity to capitalize on real human drama.

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Peace Review - A Journal of Social Justice.  
[Frank, A. K, 2018, The Lesvos Refugee Crisis  
as Disaster Capitalism, Peace Review, 30:2, 199-  
205]*





## HOUSE OF LIES

*"You who are so-called illegal aliens must know that no human being is illegal. That is a contradiction in terms. Human beings can be beautiful or more beautiful, they can be fat or skinny, they can be right or wrong, but illegal? How can a human being be illegal?"*

– Ellie Wiesel

Prints of my 2018 work – a wet grave, a stepping stone – were given out to people I have formed relationships with over the past years. A few of them have become friends, in agonizingly unequal friendships, where one has the freedom to move, and the other is trapped.

The photos have been written on by those friends. They have etched their anxieties onto the surface of the material I have curated. These friends are called “illegal” – some hide in safe houses, only coming out at night, others sleep on the streets of Athens or in a canal in Calais. They cannot vote, they cannot seek legal support; they do not receive medical support. The subaltern cannot speak here. They are forced to live like rats while Mercedes drive by. These people have been given no priority. On some sheets of paper, they are “unwanted aliens”, while on others they are “sought for deportation”. They are uninvited, they are ignored – and we avert our gaze. They may have a sad story for you, or maybe they just left to find a good job and get some money to buy nice clothes or get married. They are not from war: they are from the so-called third world. This parallel planet that’s been ravished by colonialism and capitalism.

They have names, and yet no one wants to hear them. There is one in your street, but you don’t know that.

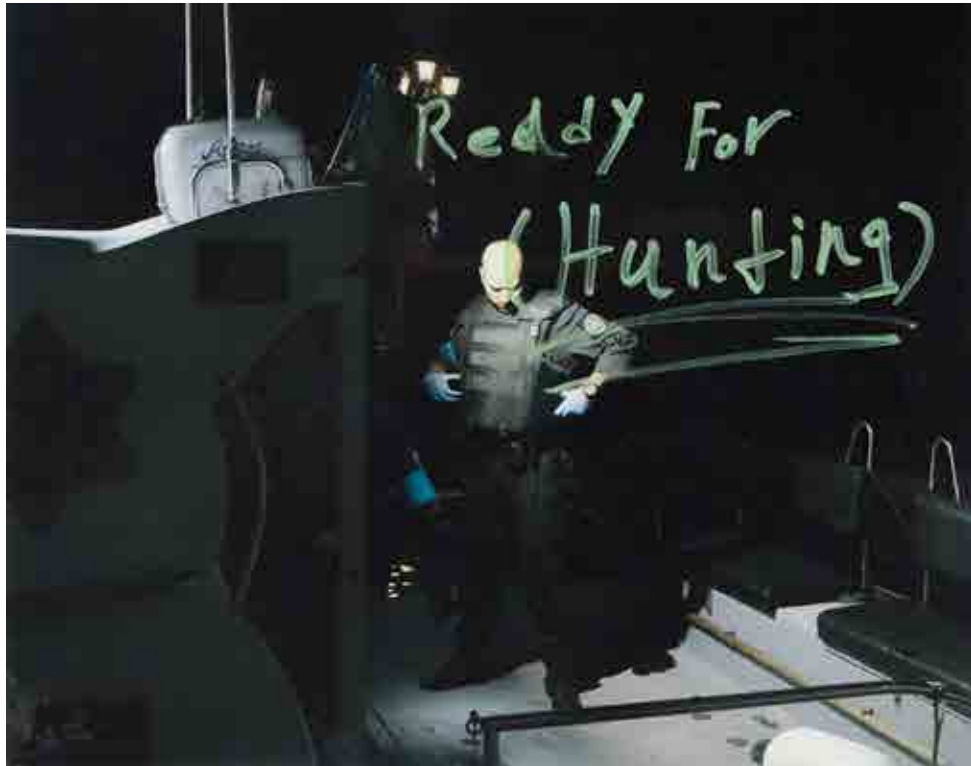
Or maybe you don’t want to know.

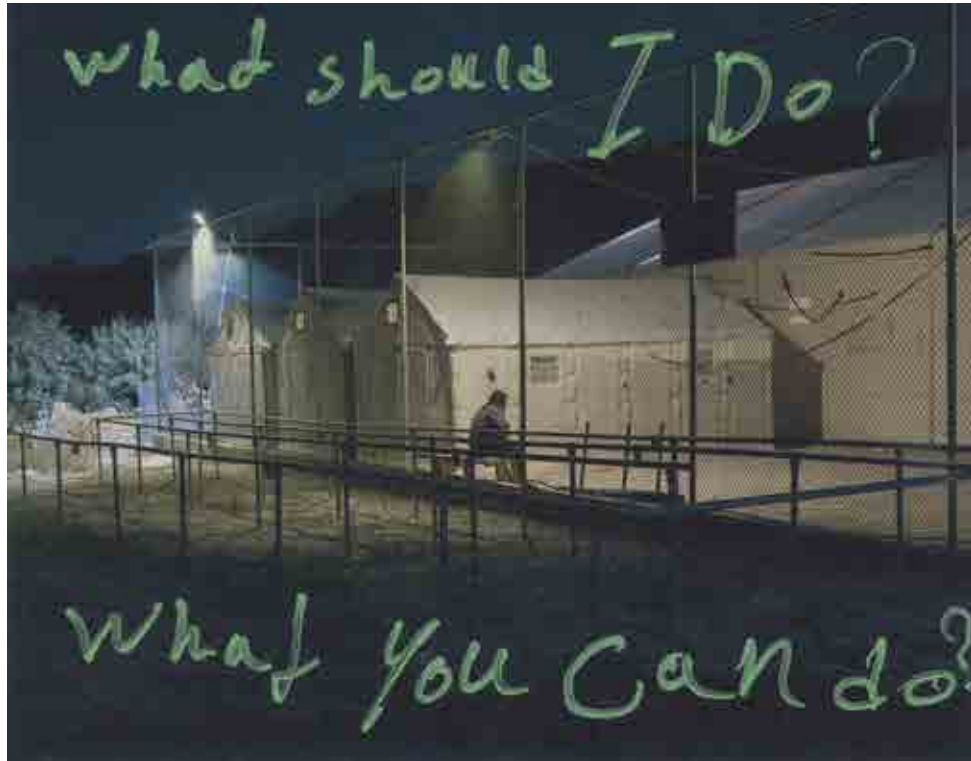
Being born in Baluchistan or Mali, these are third-class refugees, but first in line for a fight in handcuffs. They are the Deportation Class, they wear vests black. In European discourse, we call them economic migrants or simply foreigners. These souls have had their claims rejected. The classification of “safe places” is mostly determined by politics and does not reflect reality in the slightest. It’s guys that have been refused because they are not “vulnerable enough” or come from a “safe country” that I worked with on this. Many fear the deportation because it will mean a sure death. They are wanted now. Wanted gone. Out of here. Away from us.

To be sent back. Like overcooked meat or an unwanted package. Because their papers ain’t right. They are Sans Papiers. They are ohne Ausweis, they do not have ID. They are humans to be discarded, ejected from our pristine European motherland.

But I know they’ll stay.







## ONE BLOOD

Who?

Who is responsible?

Who planned this?

We live on one planet, our blood is the same

African, Asian, American, same

Who is human?

Who is a refugee?

Who is native?

Who is Mexican?

Who is American?

Different cultures, colours, but the spirit is the same

Look at what connects us, this is what makes us human

To those who have oppressed us and forced us to leave

To those who put us in cages

To those who witness

To those who kept silent

We will find a safe place

We are all humans

We are all migrants





## WHY I HATE MY BURGUNDY PASSPORT

1. Because it allows me to go, and more importantly to come.

2. Because its cover, like brown fingertips dipped in battery acid or caustic alcohol such that they cannot be traced on pan-European databases of outlawed movement beyond the country of first registration, is worn down to the point of illegibility.

3. Because friends flick through it in bars in London or Berlin or Jerusalem and laugh at how little the picture looks like me. Border guards in shirtsleeves and stupid little epaulettes likewise flick bored eyes from the decade-old mugshot to my face, and slide the passport back below the perspex grille without giving me a second glance.

4. Because the biometric scanning chip does not work and has never worked, and this has never caused me problems, has in fact allowed me to skip certain queues.

5. Because burgundy is the colour of old blood and older riches.

6. Because it would go for 2000 Euros on the black market in Athens, but the smugglers do not permit such sales. They prefer to control all irregular routes out of the country through their own network of trucks and safehouses, fashioning new borders even as they grow rich from puncturing the old.

7. Because if I lose it when I'm out on the piss, I could buy another for £90: because the inmates of Moria refugee camp must survive on a little less than £90 each month: because it is tarnished with many kaleidoscopic visas and I have forgotten how much most of them cost.

8. Because it is annotated in 25 languages, and 23 of these use the Roman script.

9. Because it should not be tampered with or passed to an unauthorised person: because there is such a thing as an 'unauthorised person'.

10. Because the Israeli authorities interrogated me for four hours then franked it with a number 5, under a threat-rating system wherein 6 is reserved for those seen as superlatively hostile to the Israeli state (Palestinians, Muslims, Arabs, known activists). Some small part of me was upset that I did not score a perfect 6. This is the same part which urges me to act needlessly tough when crossing borders, to make myself feel important, to make myself feel scared.

11. Because I have no need to work in any of the countries where I am Not Permitted To Work.

12. Because it says *shame be to him who thinks evil* of it in gold lettering on the cover, though the real shame of all those who hold such a document is that we are not nearly ashamed enough.

13. Because below that it says *dieu et mon*

*droit*, and for all that my comrades and I scream contrapuntally no gods and no masters, both our masters and our rights have endured until this day.

14. Because I have sat up late in a derelict strip-club in Lesvos, drinking cheap spirits of the sort you might desperately pour over your fingertips as the registration queue at Moria shuffled onward, while it was passed from hand to careful hand. Because my friends said wow and very nice Matt and enquired after the places I had been. Because each one of them held it up besides his face in turn, and my fuzzy little mugshot floated distant as a minor moon besides them, and our laughter was mournful but still it was laughter and the cheap spirits tasted like fine aged wine, and afterwards my passport slid back into my pocket, as all of us knew that it would.

15. Because it contains, pressed between its pages like flowers, the images of many birds.

*The British government has used the return to a blue passport – rather than the burgundy passport used throughout the EU – as a propaganda point in its push to “take back control” and close its borders still further to what it sees as the uncontrollable flood of refugees passing through Europe. This has prompted swarms of liberals to brandish their burgundy EU passport as a symbol of the ‘freedom of movement’ the EU guarantees...*





## STOP DEPORTATIONS TO TURKEY

### People trapped on the Greek Islands are deprived of basic rights

Since the EU-Turkey Statement, more and more people seeking protection in Europe are deported directly from the Greek Islands to Turkey. According to the European Commission, at least 2,224 people have been deported to Turkey since the implementation of the EU-Turkey deal on 20th of March 2016. Under constant threat of being deported, many people have to stay in a state of limbo for more than a year. They have to wait in the dehumanising living conditions of the barbed wired European hotspot camps on the Greek Islands that are unable to meet their fundamental needs. The deadlock situation drives people to despair. Already in 2017, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) denounced a “mental health emergency” on the Greek islands. In winter 2016/17 at least six people died in Moria camp (Lesvos) alone because of the terrible living conditions. According to a more recent MSF report the situation has deteriorated even further. Many people trapped in camps experience strong violence by the authorities and peaceful resistance against the situation is strongly criminalized. The EU-Turkey Deal has transformed the Greek Islands with the European hotspot camps into open air prisons. In these desperate conditions, a rising number of people agree to “voluntary return” back to their home country. After signing the return agreement with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the individuals are normally arrested and

brought in handcuffs to a pre-removal centre where they have to wait for up to several months to be deported. Between June 2016 and April 2018 more than 10,000 persons have been returned from Greece to their place of origin (regardless of the safety of the country), through the voluntary return programme funded by the EU and Greece.

### Detention based on nationality

Others are deported quicker under a so-called pilot-project that targets migrants from countries with low recognition rates for international protection. They are detained upon arrival in a prison (a so-called “pre-removal center”) and in most cases have to undergo their asylum procedure without any preparation and legal support. As a result, they get caught in the cycle of unjust detention and foreseeable deportation. Some people do not even get the chance to explain their need for protection before being deported as their asylum claims are categorized as “inadmissible” under the so-called fast-track border procedure implemented on the Greek Islands. After a 2017 ruling by the Council of State finding that Turkey was a safe country for two Syrians, Syrian nationals are under threat of being deported back to Turkey because their asylum claims are categorized as “inadmissible”.

If an asylum seeker’s claim is rejected or declared inadmissible, the person is given two choices: either to appeal the rejection or to “voluntarily return” to their country of origin with the IOM. Appealing the rejection has been reduced to a mere formal act: Since the appeal committees compo-

sition shifted under pressure of the European Commission, the acceptance rate of appeals against rejections on admissibility grounds that was by the end of November 2016 at 97.9%, dropped drastically. Chances for appeals against rejections on merits are close to 1%. Many people know that the chance of having their case fairly examined on appeal is limited, and feel forced to sign up for the so-called “voluntary return” as their only option to escape the deportation to Turkey.

While Greek law entitles asylum seekers to have the right to appeal a second time in administrative court, in reality this is practically impossible because of the lack of sufficient asylum lawyers in the hotspot camps and the costs of a second-instance appeal.

### The asylum procedure on the Greek Islands fails core legal standards

The asylum procedure carried out by the Greek Asylum Service (GAS) and the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) has been under the investigation of the Ombudsperson and was repeatedly criticized by observers. The European Centre for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR) concluded that “EASO fails core legal standards” and “EASO officers fail to respect core standards of fairness”. Whilst the Ombudsperson acknowledged serious concerns with EASO’s conduct, it was then concluded that no further action would be taken.

**People deported from Europe face imprisonment and further deportation: Turkey is not a safe third country**

The declaration of asylum claims as inadmissible and the rejection of asylum claims under the fast-track border procedure leading to deportations of asylum seekers to Turkey is based on the assumption that Turkey is considered a safe third country. However, the majority of deportees are in fact detained in removal prisons upon arrival where they are held in horrifying conditions for up to 12 months. Most of them are eventually deported to their home countries without having had the opportunity to apply for international protection. Turkey signed the 1951 Refugee convention, but maintains a geographical limitation meaning Turkey only guarantees 'refugee status' to citizens of member states of the Council of Europe. As for people coming from other countries, Turkey only recognizes a 'temporary protection'. In theory only Syrians can get this temporary protection status, which provides very limited rights, while people with other national backgrounds can theoretically only get weak subsidiary protection status, while they wait for relocation as refugees in third countries.

According to the European Commission, since the EU-Turkey agreement came into force, only two out of all non-Syrian deportees have in fact been granted protection status in Turkey until September 2017. Many people fleeing war, persecution, and poverty do not get a fair hearing for their asylum claim in Europe or Turkey. Moreover, after a lengthy period of detention in Turkey or Europe, people are

deported back to their country of origin. In several cases detainees are forced to sign return papers, or do so willingly in order to escape imprisonment. A person deported from Turkey to Nigeria reported that he had been gagged and threatened with a stun gun by Turkish police during his deportation flight.

**Serious lack of transparency by the authorities**

In several cases, the deportation procedures are carried out in secrecy. It is almost impossible for human rights organizations and independent actors to monitor the deportation procedure and to provide support to those being deported to Turkey. While the UNHCR is informed about the number and nationality of the deportees, in most cases neither the Hellenic Asylum Service, the Hellenic Police, the EU, nor FRONTEX are willing to share information regarding the deportees prior to their deportation, except with their attorney – if they are lucky enough to have one. Vital information is made inaccessible. Throughout the deportation, the view of the deportees is obstructed and in many cases no contact to the public is allowed. Independent volunteers who are monitoring these activities are frequently checked for documentation, detained on short terms, and intimidated by police.

**Inhumane deportation practices: even sick people and people who are still in the asylum procedure are deported**

People have been deported despite serious health conditions such as chronic disease, disability, and life-threatening illness. Sev-

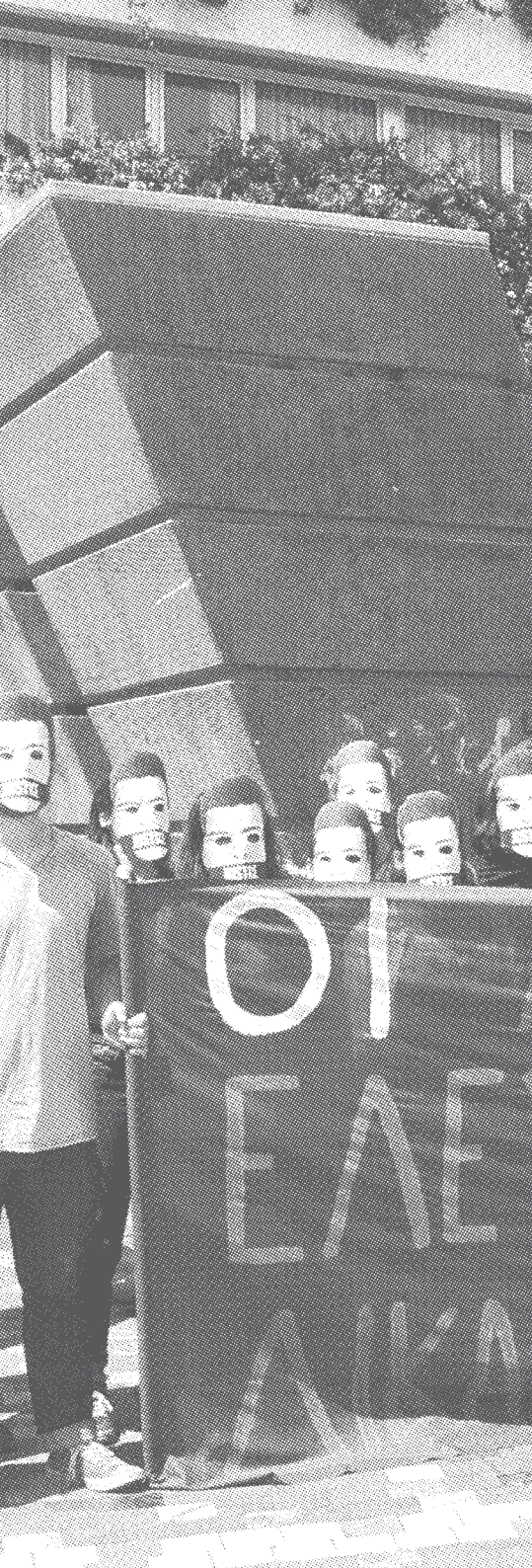
eral cases have been reported by migrants who stated that they had been woken up by the police in the early hours of the morning, given fifteen minutes to pack their belongings, brought to the police station, and were then deported. People are often prohibited to communicate with their lawyers or friends. As a result no one can provide support or legal intervention as they do not know about their situation. In other cases, deportees have been falsely told that they would be transferred to the Greek mainland and have ended up in prison in Turkey. In a few cases where the names of deportees were known, it was found that they had been deported without getting the chance to apply for asylum or were still in an ongoing asylum procedure. Directly after the implementation of the EU-Turkey statement, Human Rights Watch and Pro Asyl highlighted that asylum claims had not been considered and no legally binding deportation notices had been issued to people seeking protection prior to their deportation. In addition, lawyers have reported administrative mistakes such as mixing up case numbers. On rare occasions deportations could be stopped last minute when their lawyer insisted that their client was still in an ongoing appeal against their second rejection and only if the lawyer had arrived on time at the police station to stop the deportation.

These current practices of deporting and detaining people seeking protection violates basic human rights. We the undersigned strongly oppose these dehumanizing and oppressive actions.

We demand the European Union and the Greek State to:

- **Provide transparency and information about deportations**
- **Stop deportations to Turkey – It is not a safe country–**
- **Stop inhumane “voluntary” return practices**
- **Stop the EU-Turkey Deal and allow migrants to leave the Greek Islands**
- **Stop the detention of migrants**





## STATEMENT BY 5 OF THE ACCUSED OF THE MORIA 35

On the 20 April 2018, we are scheduled to attend trial in Chios after waiting nine months, trapped on Lesbos, while 30 of our brothers unjustly have waited in prison for this same time period.

Our humanity has been denied since we stepped foot in Europe, the supposed cradle of democracy and human rights. Since we arrived we have been forced to live in horrible conditions, our asylum cases are not taken seriously, and most Africans are denied residency in Europe and face deportation. We are treated like criminals, simply for crossing a border that Europeans can freely cross.

Now 35 of us have been accused of rioting, destroying property, and violence, however, it was actually the police who have attacked us in a violent and racist raid on the African section of Moria Detention Centre on the 18 July 2017, the day we were arrested. On the 18 July, a group of migrants of many different nationalities and races gathered to protest that we are being kept prisoners on Lesbos island in inhumane conditions. To break up the protest, the police shot tear gas canisters into the group of migrants who were protesting outside the main gate of Moria Detention Centre. It was the police in full riot gear who attacked unarmed migrants with stones, batons, and tear gas. More than an hour after the clashes ended the police surrounded only the African section of Moria Detention Centre. It was the police who damaged property by braking the windows and doors of the

containers where we were living. Without concern for people who were inside they threw tear gas into the closed containers. They dragged people by their hair out of the containers. They beat anyone they found with batons, their boots, their fists, including a pregnant woman. It seems we were targeted only because of our skin colour – because we are black. It was in this violent and racist attack that we were also beaten and arrested. The police continued to beat us inside the police station, while we were in handcuffs, and they denied us medical attention for days afterwards.

The week after we were violently arrested, the police returned and again raided Moria Detention Centre, arresting many Africans who were notified that their appeals had been rejected, and who were then deported to Turkey. We believe that this raid was in order to continue to terrorize migrants and silence any resistance. With coordination of UNHCR and the Greek Asylum Service, the pregnant woman who had been beaten was transferred to Athens in the days after the police attack on our community. We believe that her transfer to Athens and the deportation of several Africans was also in order to get rid of any witnesses to the police's attack against us.

However, the authorities can not stop the truth from coming out about how Greece and Europe treat migrants in Lesbos. It is the violent attack by the police against African migrants which must be investigated. It is the police who must be brought to justice.

We and our 30 brothers in prison must be freed. We do not trust that the authori-

ties who have treated us as less than human will treat us fairly in this case and we know that we will only achieve justice in this case through solidarity from Greeks, Europeans and other people who see us as their equals.

Stand in solidarity with the Moria 35

*For more information go to  
[freethemoria35.wordpress.com](http://freethemoria35.wordpress.com)*





## ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE ASSEMBLY OF NGO EMPLOYEES IN LESVOS

On the night of Saturday 24th August 2019, a 15-year old Afghan boy was killed, another heavily injured, while two minors are in pre-trial detention, following clashes inside the protected area for unaccompanied minors (safe zone) in Moria. For us, the moral perpetrators of this crime are none other than the European Union and the Greek state, as Europe's polemic ideology is the main instigator of Greek state policies, which see incarceration, violence and death as the sole response to refugee flows.

### Policies towards refugees

This incident is almost a natural consequence of the 'security dogma' imposed towards refugee arrivals, the protection of European borders against intruders. Instead of safe passages, the European member states respond with Frontex and murders of refugees at sea, which are labelled as wrecks and unfortunate events. Under the EU-Turkey Deal, all those who eventually cross the Greek border are subjected to the so-called "geographical restriction", resulting in them being trapped on the prison-islands of the Aegean.

This policy creates impoverished conditions, as thousands of refugees are confined to hotspots on the island until their asylum application is processed. Organised from the outset to discourage those seeking a safe haven in Europe from the violent conditions that displaced them, thousands of people are stuck in these sites, with no respect to a dignified life, the only concern

being refugee control and policing. Access to medical care, legal aid, educational and integration programs are limited and depend on the project implemented by various NGOs, which seized this opportunity to expand within the framework of the so-called refugee crisis. Meanwhile there is insufficient information on the conditions inside the hotspots and the procedures that refugees need to follow.

Human existence is increasingly depleted and replaced by a logic of "lives worth living and lives not worth living". In the hotspots, confrontations are solved mainly through police violence and the survival of the strongest. Beyond the systematic impoverishment, refugees have to confront the daily devaluation of their lives through repression, barbed wires and control policies. And in this game, NGOs' role is to embellish this misery and violence, and dress it in veils of humanitarianism.

### Unaccompanied minors

This dogma is also implemented in the case of unaccompanied minors on the islands and particularly in Lesvos. Although considered "vulnerable" and in need of protection, unaccompanied minors are trapped in extremely confined spaces inside the hotspots, that are only labelled as safe because they are enclosed by even more barbed wire. The First Reception Service also follows correctional and punitive practices within these section and protective spaces, which are not even sufficient to accommodate the number of minors currently living in Moria. One common approach to the lack of "good conduct" is to remove children from the

protected areas, and expose them to even more precarious living conditions. All these intimidating practices are carried out with the consent of the public prosecutor, who is responsible for the protection of unaccompanied minors.

At the same time, the National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA), the mechanism responsible for coordinating the provision of shelter for unaccompanied minors, under-functions, with shelter across Greece decreasing and shutting down, instead of multiplying, as a response to lack of funding, and NGO planning, which often find the running of shelters unprofitable in relation to their development plans. The result is that unaccompanied minors are forced to reside in Moria for 9-10 months, constantly looking for means of survival in the violent environment that is reserved for them.

### Responsibilities

The above policies constantly generate incidents of violence in the population residing in the hotspot. This is not the first time that there has been a death in Moria. However, it was certain that we would, at some point, be led to the death of an unaccompanied minor, since the conditions that led to the previous deaths have not changed. We despise the hypocrisy of the state, of NGOs and International Organisations for this specific death, since they never undertook their responsibilities for all the previous ones.

On the contrary, those in charge will try to place the blame on the alleged "perpetrator" in an attempt to deflect the detrimental consequences of their policies. They



will furthermore exploit the death of this minor in an attempt to reinforce the claim that refugees are “dangerous” and need more prisons and more policing. We will not allow this tragic event to legitimize a racist policy of further incarceration, marginalization and unfair criminalization of childhood and of the refugee status.

We, employees of NGOs in Lesvos, believe that the main responsibility for this tragic event lies with those that imagined, and to date operate, Moria as an accommodation center. Those that lament for the deaths must claim the shutting down of Moria, so that locals and foreigners can live, work and fight together. We do not want more specialised staff and more efficient guarding of Moria. Moria must be demolished, because it produces ruined persons, with no prospects nor future.

As an assembly of employees of NGOs in Lesvos:

**We demand the immediate shutting down of Moria hotspot**

**We demand the immediate removal of unaccompanied minors to appropriate and safe shelters**

**Lifting of the geographical restriction for all refugees**

**The public prosecutor to be held responsible and the exercise of correct implementation of the guardianship scheme**

**The director of Moria, the relevant Ministry and all co-managing bodies to be held responsible**

*The assembly of NGO employees in Lesvos was set up in April 2019, works horizontally, and is made up of NGO employees in Lesvos*

## PRISON ISLAND LESVOS

It is an everyday scene on Lesvos Island: People are watching each other through barbed wired fences. On the one side, they are detained behind the NATO wire; on the opposite side, they are stationed to guard the captives. Some people behind the fence are held for months in prisons, others are “only” forced to live in the barbed wired camp Moria. They are allowed to leave the camp during the day, but they cannot leave the island. Some of the people in the camp surrounding are also there to make their living through the people behind the fences – they are members of police or military guarding them, or humanitarian NGOs providing blankets, tents and healthcare.

What is the difference among those living inside the barbed wired camp and those living outside?

First of all, it is their place of birth and their skin colour. The people inside are Black or Arabic, from Asian, Middle Eastern or African countries, whereas the people outside are white – from Greece, other European countries or the US.

If it was not such a cruel reality, it would almost feel like a social experiment: Divide a group according to a random feature, such as eye or hair colour. Give power to the one group and force the other to obey. Watch the experiment and see what dynamics of oppression develop. Probably the results would be similar to what you can find in Moria camp on Lesvos Island.

But on Lesvos, there is more to it: It is also



about money: Many of those inside the fence are poor, while those outside have money. And it is about biographies of persecution: Most people inside experienced fear, insecurity and violence and were forced to leave their home, while those outside have more stable lives. Then, the division is affected by stereotypes of religion: The people outside are perceived as Christians and those held in Moria camp are rather constructed as homogenous group of Muslims – although there is in fact all sorts of religions and atheists among them.

Those detained in the prison section are even more explicitly selected: All of them are single men and many of them come from Africa or the MENA-region. They are perceived as dangerous and “economic migrants” with no right to stay – preselected as men traveling without families from countries with low chances to receive asylum in the European Union.

This is the selective detention regime of Lesbos island. Some people are affected really harsh – like the men imprisoned directly after the life-threatening crossing from Turkey. Others – like those categorized as “vulnerable” – have slightly better chances to be allowed to leave the island sooner. Nevertheless, for the time-being on Lesbos, all of them are suffering in conditions that are a disgrace for humanity and dignity. But what is the rationality of this inhumane, senseless suffering? Whom does it serve?

Holding unwanted people – “the others” – as captives on prison islands is not a new

phenomenon. Throughout the 20th century, people from all over the world tended to ban those expelled from society to islands: The 500-hectare small island Alcatraz close to San Francisco is one example for a variety of prison islands for people convicted as criminals. Operational for more than 100 years, it served until 1963 as high security prison. But already in the colonial era, in 1904, prison islands were used: Germany erected a concentration camp on the Namibian Shark Island to continue the genocide against the Herero and Nama. The continent of Australia used to be a colony for Great Britain to get rid of its prisoners. Later, Australia itself started to operate small prison islands before its shore to hold criminals. Today, the prison islands before the Australian continent mainly serve to prevent migrants from reaching the country: The military apprehends refugees in international waters and disembarks them to camps on islands like Nauru – well known for extreme violence, rape and torture against refugees.

Austria’s president Kurz approved the “Australian solution” to deal with migration. In fact, the EU outlined similar ideas: In June 2018, the European Commission planned to create so-called “control centres” or “disembarkment platforms” within and outside of Europe. Especially the extraterritorial idea seems to be appealing for authorities and is often brought up in debates – to find a place, where basic rights do not have to be granted as on EU territory, a place where someone else is responsible for rights violation and no one is held accountable.

What sounds like a remote dystopian idea has for thousands of people already become reality: The five Greek islands close to the Turkish shore, namely Lesbos, Chios, Leros, Samos and Kos, were in 2015 declared as Hotspot Islands by the European Commission. Located at the EU’s external border towards Turkey, they were initially conceptualized as distribution centres for registering and filtering incoming migrants. This changed with the EU-Turkey deal on March 18th 2016: The islands were locked down, and an own legal system to deal with migration – a special fast-track asylum procedure – was introduced for the islands only. In fact, this concept of dealing with migration has quite some similarities to the Australian model: The goal was to use the Greek Islands as buffer zone towards the EU and deport everyone who arrives as soon as possible back to Turkey. While the Greek Islands are however not completely extraterritorial and therefore not allowing for rights violations such as in Nauru or Guantanamo Bay, the new law still transformed them into a special legal zone where basic rights are strongly limited.

There is a threefold imprisonment system for migrants in place: the geographic restrictions to the islands, the obligation to live in the so-called hotspot camps, and for some people imprisonment within closed prison sections of the camps or prisons in police stations. The EU-Turkey Deal intended to empty the islands as quickly as possible and deport the people back to Turkey that was declared to be a “safe third country”. However, this concept did

not work and most people were not directly deported but instead trapped for months and years in lengthy asylum procedures. During this time, most of them have to live in the unbearable conditions in camps.

Lesbos and the other small Hotspot Islands are highly international places. The cruel reception and deportation systems are structured by work division among different local and international Organizations from the police/security and the humanitarian sector: EU institutions such as EUROPOL, FRONTEX and EASO are responsible for border protection, asylum procedures and deportations, in cooperation with Greek asylum and security agencies. The International Organization for Migration IOM facilitates so-called “voluntary returns”, the UNHCR is supposed to grant protection to refugees. NGOs ranging from religious fundamentalist to self-organised human rights organizations are providing basic goods, health services and legal assistance. All are involved and none is accountable – no one is held responsible, when people are pushed back or even die in the Aegean Sea, no one is held responsible when people die because of the conditions in the camp, and no one is held responsible when people are killed after their deportation.

In fact, those deported quickly learned what the EU’s externalization of responsibility means: The so-called “safe third country” Turkey hardly ever gives them the responsibility to apply for protection. Instead, deportees from Greece end up in Turkish prisons after their deportation and most of them are deported on to their



countries of origin. Even huge numbers of Syrians were expelled and sent back to the war area of Idlib. The EU of course does not accept any responsibility.

The new Europe creates legal grey zones at the edges of EU-territory and externalizes the responsibility for border controls and hosting of migrants to third countries – as far away as possible. Lesbos is used as an EU laboratory to try how far the continent can go. It is not as straight forward as the Australian island solution, it still has a humanitarian face. But this can be even more dangerous. Filtering and excluding people along the lines of race, nationality, gender and wealth will not stop global injustice and will therefore also not stop migration. The people reaching Europe will always remind the continent on the exploitive structures it is built upon and raise pressure to create an anti-colonial fair global system. Externalizing violence to islands and to third countries does not clear the European leaders and people from the responsibility for the suffering and thousands of deaths at and before its external borders.

## YOU CAN'T STOP (A) MOVEMENT

Notes towards an anti capitalist; anti-statist and decolonial struggle against borders.

The border is not just a line on a map; a line that divides an inside from an outside; a border is not just a wall or fence that separates different locations. Borders aim to prevent people from moving freely across the globe. The border is everywhere where people live in fear of arrest or deportation; borders are there where migrants are denied their rights. The border is a structure of power that violently segregates the world, controls and destroys lives. The question therefore is not who and how migration and borders should be managed—it is how to abolish them. We should therefore not ground our struggle for world without borders in humanitarian arguments alone, instead, the genuine struggle against borders is anti-capitalist, anti-statist and decolonial.

There is a direct connection between capitalism, migration and borders. Historically, the rich tried to control the movement of the poor, beggars and people who do not own land or paid work. From the 14th until the 19th century, the enclosures of land (either in Europe or in the colonized territories) forced people from their lands. Enclosure is the appropriation of common lands by a small group of people to make them more profitable. Common lands violently transformed into private properties distinguished a relation between those who own land and those who don't. In Europe, the ruling class build fences

and hedges around communal lands and claimed them as their properties. This limited movement into pastures and forest and forced people from the rural areas to the urban centres into wage-labour. The imperial project of colonialism followed a similar pattern. In the 15th century Europeans started their conquest and "explored" the world for "new" lands. The violent colonization and occupation of land that followed served only one goal; the expansion of territory and wealth. In these "new" colonized lands people were forced into slavery. Slavery supplied free labour for the European elite for their ongoing desire to accumulated capital. This accumulated capital travelled back to Europe and was one of the driving forces that pushed the development of (global) capitalism.

Nowadays, the ruling class continues to exclude people from their wealth. Western liberal states and their borders are a key structure that continuous to enforce these exclusionary politics. In 2019, according to the UHNCR, more than 70 million people are displaced. Most of the causes why people move can be traced back to Western imperial and capitalist exploitation. Armed conflict, arms trade, land grabs, climate change or occupations and wars of oppression correlate with the accumulation of wealth of liberal states. Many of these unequal economic and political relations are a heritage of colonialism. Although only a small number of people want to move to these so-called liberal Western states in the EU, they intensified the control of movement of people into their territory; differentiating between

welcome or unwelcome. Those who can offer (skilled and needed) labour power or capital for the capitalist machinery are welcomed. For example, the European Union is welcoming for skilled workers or those who invest significant capital in the EU are given visas and passports; while it tries to stop the movement of those who don't fit the classification. As a result; thousands have died on their way to reach Europe; millions are illegalized and stripped from their rights in Turkey, Greece, Europe and the world as a whole to maintain the unequal power relations.

Because borders, nation-states and capitalism are intertwined; a struggle for freedom of movement and against the exclusionary politics of liberal states should be anti-capitalist and anti-statist. A struggle against borders is inherent decolonial because many of the causes of people's displacement are a (in)direct consequence of the EUropean project of colonialism. The decolonial detaches from ongoing colonial relations of exploitation and oppression evident to capitalism and the restriction of movements. Throughout history, people resisted and subverted the desire of the elite to control their movement and the oppression inherent to it. In the 1600, thousands of people resisted the enclosures in the Midland rebellion; in 1791 enslaved people rebelled against their rulers during the Haitian revolution; people continuing to arrive on Lesvos despite that the the wealthy don't want them there and the protest against the EU-Turkey deal in Lesvos in 2016 are just some examples how people resisted the imposed control

and exclusion. When we look at the history people have always moved in search for a better live. The movement of people can't be controlled nor stopped and the ongoing and intensified control of movement will only result in more casualties. Therefore, to stop the tragedies and exclusionary politics of contemporary migration politics we need to formulate our struggle against the exclusionary border regimes as anti-capitalist, anti-statist and decolonial.

### You Can't Stop (a) Movement

*\*this article is just a small discussion of extreme complex topics. The following readings were of great inspiration to write this short text. For further readings about colonialism, decolonialism and ongoing colonial relation check: Walter D. Mignolo's "The Darker Side of Western Modernity" and Silvia Federici's "Caliban and the Witch".*

*For historical approach to contemporary border practices check: Reece Jones "Violent Borders".*

*For an anarchist perspective on borders check: [www.crimethinc.com](http://www.crimethinc.com)*



