

Flyktingarna.se

"I want to live my life, but the time is passing and the years are taken from me"

Flyktingarna.se is a politically, organizationally and religiously independent organization that aims to spread personal stories told by people who have been affected by the European migration policies.

With these stories, the organization wants to exemplify what the Swedish migration policies have meant and continue to mean to people, but also what they will mean after the election this fall. In other words, flyktingarna.se wants to stress the importance of migration policies and make it an issue for the coming election.

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DIEUDONNÉ

Refugee detention camp in Märsta, 28th of July, 2012.

Hello everybody

My name is Dieudonné, I have been seeking asylum in Sweden since October 2007 because of problems that I became victim of back in Burundi (we have had a civil war there, which lasted over ten years, 1993–2005, political violence is still common and there is no freedom to criticize the regime).

I am being detained since March 14th and Migrationsverket wants to send me back by force, they claim that I don't have enough evidence that I am in need of asylum. They tried to deport me yesterday, but luckily my deportation was stopped by Swedish activists who convinced the airline company that was supposed to take me with them to not let me fly.

To be a refugee is very hard, you are homesick but you can't return, and some times the conditions in the land where you live in exile are hard (like in my case). After two years in Sweden, in January 2010, Migrationsverket wanted to send me back and I had to hide, which is hard (I survived thanks to the church and friends). Sometimes I would get sick but I couldn't visit the hospital.

When they caught me again they put me directly in the detention centre to wait for deportation. The hardest thing about being detained is that I can't sleep at night, I only sleep about three hours at daytime since they are deporting me. Migrationsverket gave my case to the police so that they can take me back to Burundi by force. Please, can someone help me get Migrationsverket to reopen my case?

God bless you!

Dieudonné

WESAM

My name is Wesam. I am 39 years old and a stateless Palestinian from Gaza. I have had my application turned down in Sweden and a decision has been made to deport me, but no country will let me in. I live at one of Migrationsverket's housing arrangements, I get 25 Swedish Crowns per day to live on, and I am not allowed to study or work. I am not allowed to do anything. I want to live my life but the time is passing and the years are taken from me. I have waited for years and nothing happens.

I fled from Gaza in 2008 during the ongoing war that broke out after some time of ceasefire between the Hamas and the Israeli occupying power. Israeli military flew over our houses, dropping bombs. We had no food and we were scared. I didn't want to leave my home country, but fleeing was the only option I could see. I got out over the Egyptian border and left the war and the occupation behind.

For some time I lived in the United Arab Emirates and Belarus, I arrived in Sweden five years ago. I sought asylum, but got denied and was supposed to be deported to one of the countries where I have lived before. But they won't have me. Since I'm stateless and have no Palestinian identification number, they are denying me an entry permit. The police are trying to deport me and the Palestinian embassy won't give me a new passport.

I have a daughter in Belarus whom I miss every day. She writes me emails telling me about her life. I wish that I could reunite with her, but because of my situation I can't go to her. It is painful, and for every day that passes things feel more and more hopeless.

I have nobody here and I am not allowed to do anything with my life. My life is put on hold, and time just disappears. I keep looking for people to talk to, but nobody wants to listen, nobody wants to talk and nobody wants to help. I read a lot about human rights to try to understand how it this could have happened. I want to know who is responsible for me and other refugees being treated this way. I am a human being, but Migrationsverket seems to have forgotten about that.

During one month, between July 15th and August 15th I went on hunger strike to get someone to listen and open their eyes to my case, but also to other stateless peoples situation. It is awful, how we get treated around the world. The hunger strike didn't change anything, but many read about my situation in the media.

I never hid and I never tried to escape my life here, I have always cooperated with Migrationsverket, still nothing is happening. Sometimes it feels like I am the one chasing Migrationsverket and the police instead of the other way around, like usually. I won't get a residence permit and I won't be deported. I can't work, I can't study. I am a trained engineer. I can and want to work, do some good. Three years have passed and there is nothing I can do to get a life here. This has led to heavy depression. I would like to work or study, do something to help

Sweden. But I can't. I get 25 Swedish Crowns a day to live on, and I have my bags packed all the time. I am prepared to be deported to wherever, or to stay here in Sweden, but something has to happen now.

Anything is better than not knowing.

HAMID

My name is Hamid, I have a wife and an unborn child. They live in Sweden under a false identity. She is ill, it started before I found out I was being deported, but when the police picked me up she became worse. She doesn't want to talk to anybody else than me, she has psychological problems.

I eat only to survive, I can't sleep. All I can do is think about my wife and my child. But what can I do? Nothing. I sit here, locked up, like a criminal, even though I haven't done anything wrong. If I would have been a criminal, if I really had done something illegal, I could have escaped when the police came to our house to pick me up. But I stayed, I stayed because my wife needs me and because I thought the police would be able to help us. I tried to explain my situation but they said that the decision about my deportation had been made, my third application got turned down so I simply had to come with them.

When I arrived in Sweden two and a half years ago, I lived in an apartment with six other refugees. We were all waiting for answers from Migrationsverket. After a year here I met my wife, who is now pregnant in her fifth month. This is not only about me, she needs me. She is not feeling well and needs my support. I have been locked up in this detention center for a week now and I'm not allowed to go out. My heart hurts so much I'm thinking that they might just as well kill me now, because I'm soon dead on the inside anyway. I just want to be with my wife, I want to be with my child. I have to be with them, there is nothing else.

I am from a country where things are happening that I don't know how to describe. I have a mother, a sister, and a brother, but I actually don't know if they are still alive. Before I fled my country, I was kidnapped. The men wore police uniforms and had covered their faces, I could only see their eyes. They captured me and told my mother to give them money, if she didn't give it to them they would kill me. I was taken prisoner for two weeks, they beat me, they threatened me. Only my mother knows about this, it is hard for me, I'm ashamed, but they also raped me several times. They told my mother to not contact the police, because then they would kill me. She did it anyway, but she changed clothes and dressed in a burqa so that nobody would recognize her when she went there. She made the report, but as soon as she walked out of the police station they called and asked why she had done it.

These people know everything, they have people everywhere. That is why I can't go back. They will find me. At Migrationsverket here in Sweden, they tell me to move to a different town if I had problems in my hometown. But that will never work.

The kidnappers got money from my mother and after two weeks in captivity, they let me go and said they never wanted to see me again. If I didn't leave the country they would kill me, that's when my mother decided that I had to flee to Sweden. She made all the arrangements. When I returned home, she hid me in the attic where we lived, I was there for four days, my siblings didn't know I was home. She said that was for the best, maybe they would tell someone and my plan to flee would be destroyed.

Those who kidnapped me had already killed my father and recently threatened my sister. When I spoke to my mother six months ago, she said they were going to flee the country. To Iran or Iraq, as they weren't safe in the country anymore. I asked if they had any money. She said they had some, and that she was going to sell some of her jewellery. She told me not to contact her, she was going to call me.

It has been six months and I still don't know where they are, I don't even know if they are alive. I tried to call the number she called from before, but it has been shut down, taken out of operation. I have nothing in my old home country, my life is here now, with my wife and child whom I love.

JOHAN KABUIDIBUIDI

My name is John Kabuidibuidi. I am a pastor. I was born in Kinshasa, Congo, in a land where pastors have a great deal of power and influence. Congo is a country with many political issues – the president was murdered in 2001, which got a lot of attention and led to big conflicts. I had just moved to a new area of Congo, and was arrested by the military because they thought I was a spy. The Catholic Church helped free me, and helped me flee the country.

I arrived in Sweden in 2003 and applied for asylum. After waiting a couple of months, my application was denied. I appealed and got turned down again. Since I was afraid of being imprisoned or killed if I returned to Congo, I lived in hiding for four years. During these years, I developed close contacts with a lot of people in Stockholm, especially within the Elim church. After four years in hiding, I reapplied for asylum.

During the time of my process, I worked as a pastor in a Congolese congregation in Stockholm. In my preaching I often spoke of Congo and I worked to make European Congolese aware of the situation in Congo, to try to get them to engage in changing the situation. I got a lot of attention and many invitations – I held speeches in different parts of Sweden, in France and via Skype, I spoke on English radio. I told Migrationsverket that it was impossible to return to Congo. I said that I would be tortured, maybe even killed. But my second application also got turned down and I was put in detention. I was kept there for over 130 days. People from the Elim church were very involved in my case and it attracted a lot of media attention.

Migrationsverket tried to deport me three times. The first time with an ordinary passenger plane. I prayed to God out loud and the captain refused to fly with me

onboard. Next time they used a chartered plane. They handcuffed me and beat me. They had to stay in Egypt since they were never allowed to land in Congo. After having spent twelve hours on the plane at the airport in Cairo, they took me back to Flen. The third time, the 23rd of February 2012, the plane was chartered again, for me and one other person that was going to be deported. We were handcuffed and footcuffed with a chain around our waists. Both me and the other person were afraid. The police beat us and drugged us. We landed in Congo and from the window of the plane I could see soldiers all over the place. There had recently been an election with a lot of cheating, so the situation was very unstable.

At the airport I saw the Swedish police talk to migration personnel, with and without uniforms. I was put in a small room where a lot of people came and asked me where I was from, who I was, and what I had been doing in Europe. I was afraid that they would understand who I was, so I said that I had been working as a construction engineer, which I had done in Congo before I became a pastor. A person entered the room and told them to let us go. We were told to sign papers and leave. We were still in a fenced area, and had to pass a street barrier to get out. I started talking to a taxi driver when the soldiers approached. I was scared and stepped in the taxi, asking the driver to go, but the driver stopped at the barrier and the soldiers stepped in the taxi.

They made the taxi drive out of sight, and started to ask more questions and go through my luggage. They found a newspaper clipping that showed that I was a pastor. They took my cell phone and found numbers of regime critical people in Congo. They took me to a Jeep, beat me, and put me on the floor of the car. They drove for hours and I couldn't see a thing. They took me to a prison, undressed me, and left me in a room. They threatened me, tortured me, and wanted money. I had no money to offer them, I cried and begged for mercy. They said that since I didn't have any money, there was nothing they could do. They said that to stay in the prison where I was kept more than two days, you had to pay, otherwise you would be moved to an even worse prison, or you would be killed. I had to call a Congolese friend to bribe me out. I went to a hospital where I was treated for my injuries. I lived in hiding in Congo. Thanks to my friends in the Swedish church in Congo and in organizations like Diakonia and the Nelson Mandela Foundation, my injuries were taken care of and documented.

People within the Elim church fought for me a lot. They helped me get hired in the Congolese congregation and got me a travel visa. It was very complicated and made in several steps. Migrationsverket did not bend their rules. After I was given my visa, I had to get out of the country. I tried to get out via Congo Brazzaville twice, but failed both times. The Swedish embassy said, that with the residence permit I had been given, I had to leave from Kinshasa. I tried to say that it was impossible, that I would be imprisoned, but they said there was nothing they could do. Finally I flew out of Kinshasa by bribing someone in a high position at the airport. This person followed me through the check-in and we bribed everyone we met. I returned back to Sweden on March 11th.

Today I'm working as a pastor and I live with my family. Migrationsverket never admitted to doing anything wrong and there has been no compensation. They

didn't help me get back to Sweden after the torture. They have to open their eyes. They have to see all parts of the stories told by asylum seekers. People seeking refuge are taking great risks. The situation in Congo is very bad, and Migrationsverket has to understand this. We all have to talk about it, and spread the word.

FRIDON

I come from a town four hours by car south of Kabul. My father belonged to the Afghani army. He was murdered by the Taliban. I don't know how it happened, but when the Taliban contacted my mother and explained that she had to leave, we left the country. This was in the beginning of 2009. We got to Quetta in Pakistan.

But Pakistan also have the Taliban. My mother thought it was too risky for me, who was the oldest one, to stay. I was fourteen and my brothers nine and eleven. One day she told me she had paid a smuggler to help me to Sweden. She had heard that it was a good country where people were kind.

The journey was long. I went by car to Iran. I had to walk long distances in the mountain areas before arriving in Turkey. I went by boat to Greece and then later by boat to Italy. From there I went by train to France, Germany, Denmark and finally Sweden. I arrived in Malmö in March 2011. By then I had turned 16.

I had to leave my fingerprints at the police station. This way they were able to see that I had been in Italy before, where I also had to leave my fingerprints. After six months, Migrationsverket decided that I had to go back to Italy. But it is very hard to live as a refugee there, especially if you are young.

I had to sleep on the streets. There was nowhere to stay for kids like me, no school, nothing. After two weeks I started to go back, via Paris and Hamburg. It wasn't easy, but after three months I was back in Malmö.

At Migrationsverket, they asked me why I had come back. I told them about how things had been in Italy. What else was I supposed to do? After six months they decided that I could stay. I got to move to Stockholm, where I got to stay in housing for refugees. Today I have my own apartment.

Back home I often used to fly a kite. I miss that. I miss my country. I will be turning 19 next time, which means that it has been five years since me, my mother and my younger brothers left Afghanistan. I don't know where my family is now. I miss my mother and think about her a lot.

Facts: 23 000 dead at the borders of Europe

UNITED, a European network against nationalism, racism, and fascism, supporting migrants and people seeking refuge, have registered deaths at the borders of Europe from the mid 1990's until 2012. UNITED have compiled a list

of more than 17 306 deaths, recording the names of those who have lost their lives, from where they fled and the cause of death.

www.unitedagainstracism.org/pdfs/listofdeaths.pdf

Another database that also gathers information on how people die trying to get to Europe, is Migrant Files, a project run by a group of journalists. They have gathered statistics on 23 000 deaths from 2000 to 2013.

www.detective.io/detective/the-migrants-files