

CAN YOU SEE ME?



FROM 'A DOCTOR'S STORY: INSIDE THE
'LIVING HELL' OF MORIA REFUGEE CAMP'
BY ANNIE CHAPMAN, THE GUARDIAN

"THIS IS NOT ABNORMAL. THIS IS DAILY. THE NEXT DAY WE HAD A 16-YEAR-OLD BOY, AGAIN FROM THE SUPPOSEDLY PROTECTED SECTIONS, FALL THROUGH THE BACK DOORS OF THE CLINIC WITH A KNIFE STILL IN HIS BACK. ON THE LAST NIGHT I WAS WORKING WE SAW FOUR LIFE-THREATENING STABBINGS, INCLUDING A STABBED NECK AND AN OPEN CHEST. WE ASSESSED AND STABILISED THEM ALL AND GOT THEM TO HOSPITAL. AS FAR AS I'M AWARE, ALL OF THESE PATIENTS ARE STILL ALIVE.

THERE HAS BEEN NO ELECTRICITY IN THE CAMP NOW FOR TWO AND A HALF MONTHS. WE KNOW ABOUT THE DIRECT CORRELATION BETWEEN LIGHT AND CRIME - PEOPLE HAVE BEEN REQUESTING AN END TO THIS DARKNESS. IT HAS NOT COME.

A BOY PLAYS WITH A SCOOTER IN FRONT OF RUBBISH BAGS IN AREA OUTSIDE CAMP MORIA. THE SECTIONS FOR UNACCOMPANIED MINORS AND VULNERABLE WOMEN CONSIST OF FENCED AREAS WITH SLEEPING CABINS INSIDE, LOCKED IN A SECURE AREA NEAR TO THE POLICE AND NEW ARRIVALS AREAS. THEY ARE UNDERSTAFFED. GUARDIANS WORK HARD TO KEEP THE MOST VULNERABLE SAFE, BUT WITH BOREDOM AND VIOLENCE STILL PREVALENT, AND STAFF OFTEN NOT SPEAKING THE SAME LANGUAGE AS THE REFUGEES, MONITORING AND CARE IS STRETCHED, AND PROBLEMS CONTINUE TO SPIRAL. WITH FINITE SPACE AND AN INFINITE NUMBER OF INCREASINGLY VULNERABLE PEOPLE ARRIVING, MANY MINORS AND WOMEN ARE LIVING ALONE OUTSIDE THE SECTIONS, AT RISK OF ABUSE, VIOLENCE, AND SYSTEMIC FAILINGS.

THE BOREDOM IN THE CAMP IS MADDENING AND THE ASYLUM PROCESS IS OPAQUE. EVEN THOSE OF US WITH CONTACTS IN OTHER NGOS AND WITH LAWYERS CANNOT WORK IT OUT. DURING MY TIME THERE, ONE OF OUR MOST CALM, LOYAL, AND IMPRESSIVE TRANSLATORS WAS ARRESTED AFTER A SECOND REJECTION AND DEPORTED WITHOUT PAPERS, AND WITHOUT A LAWYER. WE HAVE STILL NOT BEEN ABLE TO CONTACT HIM. WE DO NOT KNOW WHERE HE IS AND WE DO NOT KNOW THE DETAILS OF HIS REJECTION. WE KNOW HE WILL NOT BE SAFE BACK IN AFGHANISTAN. THIS KIND OF THING REACHES THROUGH THE CAMP, ADDING TO THE FEELING OF RESIGNATION AND HOPELESSNESS, AND THE MADNESS CONTINUES.

THE SUFFERING IS PALPABLE, THE HOPELESSNESS IS INSIDIOUS, THE FEELING OF ABANDONMENT IS ALL-CONSUMING. I HAVE NOT DONE A SPECIAL JOB HERE. I HAVE GONE TO VOLUNTEER, AS MANY HAVE BEFORE ME AND MANY CONTINUE TO DO WHILE I RETURN TO MY HOME, WHERE I HAVE CENTRAL HEATING, REGULAR FOOD I CAN CHOOSE, AND MY FREEDOM - AND ALL OF THESE AFFORDED TO ME ONLY BY MY LUCK AT BIRTH.

MORIA REFUGEE CAMP IS AT BREAKING POINT; THE SITUATION IS ABOUT TO IMplode. THIS WILL HAPPEN INWARDLY, HARMING SOME OF THE MOST VULNERABLE PEOPLE IN THE WORLD. THE IMplosion WILL PROBABLY CAUSE A TINY RIPPLE OF OUTWARD EXPLOSION, AND THEN BE FORGOTTEN. THE WORLD CONTINUES TO TURN ITS BACK. WE MUST OPEN THE CONVERSATION ONCE MORE, WE MUST CONSIDER TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR FELLOW HUMANS. I HAVE NO SOLUTION, BUT I WANT TO GIVE A VOICE TO THESE SILENCED PEOPLE, AND HOPE THERE IS A WILLING AUDIENCE PREPARED TO BEGIN TO LISTEN."



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