

STORIES FROM SAMOS

A COLLECTION OF TESTIMONIES



OXFAM

BACKGROUND

NEW REPORT FROM THE GREEK COUNCIL FOR REFUGEES (GCR) AND OXFAM SHEDS LIGHT ON THE INSIDE OF THE NEW 43-MILLION-EURO MIGRATION CENTER ON THE GREEK ISLAND OF SAMOS.

THE REPORT COMES AHEAD OF THE 6-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE EU-TURKEY DEAL.



OXFAM

THESE ARE THE
HUMAN STORIES
BEHIND THE REPORT



OXFAM



Samos camp

Original image taken by Aideen Elliot



OXFAM

"It has been already 5 months that we are living in the new center. Only for two months, we were able to exit the center. Since November, we don't have the right to exit. **It is like living in a prison.** The only thing that changed compared to the old camp, the only improvement, is that here we live in containers; for the rest, the new center is worse. **We don't have our freedom.** You can get crazy inside this center. They just threw us here like animals. They want us to die here and then move us out. I want to tell the world that they have built a prison for refugees here. This is not an accommodation facility. At present, we are almost 300 people residing in the center and for each one of us, there are three security guards."

Testimony of an Afghan mother with four children



OXFAM



"At present, we are almost 300 people residing in the center and for each one of us, there are three security guards."



OXFAM

"I have suffered mentally a lot. I suffer from traumatic experiences in my country and unbearable living conditions here. **My mental health has been destroyed.** It's been 3 years now since 2019. I cannot understand why I haven't succeeded in committing suicide. And now I am being held prisoner here. All this period I was allowed to exit the center just once, to visit the psychologist. I couldn't exit even to buy stuff. The first time the security at the entrance told me that I cannot leave the camp and they denied me the exit. There are 5 months that I am not receiving cash assistance. **I managed to find a job harvesting olives for 3 days but they didn't let me get out from the center and I lost it.** I used to attend educational courses outside the camp but since the rejection, I fell into a depression and I cannot concentrate.

I just want to go outside. They don't let me. They are keeping me here as a prisoner. If I had to choose I would say that I would prefer the previous camp – at least, there, I was free. I was not living in a cage. At least, I had my freedom to go somewhere. We didn't have electricity, nothing, but now I feel like prisoner. [...] **They know what happened in Afghanistan – the country is falling** – but they conduct interviews asking for Turkey. They take funds to keep us here as prisoners. Since 2019, I am on Samos. It's been two years here. Why didn't they ask me anything about Turkey? Why do they ask me now, after two years? If you keep a bird into a cell, even if you give it food and water, the bird can destroy itself. They are feeding us but we are getting depressed here. I am thinking about harming myself. Recently I attempted suicide, I cut my arms. I am facing rejection all the time without any future. I am at least thankful that somebody knows that I am existing”

Testimony of a young Afghan man



OXFAM

“There are some days that the food is really bad. You can get sick from the bad quality. **At night, we have to beg for just some bread.** I have a medical problem with my eyes. There is no doctor here to examine me. I have never been to the hospital. The Red Cross informed me that Samos General Hospital has no specialized doctor-ophthalmologist to examine me. The staff inside the center just give me some eye drops but the problem remains.”

Testimony of a young Somali man



Samos camp

Original image taken by Aideen Elliot



OXFAM

In December 2021, a GCR and Oxfam delegation visited the Samos migrant centre and met with residents, the administration, and civil society organizations operating on the island which provide legal, medical and psychosocial aid to migrants.

For information, contact:

Jade Tenwick | Brussels, Belgium | jade.tenwick@oxfam.org |
+32 473 56 22 60



OXFAM