



Diavata, (QRT), Tuesday 25 January 2022



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(Tabriz), Tehran, Iran

I was born in Tabriz and ten years ago, I moved with my husband for a job. I worked, but it was my husband's job we moved for. He was a coach driver, inter-city.

I worked in cosmetic surgery, doing things like botox. I enjoyed my job a lot, especially because it was really good when people were happy with the job I did. That made me happy as well. I trained for my job and I took care about it, when I was doing it, and trying to research all the things I needed to be good and stay up-to-date.

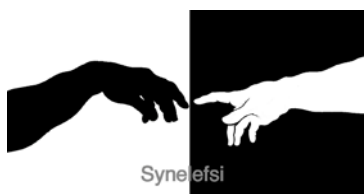
But we left Tehran two years and four months ago. Me, my husband, and our two girls who are now aged 15 and six. We left together.

We had to leave because in Iran, there were people who ordered women around. Not only women, but with the women they were very bad. They said we all had to wear the hijab and coverings. I did not want to, and I didn't want my girls to have to when they got older.

We didn't like the police. Because they and the government kill people who disagree with them, and that includes women doing normal things, things they want to do, like working. They did not kill every woman who worked, but for example many women who worked had all the money taken from them and were told if they work again, it would have to be for free. That is wrong. And people should be allowed to wear or not wear the hijab, or any other kinds of clothes. They should not be forced to wear it. We wanted to stop them being forced to.

I am an atheist and because of this I don't want to wear the hijab. But my mother and father were Muslims. I don't think no-one should be allowed to wear the hijab, or should be stopped from it, I just think no-one should be forced to.

The government in Iran kills women. They kill people who don't do what they say. It should be a choice. For example, this woman, (Mahbourt/Mahbout/Mahbort/or with 'k' – check this) Alexa da Imi, she said she would not wear a hijab, and the police took her away, for ten, eleven years. This woman was arrested because the police killed her son. He needed to fill his car with petrol, but was charged €100. He complained, and the police killed him. His mother complained, and now she is in jail.





I protested against child rape, children being forced to wear hijabs in school, and the repeated violation of women's rights in Iran.

But because we campaigned and protested against it – my husband and me – we were targeted and we had to get away to save our lives. I was sentenced to death by my country, so I ran. We ran.

I didn't really feel like a political activist: I just wanted women and men to be treated well. I could not be indifferent to the suffering of people in my country. How can I sleep when children are sleeping outside in the cold? When the government refuses to let them be inside because their parents disagreed with the government? I suppose that is what I became. A political activist.

Because they had sentenced me, even though we had a passport, ID and everything, they would not let us go. I was going to be killed, so we had to run.

We went from Iran to Turkey, and then to Greece. We spent one year in Turkey, in Istanbul

We travelled across the river to get to Greece, one year and four months ago. We came straight here, to Diavata camp.

It was very bad here.

We didn't have a container, we had to sleep in a tent. We needed to register, so we had to be there. We weren't allowed to register otherwise. We weren't breaking the law, or 'irregular' we were trying to register. There was no way to do anything: charge phones, have a shower, there was no bathroom. It was very very hard to live like this.

Maurizio (Cara, **QRT**) gave us food, bedding, everything that made the situation much better. For four months, we lived like this, and then they gave us a container. That was better, but there was nothing in it. No bathroom, or kitchen, no oven, or places to store food. Nothing. Just a bed.

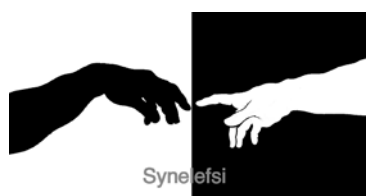
Then after five months, we got a better container, with a bathroom and a kitchen. Before that, we lived like early humans. Like stone age people. It was like we weren't even part of the modern world.

It is difficult with the wall.

When the camp was open, it was unsafe. We felt very bad. We have two daughters, and we want them to be safe and happy. We had people coming in who were from Afghanistan, Somalia, Iran, Kurdish people. That is OK, but they were fighting and killing each other. This was a very bad time, a bad situation. We were scared of them. Our children didn't feel safe. I was worried about this camp when it was open.

But this is why it is difficult. Because now the walls are here, I am worried that they will close the camp.

A closed camp is like a prison, and this feels more like a prison each day. We don't mind it as it is, but we don't want to be prisoners. I am running from one country where it was hard to do everything, and it was like the government made us all prisoners, and it mustn't happen here. It's what we ran from. We are not criminals. We did nothing wrong and we do not harm anyone. We do not want to be in prison.





When they close a camp, we will feel depressed. Too much control, and having freedom taken away, this is a very bad thing.

It is so easy now for them to shut us in, to say 'you can't go to the shops in Thessaloniki, or to the **QRT** centre because we won't let you.' This worries us. It would worry you, or anyone. It's not OK.

It feels every day like the camp is more closed. They put night security guards in. The gates are always more closed. It does not make me feel secure. It makes me feel locked in, worried that one day I won't be allowed to go out of the camp. It is not a good feeling, a bad way to live.

We are in the process of applying for asylum. We have had our interviews, but they haven't answered us yet, given us the decision.

Until then, it's so hard to think of any future. We are stuck here and the walls seem like they get closer in every day.

I think maybe we will try, if we get a positive decision, to go to another country. It really depends on the decision and the living conditions. I don't have any ideas what will happen, I don't even know what to think or what can happen.



My daughter's going to school here, but they don't teach her. The refugee children here just have to sit and maybe if they can understand anything, they might learn it. They don't teach them Greek. Not properly.

Right now, the only thing I think about is saving the lives of my children. It's not so easy. And now I have to think about this. I am very very scared of being forced back into Iran. That would be very bad. My daughters are the most important thing now.

To be honest, I could speak forever about the situation. You would have a novel. I could talk for 24 hours.

I have daughters. They are so important. I didn't want them to live the way we had to in Iran. I didn't want them to lose their mother, which they would have done. I want to live, to be a good mother and care for them.

So if Greece says 'it's OK, you can have ID' that's all I want right now. It's so important. The only important thing.

