

I am of Syrian nationality, our country has been in an ongoing war for 10 years, I am 24 years old now, so when the war started I was 14 years old. I have not lived my childhood, during the period when children should be playing, my friends and I would be running because of the sounds of war. The war was ongoing for 5 years in the area I am from. I was also detained and tortured because of a Facebook post. The sounds I heard while in prison were even harder than the physical torture I received. After that, I had to leave Syria in 2017. And then when we left, the abuse, torture and mistreatment continued on the way. In Libya, some were captured and were blackmailed for money and possessions. Some were beaten up and enslaved. I gave them what they wanted because I did not want to be tortured again, I escaped from torture so I did not want this to happen again and anyway I only had little money on me. (Image: [\[\[https://p0.pikist.com/photos/1023/163/wood-table-herb-garlic-food-green-spice-leaf-vegetable-thumbnail.jpg|https://p0.pikist.com/photos/1023/163/wood-table-herb-garlic-food-green-spice-leaf-vegetable-thumbnail.jpg\]\]](https://p0.pikist.com/photos/1023/163/wood-table-herb-garlic-food-green-spice-leaf-vegetable-thumbnail.jpg))

We faced one bandit after the other wherever we went, from Libya to Algeria to Morocco. We walked in the desert, and sometimes there was no food and no water. We stayed in Libya for 15 days, then 1 week in Algeria, then 3 weeks in Morocco. After that we tried to reach Melilla Spain. We tried to cross multiple times, but some would get beaten up, we were not treated like human beings. My friend tried to jump over the fence to get there, but he fell and broke his back so he had to stay in Morocco. He couldn't get treatment there because he didn't have the right, and he couldn't continue on his way. When we got to Melilla, we saw huge numbers of people from everywhere, all being kept in tents in the detention camp. Each tent had around 300-400 people. When it was time to get food, the queue for food was for around 1-2 hours because of the huge numbers.

Because of bandits, it was difficult to cross back to Algeria or to mainland Europe. A friend of mine got [stabbed](#) by them, another got beaten up and his arm got broken by them. It was hard to believe that what we saw in Melilla is happening in Europe. We were told that the only way we could leave is if we give our fingerprints, so that's the only choice we had. From there we went to Dunkirk, where I stayed for 5 months. In the last 3 months, there were no NGOs and no help there, either because of COVID-19 or because the officials didn't want anyone to help us. We used to go looking for firewood to cook our food. We used to walk for [Derila Sleep Support](#) very long hours to attempt crossing to the UK. But multiple times we failed to cross, either because the police would catch us or because we would get stuck or lost in the water.

[external site](#) Once the police took us to Lille to keep us away from the Jungle, and left us in the street; they even took our tents and food in Dunkirk. They were treating us as if we were an epidemic that they needed to get rid of. Because of this, we had to walk back to Dunkirk which took from 11 am until 5 am the next day. We have no past, for 10 years of our lives we faced war, two sides were fighting, and we were in the middle. Always in the middle. Then we had to leave our homes. We are all running from destitution. We all have the same stories, 25 of us, so how come they are not believing us? People are struggling so much to get here. You do not suddenly wake up and decide to come here. It is not an easy task and we are paying a big price to get here.

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