



Empowering through Justice, Freedom and Sincerity

The Albanian National Reception Center for Refugees: Babrru near Tirana. October 2nd, 2015

The National Reception Centre for Refugees in Albania is in Babrru, Tirana. This centre is supported from the state budget and by the ministry of social welfare, with 15 staff members who offer all services: food, clothing, health care, education for children and integration into the albanian society. Food costs are provided by the state budget, who give approximately 3 dollars a day. Although this is not much it helps. Support also comes from other organizations such as the United Nations aid to Refugees organization which operates in Albania. (UNHCR) The link to this agency in the Balkans is: (<http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e48d676.html>). The process of their local integration is still a difficult challenge and a joint effort takes place between the stakeholders: refugees, public authorities, non-governmental organizations and foreign agencies.

Once the refugees have been registered and received the necessary immediate support such as legal aid, medical, both psychological and physical help, and the necessary financial aid, they either leave the centre to move on to a further country or they are housed in private accommodation which is self-financed or supported by NGOs. The centre in Babrru was opened in 2014. In this centre are all the refugees who are applying for asylum in Albania, mainly for political reasons. The refugees over the past year have come from many countries such as Syria, Ukraine, Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey, Bulgaria and Kosovo (these are regarding the present conflict between Serbia and Kosova).

The highest number of refugees which they have had in the camp at any one time was 170 refugees. This was in February when a large number of Syrian refugees came to the camp. At the moment there are 56 refugees in the camp, either as individuals or as a family, this includes a newly born baby who has special services. Right now there are 3 Syrians in the camp, last week there were 32 Syrians who left after they had received their initial papers. This gave them the freedom to travel through Albania and in to another country.

It should be said that in all this chaos, there were no identified cases of trafficking, however there were immigrants violated along the way and who could have been in the hands of traffickers and who were in trauma on arrival and are receiving psychological assistance. One girl from Afghanistan, whom we met, had a terrible rash all over her body, a distinct sign of being in post trauma.

Mary Ward Loreto went as small team to visit this centre with the support of the Minister of The Interior. We were requested to support the refugees with small items such as personal hygiene materials, food and cleaning materials for the house. We responded to this request. We met the director, some of the staff of the centre and some of the refugees. All shared their stories. The staff helped us to understand the processes for running the camp and the refugees told us some of their personal stories. Most sad was to hear the story of a

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woman and her husband from Iran who had been living in Iraq. They had fled from Iraq during the recent atrocities to foreigners and in the rush at the border of one of the countries, their two little boys were separated from them. The boys are now in a German asylum seekers camp. We were asked to see if we could make a link with them through our colleagues in RENATE, in Germany. We will do this now we have the boys' names.

The refugees are people like ourselves who are fighting for human rights, for freedom and for a better life. We desire to show our solidarity with them and to support them.



Chatting with some of the Refugees



Discussing the issues with the Director at the Centre.

At The Reception Centre, Babrru near Tirana