



RASHID

Rashid is a 32-year-old Afghan who arrived in Greece. He escaped Afghanistan with his wife and child by hiding in the back of a car and arrived in Pakistan. In Pakistan he could not find a job to sustain his family and he linked up with somebody who said he would help him. When he reached Iran he was hidden in a cellar with others until it was safe to walk across the border to Turkey. During the night a group of Iranians came to the cellar with guns and stole all their money and documents. They were warned that if they complained, the smuggler would kill them.

He continued the journey by lorry from Istanbul to the coast where he boarded a boat bound for Greece. The boat was small and massively overloaded and experienced problems reaching Greece in the bad weather. For five days he was trapped on the boat with 52 other people, as it was tossed about by the waves.

“Was small, 52 we’ve been together... everybody cried a lot and we were scared and 17 people they been in coma... the weather was very hot and we couldn’t find any water to drink... the waves were very high.”

When he tried to seek rescue from the coastguard the smugglers threatened him with a knife.

“I spoke with the boat driver and I say to him “Please come I can’t speak English, speak with the police” and he switch off the telephone... and he said “oh, they gonna put me for twelve years in the jail, in two hours we will reach Greece”, and for that we spent five days in the sea... a lot of time [Greek] police call to us and they ask us “Where are you? We like to help you but we couldn’t find you where are you”, because we couldn’t see everywhere, everywhere was water and for that they couldn’t come and they couldn’t find us.”

He eventually made it to Greece.

“Everywhere was very dangerous and when I lived in Afghanistan and was almost killed that was better than that journey which I came here. I was very scared and everywhere was very dangerous. But now I survive and cannot go back to be killed with gun. I have to hide here.”