

A student voice: Safi



Abdulkhabeer Safi

From: Afghanistan

Exile in: France

Studies: Political Science

Organisation: Union of Exiled Students (UEE)

It has been almost 7 years since I left my country and my Family, I crossed the borders of different countries, mountains, rivers, spent days and nights without having food, water and sleep, locked in the container in the 30+C for more than 30 hours. Arrested and beaten by the police, by the smugglers. These difficulties were just in order to have a peaceful life. On arriving in Europe, I spent about five years for resettling in an European country. During these five years, I was not permitted to work nor to study in the beginning. Then in Paris, I had many difficulties. Eventually, I was very fortunate to find everything.

What is now? For me it is not finished yet, because it is not only me, we still have hundreds of asylum seekers and refugees who are still struggling. They don't have proper accommodation. They do not have access to much social interaction and means, which would help them integrate in the society. They find it hard to enroll in educational institutes – something very crucial for career and building a life for an individual.

Their voices seems to be unheard. We see associations, media, politicians; almost everyone talking about refugees, and their problems. There are conferences and summits, on refugee issues. The irony is that institutions and people in a lot of those high level decision making events have very little communication and interaction with actual refugees. In fact, there's very faint presence of the people whom these conferences are for (refugees). They are making decisions for them without knowing about their needs and their demands.

I have experienced problems in this beautiful continent Europe which is expected to have equal rights for all. In Afghanistan, one the poorest countries, even though we lack the most basic facilities but we enjoyed about the same rights. That is why I strive to work for the rights of refugees and support them. Since my arrival in Paris, I have made it one of my first priority to help asylum seekers with their administrative procedures.

Since the flow of immigration into Europe, the nationalists are not happy about it. The politicians have spread so much hate that it seems like for some people it might be very hard to accept others, because they have been manipulated. These nationalists need to realize that no one is ready and happy to leave their country and family to come to Europe and to sleep on the street and wait for hours in the queue just for a meal prepared by humanitarian organizations. The demonization of foreign people, specifically refugees is happening, even though not on a systematic level, but the seeds of intolerance can be seen once in a while in incidents.

After many years, I as a member of the Union des Etudiants Exilés (UEE) in France which I joined three months ago, finally got a chance to attend the Global Students' Forum in Geneva from 13th to 17th December 2019, hosted by the European Students' Union (ESU) and the Organizing Bureau of European School Students Unions (OBESSU). It was a great opportunity and would enable me in helping the people I am eager to help the most. This Global Students' Voices Forum focused on the inclusion, equal rights and free education for all migrants and refugees. The participants were very enthusiastic, dynamic, determined and rigorous from all over the world. I learned a lot; and they really encouraged me; overall, I can say it was a great experience for me.

Abdulhabeer Safi.

Student at the University of Paris 1 la Sorbonne & member of UEE.

