



REFUGEE RIGHTS EUROPE



Photo credit: Claire Veale

THE STATE OF REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PEOPLE IN EUROPE

A SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS ACROSS EUROPE, 2016 – 2017

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Full acknowledgements in each research report: www.RefugeeRights.org.uk/reports

NOTES ON METHODOLOGY

Nearly all interviews were conducted in refugees' native languages, through a semi-structured survey, by trained and independent researchers. On each occasion, we did our utmost to obtain a representative sample of the demographics and trends in a given context, using a standard methodology of random selection and stratification of research locations. However, the volatility of the situation, combined with the lack of official demographic data across many of the locations, sometimes made it difficult to stick to our standard methodology, meaning that we sometimes resorted to snowball sampling with less control over selection bias.

Nevertheless, we believe that our research findings paint an insightful picture of the lived realities facing refugees and displaced people in Europe, and our research teams' observations and complementary informal interviews with charities and NGO staff have served to corroborate the research findings in each location. Detailed methodology and limitations sections can be found in each of the research reports ([available at www.RefugeeRights.org.uk/Reports](http://www.RefugeeRights.org.uk/Reports)).



Photo credit: Claire Veale

INTRODUCTION

Refugee Rights Europe (RRE) is a human rights organisation conducting independent research on the human rights violations faced by refugees and people in displacement in Europe. By conducting in-depth data collection on the human rights situation faced by some of the world's most marginalised groups, we seek to contribute to a more nuanced, evidence-based debate on the refugee 'crisis' and encourage decision-makers to work towards a long-term sustainable solution.

RRE was founded in response to the ongoing silence by many of the established human rights groups speaking out against the human rights of individuals seeking protection in Europe. The human rights norms, which have so frequently been held up by decision-makers as a guiding principle of how we should relate to the world, have suddenly seemed to matter much less when discussed in the European context. We were thus born out of a desire to generate a strong yet nuanced call for change, a change which would see human right placed at the centre of national and EU governmental policy.



Photo credit: Claire Veale

WE SEEK TO CONTRIBUTE TO A MORE NUANCED, EVIDENCE-BASED DEBATE ON THE REFUGEE SITUATION AND ENCOURAGE DECISION-MAKERS TO WORK TOWARDS A LONG-TERM SUSTAINABLE SOLUTION.



Photo credit: Samer Mustafa

RRE is made up of professionals from a variety of sectors. As of August 2017, we have so far produced 12 independently researched field reports, having trained and deployed more than 60 researchers, and interviewed approximately 3,500 people from more than 20 countries, documenting people's lived realities.

This report is a summary of our key findings from our various field studies, structured around the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The reports paint a harrowing picture of human rights for refugees and people in displacement throughout Europe, documenting chronic police violence, lack of access to information and education, substandard living conditions, gender-based violence and absence of sexual and reproductive healthcare services. Moreover, the report shines a light on the worrying human rights situation faced by children in displacement, and the continued failure by national and EU decision-makers to implement effective protection frameworks for this vulnerable group.

In sum, our findings demonstrate how much more work needs to be done to ensure that humanitarian standards are met and universal human rights are upheld. RRE are committed to monitoring, documenting and highlighting the lived realities of refugees for as long as it's needed.

ARTICLE 1

ALL HUMAN BEINGS ARE BORN FREE AND EQUAL IN DIGNITY AND RIGHTS. THEY ARE ENDOWED WITH REASON AND CONSCIENCE AND SHOULD ACT TOWARDS ONE ANOTHER IN A SPIRIT OF BROTHERHOOD.

The central tenet of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is that 'all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights', yet this is not the reality for millions of refugees and displaced individuals. Across multiple research locations within Europe, RRE has documented systematic infringements on the basic human rights of people in displacement, and unmet humanitarian standards in many of the research locations. The spirit of brotherhood spoken of in the Declaration is not extended to refugees who face an uncertain future with insecure housing, poor access to information and a constant threat of violence.

RRE HAS DOCUMENTED SYSTEMATIC INFRINGEMENTS ON THE BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS OF PEOPLE IN DISPLACEMENT.



Photo credit: Claire Veale

ARTICLE 3

EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO LIFE, LIBERTY AND SECURITY OF PERSON.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

In February 2016, RRE carried out its first study in the Calais camp. Nearly 900 camp residents were interviewed in a single week. RRE discovered that 76.5% of residents responded they either 'did not feel safe' or 'never felt safe.' The problem was even more acute among children with 61.1% identifying they 'never felt safe.' The predominant reason cited by interviewees for feeling unsafe was a continuing fear of police violence and a general distrust of the French police. Worries also stemmed from the unhealthy living conditions, concerns for the propensity for citizen violence and a lack of ability to mitigate camp tensions. All of these factors

combined means many refugees lived in a perpetual state of insecurity.

IN MAINLAND GREECE

46%

SAID THEY "DIDN'T FEEL SAFE" OR "NEVER FELT SAFE"

This trend of concerning figures continued in our November 2016 research conducted across mainland Greece. In interviews with 278 individuals, RRE again found high numbers (46%), 'didn't feel safe' or 'never felt safe.' The reasons cited included a lack of security personnel, or their unwillingness to intervene when necessary, a lack of secure

IN CHIOS

85.3%

SAID THEY "DIDN'T FEEL SAFE"

shelters and tensions within overcrowded camps. Some also referred to the presence of animals such as snakes and wild boar. In Paris, where interviews were conducted with 342 displaced people in January 2017, RRE found that respondents commonly felt unsafe, with 32.7% reporting they had had their belongings stolen. RRE's most recent research on the island of Chios, found that a startling 85.3% of refugees didn't feel safe, emphasising once again that insecurity is a pressing problem for refugees within Europe.

DEATHS

A number of respondents across research locations reported knowing of one, or several deaths within the camp. In the former Calais Camp, 66.6% had known of one, or several, deaths within the camp. In Paris, 11.7% knew at least one person who had died. The majority of deaths amongst refugees in Paris are believed to have resulted from untreated health issues. Of the respondents who acknowledged they had heard of a refugee dying in Paris, 45% believed the death had occurred due to the

IN CHIOS

39%

SAID THEY HAD WITNESSED SOMEONE DIE

cold experienced when sleeping on the streets. The living situation in Paris also ties in with the general findings regarding police treatment of refugees. Police regularly removed blankets and sleeping bags and threw them away, regardless of the weather conditions.

Alarmingly, in Chios a whole 39% of respondents reported having witnessed someone die on the island. 87% cited suicide as the reason for the death.

CITIZEN VIOLENCE

In the Calais camp a worrying 75.9% of individuals had experienced police violence and 49.2% had experienced citizen violence. 27% had suffered violence by others inside the camp but this rose to an alarming 41.7% amongst women. Similarly in mainland Greece, 16.2% had experienced violence by citizens, 93.3% of which was verbal abuse.

390 refugees and asylum seekers were interviewed in December 2016 and January 2017 in Berlin. Although this research

OUR RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS THE LACK OF SAFETY AND SECURITY EXPERIENCED BY REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PEOPLE IN EUROPE.

highlighted a less acute security situation, nonetheless, a significant figure of 17.1% had experienced citizen violence. Incidences of citizen violence were also reported in Chios in June 2017 where 21.7% of respondents had experienced violence by Citizens in Chios. 76.2% said they had been subjected to verbal abuse, and 60.3% physical violence.

Indeed, although not representative of all citizens on Chios, the island is known for its small yet vocal far-rights and anti-immigrant group that organises demonstrations to

IN THE CALAIS CAMP
49.2%
SAID THEY HAD EXPERIENCED VIOLENCE FROM CITIZENS

express their dissatisfaction with the current refugee situation on the island. A few weeks prior to our research, one such demonstration had escalated into a physical attack on Souda refugee camp, with demonstrators throwing stones and Molotov cocktails into the camp without effective interference from the police. Many refugees described this incident as extremely distressing and frightening – especially women and children who were forced to flee the camp, and thus were reminded of previous traumatic experiences

in their war-torn countries of origin. Several respondents also reported being regularly insulted or physically attacked by Greek citizens in the port area or in parks in Chios Town.

Our research highlights the lack of safety and security experienced by refugees and displaced people in Europe. Many respondents reported feeling unsafe, with widespread reports of citizen violence and, worryingly, reports of fatalities in the camps. Our findings suggest that policy-makers must take urgent action to uphold the human rights of people in displacement to ensure that the safety and security of displaced people is realised.



ARTICLE 5

NO ONE SHALL BE SUBJECTED TO TORTURE OR TO CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT.

Violence against refugees and people in displacement was found to be endemic across research locations - where respondents were subject to police violence in the form of tear gas, physical violence and verbal abuse.

TEAR GAS WAS DEPLOYED IN CONFINED SPACES, IN CONTEXTS WHERE IT APPEARS TO BE UNNECESSARY OR DISPROPORTIONATE AND AGAINST INDIVIDUALS WITH COMPROMISED HEALTH.

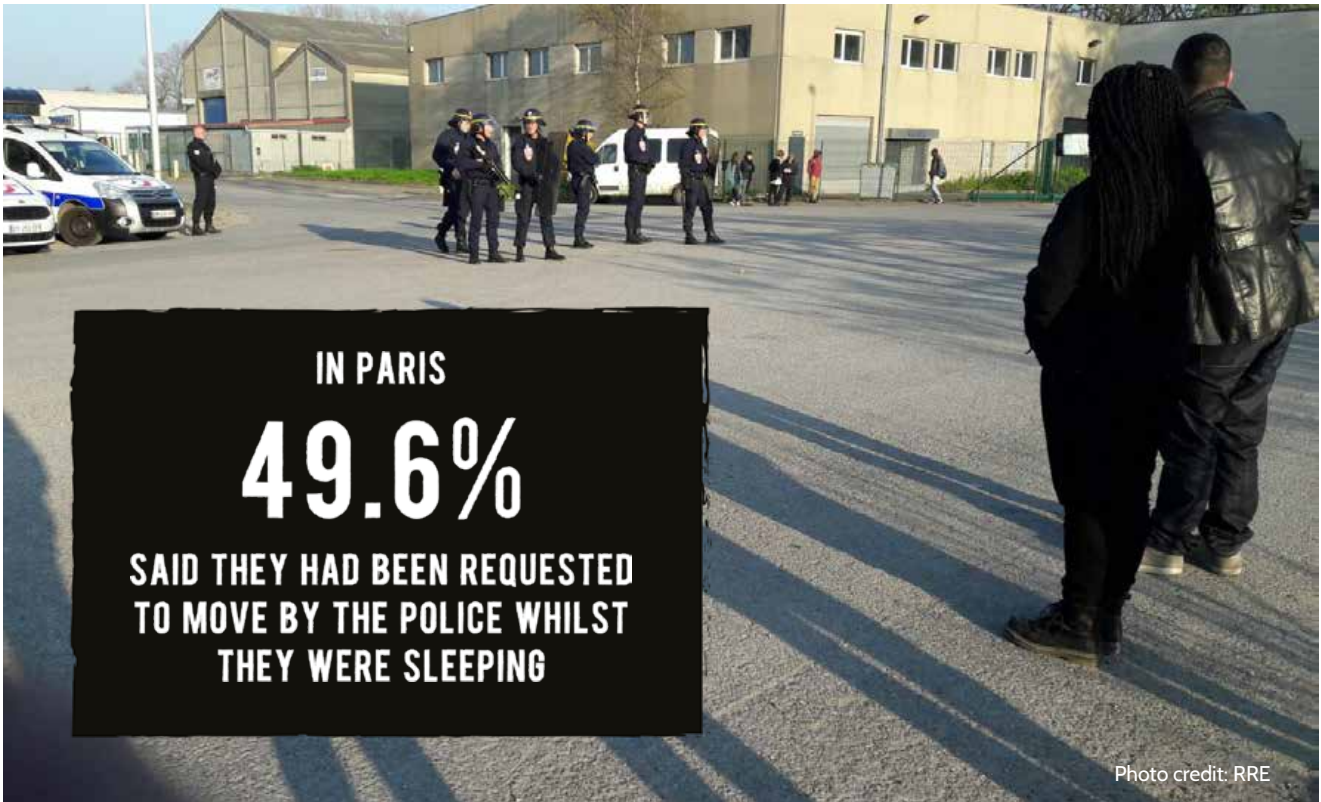
Our pilot report, *The Long Wait*, highlighted the complex picture of sustained police violence towards refugees and the variety

of forms it can take. This included the widespread deployment of tear gas and rubber bullets, the use of dogs, beatings and verbal abuse. The findings of this study indicated the misuse of tear gas by the police. Tear gas was deployed in confined spaces, in contexts where it appears to be unnecessary or disproportionate and against individuals with compromised health, all of which could be considered to constitute ill-treatment. One woman in Calais, reported she miscarried due to tear gas effects and many others reported consequential respiratory problems. Rather than just using tear gas to disperse crowds, there were instances reported of it being used to directly target individuals.

Tear gas was also used in Paris where 42.4% of respondents had experience of it. Other forms of police brutality were also widespread in the city. For example, 59.6% of individuals had



Photo credit: Rob Pinney



been requested to move by the police whilst they were sleeping, 53.9% described the incident as 'violent' and 52.5% said they were scared when it occurred. Also, many individuals recalled being hit by police batons or kicked during the relocation process. One 45-year old man said his shoulder had been kicked so hard that he had then been hospitalised for twenty days. The extent of police violence towards displaced children in Paris was also concerning, 50% had been asked to move from their sleeping spot by the police without being provided with a secure alternative and 57.7% described the experience as 'violent'. 30.8% of the children surveyed had experienced being tear gassed, 21% had experienced other forms of physical violence and 25% had experienced verbal abuse.

IN PARIS
42.4%
SAID THEY HAD EXPERIENCED TEAR GAS

Research conducted on mainland Greece in November 2016 also found repeated incidences of violence against refugees and people in displacement. 17.1% of respondents reported experience of police violence, of which 66% was verbal abuse, a 53.2% was physical abuse and 6.4% was as a result of tear gas. Some 20.5% of respondents said they had seen other refugees being hurt by police (or security or military officials) either in their camp or nearby.

RRE's study in Calais in April 2017 highlighted that the number of respondents experiencing police violence (89.2%) was even higher than the percentage witnessed in the pilot study the previous year (75.9%). This worrying pattern of police brutality indicates that the problem remains as pertinent today as ever.

IN THE CALAIS CAMP
89.2%
SAID THEY HAD EXPERIENCED POLICE VIOLENCE

RRE's most recent survey on the Greek island of Chios revealed similarly alarming reports of violence. Similarly to other research locations 24% of respondents had experienced police violence in Chios, 78.9% of these said they had been subjected to verbal abuse and 73.2% physical violence. In general the respondents described police treatment in Chios as 'very bad'. Many reported that the police treated refugees 'like animals', using disproportionate violence and disrespectful language. Meanwhile, 18.4% had been arrested or detained since arriving in Chios. Random detention by police appeared to be commonplace, with many relating stories about refugees who were detained and beaten for no apparent reason.

The routine police violence towards displaced individuals discovered in RRE's research is alarming and indicates the presence of serious human rights violations occurring in Europe. RRE believe this is a wholly unacceptable practice and violates Europe's international commitments to uphold human rights.

ARTICLE 7

ALL ARE EQUAL BEFORE THE LAW AND ARE ENTITLED WITHOUT ANY DISCRIMINATION TO EQUAL PROTECTION OF THE LAW.

At the time of our Greek study, a large number of Afghans, from all camps studied, reported that they had been disadvantaged compared to refugees from Syria. While RRE acknowledges the anecdotal, subjective nature of these reports of discrimination, we believe our findings do shine a light on potential adversities faced by Afghans during their time in Greece.

THIS DISCONNECT IS OBSERVABLE IN HOUSING, ALMOST HALF OF THE AFGHANS SURVEYED RESIDED IN TENTS, COMPARED TO 8% OF SYRIANS.

At the time of our Greek study, Syrians were the only nationality to qualify for relocation to other EU countries. The programme, intended to ease the burden of large refugee populations in Greece and Italy, has never accepted Afghans, despite their



Photo credit: RRE

significant presence in the camps. Afghans in Greece reported their grievances to our researchers. They perceived that they received unequal treatment and were disadvantaged compared to Syrian refugees. This disconnect is observable in housing, almost half of the Afghans surveyed resided in tents, compared to 8% of Syrians. Also, 48% of Syrians lived in insulated IsoBoxes compared to 1% of Afghans. Unequal treatment was also seen at the hands of the police, 27% of Afghans had suffered police violence, compared to 8% of Syrians and 30% of Afghans reported suffering citizen violence compared to 5% of Syrians.

IN MAINLAND GREECE

30%
OF AFGHANS

&

5%
OF SYRIANS

SAID THEY HAD EXPERIENCED POLICE VIOLENCE

While these findings are not necessarily a true representation of the treatment of Afghans and Syrians across all camps in Greece, it is nonetheless important to document these differences reported by these two national groups. This type of lived discrimination, whether intentional or not, feeds into the highly problematic dichotomy of 'deserving' and 'undeserving' refugees, which can have a significant impact on the mental and physical health of refugees and displaced people. Inequitable treatment within legal provision is particularly problematic in terms of meeting the standard set by the UN Declaration.



ON MAINLAND GREECE

48%

OF SYRIANS LIVED IN
INSULATED ISOBOXES

ARTICLE 25(1)

EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO A STANDARD OF LIVING ADEQUATE FOR THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF HIMSELF AND OF HIS FAMILY, INCLUDING FOOD, CLOTHING, HOUSING AND MEDICAL CARE.

The first section of article twenty-five states that everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being. This encompasses food, clothing, housing and medical care. The refugees surveyed by RRE commonly lack these on multiple counts and live in wholly inadequate conditions. In mainland Greece, only a quarter of respondents were

satisfied with their living conditions. Over a third reported that their shelters leaked when it rained and only 18% had access to a heater. 28.6% considered that they had inadequate water for washing and showering and only 41.5% could shower with hot water during the cold months. Very few measures were in place for the disabled or the elderly.



Photo credit: RRE

Photo credit: Claire Veale



In the former Calais camp, living conditions were squalid and hygiene standards extremely low. Only 27.3% had enough water to wash and shower and 60.4% acknowledged that their shelters leaked when it rained. 76.7% had experienced health problems and 40% of these individuals believed their issue had been induced by their unhealthy environment. Concerns were also expressed relating to the availability of healthcare.

IN THE CALAIS CAMP
76.7%
SAID THEY HAD EXPERIENCED HEALTH PROBLEMS

Our most recent report from Calais, following the demolition of the camps, indicate that the problems of squalid living conditions for refugees persists and is in many respects aggravated. Large numbers of displaced people, including unaccompanied minors, are now sleeping rough without the security of a communal camp or reception centre. This leaves individuals vulnerable to health concerns, exploitation and violence.

This also correlates with the findings from the study in Paris conducted in the winter of 2017 which also raised serious concerns about refugee living conditions. Most respondents were destitute and many were sleeping rough despite the fact that the temperature had at times dropped as low as -7°C . Even those with access to temporary accommodation had concerns about hygiene standards. For example, unaccompanied children complained of the dirt in their shelters, which also closed in the daytime forcing the minors on to the streets. 44.2% of the children surveyed reported they were experiencing health problems and this was largely due to the cold. Overall 53.2% of respondents, adults and children, were experiencing health problems. These included mental health issues, ailments due to sleeping rough in the winter weather and skin disorders due to the unhygienic environment.

Findings which directly relate to the health situation for refugees are particularly alarming. In Greece, 73% had experienced health problems in the camp. The majority of

these were due to the spread of contagious diseases, unhygienic conditions, or a lack of effective treatment for chronic diseases and existing health issues. A far too high figure of 26.3% of

MOST RESPONDENTS WERE DESTITUTE AND MANY WERE SLEEPING ROUGH DESPITE THE FACT THAT THE TEMPERATURE HAD AT TIMES DROPPED AS LOW AS -7°C .

those who had sought medical help described it as 'bad' or 'very bad'. Alarming, in Chios, only 28.5% had received medical help when experiencing health problems. Around 40.8% believed their problems had been triggered by the unhealthy camp environment. A startling 31% described mental rather than physical concerns and one of the most commonly cited reasons for mental health issues was the uncertainty surrounding the asylum application and fears of deportation. This indicates the direct human implications of the asylum process on individuals.

IN BERLIN
45.8%
OF WOMEN SAID THEY HAD EXPERIENCED HEALTH PROBLEMS IN THE CAMP

In Berlin, although the majority of respondents lived in warm and secure housing, RRE found that 40.1% overall and 45.8% of women, had experienced health problems in the camp. 17.9% of those described their medical treatment as 'bad' or 'very bad'. 29.4% believed their health issue was triggered by the unhealthy environment in the camp and 9.2% believed the source was a disease spread within the camp. Similarly, in Sweden, 53.8% had experienced health issues during their time in the camp. This indicates health concerns are widespread across all research locations.

ARTICLE 25(2)

MOTHERHOOD AND CHILDHOOD ARE ENTITLED TO SPECIAL CARE AND ASSISTANCE. ALL CHILDREN WHETHER BORN IN OR OUT OF WEDLOCK, SHALL ENJOY THE SAME SOCIAL PROTECTION.

The second section of article 25 specifies that special care should be provided during motherhood and childhood. RRE have published two reports specifically addressing the situation for women, one focused on Greece and the other on northern France. Both reports look at issues relating to sexual health, reproductive health and motherhood.

WOMEN AS MOTHERS

The RRE report from Greece found that the majority of women interviewed during the research study were mothers, whilst the research at the former camp in Calais found 22% of respondents had children with them, the youngest child being just one year old. Since 30% of the women interviewed in Calais reported being with their husband, whilst 42% identified being married, plus 8% widowed and 4% divorced, we can discern that a significant proportion of women at the Calais camp were acting as the sole caregiver for their children at the time the research was conducted.

There does not appear to be the special care and assistance for mothers and children as required by Article 25 (Part 2) during the asylum process either. The mother of a child with autism reported being unable to provide adequate care for her son, who had lived in a camp for eight to nine months, despite the fact their family's asylum status should have qualified under the

A SIGNIFICANT PROPORTION OF WOMEN AT THE CALAIS CAMP WERE ACTING AS THE SOLE CAREGIVER FOR THEIR CHILDREN AT THE TIME THE RESEARCH WAS CONDUCTED.

'special need' category and been expedited quickly. Another women reported being forced to wait for twelve hours after her asylum interview in Athens, without supplies for her baby, who she had with her.

MANY WOMEN INTERVIEWED EXPRESSED DEEP CONCERNS ABOUT THE HEALTH OF THEIR CHILDREN, AND FELT THAT THE AUTHORITIES WERE NOT DOING ENOUGH TO RECTIFY THIS SITUATION.

Concerns related to children's access to healthcare were also reported during the Greece research study. Many women interviewed expressed deep concerns about the health of their children, and felt that the authorities were not doing enough to rectify this situation. One women reported that every single one of her children had an aggravated health concern, including apnoea, asthma, calcium deficiency, kidney problems, skin problems, and dermatitis. Women also reported difficulties accessing emergency healthcare for their children, as well as basic supplies, like infant formula.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTHCARE

In Calais, 9% of women reported health issues related to pregnancy or reproductive health. In Greece, it was reported in some camps that contraception was only available to men. This serves to deny female autonomy for reproductive decisions and deprives them of their control over motherhood. When

interviewed privately, alarmingly only 12% of women knew where to access contraceptives. Some women also reported that in some camps their requests to health service providers for contraceptive pills or IUDs had been declined. Information and education related to contraception was also lacking in the camps.

IN THE CALAIS CAMP
60%
OF WOMEN SAID THEY DID NOT KNOW WHERE THEY COULD GO TO RECEIVE HEALTH CARE IF THEY BECAME PREGNANT

With very limited exceptions, the camps surveyed in Greece could provide local access to 24-hour emergency maternal and neonatal care. Yet 33.9% of general survey respondents (males and females) said they didn't know where a pregnant woman could seek medical care, and 24.3% of women did not know where they could seek this care. In the Calais camp, 60% of women said they did not know where they could go to receive health care if they became pregnant. In the words of one service provider, 'the services that are available for pregnant women are purely symbolic. In practice, they are entirely insufficient.' In Calais, a woman reported having 'given birth in the back of a truck', whilst another said that she had lost her child due to the detrimental effects of tear gas exposure.



Photo credit: Claire Veale

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

RRE report findings also highlight a deeply troublingly high level of gender-based violence experienced by women during displacement. Feelings of insecurity were elevated amongst women interviewed compared to men, and there was no indication that there was attention placed on addressing these concerns for mothers and children, with the exception of NGO and volunteer set up 'female friendly spaces'.

THEY REPORTED KNOWING OF INCIDENTS WITHIN THE CAMPS OF HARASSMENT OF WOMEN BY THE BROADER COMMUNITY, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, SEXUAL VIOLENCE INCLUDING RAPE AND FORCED PROSTITUTION.

In mainland Greece, 69% of women reported not having a secure lock on their shelter, whilst 46.4% said they did not feel safe in the camp. 37.8% of women interviewed privately, including pregnant women, said they did not feel safe going to the toilet at night. Even more alarmingly, 69.4% said they were unable to go to the toilet at night. When interviewed privately, 65.5% of women said they knew of other women who had suffered or continued to suffer from gender-based violence. 74% of the service providers surveyed had also heard of sexual and/or gender-based violence occurring in the camps where they operated. They reported knowing of incidents within the camps of harassment of women by the broader community, domestic violence, sexual violence including rape and forced prostitution.

ON MAINLAND GREECE
37.8%
OF WOMEN SAID THEY DID NOT FEEL SAFE GOING TO THE TOILET AT NIGHT

In the camps researched in Greece, RRE found the support systems and services were entirely inadequate to deal with these issues. The camps did not appear to have been designed or staffed with a view to reducing the risks of gender based violence. Where services did exist, women appeared unaware of them, or unwilling to use them due to the lack of female interpreters. This also adds to feelings of isolation experienced by the women. Some service providers cited that alongside the community shame many women fear, and the lack of female

interpreters to speak to, many women were also unlikely to report violence for fear that it would harm their relocation prospects.

Similarly in the now demolished Calais camp, a total of 73% of the women surveyed reported that they 'never feel safe' or 'do not feel very safe'. 41.7% of the women we spoke to in the Calais camp had experienced gender-based violence while inside the camp - this includes some reported incidences of sexual violence and harassment. One woman recalled that she was grabbed by a group of men who pulled her by the hair, as one told her 'you will come with me'. The presence of people smugglers, who are known to target women who travel alone and typically try to coerce women who lack financial resources into having sex, drew particular concerns among female respondents. By the same token, a number of women cited incidences of violence, including sexual violence, perpetrated by traffickers.



Photo credit: Claire Veale

The lack of specific provision for mothers or children, and inequitable treatment for women in general within the camps is shocking. Without equal access to contraception women are denied control over their path into motherhood in an environment that is wholly inadequate to provide for their needs. Isolated and vulnerable, women often end up stuck in a cycle of violence, insecurity and disempowerment with no hope to change their position.

ARTICLE 26(1)

**EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION.
EDUCATION SHALL BE FREE, AT LEAST IN THE
ELEMENTARY AND FUNDAMENTAL STAGES.
ELEMENTARY EDUCATION SHALL BE COMPULSORY.**

EDUCATION

There is a great disparity in education provision across RRE's research locations. In Germany only 33.3% of respondents lacked educational opportunities whereas it was 69.9% in Greece and 77.3% in the former Calais camp. This means a massive proportion of children are denied their right to education which could have massive ramifications upon the opportunities available to them for the rest of their life.

The Greek government has aimed at making schooling available for all refugee children yet the response by local

schools has varied dramatically. Some women reported that an unwelcoming environment had discouraged them from sending children to school, thus this finding does not meet the UN Declaration's call for education to 'promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations.' Other mothers cited the embarrassment of being unable to adequately clothe their children as the reason they did not attend school and transportation issues also barred children from being educated. 40% of women interviewed during the Greece report said they did not feel safe sending their children to school.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

In addition, across all research locations the lack of information available and support for displaced people was striking. This is particularly alarming given the daily reality of uncertainty faced by many refugees and people in displacement.

IN SWEDEN

64.1%

**SAID THEY DID NOT HAVE ACCESS
TO ADVICE ABOUT THEIR RIGHTS
AND OPPORTUNITIES**

During the pilot study in Calais, 79.3% of respondents said they did not have access to advice about their rights and the opportunities available to change their situation. In Germany 79.3% lacked this information, the figure was 64.1% in Sweden

and 86% in Chios. The general consensus across the research by RRE is that refugees have very limited information available to them which means they have limited power to alter their position.

There was a similarly striking absence of information available to refugees about European asylum laws and immigration rules. In the Calais camp 74.3% of respondents did not have access to this information, in Germany the figure was 55.9%, 68% in Greece, 59% in Sweden and a concerning 78.3% in Chios.

The lack of access to education and information on their rights or European asylum law is particularly worrying for women and children, many of whom are unable to improve their situation and faced increased risks of human trafficking and sexual exploitation. For the thousands of people in displacement currently waiting in limbo in Europe, the lack of access to information on how to improve their situation is likely to have an adverse affect on their mental health and leave them with little to no hope of creating a better life.



CONCLUSION

In light of these research findings, it is evident that urgent action is needed to uphold the rights of refugees and displaced people in Europe. Men, women and children in displacement face chronic police violence, substandard living conditions and

a startling lack of information on how to change their situation. Based on our research, RRE have put forward a number of recommendations to urgently address the human rights situation taking place across Europe:

NUMBER ONE

In order to address the situation northern France and Paris, there is an urgent need to provide more humane standards and protection systems. The severity of the situation means that medical staff, social workers and legal experts are urgently needed; rather than the current state response centred around violent actions by special police forces. To resolve the situation and ensure vulnerable men, women and children are protected, more decisive action could also be taken by the British government. A large number of the respondents in our research reported that they have family in the UK, suggesting they may be eligible for reunification under the Dublin Regulation. Moreover, it is also clear that many vulnerable children on the streets in Calais and Paris could be granted protection in the UK under the 'Dubs' scheme. The small numbers of transfers allowed under the 'Dubs' scheme is particularly worrying in light of the violence faced by these children in and around Calais and Paris.

NUMBER TWO

The situation in Chios, Greece is a situation at breaking point, with men, women and children likely to suffer from the lack of education opportunities, humane living conditions, and legal support. Accelerated transfers of vulnerable children in particular from the islands to mainland Greece and a strengthened system for processing asylum applications are of utmost importance.

NUMBER THREE

Similarly, in mainland Greece, increasing the speed at which asylum claims and applications for family reunion or relocation are expedited would reduce the lengths of time these vulnerable groups are trapped in unhealthy and harmful environments. As well as this, sufficient statutory funding ought to be made available to ensure that adequate information, medical and support services and protection services are available for children and families across all camps.

NUMBER FOUR

In addition, camp management and policy-makers must urgently put forward gender-sensitive policies that address the needs of vulnerable women in displacement, many of whom face gender-based violence, a lack of access to sexual and reproductive health care, domestic violence and who are at heightened risk of exploitation by human traffickers.

Overall, effective and long-lasting policy action by national and European Union decision-makers is required to secure the rights of refugees and people in displacement, many of whom having already fled war and persecution to seek sanctuary in Europe.

Human rights must be at the centre of any policy initiatives to ensure that refugees and displaced people are given the protection and opportunity expected by international

standards, in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

We hope that our research findings encourage decision makers across all affiliations to acknowledge the serious nature of the current humanitarian crisis and work to uphold the dignity and human rights of all people in displacement.

