

We Have to Stick Together

Imagine you are a young girl living in a poor family in Somalia. Your parents owe an old man a lot of money so they want you to marry him. You run away to your aunt but the man threatens to kill her and your whole family if you stay there. So, you run away again and find two men who offer to safely take you to Europe. You pay them money so you can go with them, but instead of being safely taken to Europe you are human trafficked. You manage to escape, but now you are alone on another continent, far away from everything you know. You get pregnant and want asylum in the EU, but instead of being allowed to stay you, the authorities decide that you are to be deported back, because apparently it is safe for you to go home. While being well advanced in your pregnancy, you are in custody because the authorities are scared that you will run away before they can deport you. Somehow you are allowed to stay and get a temporary residence permit, but you have to renew it every year and every year you have to fear that it is not going to be renewed.

Well that is something that won't happen to you because you probably already live in Europe. But that story is the reality for a young woman from Somalia I know and it is not only her reality, there are so many others who have to face this too.

And what do we do about this?

In Europe we don't always welcome other people, we don't want them to come and don't care about their conflicts and crises if they come from the global south. In fact, everyone is always talking about how can we keep them out? How can we harden the borders even more? Nobody asks, how can we help them? How can we make them feel welcome?

Nobody seems to understand that the crises so many people are fleeing from are caused or influenced by the west. Somalia for example is facing drought and potential famine which is most likely related to climate change, despite people in Somalia barely producing any emissions and we don't even know about it. Other countries like Afghanistan or Iraq have both been troubled by conflicts, in which the west clearly played a clear role.

We don't talk enough about crises and conflicts happening outside of Europe. Have you heard of Angola where 3.8 million people suffer from hunger? Have you heard of Malawi where 37% of children are malnourished? Have you heard of Zambia where 50% of people live on less than 1.90 euros a day?

Why do we never talk about conflicts happening outside of Europe, and if we do so then just for a very short time? Last year we were all talking about Afghanistan and now? A few months ago, everyone was talking about Iran, but what about now? These conflicts aren't over, but we just stopped talking about it, we forgot about it.

We have to change the way we look at the global south and what we consider important. Just because things happen far away from us doesn't mean that they are any less important than the problems we face here. We have to think more about the damage that is caused by the west in the global south. We have to take responsibility for countries that we and our ancestors have been destabilising for

centuries. In the future we can't continue like this, we have to help each other, because we are all human and we all deserve the same rights. Nobody should have to flee their home country because of our actions in Europe.

We can start to change right now. We can pay more attention to the problems in the Global South and be more welcoming to all the people who come to us. We can try to help where we can. The big changes, however, have to be made by our politicians, and if we are loud enough, a rethink can also take place in politics. We are all human beings and we have to stick together to create a better future for all.

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