

JRS Malta

Personal testimony

Yosef, originally from Eritrea

"It's hard to separate from our family. Nobody wants to do that, unless they are forced to. We have crossed many countries and endured difficult situations to reach safety. We've crossed the Sahara desert and the Mediterranean sea, but unfortunately, we reached Malta on 17 July 2006, which we never expected to do. Here we are burning in hell. It doesn't feel like we're in Europe and we never expected to live as we're living now.

I understand that an immigrant received in one's nation must put up with detention for a short period of time but even criminals aren't treated in the way we are. At least they can go outside each week; we haven't been outside for 3 weeks now, and we haven't even been visited by a doctor yet. Most people within the camp suffer from signs of stress.

Once fighting broke out among Eritreans and Sudanese in a build up of tensions in these harsh conditions. The disruption soon died down and there were no serious injuries, but the following day, the soldiers in charge came to the hall and made us wait outside while they plundered and raided our quarters. Some of them threw documents into the garbage and even some of our personal papers, like diaries. Some of these documents are important for our identification. They also raided and took away our monthly rations, like shampoos, soaps and toilet paper, and they also removed all eating utensils, which are plastic anyway. When we were allowed back to our rooms, it all looked like chaos and as a result we were left without basic necessities.

It is hard to believe and we never expected this to happen in Europe.

The Eritreans who were deported from Malta in 2002 were persecuted even to death in some cases. Please have mercy on us."