



Jesuit Refugee Service Europe

2009 report





cover photo

Arrivals in Malta
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The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) is an international Catholic organisation established in 1980 by Pedro Arrupe SJ. Its mission is to accompany, serve and defend the cause of forcibly displaced people.

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Acronyms & abbreviations used more than once in this issue:

ANDES	Advocacy Network for Destitute Migrants
CEP	Conference of European Provincials
DEVAS	Detention of Vulnerable Asylum Seekers
EU	European Union
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MP	Member of Parliament
NEF	Network of European Foundations
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
JRS	Jesuit Refugee Service
SAM	<i>Service Accueil Migrants</i>
SJM	<i>Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes</i>
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Bridging the gap

Michael Schöpf SJ, Director, JRS Europe

During 2009, human experience and policy-making drifted further apart in areas essential to the safety of forcibly displaced people. Ahmad told JRS Malta how he survived in Libya, one of the way stations in his perilous journey towards safety: “You should remain indoors. You can’t do anything; you are nothing. Children are the worst; a little boy will come up to you and search for your money – if you refuse, he will hit you, spit at you and report you to the police. You just put up your hands and allow him to check your pockets, to take your money, your mobile phone, anything you have of value. You are nothing, he is Libyan. You wouldn’t even dare try to stop him, to raise your head.” Arrest by the police would mean, for Ahmad, imprisonment without any juridical procedure and without time limit.

Meanwhile Ilkka Laitinen, the director of the European border agency, presented a strategic plan in the European Parliament that announces a 78% budget increase for 2010, over 2009, for return operations and “pre-return assistance” in accordance with international human rights law. Obviously, countries that lack any protection of fundamental rights, like Libya, are included in his considerations. And Italian political leaders praised themselves for returning hundreds of people to Libya, without any examination of their protection claims, after they found them stranded in open seas off Italian shores.

In 1980, the year when the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) was founded, the fate of the Vietnamese boat people struck a chord with policymakers and resulted in their resettlement in many European countries among others. Today we are much better informed about the suffering of people at our borders and yet it has become largely impossible to connect to the human experience of those who are forced to migrate. In 2009, JRS Europe was present in places of suffering in 14 countries and tried to relate this experience to services and policies that immediately affect the forcibly displaced. We understand this work as a small step towards closing the gap between the proclamation and simultaneous violation of the basic rights of those in need of protection.

JRS Europe followed the three regional priorities of its strategic plan: destitution, detention and externalisation. The *Advocacy Network for Destitute*

Forced Migrants (ANDES) project focused on forcibly displaced people made destitute through policies and practices that exclude minimum access to social services. National events were held in eight countries. The forcibly displaced with weak legal status have clearly become persons of particular concern to JRS Europe through this project.

The *Detention of Vulnerable Asylum Seekers (DEVAS)* project was a means to research the frequent use of administrative detention within asylum and return policies and their effects on particularly vulnerable groups. Almost all interviews were conducted from the point of view of detainees, to capture the impact of detention policies in the way they experience them. Preliminary results reveal that classic categories of vulnerable people in detention are not always well designed to respond to reality. Initial individual assessments, at least, are necessary if policymakers really want to address vulnerability. The research is thus laying the foundations for an advocacy strategy to be adopted in 2010, which will be directed towards the review of instruments in the Common European Asylum System.

In 2009, JRS Europe strengthened its capacity to accompany those who can no longer reach us, going to places where they are obliged to find protection instead. Both JRS projects in Morocco and Ukraine were fully operational, with a kindergarten and a safe place for women in Casablanca as well as safe accommodation and legal counselling in Lviv, western Ukraine. These services outside European Union (EU) borders were matched by services and advocacy work in several EU Member States. JRS Europe contributed to the publication of a booklet that engaged candidates for the European Parliament in Spain in further discussions before the elections. JRS Malta and Italy continued to help those who had just reached European territory and publicly denounced the breaching of the human rights of those forcibly returned to Libya. Further preparatory work was done towards a more coherent strategy to address the clearly identifiable needs of forced migrants at EU borders.

The following pages share with you in greater detail our experiences and efforts in these three main areas. However, the work of our offices across Europe often goes far beyond the focus of this report.

The internal development of JRS Europe saw the end of an extended period of staff shortages.

At the same time it became clear that JRS Europe needs more continuity in the communications position if we are to speak out in a planned and more consistent manner on the increasing protection needs of those we accompany. A public environment that is increasingly hostile towards forcibly displaced people calls for a stronger, more unified public message. JRS Europe started to build up funding in the hope of financing such a position in the mid-term.

I would like to express our deep gratitude to all who made our work possible through their personal and financial support. The Jesuit Conference of European Provincials (CEP), the European Commission, private foundations and donors contributed to the funding

for core activities. Project funding was acquired from the European Commission and the Network of European Foundations (NEF), as well as from private donors. Volunteers helped with policy analysis, project development and administration, and were equally vital for our presence among refugees. Thanks to such support, we organised an event in the European Parliament in October, which presented the work of JRS through the experiences, suffering and concerns of those in need of protection. Refugees from Eritrea, Ethiopia and Togo told the story of their journeys and engaged in advocacy contacts with newly elected parliamentarians.

Thank you for your continued help that allows us to remain close to and provide a platform for such experiences.

The work of the regional office

The work of the JRS office in Brussels can be divided into four main areas that serve the development of the European region of JRS: coordination; EU policy and JRS advocacy (see pages 3 & 4); project development (see page 5); media and communications (see page 6).

Two previously vacant positions in the regional office were filled in 2009: Mr Stefan Keßler joined the team in February as the new senior policy and advocacy officer and Fr Luigi Romano SJ took up his role as assistant regional director in November. The other staff members continued in their respective positions: Br Michael Schöpf SJ, regional director; Isabelle de Sazilly, administrator; Carola Jimenez-Asenjo, project development officer; Julian Halbeisen SJ, project assistant; and Philip Amaral, policy and advocacy officer. The position of media officer was filled by Michael Donohoe until October and taken up by Sigrid Haaland for the remaining months of the year. The regional office team was thus fully operational again by the end of 2009. On behalf of the CEP, Luis Munoz joined the office in September, in charge of the Migration Desk.

Long-term/part-time volunteers included Joseph Poncin for administrative support, Gianluigi Campogrande for policy work and Rozemarijn Vanwijnsberghe for project development. Thomas Van Eeckhoudt started a full-time internship in October to support the updating of the JRS Europe website on administrative detention.

COORDINATION

Coordination within JRS Europe is enhanced by strategic planning with national offices, regional coordination meetings and country visits by the directors.

In March, the national directors developed a new Action Plan for JRS Europe, which runs from July 2009 until June 2011. The new plan spells out the region's strategic goals and priorities in greater detail and was endorsed by all the national offices. The focus of common areas of work continues to be on:

- Advocacy against the widespread use of administrative detention within asylum and return policies;
- Destitution of the forcibly displaced;
- Externalisation of asylum and border management by the EU.

Further steps are foreseen:

- To enhance the capacity of the regional office for advocacy and project management;
- To improve mechanisms for regional collaboration and decision-making.

The Annual General Meeting in October in Clongowes College near Dublin brought together 64 participants, representing all JRS national offices in Europe as well as the JRS International Office and *Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes* (Spain). The programme explored different aspects of the integration of forcibly displaced persons.

Lobbying for just policies

DETENTION

In May the European Parliament adopted two legislative proposals to amend the *Reception Conditions Directive*, which lays down common standards for how EU Member States receive asylum seekers, and the *Dublin Regulation*, which determines Member State responsibility for examining asylum applications. In their current form, these two laws do not prescribe a manner in which Member States can detain asylum seekers, despite the ongoing practice of detaining asylum seekers during their procedure and while awaiting a 'Dublin transfer' to another Member State. The Parliament's version follows the proposals made by the European Commission in 2008, keeping to the Commission's proposal of obliging Member States to determine the 'necessity' and 'proportionality' of detention for asylum seekers on a case-by-case basis. Unlike the Commission's proposal, the Parliament would not require Member States to automatically grant legal aid and/or assistance to asylum seekers in detention, but instead only upon their request. As of the end of 2009, both legislative proposals were still awaiting input from the Council of Member States.

Together with Brussels-based organisations that form the Christian Group, JRS Europe published a policy memorandum on the Commission's proposal to amend the *Dublin Regulation*. The memorandum supported the Commission's efforts to more narrowly regulate the use of detention for asylum seekers, while reiterating the position that in principal asylum seekers should never be detained.

A new strategy for common JRS advocacy towards the *Dublin Regulation* was decided during the JRS Europe directors' meeting in Dublin in October. The two-pronged strategy looks to meet the immediate needs of asylum seekers who are in the 'Dublin process' and secondly to lobby for asylum seekers' rights at EU-level. The first prong aims to provide asylum seekers with concrete and updated information on how the *Dublin Regulation* is implemented in up to 20 Member States. Information sheets are available online at www.detention-in-europe.org. The second will focus on lobbying EU policymakers for legal provisions that grant detained asylum seekers access to free legal assistance, and that safeguard detained vulnerable asylum seekers.

JRS Europe continued to implement the DEVAS project (see also page 5). Two steering committee meetings were held and 685 interviews with

detainees in 21 Member States were collected. The project will be completed in spring 2010 with a final report and conference in Brussels.

DESTITUTION

Another focus in 2009 was the ANDES project. A previous study of seven countries revealed that, due to their status, a large percentage of migrants (undocumented or tolerated migrants, failed asylum seekers, and others) have limited or no access to healthcare, housing, education, accommodation and the labour market. As part of the ANDES project, JRS conducted research on the situation in another three countries in 2009: Ireland, Spain and Sweden. JRS was also successful in building a large coalition as a step towards establishing the destitution of forced migrants as a new topic on the European political agenda. In some Member States, national events organised by JRS brought together stakeholders and were starting points for forming new coalitions. These events were also successful in raising awareness of the destitution problem with the media (see also page 5).

EUROPEAN ASYLUM AND MIGRATION POLITICS

During 2009, the European Commission, Parliament and Council, as well as some NGOs, debated necessary amendments to several EU directives, especially the *Qualification Directive*, which seeks to implement a common definition of a refugee. JRS took part in these debates, at the level of experts, with the aim of improving the EU legal framework for protection.

Another directive, the so-called *Return Directive* on minimum standards for the treatment of returnees and those awaiting (forced) return, was still to be implemented by Member States in their national laws. JRS continuously kept national offices and partners informed about developments in this area and coordinated exchange of best practice examples.

Under the leadership of JRS, the Christian Group published a detailed policy paper on the new EU working programme in the area of *Justice, Freedom and Security*, calling for effective policies and measures to improve the protection of people in need and the integration of migrants in Europe.

Misratah detention centre, on the Libyan coast.



Gabriele del Grande/ Fortress Europe

In December, the Lisbon Treaty came into force. In an information note for national offices and partners, JRS Europe briefly analysed the impact of the new treaty law on European asylum and migration policies.

EXTERNALISATION OF PROTECTION

JRS kept pleading the cause of people with protection needs who are turned away at European borders and living in limbo in transit countries. In Brussels, together with several other organisations, JRS lodged a complaint with the European Commission against the Italian policy of forced and indiscriminate return of migrants to Libya, where persons with protection needs cannot find safety. In public presentations, JRS also denounced the plans of the French government to intensify cooperation with Libya in border controls and “migration management” without ensuring that those staying in Libya enjoy respect of all their human rights.

MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The EU held its first High-Level Parliamentary Conference on Policy Coherence for Development and Migration in February. Organised jointly by the Commission, Parliament and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the conference was attended by 300 guests from throughout the world. The conference primarily concluded that governments should develop coherent migration policies that take into account the development needs of origin and receiving countries. No other major EU actions on migration and development occurred during the year.

JRS Europe was one of 200 delegates to the third annual *Civil Society Days* of the Global Forum on Migration and Development, held in November in Athens and organised by the Onassis Foundation. Throughout the three-day conference JRS Europe presented concrete experiences from JRS field activities in Africa and Latin America that demonstrate how refugees in host countries, as well as those returning to their home country, can successfully contribute to development and post-conflict reconstruction.

In October JRS Europe held a dinner event at the European Parliament on the topic of forced migration and development. Co-organised with the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Misereor, and hosted by German MEP Barbara Lochbihler (Greens), the dinner was attended by up to 60 guests including the ambassadors of Sudan and Uganda to Belgium, and others from the development and migration units of the European Commission, political parties from the European Parliament, the embassies of Ecuador, Senegal, Kenya and also from media and civil society. Fr John Guiney SJ and Fr Alberto Plaza SJ, former directors of JRS in Eastern Africa and Liberia, respectively, presented JRS field experiences in vocational training and education. Dr Alexander Betts, a professor of forced migration at Oxford University, discussed past and current government-level initiatives that utilise the development potential of forced migrants. Among its conclusions, JRS Europe stressed that host governments should guarantee freedom of movement for forcibly displaced people, so that they may engage in economic and social opportunities, and that the EU should provide countries with additional development assistance for those who are forcibly displaced.

Major projects



The DEVAS project

In response to the European Refugee Fund Call for Proposals, JRS Europe launched a research project focusing on detention conditions of vulnerable asylum seekers. The DEVAS project, as it is known, started in late 2008 and is based on methodology developed by JRS in a previous project entitled *Administrative Detention of Asylum Seekers and Illegally Staying Third Country Nationals in the 10 New Member States of the European Union*, which was reviewed by an Oxford research expert. The DEVAS project foresees a narrower focus on particularly vulnerable detainees. The geographic scope has been extended to 23 EU Member States. Steering committee meetings were held in January and December in Brussels. Throughout the year, European partners carried out research at local level, interviewing 685 detainees about their perception of vulnerability in relation to detention conditions. JRS Europe processed data collected at national level and a European report, including national reports, is to be published and presented to MEPs and civil society in 2010. The participating JRS offices were: Belgium, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden and the UK.

To find out more, go to http://detention-in-europe.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=220&Itemid=242



The ANDES project

With the financial support of the NEF and through its European Programme for Integration and Migration (EPIM), JRS launched a second project in October 2008 focused on destitute people. The overall goal of the ANDES project is policy change at national and European levels to improve access to education, healthcare, accommodation and employment for undocumented migrants and rejected asylum seekers. The project builds on a previous research project, *We are Dying Silent*, which was carried out in 10 European countries to show the link between migration policies and destitution. In ANDES, JRS created a coalition of key actors at national levels to open a broader debate at European level about the destitution of migrants.

In 2009, JRS updated the first study and enlarged it to include Sweden and Spain, publishing a new report called *Living in Limbo, Forced Migrant Destitution in Europe*. JRS partners organised national events in Spain, Italy, Portugal, Romania and Ukraine to identify the main actor working on each of four areas, mentioned above, which are linked to destitution. The steering committee with national and European partners took place in Brussels in September and the JRS Europe policy officer visited Sweden, Spain and Ireland late in the year. The participating JRS offices were: Germany, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Romania, UK and Ukraine. CeiMigra, the Jesuit migration agency that forms part of SJM-Spain (see page 27), also participated.

To find out more, go to http://www.jrseurope.org/EPIM/EPIM_09/intro_andes_09.htm

Detention Visitors Support Group III (DVSG III)

For the third time, JRS organised a Detention Visitors Support Group seminar, bringing together staff and volunteers who regularly visit detainees in closed centres across Europe. Held in Brussels in May, the four-day seminar offered opportunities for professional exchange, reflection and specialised training on trauma and interaction with traumatised people. JRS contracted the services of PHAROS, a Dutch knowledge centre specialised in the field of healthcare, which provided detention visitors with a broad understanding of the psychological pressures detainees are subjected to. The training acted as a guide for visitors to assess the detainees' needs and to provide the appropriate support. It also looked at the personal development of the visitors.

The training was complemented by a section on advocacy, which allowed participants to review a number of DEVAS interviews, in order to encode some of the open questions submitted to detainees.

An online training kit provided ongoing support for participants on cases and issues not discussed during the training. In 2010 the training session will focus on intercultural communication and burnout.

A cohesive energy

The quality of our advocacy work in the region, as well as the further expansion of the JRS national offices in 2008, demands that communication be a cohesive energy. A major challenge in 2009 was to ensure a reliable, ever-improving stream of information between JRS Europe and all the offices. Due to improved access and use of technology, and thanks to Skype and e-mail, we have improved our internal communication. At the same time, we recognise the importance of meeting person-to-person: a meeting for JRS Europe directors was held in March in Brussels followed by our Annual General Meeting in Ireland in October.

PUBLICATIONS

Four editions of JRS Europe's newsletter, *The Refuge* were published in March, August, November and December. We constantly strived to improve the content and presentation of this publication. Our monthly internal bulletin, *Progrès*, remained an indispensable resource for every JRS national office throughout Europe.

AWARENESS RAISING – PEDRO ARRUPE AWARD

JRS Europe runs an awareness raising project for students in European Jesuit schools, which is initiated every two years: the Pedro Arrupe Award. The aim of this popular educational programme is to promote understanding and tolerance for refugees and forced migrants among young people. The winners come from two age categories (under 16 and under 19 years old.) The 2008-2009 edition featured a new website and enhanced background material. JRS contacted more than 140 schools, publishing posters, brochures, information leaflets for all the schools, and received more than 60 entries from 35 schools. Some 200 students participated. The winners were announced in May 2009 and took part in the award ceremony hosted by a MEP in Brussels. In July, the winners travelled to Macedonia and Malta, where they had the chance to visit two JRS Europe projects: a camp for Kosovar children who are landmine survivors in Macedonia (under 19) and an open centre for people granted protection in Malta (under 16).

To find out more, go to
<http://www.jrseurope.org/pedroarrupe-award/>

A shop at the Hal-Far Open Centre for families in Malta, one of the locations visited by the winners of the Pedro Arrupe Award.



An overview of JRS country offices

In 2009, JRS had offices in 14 countries across Europe to meet the basic needs of refugees, asylum seekers and other forcibly displaced people in the community and to foster their integration; to accompany asylum seekers and irregular migrants in detention; and to defend the right to asylum through casework and wider advocacy.

Apart from reaching thousands of individuals through direct service, the JRS offices carried out awareness-raising to: highlight the plight and the fundamental rights of those who are forcibly displaced; pinpoint shortcomings in current asylum and migration policies and lobby for more just procedures; promote integration.

In most countries, JRS staff and volunteers visited detention centres on a regular basis to offer psychosocial and pastoral support, social services, legal aid and more. Most of all, they went to show detainees that they were not alone. In the community, a wide range of services was provided on different levels. Some met the basic needs of

forcibly displaced people living in destitution: food, lodging, healthcare, social services and others. Legal aid helped navigate the asylum process and other procedures. The path to integration was paved by language and computer courses, assistance to find employment and independent accommodation. Meanwhile, social activities gave forcibly displaced people the chance to meet others from their own country or in similar situations.

The services and advocacy work undertaken reflected the region's stated chief concerns: detention, destitution and externalisation. In the pages that follow, the individual country reports have been divided accordingly. However none of the national offices are dedicated solely to one or the other concern. In accompanying forcibly displaced people, seeking to meet their ignored urgent needs and defending their rights, the JRS teams carry out diverse activities that cannot possibly all be reported here. The country reports, and accompanying testimonies, give a glimpse of the dedication, hard work and creativity involved.

Fr Adolfo Nicolás SJ, Jesuit Superior General, meets Bhekuzulu Khumalo from Zimbabwe during the launch of the JRS Ireland 2008 report.





Homework club, Ireland.



Games without borders, Postojna Detention Centre, Slovenia.

Vesna Godler



Fr Martin Stark SJ (centre), moderator of a panel discussion, with politicians from Berlin, on the occasion of the European Parliamentary elections in June 2009.

OASE

Detention

Detention centre, Berlin.



Nic Weiser

I feel imprisoned, alone and lost.

*An Iraqi asylum seeker
detained in Sweden*

DETENTION: Weekly visits to more than 40 asylum seekers and migrants in five detention centres. More than 500 people were accompanied throughout the year.

DESTITUTION: Participation in NGO awareness-raising activities for the legalisation of undocumented migrants.

EXTERNALISATION: Legal counselling and advocacy for asylum seekers to be returned under Dublin II to external EU borders like Greece and Poland.

Doing what we can

An open heart and an attentive ear are the first gifts that our visitors offer migrants and asylum seekers locked up in detention centres. We realise how much value there is in visiting men and women who feel excluded. The detainees get a strong message: “You are not forgotten. Someone cares for you.” In 2009, four more volunteers joined us in this service.

Our weekly presence in detention centres gives us a clear insight of the needs of detainees and the deficiencies of national and European policies in this area. Together with some NGOs, we released in June a report consisting of 12 stories of detained immigrants, showing the arbitrariness, uselessness and human cost of administrative detention.

There were some successes. The number of children in detention decreased dramatically through the implementation by the administration of an alternative scheme: “return houses” where families are not detained but supervised by a coach who encourages them to return. In June, the Federal Ombudsman made public an audit report, quite critical, on detention centres in Belgium; we encouraged MPs to translate its recommendations into law. Following a 2008 NGO report on legal aid for detainees, barristers’ associations took the initiative to ensure that a legal clinic was open in detention centres on a weekly basis.

EVERYTHING WAS DECIDED FOR ME

“You have to go back to your country,” the officer said to me upon my arrival in the detention centre. I can assure you that, after having applied for asylum and lived in Belgium for three years, this sentence turned me crazy with fear.

I spent three months and two weeks in the centre. It was a very difficult time for me, in particular the strict schedule I had to follow. It gave me a prison-like feeling. I could not choose the time of waking up, eating, taking a walk, or sleeping. Everything was decided for me. It was not easy to live together with people who were so different. In my group, there were people from Afghanistan, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, there were Muslims, Christians, atheists, people who had been transferred from prison, drug addicts, mentally ill people...

But the most hurtful experience was when they brought me to court in handcuffs. Why? I hadn’t stolen anything! This has distressed me since. I remember the night before they were to bring me to my embassy in order to obtain a travel document. I wanted to commit suicide. In the end it was my faith in God that rescued me. It was absurd to take me to the authorities of the country I had fled.

Fortunately, there were people who supported me. The chaplain always gave me hope and JRS too. I am still grateful for these visits. They were a real relief for me and helped me to calm down.

The day I was released, I had no place to stay. I had lost many things. Now I have to rebuild my life. I try not to think too much about what happened because I need to get on with my life.



Germany

DETENTION: Visits to between 100 and 130 detainees a week.

LEGAL AID: Legal counselling at the Berlin office for those without the right to stay.

Doing what we can

The main focus of our work: refugees from Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan arriving in Germany via Greece, who should have been deported back there under the Dublin II Regulation. JRS maintained a legal aid fund that financed lawyers for more than 70 detainees destined for Greece in 2009 and, as a result, many returns were suspended. However transfers to Greece did occur. JRS Germany particularly expressed its support to bring a 25-year-old Iraqi refugee back to Germany. In several expedited proceedings (one with support from JRS) the Federal Constitutional Court temporarily suspended the transfers of asylum seekers to Greece under Dublin II, postponing a final decision on cases pending before it until summer 2010. Despite the reputation of Greece as a country with serious deficits in its asylum system, including the lack of protection and care for unaccompanied children, Germany's government insisted that Greece was a safe third country and that asylum seekers would continue to be sent there.

YOUSEF IS TIRED OF EUROPE

Yousef was one of many Christian Iraqis who came to Germany via Greece and ended up in a Munich prison. According to the Dublin II Regulation, he was supposed to be returned to Greece. An appeal to the local court on his behalf was rejected and, after five months, when the date of his deportation was already scheduled, we petitioned the German parliament. Due to this, Yousef was released. He was aware that he was still in danger of being deported but didn't want to hide away. After a few days, the negative decision of the parliament came. Yousef was arrested again and returned to Greece. Ruling in a similar case a month later, the Federal Constitutional Court decided that there were doubts as to whether Greece could be seen as a safe third country. Since that decision, many local courts have also suspended returns to Greece. When we contacted Yousef by phone, he told us that he had found shelter with a relative in Athens. He thanked us for offering to try to get him back to Germany but declined: Yousef was tired of Europe and planned to go back to Iraq and maybe from there to the US.

The Vietnamese New Year celebration, 2009, in the Berlin detention centre.



Trieu Quoc Nguyen SJ

DETENTION: Regular visits to female detainees in the Dóchas Centre and on a case-by-case basis to male detainees in Cloverhill Prison.

INTEGRATION: Psychosocial support and one-to-one English language classes; a series of intercultural activities including a successful two-month summer programme in which 150 children participated.

Doing what we can

Under Irish legislation, detention for immigration-related reasons may apply to non-Irish nationals refused “permission to land”, unsuccessful asylum seekers and non-Irish nationals subject to a deportation order. Minors are not detained.

Every week in 2009, JRS Ireland staff visited women detained under immigration provisions in the Dóchas Centre (the women’s prison) in Dublin. Support was provided to detainees for legal, health and psychosocial issues. Where needed, a JRS Ireland staff member linked detainees with specialist service providers – for example, services for victims of trafficking for the sex industry. Follow-up support was offered to detainees who were released into a direct provision centre (centres that

are part of a governmental support system for asylum seekers) or who opted for voluntary return to the country of origin. In some cases, post-return contact was maintained. Support for male immigration detainees was provided at the request of female relatives detained in the Dóchas Centre or of the chaplain in Cloverhill (a remand prison in Dublin).

Outreach activities in seven direct provision centres in Dublin and Limerick benefited between 20 and 30 asylum seekers each week while life-skills activities were a means of psychosocial support. In partnership with two Jesuit schools, one-to-one English language classes were organised each week for 30 asylum seekers.

I JUST HAD TO CALL

Rachel fled Iraq with her youngest boy and sought asylum in Ireland in late 2008. On arrival, she was detained because she did not have any papers to prove her identity. “When I was detained my son was taken away from me. I was sent to prison. Sr Majella from JRS visited me each week there. Thankfully, after three weeks, the Iraqi embassy was able to send papers confirming my identity. I was released into a hostel and reunited with Adam.” After Rachel’s release, JRS Ireland continued to assist her and Adam while they lived in Dublin and subsequently in Galway. In mid-2009 they were granted refugee status. “There was so many times I had difficulties but Sr Majella was always there. I just had to call. She helped me find a house in Dublin, a school for Adam, to deal with the landlord, and even when there was a problem with visas to get our family over from Iraq. We are so happy to be safe and to be together again. I would like to say a big thank you to JRS.”

Language classes organised by JRS Ireland.



Slovenia

DETENTION: Visits to the detention centre in Postojna twice a week.

Doing what we can

JRS Slovenia accompanied detainees and extended psychosocial and material support during regular visits by staff and volunteers. The team organised three big activities throughout the year at the detention centre in Postojna: a cultural event, a concert, on 8 February; a sports event called *Games without borders* on 18 June; a spiritual event – a Christmas concert. A family from the detention centre joined the seventh edition of the JRS week-long summer holiday on the Slovene coast. Twenty-seven women and children attended. JRS work in the detention centre was highlighted in two shows on the Catholic station Radio Ognjišče.

JRS social worker Rebeka offers biscuits to a detainee during the *Games without borders* event in June.



Vesna Godler

TESTIMONY ELIJAH

I am an asylum seeker from Sri Lanka. When I was taken to the detention centre in Postojna in the early hours of 5 February 2008, I had no idea what was going to happen to me. I felt abandoned to deal with things that were far beyond my knowledge and capabilities, without family or friends to help. It was the toughest time of my life. I met Matej of JRS three days later and soon realised that he was genuinely interested in listening to my story. He gave me his mobile phone number and told me to contact him if I needed. Matej used to come to the centre on Thursdays. Sometimes he came just to visit me, to bring me food and books to read. I realised that we share the same faith in Jesus Christ and this brought us closer together. Matej trusted me; he was the first person to understand that I had done nothing wrong and arranged for a good lawyer for me.

In October 2008, I was granted weekly permission to leave the centre as long as I had the address of a house in Slovenia. I rang Matej and straightaway he told me to give his parents' home address. Meeting Matej's parents and other relatives was a special treat. I was accepted as a full member of the family from the moment I stepped inside their home and was very touched.

I applied for asylum and was eventually released from detention but, on 22 June 2009, the Supreme Court ruled against my asylum application so I was detained again. I needed a guarantor to leave the centre; Matej and his family quickly provided all the necessary papers and I was released. In October, the Constitutional Court of Slovenia overturned the judgment of the Supreme Court and requested a new ruling on my asylum application. In January 2010 the new judgment went in my favour.

I now have three positive judgments from three different levels of the Slovene courts. However, the Asylum Division of the Ministry of the Interior does not see the danger I would face if I were to be deported to Sri Lanka. I am still not out of the woods. But I know God is in control of my situation. I know that meeting Matej in the centre was no accident; it was God's plan.

DETENTION: Regular visits to Sweden's largest detention centre Mårsta, close to Stockholm International Airport; the centre has a capacity of 70 places.

Doing what we can

The number of refugees from Iraq coming to Sweden declined but there were more asylum seekers from Somalia and Afghanistan. Many Iraqis had their asylum applications rejected and were deported. A hotly discussed topic in the Swedish media was the sharp increase of unaccompanied minors asking for asylum; 2009 saw a record number of 2,250 arrivals.

The JRS detention visitors group – five volunteers including one Jesuit – accompanied the detainees and helped them to get in touch with lawyers and relatives, mediated between the detainees and the police or the

Swedish Migration Board, and established contacts with NGOs or JRS offices in the destination country of those going back. The number of Catholic and other Christian detainees, especially from Africa, increased significantly in 2009. This meant a stronger emphasis on pastoral work with religious services celebrated in the detention centre on a regular basis. Another concern was rejected asylum seekers detained in high security remand prisons. Apart from the problems inherent in such a practice, NGOs could not visit these detainees.

TERRIFIED OF BEING SENT BACK TO IRAQ

I fled from Iraq to Sweden in 2007. Belonging to a religious minority made life difficult and dangerous for us. I could not stand the situation any more so I left Iraq and eventually arrived in Sweden, where my claim for asylum was rejected. I went underground, afraid of being deported. One day I had an accident with my bicycle in Stockholm. The police checked my identity and, as soon as I was released from hospital, they came and drove me to a detention centre. I still hope to be able to stay in Sweden as I have an older brother who lives here. In detention, I have trouble sleeping and have nightmares every night. I have stomach aches. I am terrified of being sent back to Iraq. I feel imprisoned, alone and lost. I have not been able to save any money whatsoever during my stay in Sweden and I feel that I am in a vulnerable situation. I am sure: belonging to a religious minority means that my life is in danger. A JRS volunteer has helped me to get in contact with a lawyer who will help me fight my case. I hope that he will succeed.

Western Balkans

DETENTION: Accompanying asylum seekers and detained irregular migrants in Zagreb.

ADVOCACY: Lobbying for refugees' rights, for better conditions in detention centres and shorter asylum procedures, in cooperation with other organisations and Churches, such as the Red Cross, the Croatian Law Centre, the Macedonian Orthodox Church and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

INTEGRATION: Promoting reconciliation, tolerance, integration, inter-religious and ecumenical dialogue.

Doing what we can

The main activity of the JRS office in Zagreb, Croatia, was accompanying asylum seekers and irregular migrants from Bosnia, Kosovo, Albania and Serbia, who were detained in an administrative detention centre in Ježevo. Detainees received weekly visits, psychosocial support, educational materials and mobile phone SIM cards. In collaboration with the Red Cross, JRS provided

legal assistance. JRS also visited a reception centre for asylum seekers in Skopje, Macedonia, on a regular basis, and ran language and computer courses in partnership with Milorsdije (Caritas of the Macedonian Orthodox Church) UNHCR and the Red Cross.

In Pristina, Kosovo, JRS continued to support landmine survivors and people in need of prostheses.

IMAGINING A BETTER FUTURE

The Berisa family arrived in Macedonia from Kosovo during the war. As a result of the hostile environment facing the Roma in Kosovo, the family requested asylum in Macedonia and was brought to the reception centre. Since they are quite poor, their children have never gone to school. However, during their stay in the detention centre, they learnt how to use a computer and how to search the Internet. One sentence describes their gratitude: "Seeing the world online has allowed us to imagine a better future."

FROM AFGHANISTAN TO CROATIA

I was born in Afghanistan and I currently live in a centre for asylum seekers in Croatia. I left Afghanistan 18 months ago because I was scared I would die. After eight months of travelling, I crossed into Croatia and, at 1am, the Croatian border police stopped me. I asked for asylum and the police accommodated me in a detention centre, where I spent seven months. I missed my children and parents to the point that I became suicidal. Someone from JRS visited me there and his support practically saved my life. Thanks to JRS, other organisations and the Croatian authorities, I found protection and I am hopeful. My children and I can have a brighter future now.



JRS “graduates”
in Clongowe,
Ireland.



Sarah Booker

At JRS in
the UK.



Pierre Landèche

Circle of
silence in
France.

Destitution

The ID card of an asylum seeker on supermarket voucher support in the UK – JRS exchanges the vouchers for cash.



Sarah Booker

“ For over six years I had to survive by God’s miracles through charities. ”

John Oneka-Okello, UK

INTEGRATION: French language lessons to about 45 asylum seekers in the Paris region; placing refugees in the homes of French families to overcome fear and prejudice.

Doing what we can

Since 2004, 155,000 asylum claims have been rejected in France. Immigration policies speak in a loud voice. Silence speaks loudly too, hence the initiative, started by the Franciscan Brothers of Toulouse, to organise monthly “circles of silence” in towns across France. In 2009, JRS organised three such “circles” in Chambéry, which drew about 100 people, and helped to organise another in the

Paris suburb of Cergy-Pontoise. For one hour, people stood in silence, some with papers on their backs giving information about the protest on behalf of deported, detained or destitute migrants. One hour in silence, a silence louder than noise, against injustice, violence, in search of hope, peace, and a sanctuary of solidarity.

OPENING OUR MINDS AND OUR DOORS

A JRS project started in October 2009 places asylum seekers in families across France. They stay in their new home for a month or two. With their host families and communities, the asylum seekers “walk together on a path of dignity”. A young Afghan man who stayed with a Parisian family was grateful for the roof over his head and the opportunity to live with people who cared. But the start, he says, was hard. “The first few nights, I couldn’t sleep. I was always thinking about my past, my future, my own family. Then I started to relax. Everybody was so kind, the children were happy to have me around. I started practising French with them and my tutor. Today, I’m less afraid.” The family will not hesitate to repeat the experience: “We will gladly open our home again.” Isabella, the project coordinator, believes that both sides benefit considerably. “The families have discovered the courage and tenacity of people who have no other choice than to face so many difficulties to seek refuge,” she says. “And the asylum seekers discover that there are ordinary people who consider their presence as natural and an asset for shared spiritual and human growth.”

Circle of silence.



Italy

DESTITUTION: Meals for 400 people five days a week at a soup kitchen in Centro Astalli; social and legal assistance for over 15,000 refugees and asylum seekers.

INTEGRATION: Advice about employment and independent accommodation; classes in Italian, stressing the importance of language as a tool for integration.

ADVOCACY: Participation in working tables with other Italian and international associations. The aim: to lobby for a comprehensive law on asylum and to promote national campaigns on asylum and immigration.

Doing what we can

In 2009 JRS Italy (Centro Astalli) continued to offer primary and secondary level assistance to asylum seekers and refugees. Primary services included accommodation, a soup kitchen, legal and social counselling, medical care and an Italian language school. Secondary services were mostly directed towards refugees and aimed to facilitate integration.

Of two new accommodation centres opened by JRS in Rome in 2009, one was named after Sister Maria Teresa, who was a volunteer at Centro Astalli for 10 years before her death in August 2007. Casa Maria Teresa caters for destitute single women with children while

the Aver Drom Centre is for unaccompanied minors from 15 to 18 years. The new centres bring the total of accommodation centres managed by JRS in Italy to seven: six in Rome and one in Trento. The centres in Rome accommodated around 150 recently arrived asylum seekers, refugees and migrants who were destitute.

The socio-political context in 2009 proved difficult: the felt need for greater security relegated protection of the rights of asylum seekers to second place. Security operations led to serious violations of human rights and undermined democracy.

TORTURED AND TERRIFIED

Ali comes from Afghanistan. A neighbour who took them to Iran cared for Ali and his brothers. In Iran they did not feel safe, and were always afraid of being deported. So Ali decided to go to Italy. When he arrived in Italy, on 6 January 2009, he was just 18 years old. He became a guest of the San Saba Shelter of Centro Astalli. Three months after his arrival, he was interviewed by a legal worker and helped to apply for asylum. Soon it became clear that Ali needed psychological and medical help. The clinic prepared a medical legal report, which revealed that he had been tortured in circumstances that he never reported to the legal worker. It may have been too painful for him to discuss what had happened, or perhaps he may have even lost memory of the fact. A report was prepared about the psychological torture he had suffered too. All the documentation was presented to UNHCR and to the Territorial Commission on 20 July 2009. Ali was recognised as refugee on 1 August 2009 and he is now beginning his path towards integration.

DESTITUTION: 7,000 appointments for migrants seeking support in the integration process.

Doing what we can

Services provided by JRS Portugal in 2009 included legal counselling, psychosocial support, medical care, training, help to find employment and to get qualifications recognised. A significant percentage of those assisted were destitute migrants unable to access their fundamental rights. A full-time staff member and some volunteers provided ongoing support to the 256 detainees in Oporto Reception Centre.

JRS Portugal extended its advocacy work in 2009, especially in the context of the ANDES project, through the organisation of two national events. The first was a working seminar in which experts reflected on employment, health and housing. The presentations and outcomes of the seminar were published in a book, *Human Rights and Destitution*, which was launched during the second event: a national conference at the Portuguese Parliament.

A RAINBOW AFTER THE STORM: PRABIR'S STORY

I left India in September 2005 as a cook in a shipping company. For several months the company did not pay me and, worse still, the ship was carrying drugs; something that none of us knew about. For over two weeks we were deprived of food, given just water. I thought we were going to die. In February 2006, the Portuguese police intercepted the ship and we were all arrested and put into jail. I was kept in custody for 14 months and, on April 2007, was declared innocent and immediately released.

After going from place to place for several months, and living in extreme poverty, I heard about JRS Portugal and was given accommodation in the Pedro Arrupe Shelter. At that time, I was feeling depressed, abandoned and totally helpless. I felt that I had no hope, no future, no dignity. The JRS staff gave me all the support they could and went for counselling, which helped me to regain trust in myself and courage to overcome the many obstacles I had to face thereafter.

Today, I have a Portuguese residence permit, I live in a rented room, and I am attending a course, which will enable me to start working again as a cook in a Portuguese shipping company. I feel deep gratitude, because I regained my dignity as a person and as a working man, something I felt I had lost for all these years. Today I can say that I have a new life.

Romania

DESTITUTION: Accommodation, educational courses and assistance to find work.

DETENTION: Regular visits to the detention centre in Otopeni.

Doing what we can

JRS Romania provided accommodation to 66 destitute people at the Pedro Arrupe Centre. A doctor attended to residents of the centre as did volunteers – university students in medicine and psychology. The most vulnerable people and those with special needs were given emergency relief, including food, clothes, hygiene products, means to communicate with family or close friends.

A network of volunteers gave courses in Romanian and English, computer, geography and history. JRS also promoted self-sustainability, helping refugees to pursue their aspirations in the labour market. During Ramadan, on Christmas and Easter, New Year, World Refugee Day (20 June) and other occasions, JRS organised parties and celebrated with refugees. A series of sports activities facilitated intercultural communication among the refugees.

An important part of our work was lobbying for changes in immigration legislation, to improve the standards of protection for ‘tolerated persons’ (third-country nationals who do not qualify for protection but who cannot return home), asylum seekers and refugees. As part of the ANDES project, JRS informed policymakers, NGOs and civil actors about the consequences of exclusion policies and sought amendments to laws and practices. Five events were organised. They covered: access to medical services and psychological support, employment, accommodation, forced return, toleration, detention.

In detention centres, JRS Romania continued to provide legal counselling, social assistance, emergency aid and pastoral accompaniment. Close cooperation was maintained with UNHCR, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and a network of lawyers to assist cases of concern. Particular attention was given to Dublin II cases.

I NEED TO SURVIVE

I fled Pakistan and arrived in Romania after a long and dangerous journey. My first asylum application was rejected after I had already left the country for Italy. I was sent back to Romania because of the Dublin II Regulation. With the help of JRS Romania, I am trying to apply again. With the documents I have, I cannot work legally. I found a job as a salesman in one of the big markets of Bucharest, working nine hours a day without any break for less than seven dollars. I did it because I need to survive.

I am living in the JRS accommodation centre. I am really grateful to JRS and to God for giving me a place to stay but it is a temporary solution rather than a home. I still hope that one day I will become a refugee. I have no access to legal work or to medical care, not much help and only slight hope that the situation will improve.

DESTITUTION: Two day centres in London, at which services were provided for those left destitute by the asylum process.

DETENTION: Accompanying detainees, visiting them in two immigration removal centres, distributing books, periodicals and magazines; advocacy on behalf of the detainees.

Doing what we can

Between 70 and 110 people a week attended the JRS day centres – of all ages and from around 25 countries. This is primarily a befriending service with onward referral for specialist advice through partner agencies (for example, legal representation and benefits advisers). In addition, limited hardship funds were provided for those left completely destitute by the asylum process and with no recourse to public funds and with no permission to work. The funds enabled them to travel, to attend essential medical and legal appointments and to fulfil reporting requirements with Immigration Services, and to meet their subsistence needs. One of the most successful projects operated was

a supermarket voucher exchange scheme for asylum seekers. At the scheme's height JRS UK was exchanging almost £10,000 of vouchers a month, which were then sold on to supporters.

A pilot training programme, *Speak Out*, was run for a small group of refugees and asylum seekers to give them the skills to be their own advocates. They were trained in writing articles for newsletters, being interviewed on the radio and how to talk in public.

Staff and volunteers continued to speak at events, write articles and respond to consultations and participate in negotiations with government over aspects of the asylum process.

JOHN ONEKA-OKELLO* SHARES HIS EXPERIENCE

It was a wait of 12 years before I was granted leave to remain in the United Kingdom. The wait was very stressful and damaging psychologically and mentally. My asylum application was subjected to a series of rejections and I had to appeal several times. Not only that, my support in terms of accommodation and subsistence was stopped and for over six years I had to survive by God's miracles through charities.

I had no assured income and was homeless. I was forced to stay in detention facilities and, in 1998, I was ordered to report to a police station every week. I abided and reported consistently without missing a week for all these years until I got my stay. The prohibition on employment was sustained for 12 years.

It brings tears to my eyes when I reflect on the situations I have been in while in the UK before being allowed to stay. Through the power of God I survived it. I volunteered in various charities. I met nice people from different walks of life and also experienced some dislikes.

I am very grateful to the charities which helped me, among them the Jesuit Refugee Service. Their cooperation and high sense of understanding of the plight of asylum seekers need to be commended.

* John Oneka-Okello, an award-winning Ugandan journalist, was helped by JRS UK before he was granted leave to remain in the UK.

At the JRS UK office: from left to right, Sr Margaret Baxter; an asylum seeker from Congo; Sr Anne de Vuyst; Sou Huoy Lam. Margaret, Anne and Sou are staff members.



Sarah Booker

Externalisation

Patrols on the coast at Zuwarah, Libya.



Gabriele del Grande/Fortress Europe

You can't stay for even one day in Libya, it's totally bad. No place can be safe for us there. Everywhere you find danger, problems and no freedom at all.

Tigiste, Eritrea, now in Malta

EXTERNALISATION: Public expressions of concern about the fate of migrants and asylum seekers returned to Libya.

DETENTION: Legal and social assistance in detention centres.

Doing what we can

In May, Italy started to intercept migrants in boats on the high seas and to return them to Libya, where they had left from. JRS Malta publicly voiced concern about the fate of those returned, since asylum seekers who transited through Libya consistently reported mistreatment while in detention and other abuses (JRS Italy was also quick to denounce the policy).

On World Refugee Day, 20 June, JRS Malta held a well attended seminar on *Access to Protection and Externalisation of Asylum in Europe*, with a panel of speakers including representatives of UNHCR and the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) and refugees who had experienced detention in Libya. In December, JRS gathered the testimonies of some asylum seekers about life in Libya and published them in a booklet entitled *Do They Know?*

Meanwhile, JRS Malta continued to reach out to

immigration detainees, offering professional legal and social work services as well as pastoral accompaniment on a regular basis. The revised edition of our publication, *Asylum in Malta: what you should know*, was widely distributed in Somali, Tigrinya, English and French. A high number of new arrivals to Malta early on in the year led to severe overcrowding in the detention centres. By the end of the year, the population in the centres had decreased sharply and the problem of overcrowding shifted to open centres.

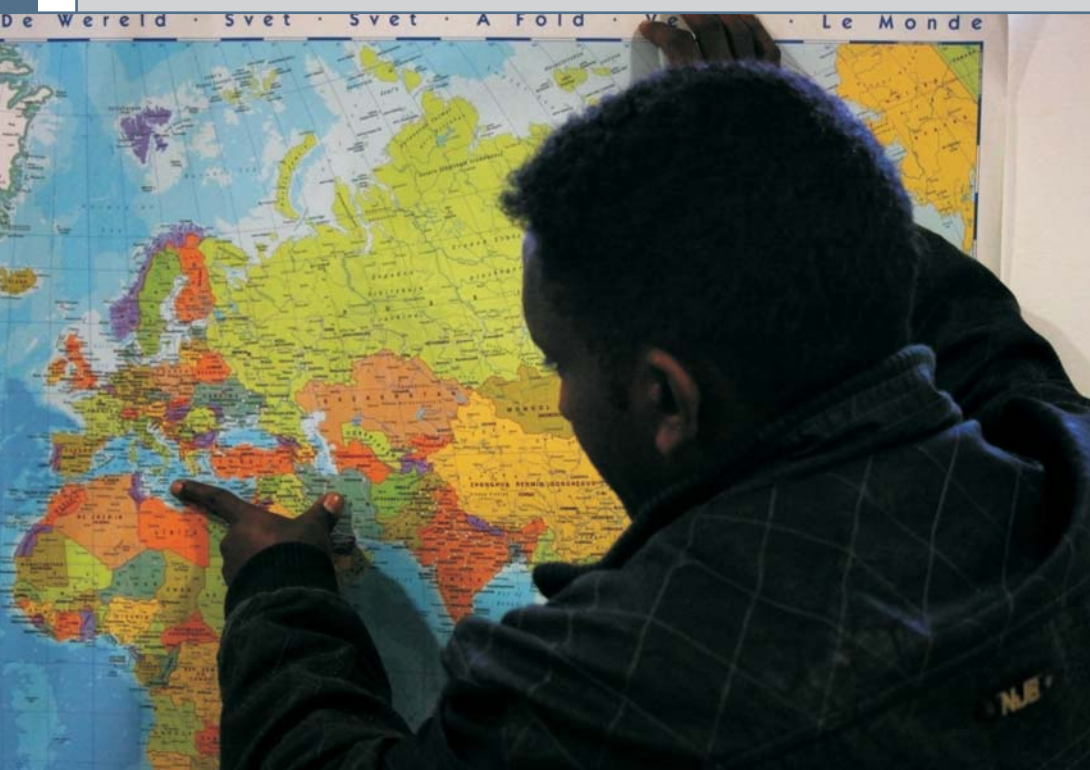
Even though the law provides for the basic rights of asylum seekers and people with subsidiary protection, a major concern for JRS Malta was the lack of clarity about their legal entitlements in terms of financial benefits and access to medical care. We helped scores of people each week with clothing and food items and with emergency financial assistance to cover rent and medication.

AS LONG AS YOU ARE ALIVE, YOU KEEP TRYING

Yohannes arrived in Libya in April 2009 and lived in hiding. In May, he got a place on one of the boats crossing the Mediterranean Sea. “Nearly 24 hours into the journey, we ran out of fuel and called for help using a satellite phone. We were more than 60 people on that boat. An Italian military vessel came to our assistance, gave us fuel and directed us back to Libya, shadowing us until a Libyan patrol vessel came and escorted us. We were all detained in Zleitan*, where I was beaten. The UNHCR visited us there and I got a certificate stating that I was an asylum seeker. A friend of mine paid 700 dollars to get me out of there. I was glad to leave that place...” Asked why he risked his life leaving Libya on a small, unsafe boat a second time, Yohannes said: “Some of my friends who had the UNHCR certificate were picked up by the police, who tore it up for them. Then they were put in jail again... I

could not live in Libya; I could not continue living in fear of being stabbed, of being put in detention for a long time, or of being sent back to my country... I didn't want to die in Libya. As long as you are alive, you keep trying. You won't give up.”

* A centre in a port east of Tripoli, where some migrants who fail in their attempts to leave by boat are taken.



Yohannes traces the route he took to find safety.

Morocco

EXTERNALISATION: Assistance, including transport grants, food and clothing, for migrants who entered Morocco illegally with the ultimate aim of reaching Europe.

Doing what we can

The Moroccan government has a default policy regarding migration and refugees. There is no official recognition of refugee status although UNHCR has identified close to 800 refugees (from sub-Saharan countries), who get healthcare and a few other benefits from the UNHCR office in Rabat. UNHCR has been working with lawyers and judges to reach an agreement that could mean full recognition of refugee status in Morocco; senior officials say this may happen in 2010.

The majority of people from sub-Saharan Africa in Morocco are migrants hoping to reach Europe, the sooner the better. There are some 5,000. Nobody wants to stay in Morocco. With the European border practically hermetic, we see that after five or six years, most

migrants decide to return, relying on the IOM to do so. The Moroccan policy leaves them without legal means of survival: they are not allowed to work, have no access to social support, although they do get limited healthcare, and must rely on the goodwill of NGOs.

Service Accueil Migrants (SAM), a project in Casablanca developed by JRS in Morocco, started in July 2008. From then until the end of 2009, we helped 219 migrant women, many of them with babies and young children, to discern their limited options. In our centre they found orientation; emergency financial support; food and clothing; informal education for their children – benefiting 40 boys and girls aged between three and six years; workshops; basic courses in computer or languages... anything to be close to them, to offer our help should an emergency arise. Often, our job was just listening and spiritual accompaniment. We could not do what was, for them, the most important thing: make their migration dream come true. We did what we could but knowing that it was not enough.

Amaka, one of the little girls attending JRS classes in Casablanca.



THE JOURNEY OF BLESSING

I was born in 1979 in Edo State, Nigeria. When I reached 22, I set off for Europe. After a month-long journey, we arrived in Morocco. In Casablanca, without much money, I shared a flat with 12 men and eight women. Finally, I got a chance to go to Europe and we crossed the sea at night. After 18 hours, it was becoming dangerous because the sea was rough. We had to call the Moroccan police and they came to pick up us up and took us back to Morocco. Once back in Casablanca, one of my friends told me about the *Service Accueil Migrants (SAM)* so I came to look for help. I was taught how to sew and found schooling for my child, and sometimes food and clothes as well. I am happy at SAM because I like the people here but more than that, I feel that my life is not a complete failure: I can do something well! God is going to find a way to send me to Europe. I still want to go there. There is no way back home. I know I can't go to Europe by boat. No way! Next time I'm going to try more safely, by road or by plane.

EXTERNALISATION: Legal representation and accompaniment through refugee procedures; language instruction, job searches, medical care, schooling for refugees and asylum seekers.

NETWORKING: Meetings with and trips to collaborating organizations throughout Ukraine.

ADVOCACY: Heading collaboration work with state agencies for the improvement of Ukrainian laws and, especially, administrative procedures.

Doing what we can

Ukraine has become a significant trafficking route to the European Union since EU expansion in 2004. The lack of suitable border controls with Russia allows for limitless trafficking and handsome income for those working on the black market and border guards alike. Russia refuses to demarcate and control its 2000-km border with Ukraine: what crosses from Russia hits the EU wall and remains in Ukraine. Detention centres do not have sufficient resources to properly feed the detained population, let alone provide legal and social services.

JRS Ukraine has housed 23 people from Iraq, Afghanistan, Georgia, Palestine and Chechnya. We also organized meetings with the relevant ministries of government to deal with administrative irregularities. One needs a birth certificate to register a child in school, to receive insulin for a diabetic, or allowances to help in raising children. Typically, refugees neither have such a document nor can they acquire it from their home governments. With the leadership of JRS, local authorities worked together on these and similar oversights in the law.

HOPING AGAINST HOPE

In desperation, my husband and I left Afghanistan 10 years ago with our three-year-old son and eight-month-old daughter. Our son and his grandmother were able to reach Germany. They were granted status. The rest of us got to Tajikistan where we lived as tolerated people without status. Ten years and two children later, we found the money to get as far as Ukraine in the hopes of family reunification in Germany. As we were without documents from our first encounter with black market forces, Ukrainian border guards apprehended us and placed us in a detention facility where we lived for six months. When the mandatory six-month term ended, the doors were simply opened for us to leave. A UNHCR lawyer recommended that we contact JRS Ukraine. We did and, as a result, we sleep in a warm room, eat well, and have a supportive community around us. I feel connected with the world again. The JRS lawyers are hopeful of reuniting us with our son whom for ten years we have only known through our tear-filled phone calls. He is now 13. Those tears are the sign that our hope is alive.

JRS activities in other countries

JRS Europe has contact persons in Austria, Denmark, Greece, Hungary, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Spain and Switzerland.

THE NETHERLANDS

Fr Leo van Lanen SJ continued his pastoral and social activities in migrant communities in Rotterdam. Fr Jan Stuyt SJ started as contact person from January 2009.

At national level, the quality of decisions about asylum applications improved so there was less need for the Churches to help people during appeal procedures. Although the government decided to stop all support for destitute irregular migrants, local authorities in major cities defied these instructions and continued to support them. Some 5,000 rejected asylum seekers “disappear” from the records each year: it is unclear whether they have left the country or decided to stay without being registered.

LUXEMBURG

The first half of 2009 was dominated by national and European elections. The Ignatian Migration Group (GIM) in Luxemburg composed and sent questions to political parties: answers from the five main parties were published on the website of the Christian Life Community (CLC) Luxemburg. GIM then wrote to Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker detailing proposals about foreign students, resettlement, rights for destitute migrants, alternatives to detention and dialogue with Islam.

Two GIM members regularly visited rejected asylum seekers and other destitute migrants in prison. Another attended meetings with the Minister responsible for migration and lobbied successfully for NGO access to detained refugees. Two others coached an association called *Amitiés Luxembourg-Monténégro*, which is mainly composed of former refugees, and helped to realise a project of rural development in their region of origin, financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. GIM also coordinated efforts to make the family reunion of Afghani refugees possible.

SLOVAKIA

Fr Dušan Bezák SJ, the JRS contact person in Slovakia, cooperated with Caritas Slovakia on a project to identify victims of human trafficking in detention centres and camps. Visiting two centres in eastern Slovakia, a detention camp in Secovce and a reception centre in Humenne, with 40-50 people in each, Fr Dušan reached out to new arrivals who showed signs of being at risk of trafficking and whose destination was clearly not Slovakia. Individual cases were helped with medical care and legal advice. On Christmas Eve, Fr Dušan celebrated Holy Mass in Secovce camp, with the participation of detainees and police.

SPAIN

Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes (SJM-Spain) is composed of five main member organisations that have agreed on a common programme. JRS activities in Spain are covered by an agreement between JRS Europe and Spanish NGOs, by means of which ALBOAN, Entreculturas and Intermón Oxfam represent JRS in Spain. They focus on fundraising to support JRS programmes in developing countries, on promoting JRS and on advocacy initiatives. In 2009, ALBOAN and Entreculturas continued to support the SAM project in Morocco.

In 2009, SJM-Spain worked hard on two main advocacy projects: *Frontera Sur* (Southern Border) and contributing to the process of immigration law reform. *Frontera Sur* was undertaken in collaboration with JRS Morocco, JRS Europe and two Spanish Jesuit NGOs. Taking advantage of elections to the European Parliament, a booklet was presented to all political parties, featuring reports on European politics and the conditions of life of Africans on their way to Europe and within Spain.

In December 2009, the Spanish Law on Rights and Liberties for Foreigners was passed. Together with other organisations, SJM proposed amendments on the law to parliamentary groups.

The structure of JRS Europe

JRS-Europe was established in March 1992. It is an incorporated “International Association” under Belgian law (AISBL # 452165993), with a Constitution, General Assembly and Governing Council. It is recognised as a refugee-assisting NGO by the EU institutions and by several states both within Europe and beyond (namely Angola and Ethiopia).

Subsequent to a decision of the General Assembly of Jesuit Refugee Service-Europe AISBL, as of 18 October 2008, the members of the JRS Europe Governing Council are: Br Michael Schöpf SJ, *administrateur délégué* of JRS-Europe; Fr Peter Balleis SJ, president of JRS-Europe and international director of JRS; Fr Dermot O’Connor SJ, representing the Conference of European Provincials, and Louise Zanré, country director of JRS UK.

JRS Europe has country offices in Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Morocco, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and the West Balkans region.

Furthermore, JRS Europe has contact persons in Austria, Denmark, Greece, Hungary, Luxemburg,

the Netherlands, Slovakia, Spain, and Switzerland. Egypt and Lebanon also belong to the JRS Europe region.

JRS Europe is an integral part of the Jesuit Refugee Service worldwide and depends on the Conference of European Provincials. It is a project of the Conference and an inter-provincial apostolic work of the Society of Jesus in Europe. It covers around 20 Jesuit Provinces. National coordinators answer to their respective provincials and, for certain matters, directly to the European regional director.

The European regional director has a Council of five members. In 2009 it was Michael Schöpf with: Ms Katrine Camilleri, Mr Ignacio Eguizabal, Fr Nuno Gonçalves SJ and Ms Louise Zanré. Fr Luigi Romano SJ joined the Council in December 2009 as assistant regional director of JRS Europe. The Council has an advisory role and meets three times a year.

The directors of the JRS country offices meet twice annually for a regional coordination meeting, this facilitates strategic planning for the region.

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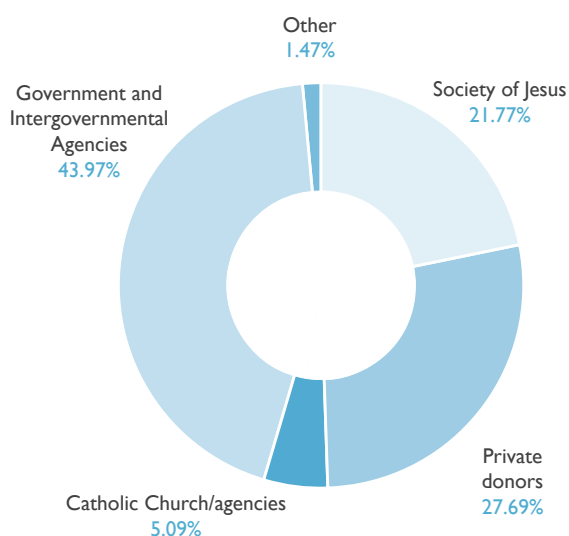
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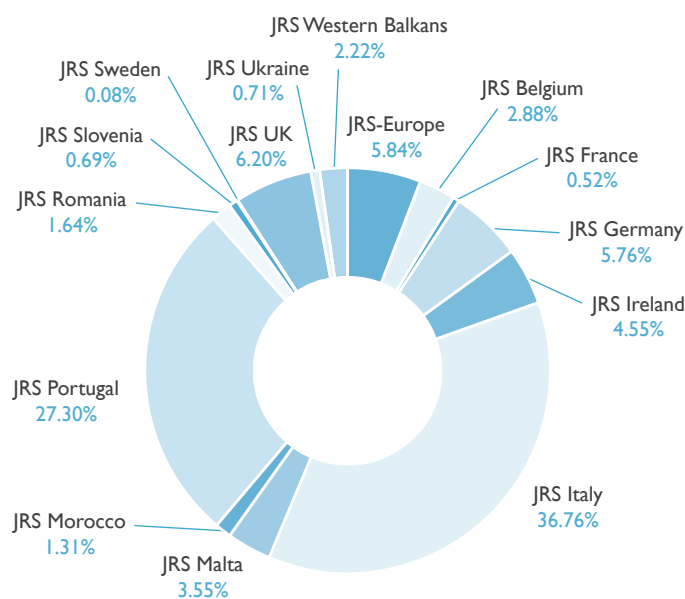
Financial summary

JRS Europe country offices – source of income



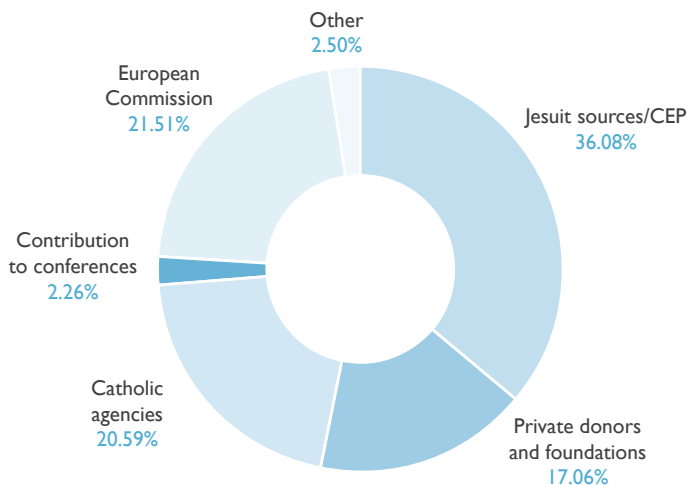
Society of Jesus	1,003,505
Private donors	1,276,280
Catholic Church/agencies	234,756
Government and Intergovernmental Agencies	2,026,380
Other	67,799
Total	4,608,720

JRS Europe country offices – expenditure



JRS-Europe	279,118
JRS Belgium	137,774
JRS France	24,600
JRS Germany	274,935
JRS Ireland	217,353
JRS Italy	1,756,000
JRS Malta	169,511
JRS Morocco	62,624
JRS Portugal	1,303,957
JRS Romania	78,242
JRS Slovenia	33,000
JRS Sweden	3,678
JRS UK	296,053
JRS Ukraine	33,808
JRS Western Balkans	105,876
Total	4,776,529

JRS Europe Brussels – source of core income

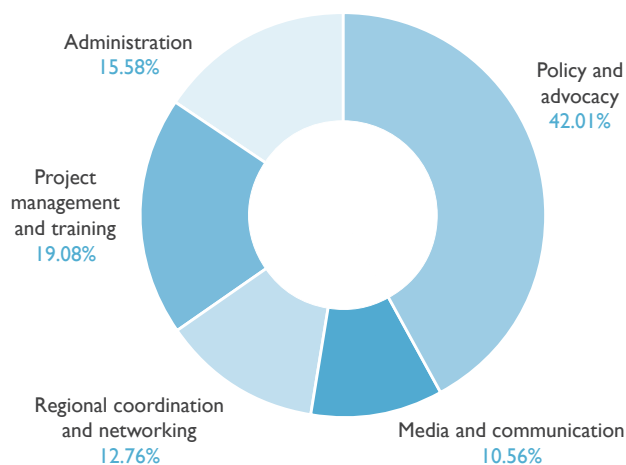


Jesuit sources/CEP	161,211
Private donors and foundations	76,224
Catholic agencies	92,000
Contribution to conferences	10,080
European Commission ¹	96,098
Other	11,188
Total²	446,801

¹ Only half of this amount has been received in 2009. For bookkeeping reasons the total amount is included.

² The income not spent in 2009 was used to build up a reserves fund which is required in case of financial difficulties or in case the operations should have to cease any time in the future.

JRS Europe Brussels – core expenditure



Policy and advocacy	117,264
Media and communication	29,478
Regional coordination and networking	35,610
Project management and training	53,268
Administration	43,499
Total	279,118



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