

News

"I am a migrant", the platform where migrant personal stories are shared



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Karim Dhahi, Iraqi migrant.

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Rehmat Ullah, Pakistani migrant.



Alaa, Syrian migrant.

These are some of the stories shared through UN Migration Agency's platform **i am a migrant**, a space that aims to fight xenophobia and antiimmigration narratives

Karim is 1,730 km far away from home and he will always be. Except that his life is in Europe now. Born a Yazidi, he is an Iraqi who had to flee ISIS carrying an elder aunt of his who could not walk. He landed in Samos, Greece, about two years ago. He misses his beloved country but fears that coming back there would mean having to deal with memories of war and widespread violence. When he landed in Europe, Karim's first choice, as many refugees' first choice, was Germany. However, he's been living in Greece since his arrival and his goal is to learn the Greek language and continue his life as a carpenter, which was his job back in his hometown near Mosul, in Northern Iraq.

"When I left Iraq, I weighted 95 kilos. Now, I barely weight 75 kilos."

Remat is 4,602 km away from his home in Pakistan. He came to Greece for economic reasons, his small family business did no longer give them enough money to live. He arrived to Greece five years ago and he had plenty of small jobs. One day, he realized he was not feeling well and he had to fight to use Greece's public health system.

He has a heart condition, and by the time he found out this he was too weak to go on and he decided he wanted to travel back to Pakistan. Then came IOM, the International Organisation for Migration: **through the EU Relocation programme, International Organization for Migration (IOM) supports the Greek government in helping refugees relocate with safety and dignity.**

Thanks to IOM's support, Remat could enter an OCAVRR facility (Open Centre for Migrants registered for Assisted Voluntary Return & Reintegration), where he had surgery done and had time to recover from his disease.

"I strongly believe that I am now ready to go back home and restart my new life. There are not enough words to thank everyone in IOM, especially the medical staff of the Open Center. They really saved my life!"

Alaa is 1,095 km away from home. She is a Syrian architect and designer who graduated in 2012. Alaa spent three years unemployed after the graduation. War broke out, but he did not want to leave his country. Eventually, she managed to get a visa to move to Erbil with her husband, in the Iraqi Kurdistan (which remains a peaceful zone in spite of the wars and conflicts going on all around it).

She has two jobs and she is happy with her life in Northern Iraq. But she feels the need to paint to express her feelings and disturbing war memories: "I would like to thank the Kurdistan Region of Iraq for helping make my dreams come true. Exhibiting my paintings was one of my childhood dreams and I have now fulfilled it thanks to its friendly, solidary and helpful people"

These stories are part of the platform **i am a migrant, a IOM'S project**. The platform is designed to support volunteer groups, associations and local authorities that combat the xenophobia and discrimination rooted in traditionally negative narratives about migration.

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