

QUARANTINED, ISOLATED, TRANSFERRED

RECEPTION OF ASYLUM SEEKERS IN COVID-19 TIMES

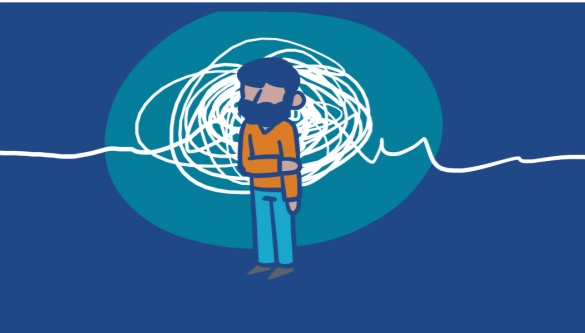


I found out I was to be transferred from Waterford to Dublin after coming back to my centre from college one day. There was nothing I could do to stop it. Moving meant I lost out on the Level 5 Horticulture course that I had started. I was sent to Dublin for the reason of Covid-19 safety, but I got coronavirus in my new centre. More than 6 months have passed and I have not been returned to my centre. (...) We share a room, restaurant, microwave, one toaster... it is dangerous.

Ethiopian asylum seeker in Ireland

JRS (Centro Astalli) Legal Officer, Italy

A MENTALLY FRAGILE MAN HAD LIVED IN A BIG RECEPTION CENTRE SINCE 2018 WHEN HE CONTACTED US IN AUGUST 2020.



THE WHOLE PLACE WAS QUARANTINED DUE TO SOME POSITIVE CASES AND THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF PHYSICAL DISTANCING INSIDE.

BECAUSE OF HIS VULNERABILITY, IT WAS VERY HARD TO EXPLAIN THE SITUATION TO HIM.



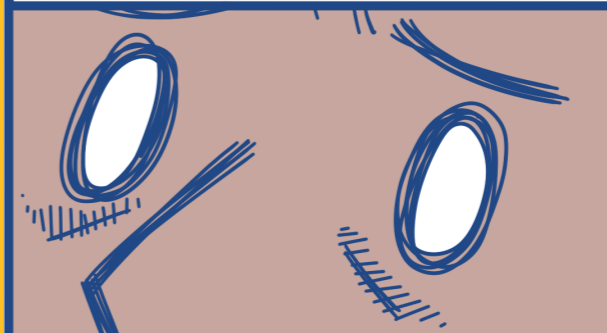
HE TOLD ME: 'YOU SEE: THIS BED BESIDE ME, IT IS EMPTY... THERE WAS A MAN FROM PAKISTAN...'

'THEY SAY HE IS POSITIVE, THEY TRANSFERRED HIM TO ANOTHER PLACE, BUT WE WERE TOGETHER TIL YESTERDAY..'



'I'M OK, I HAVE NOTHING... WHY CAN'T I LEAVE?'

EVENTUALLY, HE TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID. HE HAD NO SYMPTOMS, BUT THIS ACTUALLY WORSENERD HIS PSYCHOLOGICAL CONDITION.



HE ASKED ME: 'I HAVE NO FEVER, NOTHING... BUT STILL I CANNOT GO OUTSIDE. WHY?'

At JRS Europe we respect everyone who shares its story with us. So while their stories are true, names have been omitted to protect their privacy. Faces and places are the products of the author's imagination

Uncoordinated and disproportionate Covid-19 responses

Reception providers across the EU only received clear and common guidelines on the measures to contain the spread of Covid-19 in a few countries. Mostly, they had to improvise in a context of predominantly large collective centres, where keeping distances and adequate sanitary conditions is intrinsically challenging.

Whole centres were often put under quarantine in the event of positive cases. This practice de facto limited asylum seekers' freedom of movement more than that of regular citizens. In other cases, people were transferred to other - not always up to standard - emergency facilities. This was often done without giving people any other choice or clear information.

Need for clear national protocols

One year after the outbreak of the pandemic, it is high time to coordinate responses. In this context JRS calls on national governments to:

1 Establish clear national protocols on how to implement Covid-19 preventive measures



2 Avoid the lockdown of entire reception facilities, unless explicitly ordered by the responsible national health authorities. Transfer of ill people or (partial) evacuation of other residents should be preferred



3 Provide clear rules on how to implement transfers to reduce centres' population and facilitate physical distancing. Communicating plans to the concerned residents should be included

