


EVICTED DURING A PANDEMIC

RECEPTION OF ASYLUM SEEKERS IN COVID-19 TIMES



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

I HOPED TO FIND A BETTER LIFE IN EUROPE & JOIN MY HUSBAND WITH OUR CHILDREN.



IN THE REFUGEE CAMP, EVERYTHING WAS WORSE. I COULDN'T GO OUTSIDE*WITH MY LITTLE DAUGHTERS.

*because of the lockdown measures


THINGS ARE BETTER HERE.




38 year old Turkish rejected asylum seeker in Romania

By Ivo de Jager

FINALLY, I WAS REJECTED AND ABOUT TO BE DETAINED OR BECOME HOMELESS WITH MY 3 KIDS.



THEN I MOVED TO BUCHAREST IN A JRS SHELTER*AND WE COULD COME AND GO MORE EASILY.



*JRS Romania's shelter for tolerated people

Stop evictions, provide accompaniment

As long as the question of the pandemic remains unresolved, and beyond, JRS calls on national governments to:

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1 Officially suspend evictions from reception centres or provide alternative accommodation for people who no longer have the right to reception
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2 Actively accompany beneficiaries of protection in the search for independent accommodation
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3 Actively accompany rejected asylum seekers towards a resolution of their migration status while ensuring accommodation in the community

[At the end of the state of emergency] I was doing OK and started to find jobs in agriculture. **But I was informed that on 9th November [2020] that my time in the reception system was over.** I spoke with the landlord and told him we [him and his flatmates] would not be able to have the support of the NGO anymore, but would like to stay in his flat. **We told him that the rent would have to be lowered because we cannot pay the normal rent.** We negotiated and he agreed, so **fortunately we stayed in the same flat.** (...) I asked the **NGO for extra help with the rent due to the current situation,** but they told me that it was **not possible** and that it did not depend on them but on the government. Fortunately, **I find work once in a while, so I am able to pay the current rent.** (...) In December I received a letter in which [the authorities] **informed me that they were recognizing me as a refugee.**

19 year old Malian refugee in Spain

From reception to destitution

According to EU law, Member States must provide reception to asylum seekers for the entire duration of their asylum procedure. This means **people are generally supposed to leave the reception system if their application is rejected, but also if the decision is positive and they obtain a protection status. If they don't leave, they are generally evicted.**



This is challenging in normal times, with people often ending up destitute. But in times of pandemic, it all becomes much worse. **During the Covid-19 lockdown, some EU countries extended the possibility to remain in reception facilities, or suspended issuing decisions in asylum procedures. However, in other countries, people whose right to reception had come to an end were either detained or left homeless, facing increased difficulties finding a job and affording private housing during a pandemic.**