



# One Happy Family News

December 2017

## Situation on Lesbos

Lesbos – the Greek Island is again in the media, and not for the reasons. Moria, is in the media with the title “Welcome to Hell”. Unfortunately this article gets to the point. The situation on the island is highly aggravated. The camps and other accommodation possibilities are completely overcrowded, and the teams on the ground are at their limits.

There are still daily **boats** arriving with up to 75 people. In the penultimate week of November 458 people arrived on Lesbos, only around 300 were allowed to leave the island. The attempt to counteract the dramatic situation on the island is still failing.

Also the **weather** was very critical in November, because for some days there was very heavy rain. This aggravated the situation for the people, especially in Moria.

### Responsibility is now completely with the Greek state

The European Union is stepping back. The governmental organizations are thus the ones who should act. But we are all still waiting for their actions.

That’s why its still the Non-Governmental Organizations are on site at Moria and the other parts of the island. Things, that are part of the **basic needs**, like blankets, diapers and baby food, and should be financed and distributed by Government Organizations. For many months this is not the case. The situation still heavily relies on donations to NGOs to distribute evenly.

## Quote

*“The killing of the flowers can’t stop the spring from coming”*

Tunisian saying, said by Yassin

## Picture of the month



Our hairdresser and bardber working in the new barber shop at OHF. You will find more news from the community center starting from page 3.

## Big organizations are leaving the island

Organizations like “Save the children” announced, that they’re leaving the island at the end of the year. Until now there is no solution for the gaps that their withdrawing will bring with it. One of their responsibilities is the education. Its intended that the children are integrated in public schools. Due to bureaucratic problems and resistance of the locals, this is not happening yet.

## General strike

The mayor of Lesbos called for a general strike at November 20th. They wanted to show that the local organizations and inhabitants of the island are at their limits, and that they don’t agree with keeping the people stuck on the island. The Mayor stated that Lesbos is turning into ‘Guantanamo’.

## Protest: Open the Island

The protest and hunger strike in Mytilini continues. Since the middle of October, Refugees are protesting on the main square in Mytilini and are requesting the permission to leave the island. There were some incidents like discussions with the mayor and one arrest of a striker. Meanwhile they aren’t allowed to continue their protest at the main square. Help to open the islands with writing a letter to Athens (or your Government). In the link you’ll find a letter template. If many people send letters we hope that the pressure will grow.  
<http://letterforlesbos.tfwb.eu>

## Moria

Around 7’000 people are residing currently in Moria Camp (the official capacity is at 1’800). Its frightening as well that around 300 non accompanied children and teenagers are staying in Moria. Many of them without any special accompaniment. To our previous article - Save the Children, who also look after unaccompanied minors will leave in December. Who will look after such a vulnerable group in such terrible circumstances?

## Worse than last winter

In general, the situation on the island is worse than last winter. This year there are more families and children, who had to go through the first cold snaps in summer tents. The army says that there is a plan to make the situation better for the winter, but until now no actions have been made in this regard. The intermediate plan has been to put pallets under

tents to help with ventilation and an attempt to keep refugees dry. This is not a sustainable or dignified solution. There are also many people living in the Olive Grove next to Moria. Many are new arrivals who are shocked of the conditions on arrival to European soil.

## Heavy rainfall

Heavy rain has made the situation in Moria even worse. The summer tents were completely soggy, all belonging of the people were wet and it was very difficult to dry them again. The frustration of the people rose especially during these nights. Thereupon a riot happened in the section for unaccompanied minors. They showed their displeasure through vandalism and destruction. As a result the fear of the other residents of Moria rose as well.

## Demonstration of the police

After the outbreak of two people from the “Moria prison” the on-duty policemen were critiqued. After that the policemen demonstrated under the slogan that for them it’s not possible to assure the security in Moria anymore. At the moment there are 5 policemen on duty during the night, for 7’000 people.

## Interesting Links

- Telebärn (Swissgerman television channel) reports about Moria and the Community Center: <http://bit.ly/2jyrVXK>
- The mayor announces the general strike: <http://bit.ly/2zZnGil>
- “Der Spiegel” reports about the situation on Lesbos: <http://bit.ly/2A7o51O>
- Report about the riot in Moria: <http://bit.ly/2zCCCPG>
- 10 year old boy died in a boat towards Lesbos: <http://bit.ly/2AKuMYG>
- Al Jazeera reports: „Greece’s Lesbos: ,Guantanamo Bay of Europe’ for refugees“: <http://bit.ly/2iiWiok>
- tagesthemen report from Moria (german): <http://bit.ly/2BAMBGw>

## News from the Community Center

This month has been a special month for the Community Center. During the first 15 days of November we already had 7'200 visitors, that means per day 400 – 1'000 people came to our Community Center. Our, at the beginning formulated maximum capacity is 400 people.

This signifies a big – especially financially – challenge for us. But shows us as well how important the One Happy Family Community Center is. We want to thank at this point our wonderful team on the ground, who manage the OHF so good even with this many visitors.

### OHF is continuing its preparations for winter

Our crowdfunding was successful and we would like to give a big thanks everyone to everyone who supported us!

With your funds, we were able to:

- complete insulation of the windows in the main space
- expand and winterise the gym which is now accessible in all weather

There was a delay in receiving the material for the acoustic absorption in the main building, but the material has arrived and this project is close to completion. This will dampen the echo in the main space and create a calmer atmosphere for the hundreds of daily visitors.

There's more! We started building a new house for the boutique where we distribute non-food items. This new building will allow for guests to visit the boutique in the winter.



### New rooms for the OHF

We didn't really enlarge but we rebuild efficiently :-). The (former) tailor and PC-room is now a working and retreat room for Shaher (the coordinator of the helpers) and our helpers/volunteers. In the (former) area of the Kids-space are now three new rooms: PC-/Internet station, tailor and barber.

## One Happy Family



Yassin - one of our important helpers, because he is working tirelessly in the kitchen to offer a hot and good meal to 400 – 1'000 people at the moment.

One favourite saying of Yassin is “the killing of the flowers can't stop the spring from coming.” This Tunisian saying makes it clear that it can continue, even under the most challenging conditions. Yassin says nevertheless that it is important, that the world gets to know what is happening on Lesvos, on officially European ground.

Yassin wants to thank everyone who is coming to Lesvos and reports after that. He also wants to thank all the people who don't just read the news about the inhuman conditions but share this news as well.

Shukran from Yassin and Shukran to Yassin for his important work.

Through this change our Helpers and Volunteers now have a room to retreat – collecting forces to do their job continuously good.

## Women's Safe Space

The house for our female visitors has been opened officially at the end of October. We are very happy to offer different things in this new house: from old life jackets mats have been made, yoga, Workout, Flamenco and self defence classes are offered. Its also nice to see, that women use this place to retreat.

## School

Around 120 children use daily our school. There are as well around 150 adults who come regularly. These numbers show us that our school is the biggest school for refugees on the island.

## Weihnachtsaktion



Christmas cards (unfortunately only in German) for the OHF – a gift that arrives.

You order for yourself or for your surroundings Christmas cards with different topics and values. You can give them as a gift to your friends and family and support at the same time fleeing people, for example with winter clothes or hot meals, or you sell them to your surroundings and enlarge the circle of gifted people.

You can order the cards here: <http://bit.ly/2ydiBml>

By buying a card, you support exactly what is written on the front side. On the back side is space for writing a personal message.

The following cards are available:

- Warm meal für 10 or 50 people (10.- oder 50.-)
- Warm drink für 100 people (25.-)
- One week of energy (60.-)
- Winter clothes for two people (50.-)
- Free amount

Thank you for thinking as well during the time before Christmas of the people on Lesbos.

## We need you!

### Share the News

Share our news about Lesbos and the Community Center. Since the media don't talk often about the current situation we need YOU even more!

We prepared Information-material which you can download for personal presentations, lectures, articles, media releases etc.:

Deutsch: <http://bit.ly/2gJiVhj>

Englisch: <http://bit.ly/2xw34JY>

### Longterm volunteers – Godfather/Godmother-System

Before we tell you more about it, we want our godparenthoods (sponsorships for longterm volunteers) to be as transparent and informative as possible. We opened for example a new bank account to provide transparency in all the initiatives your donations are going to support. Unfortunately this is also the reason why the announcement of this new sponsoring system is a bit delayed. We will inform you as soon as we have our brochure. Thank you for your patience.

### “OHF Support” Group in WhatsApp

Join us using the following link:

<http://bit.ly/2gM3a9m>

## Miscellaneous

### Action week against gender based violence at the OHF

Following the “16 days of activism” of UN Women we participate as well.

During one week (27.11.-1.12.) the subject will be treated in different ways: movies, self defence classes, an exhibition at Sinirpaxi in Mytilini and Flamenco-classes.

There will be as well two times a sensibilization regarding sexual violence against women, carried out by “Doctors without borders”.