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Solidarity with war refugees

HAPPY NAWROZ, HAPPY AFGHAN NEW YEAR!

March 21, 2017.

Yesterday was the first day of spring. As I expected, with the first spring days in Belgrade came hundreds of refugees who managed to cross and survive the Bulgarian border. Today our friends told us that there are more than 1500 people in the barracks. Most of them came in the last two-three days.

Today is Nawroz, New Year in Afghanistan. Today we brought something for everyone, to surprise all the wonderful people who are celebrating New Year's far from their families and home. We brought scissors for our hairdresser Halim, a big mirror so that his "customers" could watch the work of his talent but also to rest assured that he didn't lose at all on his speed and skills. Staša carefully chose nice and colorful balls, there was a lot of candy, cake, chocolate bananas, bonbons, rahat lokums, tea and sugar.

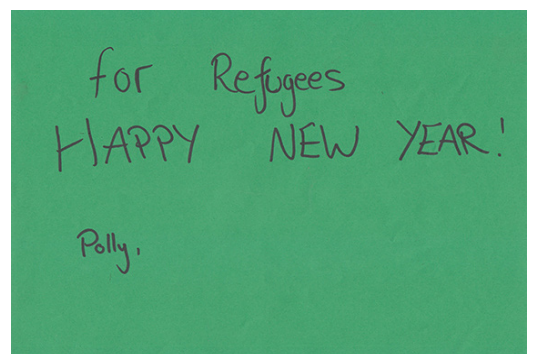
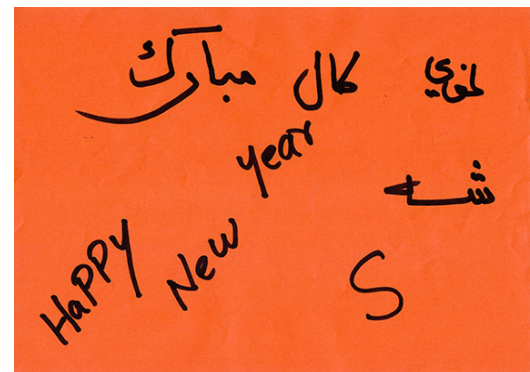
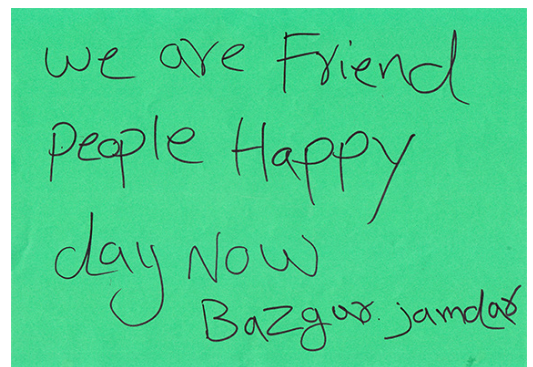
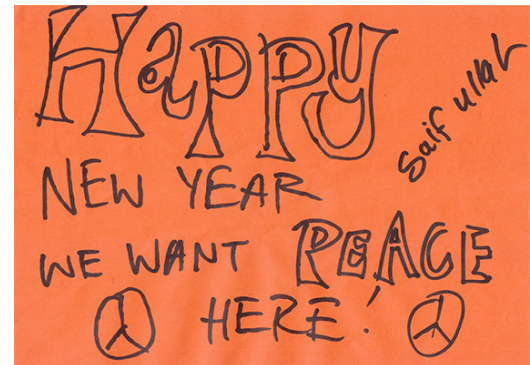
We had not so much stuff in our bag, some shirts, pants, men's blazer... We saw Halim at the ramp, he decided to return to barracks and be with us. I felt sorry because he was about to take a walk...

We wished a Happy Nawroz, a Happy New Year to everyone. Hamayn Khan showed up, we was taking a walk, he approached us discreetly. When I wished him a Happy New Year, he replied "To you as well, since you're here with us every day!"

I always feel very touched by the gesture of our friends who are helping us, everybody wants to help and distribute the stuff together. Today we brought papers in nice colors and markers so that if anyone wants they can write or draw something and we can send it around...

I noticed two young men in that large group of people who was surrounding us, both of them were deaf. Other men were helping us understand each other and it was not hard to communicate to them at all. I always feel the solidarity of other men very touching.

A very young man approached us, later on I found out his name was Rahu Naveed Sahil, he was around 25 years old. Even though he's the only son in the family, his mother didn't keep him from fleeing the country. When he speaks with her on the phone, he tells her that he is happy in Belgrade because he likes people in Serbia, despite the difficult conditions he lives in. He stopped his agricultural studies in



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Pakistan, he was amongst the best student. He volunteered in an NGO in his country and defended women's rights. The NGO director sent a letter to Bulgarian authorities claiming that Naveed Sahil's life is in danger and that he has to flee his country.

I was so desperate because many I asked didn't show up to help us but thanks to Staša and her energy she lift me up from apathy and I literally came back and decided not to give up...

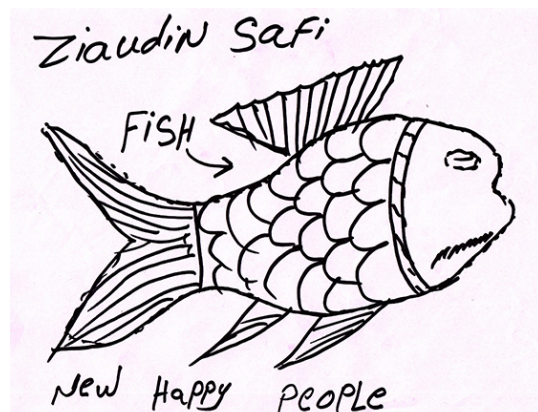
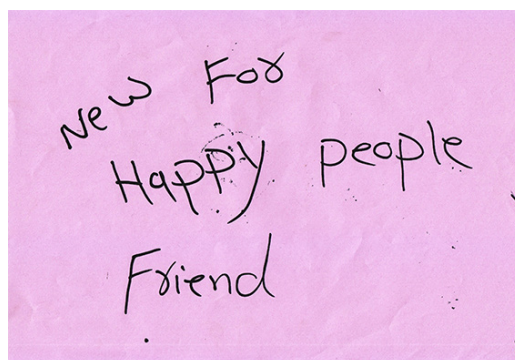
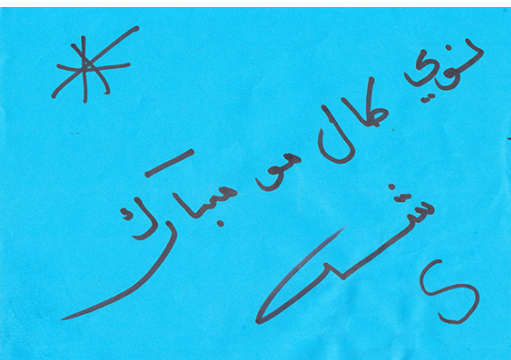
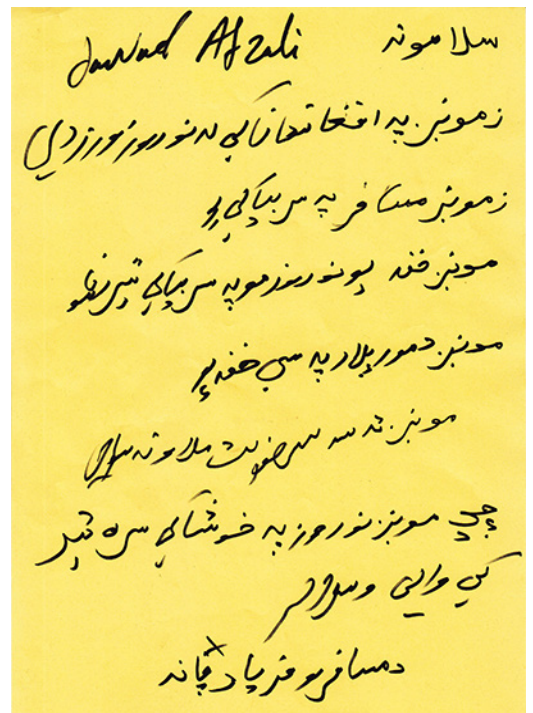
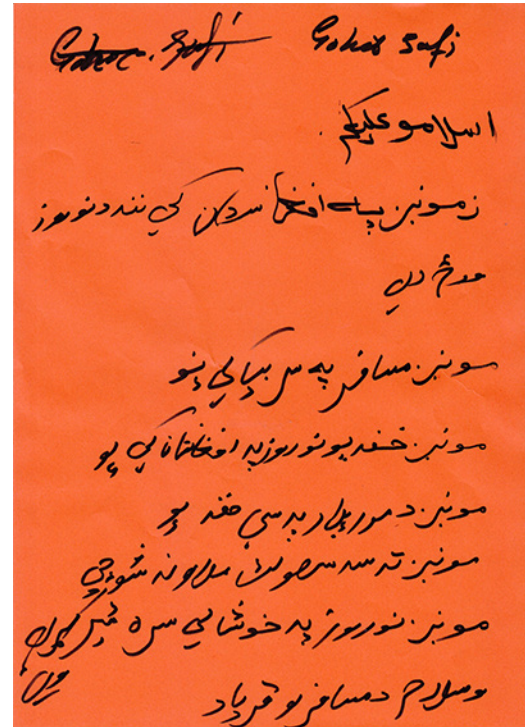
Noted by: Ljiljana Čantrak, NORAS 381

"EUROPE, OPEN THE BORDERS...!" MESSAGES FOR NAWROZ

After our action on street "Stop racism against refugees" we went to visit our friends in hangars. We played volleyball, ran around, laughed, wished each other a happy Nawroz and we agreed to organize a concert next time...

The backyard at the hangars/warehouse became a public space for witnessing the endured suffering and experience of misdeeds and injustice. One of the young Afghan men told us how he tried crossing the border ten times: six times to Hungary and four times to Croatia. The police beat his arms and especially legs - to prevent even the thought of free movement... And if he knew what was going to be like at the European borders he would never leave Afghanistan. But he had nowhere else to go, he was being persecuted by the Taliban. And now he's stuck in Belgrade... One said that he was really tired of moving forward, that he would like to settle in Belgrade.

Noted by: Staša



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March 22, 2017

I immediately went to our friend Hamayun Khan who already announced me this morning to the Bosnian organization that distributes morning meals. This organization works together with other organizations, they complete each other and share their weekly activities. They told me they had many uncomfortable situations at the border and that they're afraid of crossing the border again because they already became known to the border patrol. I asked around if any other NGOs besides WiB and NORAS 381 come to the barracks and bring clothes. First our friends told us we're the only one, which I found a bit strange. Then I spoke to the women and men activists from other international organizations. Seems like the local activists "gave in" just because there is a recommendation of the Commissariat for Refugees of Serbia (at the end of 2016) "not to continue with distribution of aid for refugees in open space".

I think these people don't necessarily need a meal, as some of the volunteers claimed today. I told them most of all they need love, and love means a lot more than food. When I realized I wasn't understood well, especially because they were mixing politics with not having money for help, I slowly gave up from an unnecessary discussion. I had a much more important meeting with our new friend Rahu Sahil who was waiting for me. We talked and he told me his parents were happy to hear that he found us and that we're very kind to him, that we're helping everybody put up with the inhumane conditions in our city...

When I went home we were texting all along. This young man was simply trying to thank me and tell me how happy he is with the attention we're giving him. I want to speak about him today at our 5 pm meeting. He's worth of mention.

We agreed that tomorrow we're going to go to Miksaliste together to meet with the volunteers. Since the Novi Sad Humanitarian Center - NSHC is going to distribute the clothes with us, I will try to find some stuff for our friends in the barracks. Many don't want to go to Miksaliste because they don't like the atmosphere there.

Noted by: Ljiljana Čantrak, NORAS 381

WOMEN OF SREBRENICA AND REFUGEES

March 24, 2017

We had a big group of 86 women from Srebrenica! We talked and played them a video on one of our actions of solidarity with war refugees. They found it very touching. Later on we took a walk in the city and went to Kalemegdan park and many of them wanted to visit the refugees. Unfortunately we didn't have time. They wanted to bring them a present. Mirko took sweets to the hangar the same afternoon.

Women of Srebrenica showed solidarity and compassion with victims of injustice - in the past as well as in the present. Women of Srebrenica in action, by big and small gestures, show us how the biggest tragedy can be turned into a fight for a just world...

Noted by: Staša