

solidarnost je naša snaga

Solidarity with war refugees - Solidarity is our power

TO HANGARS INSTEAD TO FEASTS!

15th February 2017

"Let those who are on the state budget celebrate their Visitation of the Virgin" (15th February – Serbian Statehood Day), says one of us who on that day had come to the hangars. Another woman said bitterly: "Where is the money they get on account of refugees?" Everyone who visits those hangars can clearly see that state 'investments' in basic hygienic and other conditions are nil, non-existent, while at the same time they boast and brag about the refugees "having a great time in our country!" Someone said: "We would be really nice of us for Statehood Day to take as a 'gift' to the City Assembly bags full of garbage, which has been piling up right next to their Belgrade Waterfront!"

It is still freezing outside, so the stench of the garbage has not started to spread yet, but as soon as it gets warmer, the danger of infection will escalate... Refugees, youths and young men, keep telling us: "We want to clear this, but there's no place to dispose of the waste..."

The whole team (Mirko, Mina, Marijana, Tomislav and Staša from WiB, Ljiljana from NORAS 381 (Refugee Aid Serbia 381, a non-profit organization) and Mireila, multimedia artist from Barcelona, agreed that a joint action of cleaning the yard was urgently needed.

We handed out small relief packages together with the refugees, who like to be involved in the distribution of humanitarian aid, in a friendly atmosphere and conversation. Volunteers from Ireland made cooking and heating stoves ... And they deliver firewood daily, and everything is organized equitably and in solidarity. An entire world of 'Underground Europe' organizes assistance...

We brought some tea and a big pot, sugar and biscuits. Then we prepared tea together with the refugees, and they showed us the skill of tea making, the way they do it in their native Afghanistan. We drank it together, laughing, talking and making plans about the cleaning of the yard and the whole hangar. We also went to see our friends, 'Doctors without Borders' (MSF) to make arrangements about refuse bags, shovels... And then suddenly, we saw a couple of young men giving themselves a haircut with some kind of blade, using their mobile phones as mirrors. Next time, we will organize 'haircutting' and we have already found a barber among the activists. We have made an 'agenda' with NORAS 381, and our contacts with MSF are more than encouraging!

HAIRCUTTING AND CLEANING ...

20th February 2017

After the protest outside the High Court against the rehabilitation of Quisling Nedić, we headed for the hangars.



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We had brought scissors, a large mirror and small one with Peace stickers, and our Barber Fahro positioned himself on a low wall. Immediately, there were 'applicants' for haircut, the first one being Azel, a hairdresser from Kabul. He wanted to 'test' his colleague, and was satisfied with the outcome. Others followed suit. We concluded that we have to find some better scissors, as these men's beautiful, strong hair requires sharper tools!

The stoves were not available just then, as bathing water was being heated, and so tea would be brewed later, and accompanied with the teacakes Fahro had brought.

Before the 'haircut session' our friends from 'Doctors without Borders' / MSF had provided us with shovels and white jackets, and we got down to cleaning. That was at lunchtime, and the refugees were lining up for lunch, apologizing for not being able to join us immediately. Our work group (Mirko, Fahro, Mireja, Staša) filled up ten big refuse bags in no time, and then two men, refugees with wheelbarrows joined in and took everything away to the big green container. MSF was going to organize the carrying away of the garbage later. The volunteers in the yard were working busily, and cheered loudly when a team arrived from Bulgaria in solidarity. We spoke with one of them, Maksim, in a Serbo-Bulgarian mixture. They would stay for an indefinite time... Volunteers from Bilbao, the Bask Country, had also arrived, introducing themselves immediately as 'not being here as part of a project, but self-organized'.

One group of refugees are heading for Europe, with their dreams about Europe stashed in the small bundles they are carrying with them... Good luck to them! Both these migrants and ourselves utter simultaneously 'Inshallah!.

Recorded by: Staša

