

**Aus: Women in Exile (2022):
Breaking Borders To Build Bridges**

Mu

One of the thousands: I was pushed back and forth between Turkey and Greece ten times. After spending four nights in the jungle, we finally got on the boat to go to Greece. But after 15 minutes, we saw the sea guards of Turkey coming towards us. We tried not to stop, but they had a special long rod they used to beat the captain. Finally, they arrested us and took us to Izmir jail. Every meal was not enough to get full, and we were not allowed to get more. I was always feeling hungry there. Every day we could only see the yard for 30 minutes. There was no warm water to take a bath. The most annoying part for me was the young woman who came to me and asked if I could bring shampoo inside the jail (bringing in shampoo was forbidden). She showed me her hair. It was really, really dry and she had dandruff because she has been using soap to wash her hair for a long time. She also had a new-born baby, just imagine! To have a new-born baby in this situation! What was her fault?! Her fault was trying to go to Greece. It was random: from every group that was arrested, they kept one or two people for a long

time, sometimes even for a year. Every time that they let us out of jail, we had to buy a ticket to go back to Istanbul, which was so expensive. And when we arrived in Istanbul, we were so tired and dirty and weak. In the house where we lived, there was no bathroom or place to rest, or even an oven to cook. There was only one picnic for around 50 people. We did not even have enough space to hang our wet clothes when we washed them. We were not allowed to go out. Only one person collected all the money and bought things for us, because the person who wanted to send us to Greece told us: if all of you go out every day, all the neighbours will understand how many people live here.

After a while, I changed the way to Greece. I mean: I tried from another city. But every time, we were in the jungle for a week and in the last days, when our water bottles were empty, we drank from a dirty lake which was near us. Mothers, who had little babies, used the dirty water for the milk powder. Once we were on the boat, suddenly a huge Turkish ship hit our boat to stop us. Our boat was broken and one baby fell into the sea. Fortunately, we could save her. They got £200 to leave us, because they said that if we didn't pay it, they would deport us to our country.

After a while, I changed my way again. I was trying a new way. But this time I was arrested by the Greek police. They asked us to give our phones to them. I did not talk to them but they told my friends that they would transfer us to Athens. Then they took us to a camp near the border. They searched about four times to make sure that there was no phone with us. Then they separated women and men. They took all our belongings except money and gold, and said: "If you want food, you must pay for it." We were about 100 people in the camp. At night, some policemen who had covered their faces came to us. They had guns. They told us: "You must keep your hands up and put your head down and get into the car very fast". It was like a big truck. Before they came to us, they were saying the same things to men. I remember there was a young boy who was crying and begging and kissing the policemen's feet to not get deported to Turkey. He was saying: "I am politically persecuted in Turkey and if they catch me, they will definitely execute me. Please don't deport me!!!!!"

But the police hit him hard, as much as they could. Finally, we got on the truck. It was all dark and I could not see how many people were inside the car! When the car stopped, they told us: "Be quiet!!!!" Anyone who made a noise was beaten very hard. There was a river there and they deported us ten by ten on a small boat. At last, I passed the border of Turkey after trying ten times. This is why I lost about 20kg of weight. Now one of my biggest wishes is a world without borders.