



RED SOS
REFUGIADOS

Asociación de ayuda humanitaria

Monthly report: December 2020

In the last report of this terrible year, besides sharing with you the work done and the help received during December, we send you a story, a tale or a real story in Greece, during these holidays for many, and hard for almost all. We have tried to show the harsh reality of the most vulnerable and the hidden power that our behaviour has over it, so that we do not forget that miracles are made with the hands and the heart. And if this is not the case, then they are not miracles.

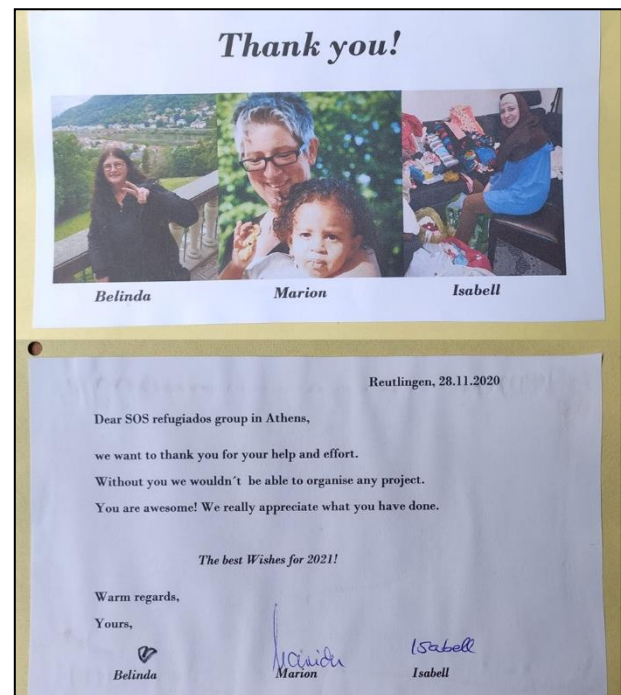
Thank you for being here, for your efforts and your commitment, for your determination and your light. Thank you for your company and your joy. A hug from the heart to all of you. Health and encouragement to all and especially to those who have lost a loved one.

COLLECTIONS, EVENTS AND SOLIDARITY INITIATIVES:

On December 15th two containers arrived at the SOS warehouse in Athens: one from the *Plataforma Acción Directa Sierra Norte y Barcelona* (and that's two) and another coordinated by *Caudete se Mueve (Colectivo sin Fronteras, Albacete; Plataforma Almanseña de Apoyo a Refugiados, Almansa; Dandelion, Villena; Somos Anti Xenofobia and Red Cross, Sax; Asociación Humanista, Elda; Crida contra el Racismo. Elda and Petrer; Grupo Abril, Elda; Asociación de Ayuda a Personas Refugiadas Sirias, Elche; and Caudete se Mueve)*. Thank you to all those involved in these wonderful gatherings. Julio, Emilia, transmit to your groups our love and our applause.

Last week a new container of the *Sierra Norte* and *Móstoles sin Fronteras Direct Action Platform* arrived in port and was transferred directly for deliv-

ery to the Lavrio camp. What a great campaign you have done, comrades.



Thanks again to Belinda, Marion and Isabell from Germany for the pallets they sent us this month. **Vielen Dank.**

Grateful hugs to our friends from Sweden, Anna Hallen, Jorgen Hallgreen and Lotta Delling for the trailer sent with warm clothes. You have done an exceptional job. And thanks to our kind collaborator Eva Andersson, because she has made so many children happy with her dolls and stuffed animals.

A container full of food and hygiene products, has arrived at the port of Piraeus, managed by *Sonrisas en Acción* from Cáceres, once again committed to the most vulnerable people. In the next few days, part of this cargo will arrive at our warehouse. Thank you very much for your support.



RED SOS
REFUGIADOS

Asociación de ayuda humanitaria

The *Seur Foundation* is resuming solidarity transport as of 11 January, after suspending it during the Christmas season. Ferrol, Seville and Donosti have already finished their campaigns; Torà, Villar del Arzobispo, Valencia, Utrera, Madrid, Ibiza and Formentera are finishing theirs. Thank you very much, friends.



FINANCIAL DONATIONS:

We are already more than 500 teamers in SOS Refugiados. Thanks to each and every one of you. Thank you also to the dozens of private donors for your trust and your efforts for another month. Thanks to the Sant Quirze del Vallés Town Council, *PHES Project*, David Fernández Marcote for the sale of his charitable cloth bags which he designed, *Acción Católica General de Bizkaia*, Clínica de Podología y Biomec, Alcázar de San Juan (charitable masks).

CALENDARS, CUPS AND CERAMICS:

Thank you all very much. The solidarity calendar for 2021 has had the best of welcomes because you have again felt encouraged to buy and share them. We have also released the last batch of stored solidarity cups; we have opted for distribution from large groups, sending 50 units to the group of SOS Refugiados Barcelona, 100 to the group L'Eliana Vol in Valencia and 50 to the groups of Madrid.

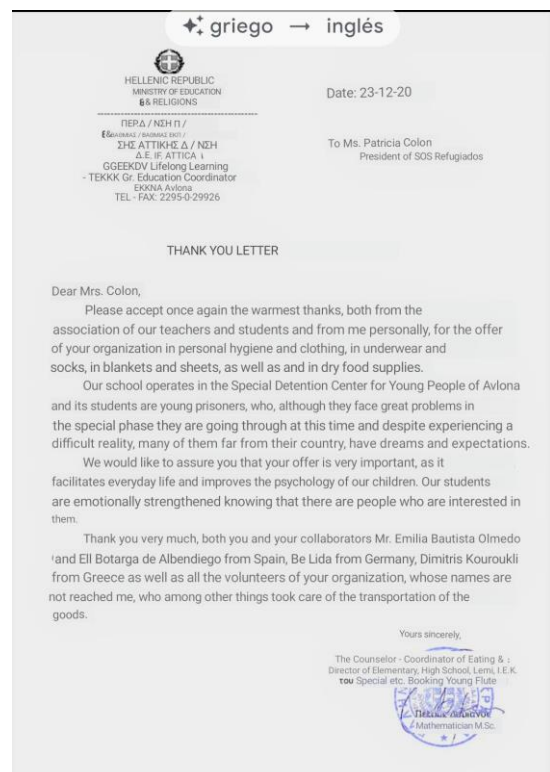
And we end this year 2020 by starting the *Keramós* solidarity project with the donation of craftwork that the Association of Ceramists of Asturias has donated to our cause and that you can see and

order from the gift section of our website: <https://sosrefugiados.org/regalos/>.

Thanks to the help and commitment of groups and individuals that you have spread in your circles and distributed to people close to you, proving again that teamwork is the fundamental engine of SOS Refugiados.

AVLONA PRISON:

We have returned to Avlona's juvenile prison, whose teachers had sent us a nice letter of gratitude which we shared with you last month. They have written to us again and their words are the best gift for SOS Refugees. We share them with all of you.



Second letter received from Avlona Prison thanking you for your donations during December.

The karavaki

It is the last night of the year. It is only a few hours before midnight and in the almost deserted streets you can hear a muffled murmur of noises, shouts and music that comes, goes and comes again.



RED SOS
REFUGIADOS

Asociación de ayuda humanitaria

Thousands of lights flicker in shop windows, windows and balconies, and from one pavement to another hang luminous tapestries. As in other squares in Athens, in Victoria the *karavaki* life-size sailing ship dressed in thousands of light bulbs shines. Since ancient times, at Christmas, instead of decorating a tree, Greek families built model ships and decorated them with lights to remind each home of the sailors, parents and absent siblings who struggled at sea far from their loved ones.

For some time now, more than a square, Victoria has been a sheepfold for families who were passing through and ran aground on the cliffs of despair. It is the last night of the year 2020 and a Syrian family with three children occupies their three square metre pavement slot under a tree. Squeezed together so that, if they come, they are not separated by Herod's Roman soldiers or the Greek cops, the father and the two small children doze on two mats, between bags and blankets. The mother and the ten-year-old daughter are sitting on the edge, finishing off the remains of the chicken they received at midday. The girl dances her gaze on the boat. She asks her mother to accompany her to it, for a moment, to see it more closely, once more before going to bed.

Around the *karavaki* other children flutter around, happy about this magical gift. The hull, the line of the gunwale, the rudder, the masts, the rigging that hangs from one pole to another, everything is dressed in lights, on the short stone pedestal. Weightless as a fallen star that could rise again if the wind wanted it to. The mother, with no tears in her eyes and her heart drowned in terror, sees only a huge coffin that they should have sunk to before they entered this hell. But Hala, her child, thinks differently and makes a wish. It is her second Christmas in Athens and she knows well the customs with which this country celebrates its beautiful and strange festival, which speaks of a child born in a foreign land, on a cold night, during an escape. Just like his little brother. She knows the

kalanda, Christmas carols that girls and boys go to sing at their neighbours' doors in exchange for sweets. And she knows that in the New Year the children receive gifts from Saint Basil. So tonight, Hala asks him to put her and her family on the boat and turn it into a flying star that will take them home, across the sea and over the mountains.



A little further up, behind the window of her room, Elora, a ten-year-old Greek girl, looks out over the square, the boat with its lights and a girl about her age, she thinks she has seen her before. For as long as she can remember, her square has always been occupied by people, exposed to the gaze of others, the summer sun, the wind and the downpours. And she can't get used to seeing them there. Sneaking around, as if opening someone else's door, between curiosity and guilt, she has not stopped watching them for a single day. Especially the children, spying on their games, watching them eat, crying, keeping silent, questioning their faces. Her parents have explained some things to her, the war, the bombs, calamities. She does not understand, however. She does not understand why here, in this peaceful city, they are still on the streets without a house like hers, nor do they go to school or have birthday parties.

But tonight, she does not watch them restlessly. The square is no longer a strange territory but a place to dance and celebrate. May this girl and her family, she murmurs, move into our building and let us be neighbours, may we finally meet and be friends: that's all, Saint Basil.



RED SOS
REFUGIADOS

Asociación de ayuda humanitaria

The holy man frowns. Bad, very bad, I feel bad not being able to attend to the wishes of these two girls, what more could I want, a simple toy delivery boy, quite a bruiser, by the way. Even though I only attend to this part of the world. Every year the same, thousands of wishes too large to handle come my way; from the very beginning, from the time they made me a saint and the rumour spread that I was working miracles. It won't seem much of a miracle to them to distribute hundreds of thousands of toys in one night, damn it! That was the work I agreed to do, but of course, those in other departments don't do their share of work for a whole year and the children, who are not to blame, ask Uncle Basilio for it because they trust me.



Dolls distributed among the children of several buildings and Elna Mathernity.

Hala's wish should have been dealt with and resolved at the UN General Assembly and at the world summit of Foreign Affairs Ministers, those are indeed forums where all those who can reach agreements if they are willing to do so are to be found. Don't tell me about war, conflicts of interest, persecution, excuses! They're all nothing but excuses: if they wanted to end the problem, they would solve it this very night. And Elora's story is a domestic matter that would be resolved in a jiffy by the Asylum Office of the Ministry of the Interior, with the permission of the Syrian family, of course. Of course, if one is satisfied, it will be impossible to do so with the other, but, what the heck, either would be a magnificent gift.

Basil kept thinking about it all night long. With his modest powers, he had to do something.

New Year's Day has arrived. Hala stirred under the blankets and let the time pass. Elora ran to the living room in search of the gifts. Among them all, there were two that were identical in size and wrapped in the same type of paper. It said "Syria" on one of them; "Greece", on the other. They removed the paper and saw that they were puzzles from both countries. Elora concealed her disappointment as best she could, but at once there was a sudden flash in her brain and a rise in temperature. There is a girl sleeping in the square since weeks with her family, she told her parents, I would like to meet her and talk to her. I'm sure she's from Syria, what a coincidence, right? We have breakfast, get dressed and go downstairs to give her one of the two. Which one would she prefer?



In the morning, the karavaki in Victoria Square, with the lights off, was no longer a fallen star but a real repaired boat, eager to cut through the waves. All it needed was for Hala, Elora and a few others to push it enough to leave it in the water. And that all those who wanted to continue their journey would get on it.

A hug from the heart. Prosperous 2021.