

Oral History Kosovo

Narrator: When they went to Germany, that wave of asylum seekers, me and my husband went there. I also had a son who had turned two then. We went.

Interviewer: How did you go?

Narrator: We went, first we got in the bus here, with the bus we went to Serbia, from Serbia, a family member found a person, he said, "He will take you and you will get on the bus in Novi Sad and they will take you to Austria, no problem." We got into that car and they left us at the border of Serbia, Serbia-Hungary border. He said, "Just pass it, walk," he said, "I will get you on the other side." We passed the road, got to the other side, passed the border without problems. We waited, he didn't show up, the man disappeared (laughs), we had to walk, I don't know for how long, we got there at 11:00 until 05:00 in the afternoon.

We walked, we walked, walked, my son was very little, a year and half old, so he turned two there. He cried all the time, "I want to go back home." He knew, we walked ahead, he said, "No," he said, "I want to go back home, home." I was with my husband, my brother-in-law, and two friends of my husband's. They helped me a lot, they carried him, they played with him. I was breastfeeding him and when we needed to drink I had to carry him, breastfeed while walking (laughs). Sometimes we sat, rested, but we mostly walked until the Hungarian police got us, and gathered us all.

Then they took those of us who had children, we got into a, into a prisoners' can and they took us to a garage. My brother-in-law and our friends stayed there because they said, "We will take you later." They took us to a garage, it was all filled with water, they put us there. Until they took some of our information, I didn't know what they were doing. They brought two buses, then with those buses they took us to a prison, I don't know the name of that place, it was like a prison. When we went there, I as so tired, so exhausted, the moment I went in I slept and I didn't hear anything until the policeman knocked on our door in the morning.

They didn't hold us for long, they gave us food and everything, you know we weren't maltreated or anything. And we took those, they came and called us and took our information, our fingerprints, everything they needed and they let us go. But we wanted to meet with my brother-in-law and our friends. For slept for a night in a hotel, it was something like a motel. And we stayed there for a night until we got together with them. When we got together, the person who was supposed to pick us up lied, he didn't come to get us.

We took a taxi, actually one of the taxi drivers who took us was a policeman, but the price was convenient to him, because in the Balkans there is corruption in general (laughs) it's number one. He took us to Budapest. In Budapest we stayed in a hotel, he came... one of my husband's friends found an acquaintance, he came and took us to Austria by car. He took me and my son, and that man. Because the aunt of that man sent him to pick us up and they left us in Austria, in the train station, he left me and my husband there, he said, "Come," he said, "I'll get your ticket so they don't notice you." It was snowing a lot that day, a lot.

So, we had to leave for Germany at 12:00 at noon, we didn't leave until 02:00 in the morning, we stayed in the station because the roads were blocked. We got on the train at 02:00 and got to Germany around 05:00 or 06:00. When we went there we didn't know what to do, we didn't know the language, the place, nothing. And we were stuck there, we went to a coffee shop there, I told my husband, "Let's go inside just so we can get warm, or do something." Because it was very cold. And we went in there, we stayed for about an hour. We met an Albanian family who were refugees like us. The husband, wife and they had four children.

That man was told, "You can come, and when you get to Germany tell me where you are and I will come get you." He came with the hope that his brother would take him, he called him on the phone but he didn't answer, he would just write, "Go there." You know, with names. But hi, his wife, or his children, they were very little, they didn't know English or German, any languages. Where would he go, he didn't know how to get tickets, or what's happening, he was left on the streets. And we said... because we could speak a little English and my husband said, "Come with me." Then we met an Albanian who was a resident there, he bought us some tickets and said, "Go to Stuttgart." We were in Munchen there I think. And he bought us the tickets.

Then we often had to change trains. My husband understood it more or less. And we went there, we left them there, we identified as asylum seekers at the police, I don't know what they did, where he went, he didn't know, his brother lied to him. We didn't stay there for long, around four months in Germany. We stayed, for a month at the camp, for three other months in an apartment, so we had an apartment just with my husband and son. A bedroom, a living room, a kitchen, it was good, we didn't lack anything, they took care of us.

The place where we were was Osa... Osnabruck, no another one, what was the name, I forget (laughs) the name. They said... there some elderly women there, they said, "Even during the war in Kosova," they said, "There were no Albanian refugees here. So you are the first who were brought here." It was just us and man and women, they were a couple. They took care of us, because they had never had refugees there. And then we got the [invitation], we went to the interview, but we got a negative response and we signed it immediately and came back. They said, "They're taking them home by force." My husband said, "Since I have a son and you here I don't want to flee or anything." And we came back.