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REFUGE

Jesuit Refugee Service Indonesia

Accompany, Serve, and Advocate the cause of forcibly displaced People

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Practicing Kungfu in the beach is a refreshing activity for Refugees 🇮🇩 Indro

A Friend On the Journey

Lars Stenger

Dear Reader, JRS Indonesia started the year 2012 with five projects addressing the needs of forcibly displaced in Indonesia and more than that being a friend on their journey to peace and safety.

We are continuing our service and accompaniment to asylum seekers and refugees in the Immigration Detention Center in Medan through regular visits, sport activities and a mobile library and started regularly visiting the Immigration Detention Center in Surabaya. In Cisarua, Bogor JRS staff continues to provide vulnerable asylum seekers with the means to sustain themselves while awaiting the outcome of their Refugee Status Determination process through regular visits, the sharing of information, provision of housing, food and securing the access to health services.

Three volunteers under the coordination of one staff continued to provide English classes and social activities to Refugees living in Bantul, Yogyakarta. January 2012 the new JRS Ambon project started its support towards the realisation of a durable solution for long term displaced people living in Barito warehouse. Through these five projects JRS Indonesia hopes to attend to the most severe needs and to raise attention about the issues experienced by “forgotten refugees” in urban areas, immigration detention centers and in longterm displacement situations.

We are happy to welcome Fr. T. A. Maswan Susinto SJ rejoining JRS as new country director after having worked with JRS in West Timor and North Sumatra (2002-2004). Fr Maswan is joined by Indro Suprobo as new Communications Officer, Fransisca Dwi Indah Asmiarsi as new Assistant to the National

Programme Officer, Paulus Enggal Sulaksono and Zainuddin, as Information and Advocacy Officer and Coordinator of the JRS Surabaya office supported by Martinus Yopa Oktrianus as Finance Officer.

The JRS team in Cisarua is strengthened by Pius Marmanta as new Caregiver providing English classes to asylum seekers and refugees and Sem Kevin Pospos the new Legal Liaison Officer. With Yohanes Suryadi as Coordinator, Veronica Purwaningsih as Information and Advocacy Officer and Junaidi as Finance Officer, JRS Ambon was set up with three experienced JRS staff. Donatus Akur was recruited as Coordinator for JRS educational activities in Bantul, Yogyakarta supported by Triarani Susy Utami, Equatori Prabowo and Constantinus Elang Perkasa volunteering their time befriending and teaching English to Refugees.

This year JRS Indonesia plans the release of four editions of the Refuge newsletter to share updates from our projects and to provide a forum to forcibly displaced people accompanied by JRS to share their story and concerns. Updates and articles will be also regularly published on JRS Indonesia's website: www.jrs.or.id.



Building An Immigration Detention “HOME”

*“Me myself I just want to get out here quickly,
I am predicting that other who might replace me,
will have the same wish”*

Paulus Enggal

Immigration Detention Centers are called in Indonesian “Rumah Detensi Imigrasi” literally translated as 'Immigration Detention Home' or 'Immigration Detention House'. They are the technical implementation units of the immigration office functioning as temporary shelters for foreigners violating the Immigration Law, last revised in 2011. Chapter III of the this regulation defines where an Immigration Detention House can be built, on what conditions a person can be sent there and for how long he or she can be detained. It also states that it is part of the government's duties to provide immigration services, enforcing law and state security and so facilitating people's welfare.

During the first four months of JRS Indonesia's presence in one of the Immigration Detention Houses the element of enforcing state security became apparent. *“This is a jail although we are not criminal,”* summarizes one detainee from Pakistan. Detainee is an asylum seeker detained in an Immigration Detention Center.

Calling a detention center 'Immigration Detention House' must have a certain intention. Placing the word 'house' for a place where its occupants are deprived of their freedom seems a paradox. A 'house' or 'home' for the most of us is a secure and pleasant place where 'love' is present through people we love. 'Home' is the first place of appreciation to the human civilization, a place for us to grow up within. The house or home becomes a place we look forward to come back to when physical distances separate us from it.

So, is the word 'house' an appropriate name for a place where its dwellers are confined against their will and cannot feel the presence of love even from those who are very close to them every day? The House becomes an abstract concept irrelevant to the detention's daily conducts. The House does not mean close anymore, instead it means far, be it physically or spiritually. *“This is not home for us,”* said an Afghan asylum seeker

Perhaps the policy makers in this country are aware that the asylum seekers and cross border refugees



Detainees inside the Fence  Paulus Enggal

are not criminals violating the Indonesian Law. Treating an immigration detention house the same as a jail is a big mistake. The guideline on handling the refugees and asylum seekers clearly states that the asylum seekers and refugees should not be allowed to be put in a place along with criminal convicts. This awareness eventually leads them to using the word 'house', not institute or facility. This would bring us to the thoughts that those who will stay at the Immigration Detention House are people who are far, evicted or lost their home.

“With this kind of activity, dancing and singing, we feel that our home is nearer,” said an asylum seeker. The Javanese people often relate the house with 'pulang' or a supernatural prize for those who are 'chosen'. The prize is something we have to pursue. It would not come when we don't do anything at all. So, obtaining a 'pulang' means that we are harvesting our hard work.


Providing a “detention house” is like running after a 'pulang'. When the word 'house' is stuck on the Immigration Detention terminology it doesn't mean a dream 'house' is already put in place right away. Instead, when 'house' is augmented, there are responsibilities and consequences to bear and to face. This becomes a vocation and moral challenge to fight for the enforcement of human principles. To bring into reality our dream to provide a place where we feel secure, safe and protected, where loves can perfectly grow, as if without any end.

The Immigration Detention House is still far away from the idealism of a 'house'. It is not a place people long for, yet. The Immigration Detention House is virtually a cursed place for everyone inside it. It brings no blessings but burdens also for the people working there. *“Six months are like two years,”* said an Immigration staff.

“The actual problem among the migrants is their acceptance. The migrants can't accept this present situation as a result of their actions,” explained another staff member.

Acceptance is the challenge the detainees and



In a long waiting process, Asylum Seeker is longing for home  Paulus Enggal

immigration officers have to face. Both of them just can't accept the reality related to their presence in the detention center. Working as staff or officers of an Immigration Detention House is far from what one may think when, for the first time, receiving the duty and responsibility as immigration officer. *"I've never thought of getting this placement here. In the past I've always been appointed to work at airports, seaports and immigration offices,"* one officer added.

For the detainees, being at the detention center is just a bad luck. They have been caught on their way to the final destination: Christmas Island, Australia. The detainees have never wanted to waste 15 months of their lives in a situation full of distress and uncertainty. *"They don't want to be here. If you asked them, they will answer that they don't want to spend their 12 months here only to drink milk, play karambol or football,"* snarled a Pakistani detainee.

Detention in the eyes of the detainees is an obstacle between the present and the future. It blocks their way to make their dreams of living in country granting political asylum come true. The detainees as well as the Immigration Detention House staff similarly build a denial against the present conditions. Both argue that they should not actually be present in this location. They feel rejected and marginalized. *"Here we work hard, but whenever one of them tries to escape, we will get the blame,"* said a staff member.

"They never think about us. Immigration and UNHCR," said a detainee. *"UNHCR make us wait for one year, more than one year for nothing. They make us in tension"* added another detainee. The idealism of

'house' cannot be materialized through a single denial. How the detainees and the immigration staff as well could discover the other side of their daily lives in the detention center when they make their fate dependent on others' faults. In the detention center's routines they tend to lose the awareness of the present. The absence of this kind of awareness triggers dreams about 'another world' where all things are beautiful and cannot be found here in the detention center, but fails to motivate them (detainees) to do something. They're just like illusions. People have to rise, leaving their dreams behind and start to try to reach their goals in the real world. With this the change will come.


The change toward making the immigration detention HOUSE a reality begins when all parties can accept and understand its essences. They have to help themselves develop in history of civilization based on the humanitarian spirit - when they feel the depth of love in a limited environment - through meaningful daily actions.

"We will start to understand each other through meeting and dialog. We can not build understanding by throwing rock to immigration," said a detainee from Pakistan on February 1, 2012 before he opted to return to his country. A desperate and dangerous journey 'Home'.



Becoming Vulnerable In the Community

Melani Wulandari

The children of Asylum Seekers are playing games.  Cisarua Doc.

Beginning of 2012 the situation for asylum seekers living in urban areas of Indonesia is getting more difficult. The immigration authorities started to firmly clamp down on foreigners who do not have valid immigration documents. An increasing number of foreigners coming to the country to claim asylum were arrested and reports about deportations circulate in the media.

In February Media reported the deportation of 13 Iranian nationals back to their home country after being captured in Cipatujah, West Java. In the same month immigration officers started "dawn raids" in Cisarua, West Java which is temporary home for the largest population of refugees and asylum seekers undergoing the Refugee Status Determination process at UNHCR's Jakarta office.

An estimated 2000 asylum seekers originating from Iran, Afghanistan, Somalia, Iraq and other countries are living here. This number might be even higher as some live here unregistered waiting to test their fortune by trying to embark on a risky boat journey to Australia. How risky these journeys can be shows the sinking of a wooden boat in December 2011 only 49 of over 200 asylum seekers on board could be rescued.

The February immigration enforcement operation was conducted in the early morning hours surprising most residents in their sleep. Going from house to house, a team of officers from the national and local immigration department, the Jakarta immigration detention center and police took people without valid immigration documents from Cisarua to the Immigration Office in Central Jakarta.

"We sleep at home and police and immigration suddenly came, put us in a bus and take us to Jakarta, sister. I did not do anything wrong, why they catch us Sister?" asks Amiri (31) asylum seeker from Afghanistan. Amiri finally got back home to Cisarua at 10 pm after he could show an attestation letter from

UNHCR. Another asylum seeker from Sudan, Bushar (26), recalls his experience: *"They Came to my house early morning, and I was not prepared. They take to the bus and I saw more people in that bus, Somalia, and other Afghan. At first I was afraid of because they catch only me, but knew they catch a lot of people I feel more ease."*

"As a result 149 foreigners from Macao 1, Somalia 44, Afghanistan 99, Pakistan 3, Syrians and Sudan respectively one person were captured," reported Maryoto Sumadi, Head of the Public Relations at the Directorate General of Immigration, later to the media. Subsequently only those of the captured who could provide a UNHCR letter identifying them as asylum seekers or refugees were allowed to return. Those who could not show UNHCR letters were subject to "immigration acts". Statements by immigration officials suggests that this operations are planned to become a routine in Cisarua, Jakarta and surrounding areas.

Responding to the immigration operation the Legal Aid Institute (LBH) Jakarta released a statement pointing out that even if the Directorate General of Immigration does have the authority to implement immigration measures including conducting data collection and the control of the foreigners. Asylum seekers should not be treated in the same way as those violating immigration laws.

Making them subject to detention in immigration detention centers or even deporting them is in contrary to national legal and human rights obligations, especially if the acts are imposed on vulnerable groups, such as: children, women, parents, victims of torture and ill people. Government control of foreign citizens and asylum seekers should be implemented with a good system that ensures their rights are not violated.

Voices of asylum seekers

“I know for sure if I go back, I will be dead ... I asked my father, he said it is not save for me to come back. I ask you, if I go back and get killed will my wife and my children get Refugee status. I will do that, but I want my family to be safe.”

“I went to UNHCR in January only to get an appointment for registration in November. This is too long waiting.”

“Is it true without a UNHCR letter I can be arrested and put in detention and deported?”

“All we can do is eat and sleep nothing else” ... “God forbid you become crazy here, Australia won't need us” ... “Better to go illegally, if we sink, better then life here!” ... “UNHCR, they compel us to go illegally” ... “Money is not important, 'waiting' is, I have to manage

my life,” a group of Unaccompanied Minors discussing their situation in Cisarua.

JRS encourages UNHCR Indonesia to change its registration practice to ensure protection is given to people wanting to claim asylum by enabling them to register as soon as possible or at least by changing the format of the 'Token' form and socialize it to Indonesian authorities. JRS also encourages Indonesian authorities to uphold human rights and the right to asylum by ensuring authorities practice, to not deport people wanting to claim asylum, continues.

Giving all Despite own needs

Veronica Purwaningsih

Today over 15 million women are displaced and struggling to sustain their life and the life of their loved ones. Some of these women have been displaced for over a decade. Marian is one of these women initially displaced in 1999 and since then living in camps and a shabby warehouse in Maluku hoping for a better future to come.

“This is actually not my child. I don't know where its mother is. When its mother gave birth, it was me that helped her. After that she went away. Now the child is already eleven months with me,” says Marian about the child that is with her wherever she goes. Yonafia Agustina Marian Seralurin is one of 18 women living since many years in an old warehouse since she was displaced by communal violence erupting in many parts of Maluku. Being no longer able to return to their previous residence they have lost all property, homes and land but their hope and will to survive.

Although Marian lives from the hand in the mouth, only able to buy food from the money she and her husband earns on a day-to-day basis, she still finds the heart to



A displaced Woman and her foster daughter Ning

share. The midwife, her husband and the now three children survive on 40 USD a week only supported at times by her oldest son that lives and works in the city. Daily expenses and school fees for her own two children in high and junior high school are exciding the money she has available. Five people including a toddler of another woman want to be fed and educated on 6 USD a day. But Marian rarely complains about the lack of money, as she is more concerned about conditions for her children in the shabby plywood-walled warehouse a place that is not suited for people to live in.

Marian lives on 3x4 square meters that are bedroom and living room in one. Day and night it is hot and humid. The Barito warehouse is the third temporary shelter Marian and her family lived in after being displaced 12 years ago. Former camps included a Military dormitory and a NGO run camp in Waimahu.

Two times the government provided assistance in the past. The Government Center for Housing Assistance

and the Governor gave about 1800 USD to build an emergency house years ago. *"The government gave cement, zinc, plywood, nails and the cost of builders to build houses, but where we want to build a house if we do not own land."* Because land was considered the most important, residents sold building materials to put their money together for a down payment for land meant to be for relocation. Unfortunately this collaboration could not be sustained for later support provided by the government so the outstanding amount was never paid by the collective. *"We here are not united in heart anymore"* is an expression one often hears not only in Barito. Sometimes government aid is spent in vain. This is one of the reasons why people until now cannot move to a relocation area.

Now government aid has dried up and the issue of displaced person of the conflict of 1999 is not on the agenda anymore. More recent conflicts triggering displacements in Maluku are in need for attention. *"They think we are not displaced anymore. Especially now after a lot of new unrest,"* said Mariana.

"I dream of selling again, open a stall again to sell vegetables, kerosene, spices, soap, rice, shampoo, sugar and coffee. If I work at a stall I can care for the child at the same time. Although it is not my own child," Marian said when asked what she would like to do in future. In Vitas-Barito Warehouse there are not many potential buyers. The only hope is to find a place to move to.



Children of the internally displaced are expressing their experiences Ning

To trace back the past events I have experienced with Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) in Indonesia the last six years is quite fascinating. Not because of its success stories, but, more particularly, because of all the dynamics during this time. The JRS' history can be depicted as a miniature journey of the refugees - friends of the JRS. "On the move" or "on a pilgrimage" describes well the odyssey of JRS and the refugees, whom JRS has been accompanying and caring for. A journey characterized by many dynamics, smiles, laughter as well as sadness and tears - all bound in one passion, the passion of love. This experience is felt to be 'fortified' by Pope Benedict's Encyclical of *"Deus Caritas est"* (God is Love)

The power of love has moved the hearts of many people to allow themselves to become friends of those who were in need - the refugees. For a Catholic, caring and helping others in maintaining their dignity is not merely a human vocation. It's more of an implementation of their faith. Caring for others in need is one of the aspects of religious comprehension, similar to our services to God's Words and Sacramental devotions.

Based on this spirit JRS has gone through a pilgrimage along with the refugees who were experiencing a period of uncertainty in their journey toward their future life. From 2005 to 2008 myself as a part of JRS accompanied refugees - victims of natural disasters and conflicts in Aceh, Maluku, Nias,

Together with Refugees

JRS On the move

Adrianus Suyadi, SJ

Yogyakarta and Central Java. In the following years, it became clear that needs of increasing numbers asylum seekers and refugees stranded and intercepted in Indonesia weren't addressed sufficiently and JRS felt itself called to accompany and serve them. Of course, what JRS could offer was limited sometimes only to accompanying them as a friend in a difficult situation. Material support and services provided to them, do not come from the wealthy, but come from people who have given all despite their own needs. Five pieces of bread and two fish the poor widows have given in their sincerity and good intentions, enabling JRS Indonesia to share with refugees during their plight reaching out for a safer future.

There were laughter and tears, easy times and difficult challenges, hopes and sometime edges of hopelessness in JRS' efforts to become a good friend

and caretaker for asylum seekers and refugees. Frequently, we had to face a situation where our human competence and efforts were on the brink testing our conscience of that there is a superior power out there - the hands of God in action. *"Pray...pray much, because problems such as these are not solved by human efforts"*, a wise call came from the founder of the JRS, Father Pedro Arrupe, SJ, speaking in front of a group of Thai Jesuits working with JRS. This call is always valid as long as JRS is still committed to accompanying and caring for the refugees.

At the end of my duty as the director of JRS Indonesia, I remember many faces of refugees I have met, my dear colleagues and many JRS volunteers who have studiously and faithfully accompanied and served displaced people during the hardest times of their lives, and there are also all my companions sitting behind desks to give support to people in the field. I also remember all those who provided us with the means, generously giving donations despite shortcomings. Many other institutions and organizations, our partners have sincerely worked together to care for displaced people. The power of friendship and God's love created an overwhelming energy that drives this work of compassion for our brothers and sisters, the refugees. On this good and grateful occasion, I as a person as well as the director of JRS from May 2006 to December 2011 would like to convey my thankfulness to God and other parties which or whom I may not have mentioned above for your support and assistance. I do understand that your support and assistance have emerged out of a passion and dedication that multiplied the grace awarded by God to the refugees. I hope that the JRS' vision - to create peace, justice and harmony in the world - is to be reached in order that nobody should be forced to move anymore. But when will this happen? Perhaps, as long as greed defines human actions and the lack of will to share and act justly despite all differences are within and around us, this vision will never be reached.

Adrianus Suyadi, SJ
(Country Director, JRS Indonesia May 2006-December 2011).

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