

## Statement for Detention Inquiry

The person would like to remain anonymous

Assisted by Sarah Pailthorpe to give evidence on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2014

### **Context and duration:**

1. I have been detained since the beginning of August 2014; my case is a third country case. I have no information of the outside, I was detained when I arrived, and this is very disorientating.
2. My friend says detention is an "aging machine" I am here for nearly 2 months but it feels like 2 years.

### **Conditions and mechanisms for coping with mental/ physical / emotional issues**

1. Healthcare service is terrible here, I am sure they will only do something if you will die. I have told them 9-10 times that I have pain in my kidney, only they take Urine sample with paper indicator and tell me nothing is wrong but I have pain. My friend also has back pain and kidney pains, Healthcare know only to prescribe painkillers that do not work.
2. I am getting sick in detention, I am getting cold sores and it feels like my skin is getting darker, I don't know what is happening here.
3. In detention they just focus on physical support, food, and provisions not mental problems. People do not understand mental problems here. For example one of the managers told me I should feel safe, that I feared for my safety and came to UK and he said that I am safe in detention. I am not safe here.
4. I was referred to the psychiatrist when I came here it took three weeks to see someone. She started me a set of medications and said she will return in one week, I am waiting for her. I was referred because I think about suicide, when I was detained in Bulgaria people hanged themselves from the ceiling and I think about doing this. After three weeks in detention I began to hear a male voice in my head, it tells me that this will be my end, this started here in detention in UK.
5. Before I left my country I learnt about psychology a bit and practiced some Tibetan Meditation, I understand a bit about mental health and I realise that my mind is collapsing because of my situation, my past and especially now because of detention.
6. Winding around my head are all my problems it is not good here.
7. In detention I feel like the operator system in my mind needs to be re installed. I do not think I will be released from here
8. The officers here try to help they cannot because detainee problems are of a different kind, mental health problems officers cannot help with. Being here reminds of my past, the uniforms of the officers make me stress, they are like the police in my country. They ask me

about my problems with suicide and self-harm and they remind me of my problems, they are not at fault, most of them are trying to be friendly but our problems are different.

9. I would like to tell you about my friend, in detention. Most of these days now in detention my friend I realised he cannot talk properly in his mother tongue, he mixes the words and he has extreme emotions, for example he sometimes laughs excessively, I cannot explain it, but I realise these are real disorders if a "normal" person sees my friend they would be surprised at his behaviour.
10. My friend was detained in our country for 2 years, every week people were taken to be hanged, sometimes the ropes and bodies remained in the kitchen, this happened before the sunrise every day we were waiting to be called to be hanged. Now in this detention we say we have mental problem and officers try to help by knocking all the time on our door and checking what we are doing, but this does not help. The sound of the door brings back the memories of our country and puts him in deep stress; my friend says he is experiencing stress like in our country. 3-4 times a night I am back in prison in my country, he says he wishes he was killed there rather than experiencing this every night.
11. There is not enough support for mental problems in detention, this place needs to be changed.
12. **Recommendation:** people with mental problems should not be here. People who have been in difficult situation like prison or tortured in their country should not be here.

#### **Facilities:**

1. There are facilities in this centre; people say it is the best detention centre. There is sports hall, library, English classes, restricted internet, arts and crafts, gymnasium, chapel and cinema, but I cannot use them, it is difficult to concentrate in here, when you sit in front of the screen your eyes are watching but your mind is surfing in another world.
2. In my normal life I was not used to cameras, in this place there are so many cameras I feel like I am being controlled, this began in Bulgaria, now it is much worse. It is like someone is waiting for me to go wrong I am self-conscious this makes you feel crazy.

#### **Indefinite detention:**

1. At the moment I don't think I will be released, sometimes I think this is a stupid thought but it is strong, nobody knows when we will be let out, I miss my hope. I have lost all hope; all the structures in my mind are ruined.
2. I do not think I will be released from here.

#### **Long term impact:**

1. The first question that comes to my mind is "am I criminal" I escaped my country for my freedom, and now I am in detention, like in my country. It becomes a part of your mind that you are different now.

2. In my country I used to help people I was very sociable, but now in detention I am unsociable, I stay in my room most of the time. When I go to the day room, I cannot play billiards, I cannot socialise, I cannot talk to people. I compare my personality to my past and I am totally different in detention. I feel ashamed all the time, because of what I don't know.
3. I do not know what will happen to me, I cannot think about it, all I know now after this my life will not be a normal life. IT is a mental part of the harm I have suffered; I will not live a normal life.

**Other comments:**

1. Being in detention makes you sensitive to everything, and I feel unstable, every knock on the door pushes you into stress, there is not one second without stress here. Only waiting and waiting it is exhausting it is like my doomsday, I am waiting for my judgement before death.
2. The main thing that bothers people here is being detained.