

## Marzia Jamili, Afghan girl at the 'Melissa' women's centre near Victoria Square, Athens



“My name is Marzia Jamili. I am 15 years old. I am an Afghan girl, and, importantly, I am Hazara. My people always seek freedom, but we are always shackled. My people are against war and oppression, but we have always had our rights taken away from us. My people are intelligent, but from every possible way we are forbidden from progress. In fact, during the July attack against the Hazara Enlightenment Movement, our most educated Hazaras were intentionally targeted.

“Today, I would like to speak about the pain of my people so all of the world can hear. I had a thousand hopes of getting an education and contributing to the development of my country, but unfortunately, I only went to school for two years. I was born in Iran, but because I am an Afghan I was not permitted to go to school. When we returned to Afghanistan, but again, because I am Hazara, I was not permitted to go to school.

“It’s true, I am not Syrian, but do I not have a right to live? Is the blood of others different from the blood of an Afghan? No, people of the world, an Afghan also bleeds red. But unfortunately, today the European Union discriminates against us. They have recognized difference between peoples, have determined that others are worthy of their humanity, and have lowered the value of an Afghan life. Politics determines who is offered a safe place to go, not their needs.

“Today, our request from the world is that they recognize the human rights of the Afghan people. We would like that the pain in our hearts be listened to and for governments of the rich world to give us refuge so that we are not forced to go back home and risk being killed, as many who returned from Europe have.

“We have been spun around aimlessly by Europe. In this big, wide world, is there no place for us? Can we not find a place to live together so that we have peace of mind, are far from war, bloodshed, discrimination, and disrespect?”