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## No option but Europe

Asylum seekers arriving in Europe are often seen as part of an undifferentiated mass, and the complex stories of how they arrived are often submerged in the effort to control or manage migration. However, many of them are driven to seek protection in Europe only after seeking and failing to find safety elsewhere.

Arriving on the shores of the EU they have crossed a number of countries on their way. Authorities in receiving countries tend to interpret such long journeys as ones in which asylum seekers have had many opportunities to choose, presumably on the grounds that the longer the journey, the more opportunistic and the less justified it becomes.

However, the experiences of the asylum seekers we met, making their way through numerous countries, show that this is not necessarily true; rather than journeys in

which many open doors were passed by and opportunities were forsaken, they were journeys in which asylum seekers were bounced from slammed door to slammed door, with opportunities diminishing at every turn, leaving these individuals increasingly desperate to do anything that they can to find a modicum of safety and stability. Their stories<sup>1</sup> point to the need for effective protection for refugees and to facilitate greater opportunities to access it, both within Europe and beyond.

**Yotam Gidron** [yotamgidron@gmail.com](mailto:yotamgidron@gmail.com)  
Consultant

**Olivia Bueno** [olivia.bueno@refugee-rights.org](mailto:olivia.bueno@refugee-rights.org)  
Associate Director, International Refugee Rights Initiative [www.refugee-rights.org](http://www.refugee-rights.org)

1. IRRI (2015) "I was left with nothing": "Voluntary" departures of asylum seekers from Israel to Rwanda and Uganda [www.refugee-rights.org/Publications/Papers/2015/IWasLeftWithNothing.pdf](http://www.refugee-rights.org/Publications/Papers/2015/IWasLeftWithNothing.pdf)