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## **Freedom of religion or belief in the European Parliament Human Rights Report**

### ***FoRB Intergroup welcomes special attention given to Freedom of Religion or Belief in the EP Human Rights Report***

FoRB Intergroup (14.12.2016) - Today, the European Parliament adopted the *Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the world 2015 and the European Union's policy on the matter*.

**Intergroup co-Chair Dennis de Jong MEP:** *"The resolution gives extra weight to our dialogue with the EEAS on the implementation of the EU Guidelines on the Promotion and Protection of Freedom of Religion or Belief. As we as intergroup demonstrated in our own Annual Report, persecution based on religion or belief is increasing in many parts of the world. It is important for the EU and its Member States to do their utmost to support religious and belief communities who are facing discrimination, violence and persecution. This holds, in particular, for those professing a non-religious belief, as their rights are frequently completely ignored, especially in States where the government identifies itself with a dominant religion."*

**Intergroup co-Chair Peter van Dalen MEP stated** *"I am pleased that the European Parliament took almost all of the Intergroup's amendments for freedom of religion or belief on board. The cross-party support proves that FoRB must continue to be prioritised. We have a duty to protect religious or belief groups and these amendments provide us with the tool to advocate just that."*

Intergroup Bureau Members from 5 political Groups submitted amendments to this report, relating to freedom of religion or belief. These include Intergroup co-Chairs Dennis de Jong (GUE/NGL), Peter van Dalen (ECR), and Bureau Members Lars Adaktusson (EPP), Miltiadis Kyrkos (S&D) and Hannu Takkula (ALDE).

**Please see the full FoRB section from the report below, largely based on the Intergroup's amendments over the last two years.**

For more information, please contact [secretariat@religiousfreedom.eu](mailto:secretariat@religiousfreedom.eu).

***Freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief***

## The Parliament

142. Condemns, in line with Article 10 TFEU, all acts of violence and persecution, intolerance and discrimination on the basis of ideology, religion or belief; expresses its serious concern over the continued reports of violence and persecution, intolerance and discrimination against religious and belief minorities around the world; stresses that the rights to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief are fundamental rights, interrelated with other human rights and fundamental freedoms, and encompassing the right to believe or not to believe, the right to manifest or not to manifest any religion or belief, and the right to adopt, change and abandon or return to a belief of one's choice, as enshrined in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and in Article 9 of the European Convention of Human rights; calls on the EU and its Member States to engage in political discussions to repeal blasphemy laws; calls on the EU and its Member States to ensure that minorities are respected and protected worldwide, including in the Middle East, where Yazidis, Christians, Muslim minorities and atheists are being persecuted by Daesh and other terrorist groups; deplores the abuse of religion or belief for terrorist purposes;
143. Supports the EU's commitment to promote the right to freedom of religion or belief within international and regional forums including the UN, the OSCE, the Council of Europe and other regional mechanisms, and encourages the EU to continue tabling its yearly resolution on freedom of religion or belief at the UN and supporting the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief; encourages the VP/HR and the EEAS to engage in a permanent dialogue with NGOs, religious or belief groups and religious leaders;
144. Fully supports the EU practice of taking the lead on thematic resolutions at the UNHRC and at the UNGA on freedom of religion and belief, encourages the EU to support the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief and urges countries not currently accepting requests for visits from the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief to do so;
145. Calls on the EU to reinforce its existing instruments, and to adopt any other within its mandate, to ensure that the protection of religious minorities is effective worldwide;
146. Calls for concrete action to ensure the effective implementation of the EU Guidelines on the Promotion and Protection of Freedom of Religion or Belief, including: systematic and consistent training of EU staff at Headquarters and in Delegations; reporting on country and local situations; and engaging in close cooperation with local actors, especially leaders of religious or belief groups;
147. Is deeply concerned that in some parts of the world the position of religion or belief communities is endangered, with entire religious communities disappearing or fleeing;
148. Highlights the fact that Christians are currently the religious group most harassed and intimidated in countries throughout the world, including in Europe, where Christian refugees routinely suffer religiously motivated persecution, and that some of the oldest Christian communities are in danger of disappearing, especially in North Africa and the Middle East;
149. Encourages the international community and the EU to provide protection for minorities and to install safe zones; calls for the recognition, self-administration and protection of ethnic and religious minorities living in areas where they have historically had a strong presence and lived peacefully alongside

each other – for example in the Sinjar mountains (Yazidis) and the Nineveh plains (Chaldean-Syrian-Assyrian peoples); calls for special assistance in efforts to preserve (mass) graves in areas of current or recent conflicts, with the aim of exhuming and forensically analysing the human remains therein, in order to allow for decent burial, or release to the family, of the victims' remains; calls for the establishment of a dedicated fund that can help finance initiatives to preserve evidence, in order to enable investigation and prosecution of suspected crimes against humanity; calls for actions from the EU and its Member States to set up, as a matter of urgency, a group of experts tasked with collecting all evidence of any on-going international crime, including genocide, against religious and ethnic minorities, wherever they may happen, including the preservation of mass graves in areas of current or recent conflicts, with the aim of preparing international prosecution of those responsible;

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## **Christian refugees facing attacks in European refugee camps**

Bosnewslife (28.11.2016) - <http://bit.ly/2gEoAEM> - Christians fleeing war and persecution face violence and death threats because of their faith in several refugee camps across Europe, BosNewsLife established.

In Germany, religiously motivated attacks against Christian migrants and other minorities have been at a refugee center in the central German town of Rotenburg an der Fulda.

"We, the Iranian refugees based in the city of Rotenburg, have fled from the Islamic Republic of Iran because we have been accused of being Christians and, therefore, have repeatedly been threatened by torture, imprisonment and the death penalty," Christian refugees said in a published letter.

"Here, where we have been accommodated presently, we are exposed to the same kinds of threats as before, this time at the hand of Afghan Muslims, and we fear for our lives," they wrote.

"The Afghan refugees...call us Iranian Christians 'apostates' and 'infidels' because of our decision to leave Islam and consider the shedding of our blood as legitimate (or even necessary)."

### ***Kurdish church leader***

Separately, a Kurdish church leader smuggled to Britain said he received death threats – for having left Islam for Christianity – while living in makeshift camps in northern France.

The church leader, who did not wish to be identified, spent nine months living in camps outside the French cities of Calais and Dunkirk. He told World Watch Monitor, the news agency of Christian advocacy group Open Doors, that Kurdish Muslims in both camps antagonised him.

"In Calais, the smugglers [saw] my cross [round my neck], and said: 'You are Kurdish and you are a Christian? Shame on you,'" he recalled. "I said, 'Why? I'm in Europe, I'm free, I'm in a free country.' They said, 'No, you are not free, you are in the Jungle. The Jungle has Kurdish rule here – leave this camp.' The smugglers were from inside the camp, and were Kurdish. They said to me, 'We will tell the Algerians and Moroccans to kill you.'"

The church leader, who taught art in his home in Iraqi Kurdistan, as well as helping to lead a church there, said he received further threats in the camp outside Dunkirk. "They [set] fire [to] my tent," he added. The Christian moved from what was known as the "Jungle" camp in Calais to the Grande-Synthe camp near Dunkirk after one of the people-smugglers allegedly told him, "You're a Kurdish pastor? I've heard about you."

### ***Convert to Christianity***

As a convert to Christianity from a devout Muslim family, he left Kurdistan in Iraq after receiving death threats, the Christian explained. He said he was detained and beaten by police for preaching in the streets, and twice received letters warning him that he would be killed if he did not return to Islam.

"In the mosque the imams talked about me, and my father, and my little brother, who became a Christian too... The imam talked about us - 'they are kafir [unbelievers], they have to die,' from the stage, into the mosque microphone. My father [a Muslim] was filled with shame," he said. "They were taught bad things about us in the mosque: 'The Christians are kafir.' Of course, they [also] say you are slaves to Israel, to the American people."

Within his family, five of his close relatives also became Christians, he said. This apparently strained relationships, including with his father and two brothers, who are imams. He said one of his brothers supports the Islamic State group, which, he said, has "definitely, definitely" created sleeper cells in Kurdistan.

He said his elderly father also tried to kill him, entering his bedroom one night with a knife. He left home the evening that four men, whom he described as having long beards and belonging to Islamic State, came to his family home and asked where he was. He heard his mother lie for him, saying he was not at home, and escaped through the back door without the opportunity to say goodbye to her.

He said he had flown from Kurdistan to Turkey and paid around \$10,000 to cross the Mediterranean in the bottom of a boat packed with 56 others, including women and children. The Christian recalled that he had experienced kindness, as he and a friend made their way through Europe from Greece, through Macedonia, Serbia and Croatia. They reportedly travelled by bus and train and walked other stretches of the journey.

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## Century of Genocides: End or Continuity?

*Paper of Jan Figel on the occasion of the International Day of Religious Freedom*



**HRWF (31.10.2016) - The annual International Day of Religious Freedom on October 27 is a reminder that freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) is neither a self-evident reality, nor a broadly winning international trend. Quite the opposite is the case, since the actual tendency is negative.**

This essential, universal human value is currently seriously restricted or attacked in the majority of the world's countries and territories representing 74% of the total world population (Pew Study Center Report, 2013). The day also reminds people of the hard, long, often bloody road from serfdom, deep societal divisions, sectarian hatred, and violent oppression against efforts to form free, pluralist and tolerant societies respecting the rule of law, human rights and basic universal values. No society is the perfect role model in this, but we learn as we go. Many peoples, communities, leaders and governments in Europe, Asia, Africa, Americas, Australia and Oceania struggle to improve the quality of democracy, to embrace and care more about these principles and values. Many dictators, autocratic regimes and violent groups struggle in the opposite direction: they proclaim rule without law instead of the rule of law; the power over people instead of the service to people...

While more than 84% of people in the world can be described as "religiously affiliated" (ibid.), FoRB is more widely applied. It is a fundamental freedom relevant for all, as it also covers the rights of atheists, agnostics, and non-believers. The **right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or conviction is linked to the freedom of expression, of assembly and other important civil and political rights. FoRB is a**

**litmus test of all human rights**, because when the religious freedom is missing then other civil freedoms are missing as well.

**A culture of human dignity is inconceivable without FoRB.** In my homeland of Slovakia, then Czechoslovakia, the struggle to overcome the totalitarian, communist regime peaked after Bratislava Good Friday 1988, when a peaceful prayer manifestation of citizens in the center of the capital city with requests for religious and civil rights was brutally attacked by police forces. Afterwards, a trend towards "Velvet revolution" and overall political change in 1989 became unstoppable.

Freedom is not purposeless and cannot survive without shared responsibility. Therefore, claims for more religious liberty are in my mind implicitly linked to active engagement of religious leaders and communities for peace, justice, human togetherness and solidarity. This is very much needed in the 21st Century. Since 1915-16, the systematic extermination of 1.5 million Armenians, which constituted the first recognized genocide of the 20th Century, mankind went through similar horrors on religious, racial, national or ethnic foundations in many parts of the globe - in Nazi and Soviet concentration camps, gulags and mass graves, in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, etc. Unfortunately, the **"Never Again" promise from the Nuremberg Tribunal of 1946 was broken repeatedly, again and again. We abandoned commitment to prevent genocide or inhumane treatment too often.** In reality, people in need have been abandoned as well as those who have been persecuted for their religion, conviction, race or ethnicity.

The current systematic murder, torture, enslavement, kidnapping, raping and persecution of religious and ethnic minorities on territories dominated by the "Islamic State" constitute the very same type of the greatest crime - genocide. This position was strongly expressed by parliamentary bodies of the Council of Europe, EU, USA, UK and Australia. Thus, a very timely and alarming question arises: "Shall the century of genocides end or continue?" After Christians, Yezidis, Shia-Muslims and some other communities in Iraq and Syria, who will follow next? The answer is crucially important and commitment is decisive. I am sure with many like-minded supporters, that a better century is possible. A more human century is our moral obligation! If we want to share more peaceful and better times, we have to prevent that repetitive tendency, prevent returns of inhumanity. This means to stop persecution of innocent people and to help voiceless and defenseless victims, and to finally bring perpetrators of crimes to justice. **Ignorance, indifference or fear helps fanatics and perpetrators of crimes; our silence hurts the victims.**

Besides genocidal persecution there are many other forms of religious oppression - blasphemy laws, anti-conversion laws, sectarian violence, totalitarian regimes which try to eliminate religious manifestations and freedom of conscience and conviction for the sake of their ideology and uniformity. Already Marx and Lenin despised religion as "the opium of the people". And they have created their own political religion, a new coercive and militant ideology. The major dictators of the 20th century - Hitler, Stalin, Mao Zedong, Pol Pot - all have something in common: They fiercely suppressed FoRB.

Without understanding the aims, structure and effects of religions, including the abuse of religion, i. e. by Islamist terrorists, we cannot understand what is going on in our world. Subsequently we cannot find efficient solutions that help society to recover from inter-religious strife. The promotion of FoRB, an ethic of responsibility, and education for living in diversity is the principal way to tackle religious fundamentalism, violent extremism and terrorism.

**When there is indifference, ignorance and fear become the allies of evil. But when we continuously cut the roots of indifference, ignorance and fear, a culture of human dignity for all and everywhere may grow and bear positive fruit in our century.**

***Jan Figel' is the Special Envoy for promotion of FoRB outside the EU.***

27 October 2016

See interview of Jan Figel in Christianity Today (27 October 2016)

**Religious freedom is a litmus test of overall freedom, says EU Special Envoy**

<http://www.christiantoday.com/article/religious.freedom.is.a.litmus.test.of.overall.freedom.says.eu.special.envoy/99102.htm>

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## **Videos of Jan Figel, EU Special Envoy for FORB outside the EU, about his mission**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hYOg5aSaxdA>

<https://youtu.be/OxB0-nEq52g>



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## **HRWF Annual Report on Freedom of Religion or Belief presented at the European Parliament in Strasbourg**

HRWF (11.05.2016) - Willy Fautré and Mark Barwick of Human Rights Without Frontiers (HRWF) presented the organisation's 2015 Report to the Working Group for the European People's Party (EPP) on Intercultural and Religious Dialogue, meeting on the 10th of May in Strasbourg. The report, entitled "Religious or Belief Groups under State Oppression," documents over 1500 cases of prisoners belonging to 15 minority groups[1] in 20 different countries[2].

Mr Fautré commented that the religious or belief communities that have been targeted by state oppression share one common denominator: "Regardless of the country where they are persecuted or the regime that oppresses them, they are wrongly perceived by the state as a threat to the identity of the nation, a threat to security or a threat to the territorial integrity of the country."

Article 18 of the ICCPR guarantees the freedom to practice a religion or belief of one's choice "either individually or in community with others."

"This community dimension is present in most religions and shapes profoundly religious identity," said Mr Barwick, "and that can make governments uneasy. It can trigger actions to monitor, control, ban and even suppress that community by violent means and consequently anyone who is associated with that community."

Such suppression of religious identity can contribute to radicalization, it was pointed out, especially among disaffected youth of targeted minorities. However, when religious identity is recognised and respected, this can open the door to greater understanding and be a catalyst for building social cohesion.

"If such prejudices could be uprooted," added Mr Fautré, "trust could be restored and the plight of these vulnerable minorities could be dramatically alleviated."

The full report report is available [here](#).

The List of Prisoners country by country and denomination by denomination is available [here](#).

[1] Ahmadis, Atheists, Baha'is, Buddhists, Erfan e-Halghe, Falun Gong, Jehovah's Witnesses, Orthodox, Protestants, Roman Catholics, Said Nursi Followers, Shias, Sufis, Sunnis, Tablighi Jamaat

[2] Azerbaijan, Bhutan, China, Egypt, Eritrea, Indonesia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Laos, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Korea, Sudan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Vietnam

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## **Figel appointed envoy for promotion of religious freedom**

By Martin Banks

EU Today (06.05.2016) - European Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker had appointed the first Special Envoy for the promotion of freedom of religion or belief outside the European Union.

Former European Commissioner Ján Figel' assumes this new role as of today for an initial mandate of one year.

Speaking at the Vatican on Friday on the occasion of the award of the Charlemagne Prize to Pope Francis, Juncker announced his decision to appoint Figel' (former European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth from 2004-2009) as the first Special Envoy for the promotion of freedom of religion or belief outside the European Union.

Juncker said: "Freedom of religion or belief is a fundamental right which is part of the foundation of the European Union. The persistent persecution of religious and ethnic minorities makes protecting and promoting this freedom inside and outside the EU all the more essential. I trust that Ján Figel', our Special Envoy, will help us in this endeavour, sharpening our focus and ensuring that this important issue gets the attention it deserves".

The European Parliament supports and has called for this initiative in its Resolution of 4 February 2016.



Given the importance of promoting and protecting freedom of religion or belief outside the EU in the context of the European Union's dialogue and assistance programmes with third countries, the Special Envoy will serve as Special Adviser to the Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven Mimica. The one-year mandate is renewable.

Figel "brings extensive experience in European and international affairs."

He served as European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth from 2004 to 2009 and was First Deputy-Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic from 2010 to 2012.

As part of his mission, Figel "will present a report in the context of the on-going dialogue between the Commission and churches and religious associations or communities, which is led by First Vice-President Frans Timmermans.

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## **Christian migrants find discrimination follows them to Europe**

World Watch Monitor (17.02.2016) - Christians among the thousands of Middle Eastern migrants who have fled to Europe have discovered that a familiar burden has followed them: religious harassment.

Some Christian migrants have been subjected to discrimination, harassment and violence from Muslim migrants with extremist views. One Iranian convert to Christianity was murdered.

The phenomenon has been observed in various locations across Europe, including in the camp of Grande-Synthe in northern France, where Iranian converts have been targeted by migrants from Iraq.

The situation has raised great concerns among local churches, which are now supporting migrants by supplying them with food, clothing, and, in some cases, even shelter.

It all started at the turn of the year, recalls Philippe Dugard, the Pastor of Église Evangélique du Littoral, or EEDL, a church in the neighbouring town of Saint-Pol-sur-Mer, which has spearheaded the relief effort in Grande-Synthe.

"Between November and December, there was a group of Iranians who confessed their belonging to Christ, who started to attend our church. Some were Orthodox, while others said they were Christians but were not truly converted. But we got to know them, and we felt they had a real spiritual thirst," he said.

"And then one evening [14 December], we were informed that two of them were stabbed and the whereabouts of a third one was unknown.

We then said that as Christians we cannot leave them alone in that situation, and the victims themselves told us that they no longer wanted to stay in the camp, as they felt threatened."

The incident marked the beginning of EEDL's support for migrant victims of persecution.

For the next few days, the victims were put up in hotels, before they were moved to a church in Dunkirk, the closest city to the camp.

Just one of the victims from the initial group remains, a 29-year-old who wished to remain anonymous.

“Generally the Kurdish mafia in the camp are against Christians,” he said. “When we gave our money to them for them to help us to go to England, they didn’t help us and they just stole our money and did not give it back. Then they attacked us and called us *kafir* [infidels] and dirty. They came and cut me with a knife and they beat my friends.”

He said there are still some Christians in the camp, but that many are too scared to speak about their faith.

“Yes, there are still some Christians there in the camp,” he said, “But they don’t prefer to stay there beside these strong Muslims. They are so racist, they just want to clear the camp to be without Christians.”

He added that a mosque has been created in the camp, and that the Call to Prayer resounds around the camp every day, but unlike the nearby Calais camp, there is no church.

### ***An explosive cocktail***

Located in the northwest of France, beside the English Channel, the camp of Grande-Synthe hosts around 2,500 to 3,000 migrants – mostly Kurds from Iraq and Syria, but also some Iranians.

Tensions and other forms of violence are common in the camp, said a social worker, who wished to remain anonymous for fear that the report could impact upon his work with the Christians.

Ethnic differences have created tension in the camp between the Iraqis and Iranians, of whom there are only around 50. The thousands of Iraqi Kurds are mostly Muslim, while some of the Iranian minority are Christians.

Some of them attend local churches secretly, because they are scared of the Muslim migrants and smugglers, who hold sway within the camp. Night raids, theft and violence are among the common threats.

On the night of 14 December, a knife attack left several Christians injured. One of them, a 19-year-old named Mohammad, was murdered. The local police were informed and an investigation is underway. Police did not respond to World Watch Monitor requests for information about the investigation.

A staff member at the Mayor’s office in Grande-Synthe said there is no security problem in the camp, which she said is open to external visitors. However, police now patrol the entrance.

On 26 January, a shooting between rival gangs of smugglers erupted, prompting a huge police deployment around the camp. Security checks are now carried out at the entrance of the camp, and visitors must acquire prior authorisation from the Mayor’s office.

There are some who fear members of the so-called Islamic State may be among the migrants, intent on radicalising other migrants and imposing Sharia inside the camp.

### ***A settled tension***

Two months after the attacks against the Iranian migrants, the tension has settled, according to Dugard.

The majority of the victims of the December attacks have moved on. Some managed to reach England, their preferred destination, while others, tired of waiting for a hypothetical crossing or because of a lack of financial resources, returned to Iran. Others have left for other European destinations, with the hope of reaching England another way.

"Sometimes they just won't show up at dinner time, even though we have already laid the table," said Dugard. "They are always in search of new routes because the passages via Calais and Dunkirk seem completely blocked.

"But in the meantime, other refugees, including moderate Muslims who heard about the support provided to the Iranians, have now arrived."

A group of about 10 migrants, only one of whom professes a Christian faith, are currently staying in a church in Dunkirk. A non-religious Iranian in his 30s, who identified himself as Max, complained of the poor conditions and lax security of the camp. A fellow Iranian, a Muslim man in his 20s who identified himself as Farhad, agreed.

"The living conditions in the camp are deplorable," he said. "It is no place for humans. It is very cold and people fall sick easily."

### ***Churches overwhelmed***

Local churches are struggling to cope with the demands being placed upon them, as they seek to support migrants of all faiths and none.

What started as an emergency has become a long-term commitment, Dugard said.

"We are wondering: what is the best option for us? Do we have the spiritual, human and financial resources to continue this work, which is full-time social work?" he said.

"Yet the migrants are really suffering. They crossed a multitude of borders and faced various obstacles to get here, in the hope of a better life. But they realise that it is often hopeless to cross to England and have ended up living in precarious conditions often more difficult than in their countries."

Michel Varton, director of Open Doors France, added: "Many Christians amongst the refugees are fleeing persecution and discrimination. They are already traumatised by their terrible experience in the Middle East. Imagine their despair to realise that, once here in France, they are suffering the same discrimination and hate from fellow immigrants.

"The local churches have shown dedication to help the Christian refugees and those who are genuinely interested in the Christian faith. The authorities must allow them to have simple buildings where they can meet and worship God in security and make sure that values of freedom of belief reign in the camps. It's totally unacceptable that someone could lose their life for their faith once in France."

In addition to the lack of resources, there is a logistical problem, as different churches act without much coordination.

Moreover, various groups and associations from all over Europe are also providing assistance to migrants, which has only added to the pressure, said Dugard.

"If some groups are useful, others believe that they can save the world," he said. "They often come with very aggressive speeches, for two to three days, and then leave. In the

end, their actions are doing more harm than good, because after they leave it becomes difficult for us to do serious work.”

Talks are currently underway among churches, as they seek to create a regional platform, which would come underneath the umbrella of the Conseil National des Evangéliques de France, the national Evangelical Church network.

### ***Humanitarian disaster***

The Grande-Synthe camp stretches over 20 hectares (nearly 50 acres) of marshland. It is difficult to walk through the slippery mud without proper boots.

With thousands of people, including women and children, living in such unsanitary conditions, respiratory problems and infectious diseases are common, says Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders), which provides emergency care alongside Médecins du Monde (Doctors of the World).

According to MSF, a new camp, equipped with heated tents and located three kilometres from the current camp, will accommodate migrants in the coming days.

However, the migrant crisis remains a very complex issue, says Matthew Bosiger, the pastor of the Salvation Army Church in Dunkirk.

“They are a bit like in a prison,” he said. “It is good to try to improve their situation, but they have no plan to stay in France. The migrants have only one thought in mind: to cross the channel to England, at any cost.”

Many say they have relatives or friends already settled there and the living conditions seem very attractive – partly because many know a little English, but also because of the prospect of better economic opportunities. Smugglers take advantage of migrants’ desperation to reach the UK by charging them everything that they have, with no guarantee they will succeed.

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