

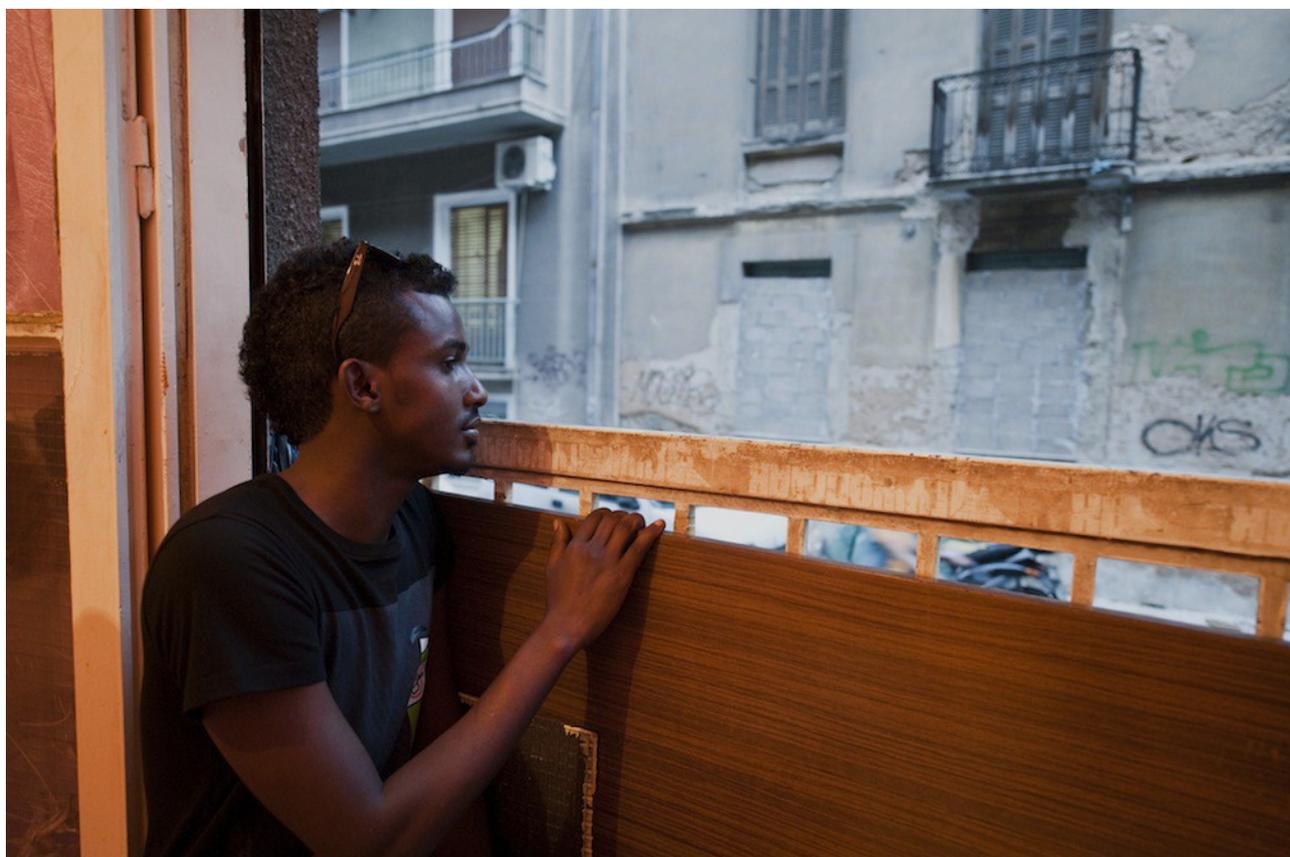
A R E E L N E W S P R O D U C T I O N

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## Into the Fire

The Hidden Victims of Austerity in Greece

**release date: 21<sup>st</sup> april 2013**



[intothefire.org](http://intothefire.org)

# Into the Fire: The Hidden Victims of Austerity in Greece

## contact

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## relevant links

Homepage <http://intothefire.org>

Languages: English, Greek, Arabic, French

Production <http://reelnews.co.uk>

Original subtitles and narration: English

Facebook <http://fb.me/intothefirefilm>

Other language subtitles (to be updated):

Twitter <http://t.co/Moax1smz>

Czech, Dutch, French, German, Greek

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## synopsis

Greece is in crisis. But the economic crisis is not the only one. An asylum crisis has gripped the country at this time of severe austerity. And it hits the most vulnerable: Refugees, including minors, who have left everything behind fleeing their countries to find safety.

In Greece, they are left destitute and on the streets, unable to apply for asylum and threatened by escalating racist attacks. Trapped in Greece, they have one message for Europe and the rest of the world: Let us leave!

## crowd-sourced distribution

*Into the Fire* is an experiment in distribution. These days, everyone is talking about crowd-funding. Part of the production of *Into the Fire* was also crowd-funded. We are going one step further: Not only the production, but also the distribution of *Into the Fire* is crowd-sourced. On 21<sup>st</sup> April *Into the Fire* will be released on simultaneously on various websites and platforms around the internet. An [incomplete list of participating organisations and bloggers](#) is available on the film's website.

The international subtitles have been successfully crowd-sourced using social media networks. A team of volunteers has translated the film into a number of languages and new volunteers are still adding more languages.

## production history

In April 2012 we went to Athens to make a series of short films about austerity. Before we left, we were contacted by a teenage refugee from Somalia. He emailed us with a list of problems that he and his friends were facing. We met them and filmed a short series of interviews about their deeply shocking experiences in Greece.

What we discovered during our one day of filming on the situation of refugees in Greece was unsettling. Once we got back to London, we secured additional funding, to be able to go to Greece a second time and take a closer look at what was happening. From that starting point, the film grew in an organic fashion that surprised us. It seemed to have a life of its own and drag us along in its wake.

We witnessed the aftermath of a racist attack that left a family's livelihood in ruins and a young man in hospital. We were invited into the crowded home of undocumented refugees. We spoke to refugees who have been waiting for months or even years to apply for asylum. We witnessed a prayer vigil for a young man stabbed to death. We spent a morning with homeless refugees in a park.

Along the way, we were impressed by the hospitality, passion and spirit of the people we met. We were saddened and shocked by the stories we were told. We were delighted at the support we received, many people have donated their time and their skills to make this film happen. We made this film on a shoestring. No one has been paid for their work. But we felt this story needed to be told.

## full synopsis

*Into the Fire* is an investigative documentary looking at the situation of refugees and migrants in Greece, in the face of severe austerity measures and rising racism. Refugees flee their home countries on the search for safety. Due to its land border with Turkey, Greece is one of the main entry gates into Europe. Once they have entered Europe, European legislation prevents them from moving on to other European countries. In Greece however, refugees are faced with deficiencies in the asylum procedure and appalling detention and living conditions.

Without housing, legal papers or support, they are faced with increasing and often violent racism. Attacks do not only target refugees, but any foreigner, including immigrants who have been in Greece for years. In spite of incendiary propaganda by the extreme right party Golden Dawn and a surge of murderous attacks, state and police seem unwilling to address the issue. Allegations of police sympathizing with Golden Dawn are an open secret. The refugees address their plea for help to Greece and all of Europe: "Let us leave!"

In the first part of the documentary refugees and migrants speak for themselves in moving testimonies on the living conditions and asylum crisis in Greece. The film moves on to document the aftermath of attacks, including visiting a victim in hospital and the Pakistani community gathering to send home to body of a young man who had been stabbed to death. Some who speak are in the country illegally without documents, others have been living in Greece for over a decade and run successful small businesses.

The second part revolves around racist rhetoric and attacks, with Greek citizens speaking up about the lack of response by the Greek state and police force. A Greek lawyer speaks about police brutality against his clients severe enough to be called torture. Now in their 90s, former resistance fighters during the Nazi occupation of Greece are participating in protests against neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party.

## outlook

We hope many people see this film. We opted to release it under a Creative Commons license that allows for non-commercial distribution and performance of *Into the Fire*.

Our distribution strategy is the compassion and outrage of everyone who hears about this story: We will work with everyone who is interested, online and offline, to organise screenings and publish the film online. The audience is no longer only the recipient of the media we produce, they have become an active participant, commentator and amplifier. We hope to harness that power to get word out about the conditions in Greece. Whether large websites, a personal blog, or social networks, as the film is embedded or shared, our audience will grow exponentially.

## filmmakers bio

**Guy Smallman** has previously made [15 Million Afghans](#) on unemployment in Afghanistan. He is a photojournalist who has worked in all over Europe, South Asia and the Middle East covering the Lebanon war in 2006 and the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan. His work has appeared in most UK national papers and periodicals. Also on the BBC, Channel 4 and ITV.

**Kate Mara** studied Film and Video at the University of the Arts London. After graduating with first honours she worked freelance in production and post production, specialising in participatory community media and documentary. *Into the Fire* is her first independent production.

film and production stills High resolution versions of these images are [available for download](#).



Homeless refugees and migrants sleeping rough in Alexandra Park Athens. © Guy Smallman



Refugees and illegal immigrants queue for registration papers in Athens. Each week up to 1,000 people queue at the government facility on Petrou Ralli road for up to four days. Only around 20 are issued with papers. © Guy Smallman



Athens Somali refugee house. The two bedroom house in Axernon, Athens was occupied by 8 Somali men and 10 Somali women. All of them were refugees from their war torn country. The house had been attacked by racists who threw bricks through the bedroom windows at night. © Guy Smallman



Prayer vigil for Shehzad Luqman in Kotzia square, Athens. The 26 year old Pakistani migrant was stabbed to death on 16.01.2013 as he was cycling to work. His family and friends from the local Pakistani community met in Kotzia square in Athens to pray over his body before it was repatriated to Pakistan. Two men one of them linked to the far right Golden Dawn party have been arrested for the crime. © Guy Smallman



Graffiti in central Athens, Greece. © Guy Smallman



Kate Mara hindered from filming by a police officer during a shoot in Greece in April 2012. © Guy Smallman