



@RAILSALE4CHANGE

CHALLENGES 2021



SAFE
PASSAGE



LEGAL ROUTES TO SANCTUARY



1. ON THE GROUND

- In Greece, there were already over **1,200 unaccompanied children** living without secure accommodation before the Turkey - Greece border reopened in February 2020.
- In Lesvos, **approx. 22,000 people were living in abysmal conditions in Camp Moria last August — seven times over its capacity**. In September, a fire demolished the camp leaving thousands - including many unaccompanied children - without basic shelter.
- In Northern France, authorities estimate approx. **288 unaccompanied children are sleeping rough**, with no access to running water, food or toilets.

Many of these children have family in another European country, including the UK, who they had a legal right to be reunited with until Dec 2020, when EU family reunification laws no longer applied to the UK. See point 3 for more information.





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2. COVID-19 & THE LEGAL SYSTEM IN EUROPE

As travel restrictions were set across Europe, even refugees who were accepted to travel to another country could not and had to stay in dangerous camps. Government departments shutdown, meaning there is now a large backlog of cases that need progressing.

Many children have turned 18 over this period and therefore can no longer access family reunion. We have seen a stark increase in demand for our services, doubling the number of cases taken on between April - July 2020 compared to the previous 4 months.

Covid-19 has put the asylum system in Europe under even more strain, leaving unaccompanied & separated children in Greece / Europe on their own in uncertain circumstances for far too long.





3. BREXIT

Sadly, one impact of Brexit is that the only **safe and legal route for a child to reunite with their family** in the UK - the EU family reunification programme - **has come to an end.**

On 31 December 2020, refugees lost the primary safe and legal route available to them to reunite with family members in the UK. This was an EU regulation that the government did not replace before the deadline date.

Refugees can apply to reunite with family through UK Domestic Legislation, which is much more difficult, and in many cases, impossible. This process is more difficult, complex, and does not function properly.





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IN SHORT...

COVID-19 & Brexit have brought about an immensely complex and unpredictable environment, and children's lives are caught in the middle.

Safe Passage must keep working to convince the UK Government to provide a viable alternative, otherwise many more children will be left prey to the devastating effects of criminal gangs on the peripheries of Europe.

Your support enables the Safe Passage team to help reunite a child with their family — giving them the loving home, happy childhood and bright future that every child deserves.

