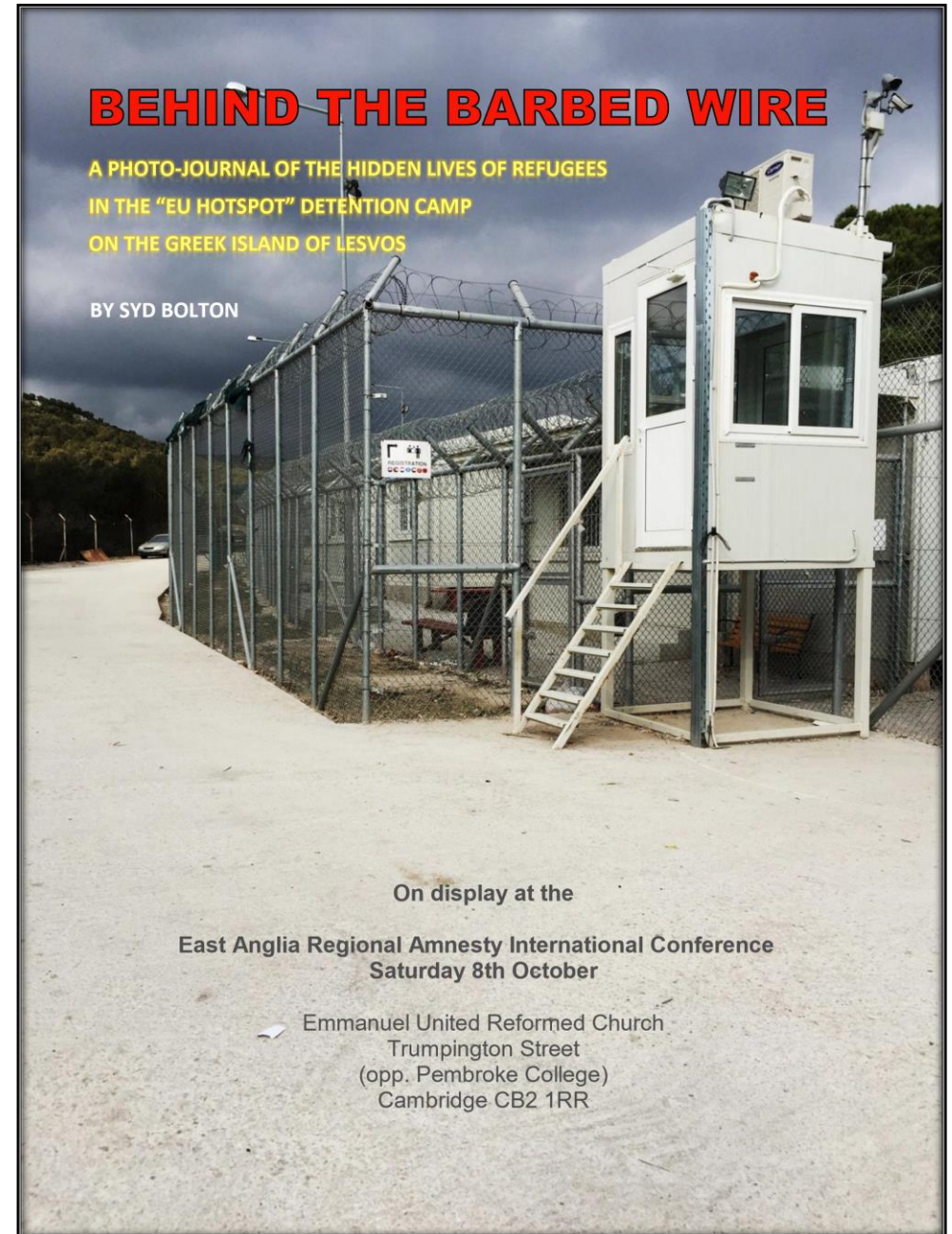




Syd Bolton is a children's rights solicitor (currently non-practising in the UK). He was the former co-director of the Refugee Children's Rights Project at the Coram Children's Legal

Centre, Children's Legal and Policy Adviser to The Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture, a solicitor at Islington Law Centre and at Wilford Monro Solicitors. He has litigated, written, spoken and delivered training extensively on the rights of children, in particular, refugee, asylum seeking and migrant children, both nationally and internationally. Amongst other roles he has been an executive committee member of the Immigration Law Practitioners Association, chair of the Advisory Board on Asylum and Trafficking to the Children's Commissioner for England and an Associate Member and Deputy Rapporteur of the International Association of Refugee Law Judges. He is now providing voluntary assistance to refugees and to Greek legal professionals and ngo's in relation to the present refugee situation there and also working on an international legal project to develop standards and practices in relation to the rights of dead and the bereaved migrants.



Over the last 12 months Syd Bolton a UK human rights lawyer has been visiting Greece as a volunteer and has documented the living conditions of the many hundreds of thousands of refugees forced to endure squalid and inadequate conditions in the EU funded “hotspot” detention camp at Moria on the Aegean island of Lesbos off the coast of Turkey.

These photographs were taken at Moria over a number of visits in the space of 12 months between August 2015 and September 2016 and cover a period of time during which the conditions and policies have been transformed from open mass registration and transit camps to closed, detention and deportation camps imposed on refugees by the Greek state and the institutions of the European Union.

Photography is forbidden in the detention camp and all the photos in this exhibition were taken necessarily clandestinely to reveal the reality of EU policy and its impact on the lives of refugees, many, many of whom are children, alone or with their families, not knowing what will happen next. The despair and distress in the detention camp pervades the place.

Despite the presence of a multitude of state and international agencies as well as humanitarian aid groups and NGOs the conditions continue to be abject and unacceptable to any basic notion of human rights and dignity. This is Europe in 2016.

‘Moria’ detention centre is on the frontline of the humanitarian crisis inflicted upon refugees arriving in Europe having already fled devastating conflicts in their home countries, like Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq and from many other countries where persecution and oppression have become the norm. Many have tragically died en route in flimsy boats at the hands of unscrupulous smugglers. Those images have been prevalent on the world’s TV screens and front pages. Living conditions in the refugee camps has not been reported so widely and remain a largely hidden scandal.

‘Moria’ is the heavily funded centrepiece of the European Union’s policy of deterrence and security at the borders of Europe, providing a “one-stop shop” for all arrivals and registration, security screening, admissibility and asylum decision-making, detention and deportation. It has an official capacity of around 1,500 but the population is generally around double that at any one time and growing as people continue to arrive daily on the island. At the centre of this heavily fortified camp is an inner detention compound, used to keep unaccompanied children in ‘protective custody’ in the absence of suitable alternative care arrangements.

Syd Bolton September 2016