



RIGHT NOW

APRIL 14, 2012

VOLUME 02, ISSUE 02

Interview with Juan Carlos Aviles

The National Officer on Human Rights and Peace of Mexico

Thought from the editor

The third edition of Right Now has a special theme. The subject of immigration is constantly in the news nowadays. This is the reason PAX 48 decided to dedicate this edition/issue to this subject. Asylum seekers do not belong to the regular protocol of immigration because most of them are fleeing from war or their home country has become to dangerous to live in. But do doctors know about their rights and current medical situation? Our aim is to inform medical students about medical care for immigrants. Because we, as future doctors, will have to deal with immigrants. Text: Illaa Smesseim

Article 1

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.



Picture: Esra Dede

Who are you and why did you become an IFMSA member?

My name is Juan Carlos Aviles, I'm 22 years old and I'm the current NORP of IFMSA-Mexico. I went on exchange in Norway in 2010. Because of the exchange, I wanted to become active within the IFMSA in my own country. Unfortunately there was no SCORP at my faculty at that time, that I decided to create one.

What is the current situation in Mexico?

Mexico is going through a rough time at the moment. The main issue is immigration. The immigrants travel from South America to North America in search of a better life. When they reach Mexico they are kidnapped, harassed and abused by the

police. There is no one watching over them. Next to that there is a drug problem. Gangs are smuggling drugs to the United States. Human rights violation by the army is also a big issue as well. In Mexico it is legal for the army to shoot at you. This causes them to shoot first and ask questions later. A while ago they even shot 2 students on their way home just because the army thought they were drug dealers. The politicians are very corrupt and I believe that society has to take control to try to improve the environment. I want to make a contribution as well. I want to change my country instead of just sitting there and doing nothing.

What is your main project at this moment?

Recently we have changed the way we work in Mexico. There are world days, days that

have a specific theme/subject linked to them to create awareness, but they do not really make a difference. Instead of focussing on those world days, we now focus on one issue for a six month period. At this moment we have a project about the elderly. We test them on dementia and depression and the staff at the nursing home are taught about these diseases. This way you can accompany as well as inform them. We also have a project on indigenous languages.

What are your hopes and expectations?

For SCORP, I want more activities with a bigger impact. Every year we have a clear list of goals. For me, I just want to be happy. I would like to gain as much knowledge as possible in my life. Text: Esra Dede

The haves and have-nots

In the Netherlands, the definition of illegal residence is the residence of aliens who do not possess a valid permit of residence and therefore are obligated by the law to leave this country. Rejected asylum seekers are transferred to a departure center, with the intention that they return to their country of origin. This stems from a policy of the government that it is the responsibility of the rejected asylum seeker to plan his departure from the Netherlands. Furthermore, only people with legal status are covered by the insurance companies. This means that illegal aliens are excluded from access to the health care package provided by the fund. In the Netherlands, the right of access to health care for undocumented migrants is based on the fact that medical doctors have a duty to care for any one regardless of whether they are insured and/or have a valid residency status. There is, however, one group in the Netherlands that is particularly susceptible to exclusion from medical services, they are the illegal aliens residing in the Netherlands. Doctors are allowed to provide them with legal subsidized medical treatment, but only in cases deemed a 'medical necessity'. This means that they do have access to a limited health care package. During the years the term 'medical necessity' appeared to pose difficulties in practices across the country. Currently illegal aliens have less access to mental, dental and preventive health care. The policy aims to provide a voluntary return for rejected asylum seekers living in the Netherlands.

Text: Illaa Smesseim



Picture: Mahlet Beyene

Column: A message to the bounty hunter

On March 21st, the day against racism, I went to a very special press release in the City Council of Amsterdam. Médecins du Monde is an organization established to improve healthcare for undocumented migrants. They have released a new brochure specifically for them. This information guide helps them to get assistance when they are sick, in trouble and lonely. The Mayor of Amsterdam was also at the press release, during his keynote speech he had a special message for the government. He said: "No illegal-quota in Amsterdam." What is an illegal quota? Illegal quota is a deal the Department of Immigration, Integration and Asylum Affairs and the police have made to actively track down 4,800 illegal immigrants in the Netherlands every year and deport them back to their country of origin. As I would call it: "a deal with a bounty hunter." Previously the term only referred to criminally active illegal immigrants but now being "illegal" has been made a crime by itself. Cameras flash in his direction as the Mayor smiles and shakes the hand of James, the illegal immigrant who was there to tell his story. "Let this be a message to the government", the Mayor concludes and disappears behind the council doors. I saw James looking through the brochure and I knew right away it will be of no use for him as long as the government wants to go through with this policy. The fate of James and thousands of others is to simply live in fear. The opposition is growing restless, the organizations are strating to fight back and I get more optimistic with every article I read about this issue. It will take a lot more mayors to oppose the government to stop this, but I believe this message from Amsterdam will be the start of the final blow to the bounty hunter.

Text: Esra Dede

Article 25

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.



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