

## Informal settlements of migrant workers in the agricultural sector: The ghetto of Campobello di Mazara

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The agricultural ghetto is situated in the contrada *Erbe Bianche* area of *Campobello di Mazara*, a small town in the west of Sicily. Less than 3 kilometres from the nearest local inhabitants, this agricultural ghetto is at the immediate periphery of the city. It lies between darkgreen olive plantation fields and a giant olive oil factory approximately 100 metres from the main highway which leads to the city in the olive (also Mafia) heartland of the Province of Trapani, Sicily. This agricultural ghetto is clandestine and unauthorised. (...) At the same time, Campobello di Mazara and its municipality produce a large amount of olive (oil) for local consumption and international exportation mainly in the names of 'Valle del Belice' and 'Nocellara del Belice' which are guaranteed by Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) trademarks. Every autumn, hundreds of sub-Saharan migrants are hosted in several agricultural ghettos in Campobello di Mazara for the olive harvest. These workers live and work under tough conditions and without basic services. The following testimonies give an insight into their life in Campobello di Mazara. They were collected within a broader research project during the 2018 autumn season olive harvest.

### **Interview with Kebis (Gambian)**

*"Bro, there is nothing to know about this ghetto. You can apparently see everything. No? We are here without anything. Nothing is here. We do not have houses, there is not water, no electricity, no toilets, no kitchen and no services close. It is cold here. It is also windy. It rains. It is dirty. You cannot sleep well, you adapt anyway. So, you want to know about how much I earn or how I work. You want to know if I earn some money and if I am worried about all these. It is out of respect that I speak to you about my personal situation. I do not speak to journalist or other arrogant people who come here and want to know what we*

*do here. I think it does not matter if I explain my situation to other people. Many times it is better I keep it to myself. If I work 10 or 12 hours every day and earn little less than 50 euros, it is not you who suffers. It is me who suffers. You do not suffer by listening to me.”*

### **Interview with Bai (Senegalese)**

*“After L called me from the asylum camp to come and work here, I left but as you can see, we can only sleep here and pay for the little services we cannot live without like food and water. We cannot pay regular rents without money or permits. It is twelve days since I had my last shower and 5 days now without changing my cloths. Well, it makes no sense changing cloths in this condition. I cannot wash them when they are dirty and even if I do, within a moment they will turn dirty again. There is no washing machine here and I have neither the time nor the energy to do all the washings needed. It is not easy as you can see it yourself, from any point of view we suffer and earn nothing. Nothing compared to the 8 or 9 hours doing this work.”*

### **Interview with Mam Sarr**

*“There is no electricity, or gas here. Can you see light here? There are less than 10 bulbs here for 600 and more people! These bulbs are located in the service points: small shops and mobile charging points. When you want to charge your mobile you take it there and pay 1 euro. We must collect some wood for cooking and also for warming ourselves. But this is only possible before going to sleep because you have to put out the fire. The cold here is too much. Blankets cannot warm you up. It is too cold and windy here. Naturally you get cold inside of you. You cannot adapt to the cold at work and especially because of the conditions here. Look at how open we are here! There is no condition for privacy at all. You do everything right in front of everyone’s eyes. Your brothers, uncles and some here can even be my father’s age mates. But we are constrained to do everything together. It is not nice.”*

### **Interview with Fall (Senegalese)**

*“This is my fourth season here. It is called Campobello. I called it ‘Campobrutto di Mazara!’ What is nice about this ghetto? What is nice about these employers? This year we are seven boys in our working group: two Gambians and the rest of us are from Senegal and Casamance. Our ‘Capo’ come for us with his car every day at 6 am. Even on Sundays which is a half day. We all have a onemonth contract. When we arrive at the field, we organise ourselves and exchange roles during the harvest. After spreading the net under the olive tree, one or two people climb, others collect and so on. After we cleaned it and filled in all the bags, we then carry them to the truck for transportation to the factory. We are paid 45 euros a day for working from 7 am to 16:30 pm. We take an hour break every day. That is when we eat the food, we brought with us. We can pray, make calls, and take a little rest before we start again. This is the routine. The contract guarantees us a permit of stay even if the work is very hard and the pay very bad. When we reach home, we have very little time for any other thing. So, we go to bed directly after dinner waiting to start another difficult day. Nothing can be more painful”.*

### **Interview with Serign (Senegalese)**

*There is no good thing about this ghetto. There is freedom? We are in a big darkness here in this Europe. This is the Europe for us! ‘Baye Fall’, we think it should change and that tomorrow everything will be better. Every day, it gets worse for us, for me. The basic things are absent. As you create your own tent from cardboards, you also need to get everything. Some of those things like water, a place to sleep with electricity, toilets and a kitchen could be provided for all the hundreds who live here. I do not think we can work, and we pay taxes without any benefit. This is the Europe for us. We have to create them, all that. We do not have that power. We do not even have good food. If you drink you must suffer. We suffer here for the basic things. Before you get anything, you must prepare for it. But as non-Italians, it means we must start everything, we*



*have to do more and more. We do not get documents, houses, jobs. We need to gather a lot of energy to start every day. You do not want to starve to death.*

### Further Literature and Information

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*More Information on modern day slavery:* <https://www.antislavery.org/slavery-today/%20modern-slavery/>