Reportage from Sicily: Dream Slaves.

The olive season in Sicily ended in November, during the harvesting season, between September and November/December, around 1,500-2000 people living in the informal camp for seasonal workers.

Gambian farm worker at the place where he lives for a few months, several tents was burnt during the night. He lost in fire all his documents, money and clothes. February 2018

The camp is located next to the village Campobello di Mazara and has been around for few years, and it’s one of dozens camps in Italy.

Informal camp, some of the jobless tenants warm them self during winter. December 2017

After harvesting season it was shelter for dozens of people who use to live there permanently. They are mainly men, refugees, asylum seekers and migrants from Western African countries, they work on nearby farms, harvesting olives and other vegetables and fruits, for very low money.

A group of homeless people from Senegal sitting on front of the fire in the cold winter night. February 2018

Out of season there is not so much work, and most of them living as homeless and working occasionally, a few days a month, for local farmers.

One of the camp tenant from Gambia, before going to look for a job. Every day morning, hundreds of people go to the streets and waiting for the farmers. February 2018

Most of people working at the farms came to Europe many years ago, some of them still doesn’t have all Italians documents like refugee status or permissions to stay and work in Italy, they are waiting for it for more than 3 years.

Bathroom on front of abandoned house for people who work on the farms. May 2018

At the beginning of 2018, local authorities decide to remove the camp and force homeless refugees and migrants to leave.

Dinner preparation in one of the abandoned house for several Gambians and Senegalis. April 2018

After Carabinieri (Italian Police) demolished all tents and sheds, dozens of people from camp moved to abandoned houses and factories located around the village. So they are living now without access to water, electricity, bathroom and toilets.

One of the farm worker wash himself before go to sleep.
February 2018

Morning cafe in abandoned house, made by jobless Gambian who suffer from deep depression after several weeks without job. May 2018

After olive season is finished, there is not so much work. Some people work only a few days in month for 20 Euro per day.

Every person who came to the camp build their shelter by them self. December 2017

Group of jobless people from Gambia and Senegal waiting for their phone to be charged. December 2017

Temporary mosque in the informal camp. In March 2018, local authorities came and demolished informal camp, force all people to leave their only shelter. February 2018

Making warm water for shower and clothes washing, it may takes a few hours. December 2017

Abandoned factory, house for dozens people from Gambia and Senegal. There is no water and electricity and closest shop is a few kilometers away. May 2018

One of the Gambian on front of his previous abandoned house, which was blocked by local authorities after they force him to leave his shelter. April 2018

New informal camp set up this October. Before olive season starts, it was place to live for around 500-600 people. October 2018

One of dozens abandoned houses around Campobello di Mazara. In some houses there is a few people only but in some of them several people live without water and electricity. April 2018

One of dozens farmers came to pick up migrants to work. Every morning they are waiting in front of informal camp. October 2018

One of the abandoned houses around Campobello Di Mazara. It’s home for several people from Gambia and Senegal who try to find some work at the farms. May 2018

About the author:
Marius Zsmiejek is a Freelance documentary and portrait photographer, born in Poland in 1978. His work is dedicated to expose issues of post-conflict territories and societies. Mariusz lives in Belfast since 2011 and has been documenting a long term project about the transition and everyday life in Northern Ireland during the peace process.

Since 2017 he work also on long term stories about daily life and condition of refugee and migrants from Western Africa living in Sicily.

His photographs were published in The New York Times, National

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