

### **Time Scale 1, Waleed (Sudan):**

*Waleed waited 14 months before being granted asylum in Denmark. Before that, it took him two years to make the journey from Sudan to Denmark. His wife and three young children are still in Sudan. Waleed was granted political asylum and his political profile means his family are still at risk. His youngest child wasn't yet born when he left the country.*

In September 2015, Waleed had his asylum interview where he submitted his marriage certificate and birth certificates for his children. He was granted asylum in November 2015 and 14 days later, he submitted an application for family reunification with copies of all the documents.

4 months later, he received a letter from the Danish Immigration Service requesting DNA tests for both him and his children. He calls and writes repeatedly, trying to find out where he and his wife can take the test. 4 months go by before he receives a letter stating that the test should be carried out at the Danish embassy in Addis Abeba, Ethiopia. A friend of the family contacts the embassy in Addis to book an appointment, but is told that it's no problem to take the test at the Norwegian embassy in Khartoum, where the family is staying. They do this 3 days later. Waleed gets a letter from the Immigration Service stating that he must take the test in Randers, but he lives in Odense, and when he contacts the hospital he is told that it's no problem to take the test in Odense.

At this point, 10 months have elapsed since he submitted his application. After this, nothing happens until October 2016, where he gets a letter informing him that the case will be decided on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2017 – a combined waiting time of **22 months**, despite the fact that the Immigration Service was in possession of all the necessary documents before he even applied for reunification. Waleed is still waiting.

### **Time scale 2, Daniel (Eritrea):**

*It took Daniel a year to make the journey to Denmark and he waited almost another year before being granted asylum. During this period, his wife and child managed to get out of Eritrea to Ethiopia, where they have waited for more than a year.*

In July 2015, Daniel submits an application for family reunification for his wife and 3-year-old child. The Immigration Service confirms receipt of his application a month later. In May – 10 months after submission – he gets a letter requesting a DNA test, but without informing him as to where the test can be taken. He first gets that information 3 months later – with a 14-day deadline. The family comes to the embassy and takes the test one week later.

In October, Daniel receives a letter telling him that he can expect an answer in July 2017, i.e. exactly two years after submission. Refugees Welcome sends a complaint concerning a number of cases, including Daniel's, to the Parliamentary Ombudsman. Two weeks later, in November, Daniel receives permission from the Immigration Service – 8 months earlier than the expected time period. His actual case handling time ends up being **16 months**.

### **Time scale 3, Noshin (Syria):**

*Noshin first applied for family reunification for another relationship in March 2013, but the relationship ended before the visa was issued. Before this, he had been in a relationship with Jinda for many years in Syria, and the couple was married in Iraq in August 2015. During the waiting time, Jinda lived alone in Iraq.*

In September 2015, Noshin submits his application for family reunification for his wife in person. The Immigration Service checks the application and it is approved.

He then hears nothing, and despite numerous inquiries as to waiting times via telephone and nyidanmark, he cannot find an answer. In June 2016, he gets a letter from the Immigration Service with a long list of questions and a request for documentation to prove they knew each other prior to the wedding. He immediately sends print copies of Facebook chats, telephone calls etc.

20<sup>th</sup> August, he gets a letter from the Immigration Service stating that his case is expected to be decided on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2016. However, a week before the expected date, a letter arrives from the Immigration Service telling him that his case has been delayed by 4 months and he can now expect a ruling on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2017, giving a combined waiting time of 19 months.

Noshin's case was included in the complaint submitted by Refugees Welcome to the Parliamentary Ombudsman. Shortly afterwards, Noshin was granted permission by the Immigration Service – 5 months before the expected date. His actual case handling time ends up being **14 months**.

### **Time Scale 4, Habtom (Eritrea):**

*Habtom waited 10 months for asylum and prior to that, he used more than a year to make the journey to Europe. In all, he was separated from his family for 39 months.*

1<sup>st</sup> June 2015, he submits his application for family reunification for his wife and 5 children (3-15 years of age), who at that point in time are living in a refugee camp in Ethiopia.

After 4 months, the Immigration Service requests biometric data, civil marriage certificate, translation of his wife's ID card or a copy of her birth certificate. Habtom gathers and submits the requested ID documents for his wife, together with the children's birth certificates, and informs them that he cannot provide a civil marriage certificate as the family left Eritrea illegally. Biometric data is provided at the Danish embassy.

In May 2016, he gets a letter from the Immigration Service, who now also requires a DNA test to be taken at the Danish embassy within 14 days. The family takes the test a few days later.

18<sup>th</sup> October, the Immigration Service writes that the case is deemed as being 'straightforward' and he can expect an answer in December 2016. This proves to be the case and the family is granted permission. The waiting time for this case ends up being **16 months**, even though the Immigration Service itself deemed it to be 'straightforward'. It's also difficult to see exactly what makes this case more straightforward than other cases from Ethiopia, which also contain the exact same elements.

### **Time scale 5, Hagos (Eritrea):**

Hagos submits his application for family reunification for his wife and children in August 2015. In November, the Immigration Service requests that he submit his civil marriage certificate. He replies that he can't acquire one, as he left Eritrea illegally.

21st July, the Immigration Service writes again, this time requesting DNA tests for the family, which they duly take within a week. Two weeks later, the Immigration Service writes that he can expect a ruling on the case in June 2017 – 22 months after he submitted the application. However, Hago's case is also included in Refugees Welcome's complaint to the Ombudsman in October and – as was the case with Noshin and Daniel – he is granted permission in November 2016 (7 month earlier than expected). His actual waiting time ends up being **15 months**.

### **Time scale 6, Mehari (Eritrea):**

*Mehari arrived to Denmark in July 2014 and was granted asylum in January 2015. His only child was one year old when he left and is now four and a half – the boy refuses to speak to his father on the telephone because he has lost faith in his father after such a long wait. His wife and child have now been living in a refugee camp in Ethiopia for 17 months. The state of emergency in Ethiopia has created great problems for many refugees in the country. Recently, Mehari's wife and child were detained for six hours as they tried to make the journey from the camp into Addis Abeba. They were only released because a family member stood guarantor.*

Mehari had a long wait before moving out of the asylum centre. He asks the Local Council about how to apply for family reunification and is advised to wait until the family has made it out of Eritrea. As soon as they manage to do this, in July 2015, he submits his application for family reunification.

In November 2015, the Immigration Service requests a civil marriage certificate and his son's birth certificate. He submits these two days later and his wife provides biometrics a few days afterwards. In December 2015, the Immigration Service writes that the case is now 'fully informed', but has been deemed to be 'complicated'. On nyidanmark, the Immigration Service writes that at that time, there was a service goal of 5 months, which would mean he could expect and answer in May 2016. However, in April 2016, he receives a letter from the Immigration Service. It has not been possible to live up to the service goal of 5 months and the new goal has been raised to 10 months, meaning the case won't be decided until October 2016.

At the end of September, the Immigration Service writes again. It has not been possible to decide his case in October due to the high number of applications, so he can now expect an answer in February 2017, which would make it a waiting time of 19 months, 12 of which had elapsed since the last requested information has been provided. The case was decided shortly before the expected date, on 18<sup>th</sup> January. The combined waiting time ended up as over **18 months**.

### **Time scale 7, Kefete (Eritrea):**

*Kefete was forced to leave his wife and four children in 2012 and they are now living in a refugee camp in Ethiopia. It is now over 4 years since he has seen his family.*

He was granted asylum in Denmark on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2015 and not on 25<sup>th</sup> August, as the Immigration Service's Family Office wrote to him in a letter. He applied for family reunification in May of the same year.

10 months later, in March 2016, he gets a letter from the Immigration Service informing him that the case is considered as 'fully informed' and that he can expect an answer in December 2016.

In the meantime, a new letter arrives from the Immigration Service in October, a consultative procedure with a long list of questions, including some about his son from his deceased ex-wife. The boy now lives with his new wife and the younger children. One of the questions asks, "Why didn't you choose to take your family to Europe with you?". According to the Immigration Service's own statistics, currently 1 in every 22 perishes while attempting to cross the Mediterranean, so this question seems incredibly strange. Kefete answers the questions, politely and patiently. However, the Immigration Service writes again in December, with a new request for DNA tests for the whole family. The case has had three dots on the website since March 2016, which means that it is 'fully informed', but apparently the opposite was true.

So far, the case handling time is up at 19 months and the case hasn't been decided yet.

### **Time scale 8, Adhanom (Eritrea):**

*In September 2015, he applies for family reunification for his wife and 1 child and attaches his religious marriage certificate.*

In January 2016, the Immigration Service requests a civil marriage certificate. Adhanom replies that he cannot acquire one as he left Eritrea illegally. It then takes more than half a year for the Immigration Service to request DNA tests for the family at the end of June and two more months go by before they send information about where the test can be carried out.

At the end of November, the Immigration Service communicates that they now have all the relevant details necessary for handling the case and that he can expect an answer on 22nd August 2017 – in other words, **24 months** after the application was submitted. The screening period lasted 14 months.