



Maltese soldiers hold a coffin during the funeral ceremony of 24 people who died after a boat carrying migrants capsized off the Libyan coast. Photograph: Matthew Mirabelli/AFP/Getty Images

Weddeey: (my dear son)

I came to the same church your Dad and I got married. The same podium where our family's priest baptized you.

I remember the day you brought your future wife home and we all prepared your wedding. You asked to be married in that same church that holds so much of our family's history.

I am down on my knees holding the letter your sister sent from abroad. She told me that the photo attached might be you.

There is no photo of you dear son. I want to see your smile and all I see is the back of some foreign soldiers holding a coffin marked as "Body # 124".

Who told them that you do not have a name? This baptismal font I am staring at is my witness. I hold your birth certificate and then I look at the photo your sister sent. It is marked as "body # 124". How can that be you?

Your name is Awet, in English it means Victory. We named you for our hope to see our own victory over the enemy occupying our land.

Could the photo hold our neighbour's daughter remains? But her name is Rahwa (Serenity in our language). Or our friends' child that left with you? But, her name is Ahlam (Dream in Arabic).

It could be any of you and I am in pain for not having any news. I cannot accept for you to be marked with a number.

Body # 124! All of us parents gave you a name and raised you with hope to see you prosper in your future.

You all played together and eat at each house when hungry. Your laughter filled our house, and Rahwa's house and Ahlam's house. In all our houses silence now reigns.

You left to seek freedom and work. You promised that you will never forget your families.

We- the three mothers- are holding the same photo. **We wish that it is not our own child and hope is none of you.**

We sit next to the phone at home. We make sure the line is available. We pray you will call and tell us it was all a mistake.

Call my son. I am down on my knees in the same church that holds so much of our family's history. Ahlam's Mom is down on her knees with her forehead touching the floor and praying Allah that all of you are still together and will call soon.

We all pray that the photo showing "BODY # 124" is not related to any of our children.

You all had no other choice but to leave.

You all have a name. You all became a number.

Your Mother

November 6, 2015

Writing by: Aida



Women cry as the coffin of one of the 24 migrants drowned while trying to reach the Southern coasts of Italy is buried in L'Addolorata cemetery, in the outskirts of Valletta, Malta. Photograph: Alessandra Tarantino/AP

Photos: Google

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[Radio Erena: ቃለመጠይቕ ምስ ኣባ ሙሴ ዘርኣይ \(Interview with Aba Mussie Zerai\)](#)