**UNHCR’s Nansen Refugee Award 2016 – “Nansen winners 2016” international story ENGLISH**

**Title**: 2016 winner of UNHCR’s Nansen Refugee Award Profile and work of The Hellenic Rescue Team and Efi Latsoudi

**Origin**: To be updated

**Shot**: June 2016

**Sound**: English/Arabic

**Duration**: 06:56

**Location**: Lesvos and Samos, Greece

**Suggested *INTRO***:

A 2,000 strong volunteer sea rescue team, credited with saving thousands of lives during the 2015 refugee crisis, and a tireless human rights activist who provided a safe haven for hundreds of the most vulnerable refugees arriving on Greek shores, are joint winners of the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)’s Nansen Refugee Award 2016.

***VOICEOVER ONE***

In 2015, Greece experienced a refugee and migrant emergency as hundreds of thousands of people took often unseaworthy dinghies and boats to cross the Aegean Sea from Turkey. Freezing waters, fake lifejackets and surging storms all became risks worth taking. For many, the heroic humanitarian efforts of volunteers in Greece turned out to be the difference between life and death.

Konstantinos Mitragas on behalf of the Hellenic Rescue Team (HRT) and Efi Latsoudi from PIKPA village on the Greek island of Lesvos were both chosen as this year’s Nansen Refugee Award winners for their dedicated volunteer work during the 2015 refugee crisis.

***NATURAL SOUND*:**Coastal sounds, Efi and Konstantinos together

***VOICEOVER TWO***

Efi Latsoudi is the softly-spoken but quietly powerful human rights activist behind PIKPA village. On Lesvos, PIKPA has provided a safe and welcoming environment for refugees on the island. Opened in 2012, the former children’s summer camp has become a haven for some of the most vulnerable refugees on the island, including women who had lost their children during the crossing, and adults and children with physical or learning disabilities.

During the peak of the crisis in 2015, PIKPA was hosting around 600 refugees a day, despite a capacity of just 150, and distributing over 2,000 meals each day. Efi estimates that 30,000 people have been supported at PIKPA since 2012.

***SOUND: Efi Latsoudi (English)***

***I was always dreaming that we can have a place that refugees will arrive, they will have a fair and decent treatment.***

***I think the reason that Greek volunteers and international volunteers are coming here every day has to do with solidarity and the power of solidarity and the power of solidarity. It’s a huge injustice to die trying to save your life and your children and die in this friendly sea.***

***For me supporting refugees is not something exceptional, it’s something that we have to do, it’s something that we all share, it’s a very human thing, it’s very important to be there next to them.***

***VOICEOVER THREE***

PIKPA Village relies on both Greek national and international volunteers including a Doctor and Nurse team and a group of Spanish lifeguards, who volunteer to teach refugee children to swim and not be afraid of the water. For many children the lessons have given them new confidence and self-esteem after terrifying sea crossings from Turkey.

***NATURAL SOUND:*** Medical examination and swimming lessons

***VOICEOVER FOUR***

For 31-year-old mother of three Kinaz PIKPA village has become a sanctuary. Like tens of thousands of other Syrian refugees she made the perilous journey by boat from Turkey to Greece. When Kinaz and her children finally made it to Lesvos, they spent 55 days in the Reception and Identification Center in Moria, before being transferred to PIKPA where her son Jiwan could get the medication, care and treatment he needed and the family could live in safety, away from the bombs and bullets of home.

***NATURAL SOUND*:** Kinaz and her children in PIKPA

***SOUND: Kinaz (Arabic)***

***At PIKPA I felt relieved and at peace. It is a quiet and safe place. My son Jawal has cerebral palsy. They adjusted his medication and took care of him***

***Efi is an affectionate woman who understands everyone in the camp, all the refugees, she makes us feel like she is our mother.***

***VOICEOVER FIVE***

More than 2,000 volunteers make up the Hellenic Rescue Team and have been rescuing people from the Aegean Sea and Greek mountains since 1978. In 2015, the volunteers worked 24 hours a day, responding to endless rescue calls in the middle of the night. During this time they undertook 1,035 rescue operations, saving 2,500 lives, and assisted more than 7,000 people to safety.  In their tireless efforts to save so many people, Hellenic Rescue Team volunteers set an example to the world.

***NATURAL SOUND:*** HRT in the water and rescuing on land

***VOICEOVER SIX***

Konstantinos Mitragas, the Hellenic Rescue Team’s secretary-general, is a sea captain and a Thessaloniki businessman by trade. Like his colleagues, he works on a voluntary basis, overseeing everything from training to media relations.

***SOUND: Konstantinos Mitragas (English)***

***2015 was the most difficult year that we have ever faced as a rescue team. We lived the absolute horror. That was a year with thousands of people risking their lives at sea on unsafe, unseaworthy boats, and without wearing lifejackets or wearing fake lifejackets. It was clear to all of us, all 2,000 volunteers, that our main purpose was to save lives wherever they were needed.***

***There were many casualties, that was the most difficult part that we had to face and among them many children, which is the thing that affects you mainly, when you are losing a child.***

***Actually to be a volunteer in general this has to come up from your heart. If we speak about our volunteers, I can say that they are heroes.***

***VOICEOVER SEVEN***

Yanis is a 33-year-old paramedic who volunteers with the Hellenic Rescue Team on the Greek island of Samos. Along with the rest of his team, he has been battling to save lives at sea for the last seven years.

***SOUND: Yanis (English)***

***2015 was a very difficult time. It brought us to our limits. We have never seen these numbers of people arriving, and we were almost out every day rescuing people from mountains and the sea, so it was really difficult.***

***I don’t think you can describe it with words, you have to live it. You’re searching for this person, and suddenly when he sees you and you say everything is going to be alright, they just like relax and let you help them so that’s our reward. It’s not money, it’s not thank you, it’s nothing, it’s that, that moment there.***

***SUGGESTED OUTRO***

Konstantinos Mitragas and Efi Latsoudi will receive the Nansen Medal at a ceremony in Geneva, Switzerland on the 3rd October. UNHCR’s Nansen Refugee Award recognizes outstanding dedication and service to forcibly displaced and stateless people.

**Shotlist**

00:00 UNHCR footage of 2015 arrivals to Greece footage

00:26 Vast pile of lifejackets discarded on a hillside in northern Lesvos

00:27 Efi and Konstantinos walking around the lifejackets

00:48 Shots of Efi and refugees in PIKPA village

01:38 Efi interview to screen

02:23 Medical team at PIKPA village

02:40 Lifeguards giving swimming lessons to refugees on Lesvos beach

02:47 Shots of Kinaz with her family

03:01 Kinaz interview to screen

03:37 Shots of Hellenic Rescue Team boat at sea

4:07 Shots of Hellenic Rescue Team rescue footage at sea

04:15 Shots of Hellenic Rescue Team mountain rescue

04:30 Shots of Konstantinos aboard HRT boat

04:50 Konstantinos interview to screen

05:53 Shots of Yanis on HRT boat

06:17 Yanis interview to screen