

PRAHA – VIENNA – CAIRO – N'DJAMENA – MOUNDOU

On the road to the south



It's night, my passport was confiscated at the airport, I'm driving around Cairo in a car with Mohammed, Mohammed and a third Mohammed, and I feel like I'm dreaming... This can't be reality...

And I feel the same way a few days later, again without my passport, on the road between the capital city of Chad and the south of the country. After driving for a while, we stop so that Mamut with Usman, Muslims, could pray, I get out of the car, and I can't believe my eyes, as I'm stepping between the plastic wrappers, little kids grab me by my hands, and as I jump away from the ferocious camel, I don't want to believe that I'm not dreaming...

BUT LET'S NOT SKIP AHEAD, LET'S START FROM THE BEGINNING!

HOW IT ALL STARTED

Dear family, dear friends, don't worry, when I write you this JET news, it means I made it here safely! And where to? To the Gabriel Balet Center in the village of Ku Jericho near Moundou in southern Chad, Africa. I'll be spending the next few months here, helping out at the health centre! And who makes it possible for me to be here? The centre was founded and is run by the Christian community Chemin Neuf, which I introduced to you in my first JET news! I wrote it actually only in Czech, but to see the photos from my formation in Spain, you can find it [here](#).

In one sentence, just as orders and congregations were formed in the past, now communities are being formed. Chemin Neuf, originated in France, is active in many countries around the world (yes, even in the Czech Republic and Chad), unites celibates and married couples, is originally Catholic with a vocation to ecumenism (brothers and sisters are also of other Christian denominations than Catholic). And in addition to the commitment to life, it is possible to participate in various programs in the community, such as weekend retreats or volunteering for a year in a program called JET. If you have any questions, be sure to email me, I'd be happy to answer them!

THE END! OR THE BEGINNING?

FROM SPAIN HOME FOR A SHORT WHILE

That was the headline of my first JET news I wrote to you from the monastery of Zaragoza. And for the sake of completeness, we'll go back there for a few moments! At the end of the three-month formation that prepared us for our missions, my fellow JETs and I headed to the Las Bardenas desert. It was as if from there we were already kind of looking out on the deserts of our destinations!

*The desert hides beauty
in simplicity*



THERE IS A TIME FOR EVERYTHING, A TIME TO WEEP AND A TIME TO LAUGH, A TIME TO EMBRACE AND A TIME TO REFRAIN, A TIME TO MOURN AND A TIME TO DANCE, A TIME TO BE SILENT AND A TIME TO SPEAK. SO TIME HAS COME TO LEAVE ZARAGOZE, SPEND CHRISTMAS AT HOME, SAY GOODBYE TO EVERYONE AND HEAD OF TO THE SOUTH!



JETs 2022.

At the end we had a festive mass where we were sent to the missions. Very nice moment! And where are the others going? Check out the map!

MARTINIQUE
Claire

LIBAN
Minitille

TEREZA
Tchad

Côte d'Ivoire
Anna & Clémentine

CONGO
Sybille & Nico

LISE
BRESIL

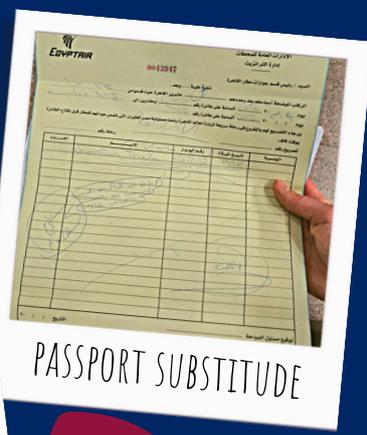


CAIRO

I haven't even warmed up at home, and I'm already on my way to countries where I'll warm more than enough. I'm off to **Vienna**, food to go from my mom, my dad is driving me, thanks parents, you're the best anyway! <3 In Vienna, after a while of arguing with the lady at the check-in desk about the fact that I really don't want to pick up my luggage in Cairo (if the lady had chosen to speak either German or English, it would have been a bit easier), I get to the gate, buy the most expensive water in my life (who knows what it will be like in Cairo?) and after a while of waiting, **I take off to a new adventure! I had no idea what was waiting for me.** Sitting next to me on the plane is **Mohammed**, an Egyptian who moved to Vienna and started a restaurant there. We chat for a while, he is fascinated by my plan to volunteer in Chad! And a little less by my plan to wait for 14 hours at the airport... "You can't do that, you have to go to the hotel!" I try to resist but to no avail. However, on arrival, thanks to his Arabic, it turned out that with Egypt airline, during the long layover in Cairo, I am entitled to hotel accommodation included in the price of the ticket! Of course, nothing's for free, this is gonna cost me my passport. The clerk speaks almost only to Mohammed (after all, I am a woman). Well, in the end, because I kind of think I'm dreaming, he hands me a **scribbled yellow paper** of a little more than A4 size instead of my passport. I try to protest, it's all in Arabic! The clerk replies with a straight face, "But your whole name is in your language!" I have nothing to say to that and obediently walk out of the airport. Unfortunately, the hotel shuttle bus has not arrived, however, Mohammed's two friends, Mohammed and Mohammed, are waiting for him. So they offer to drive me to the hotel. A moment of reflection, **where on the line between trust and irresponsibility I am....?** And then I'm in their car, Mohammeds got me to the hotel safely, thanks, guys! And if any of you are visiting Vienna, be sure to stop by L'inizio kitchen and say hi to Mohammed!



WITH THREE MOHAMMEDS



PASSPORT SUBSTITUTE

"YOU KNOW WHY I'M HELPING YOU? BECAUSE YOU'RE GOING TO HELP. AND PEOPLE SHOULD TO HELP, THAT'S THE WAY THE WORLD SHOULD BE."

AIRPORT ENCOUNTERS

What struck me about the hotel was the fact that I was **one of the very few women**, that occur there. And together with Miss from the reception desk, **the only one not covered...** Strange feeling! I finished my dinner, which was also part of the hotel surprise, and enjoyed the bed and bathroom instead of the airport benches for a few hours. **When we don't take ordinary things for granted, they become a miracle!**

In the morning, unfortunately, the shuttle bus didn't come again, before I managed to convince the guy at the reception to call me a taxi, half an hour passed when he finally called the shuttle bus driver with his smiling "Don't worry, trust me, it's ok" (probably the only sentences he knew in English). On the way, I met **Connor** from England who helped me get my passport back at the airport. His passport was fascinating, so full of different stamps! After all the inspections (the men were very interested in my flute, I had to take it out of the case, open it, two of them looked at it, then a third came, for a while I wasn't sure if they would confiscate it or if they would want me to play it :D, then such a queue formed behind me that they let me go with the flute), I was sitting at the gate, and we were exchanging glances with one lady. It's clear that we have something in common (no, I don't mean that we are one of the few women, the only white women, the only ones not being covered completely). We get to talking, her name is **Anigna**, she's Swiss and she's going to Chad on a **mission with Doctors Without Borders** as a nurse! She's been on quite a few missions so far.



CONNOR FROM THE UK

"I OFTEN TRAVEL TO ARAB COUNTRIES, I KNOW THAT WHEN YOU HAVE A MAN BY YOUR SIDE, BUSINESS GOES FASTER!"

ARRIVAL

The second aircraft has a very **interesting crew**, a group of about ten Asians in anticovid overalls and shields, Arabs with white dresses down to the ground and scarves around their heads, a few Europeans, a few women who look like African princesses with lots of handbags and plastic bags. And then me and Anigna. Such an experience... The sun was shining so brightly **over the Sahara** that we had to close all the windows in the plane. It's interesting that in 3,5 hours I flew over half of Europe, now in 4,5 hours only Egypt and half of Chad, flying over the Sahara... We're landing in N'Djamena, obligatory covid antigen, Anigna came out with a headscarf on so she taught me how to tangle it so it doesn't fall off. We go through **immigration** together, say goodbye outside, wish each other a good mission, a **Doctors Without Borders** car's waiting for her, **Sister Agnieszka and Priest Elysé** are waiting for me.



ANIGNA ON A MISSION MSF

"A WORD THAT OFTEN HELPS ME IS TIA = THIS IS AFRICA. WHEN THERE'S SOMETHING I DON'T UNDERSTAND OR IT ANNOYS ME, I JUST SAY THE THREE LETTERS AND IT'S BETTER"

The journey from the airport was unforgettable! One **can't take pictures much here**, especially if they have fair skin like me! :D So I just watched with my eyes (and sometimes my mouth) wide open. So much life along the main road, lots of **motorbikes** and lots of people on them (yes, all **without helmets**). Motorbikes parked along the road, with men of all ages lounging on them and chatting. Women walking by, a **bucket of water, wood or whatever on their heads**, a child strapped on their back.



THE MAIN ROAD



STREET SELLERS



N'DJ AIRPLANE VIEW

Soldiers with **submachine guns** patrol along the **presidential palace**. You can only see the walls (no photos allowed here!). Cars and motorbikes honk, **clouds of dust** rise from the side streets. Swarms of **bats** fly over the trees even in the daytime! The sun is beating down.

N'DJAMENA

CAPITAL OF CHAD FULL OF LIFE, DUST AND UNFORGETTABLE PHENOMENONS

I live here in a **community house**, I feel safe here. The current president's brother has a house right next door, I can hear their kids playing sometimes! Every house has either high walls with barbed wire and a **security guard** or is not in good condition. Our guardians are named André (Christian) and Idris (Muslim, he lays out a rug in front of the entrance and prays when the call from the mosque comes). We have lots of local **grapefruit** here, I made juice out of them!



LOCAL GRAPEFRUITS



ANDRÉ IN FRONT OF THE GATE



THE OVEN



FOUR POSTER BED

I was interested in the **oven**, you have to strike a match at the bottom to **light the fire** to make it burn! The very next day it broke, the repairmen came. A long-time dream has come true, I have a four-poster bed! I mean, with a **mosquito net**, but it's pretty much the same!

Funny story, **sisters Rose and Jacqueline** needed to take a covid test. The first attempt in a tent on the sand in the middle of the garbage (plastic is everywhere) failed, so we went to the **military hospital**. Despite this photo looking scary, it's just the **queue for the covid test!** :D I was surprised to see all sorts of military patterns here. I was taken aback by one of the soldiers on guard, he smiled and asked, "Bonjour, ma soeur... Hello, my sister. Which religion are you?" I just look at him in confusion, Rose answers for me, Catholic. "And what race are you?" Well, I don't really know what to say to that, so they'll let us go. :D And the other **soldiers continue to look ahead uninterestedly, holding their machine guns.**



MILITARY NON UNIFYING UNIFORM

Although the street life of N'Djamena never ceases to fascinate me, I head **further south** to the city of **Moundou**. Chad is a huge country, **16 times the size of the Czech Republic**, with a population of just over 16 million! In the **north is the desert**, there is a very low population density. And besides, it's not the safest region either. **South** of the capital, the landscape is **gradually becoming greener** and greener. I have a journey ahead of me that I'll probably never forget... Here are some observations and many photos:

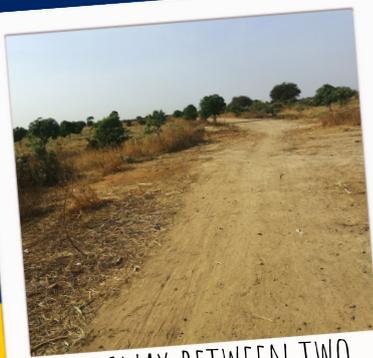


WAY TO THE SOUTH

We're being driven by **the driver Mamut and his brother Usman** (written Mahamoud and Ousman). After loading the car, **I made them laugh** by asking if my suitcase, which was on top, would fall off the back of the car. I didn't understand why... I understood on the way. Our, in my opinion, too full car was on average **18 luggage and 7 passenger less full than any we've ever met!**



OUR ALMOST EMPTY CAR



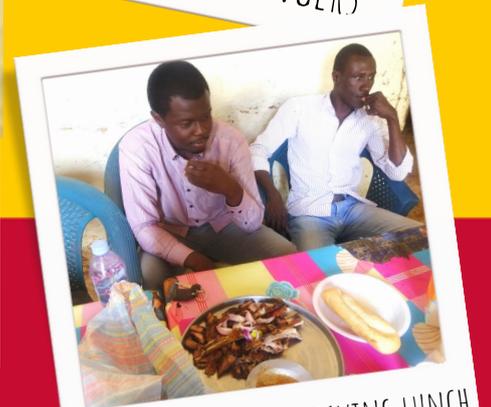
HIGHWAY BETWEEN TWO BIGGEST CITIES OF CHAD

And why is the journey **unforgettable**? 500 km, 10 hours on the road. That means an **average speed of 50 km/h**. No wonder - the road exists for 500 metres, then there's a tract where it just disappears. Of course, with a big step, you have to slow down to max 10 km/h. It's hard to tell how many traffic lanes exist, the **contraflow only exists when the oncoming car is really close...**

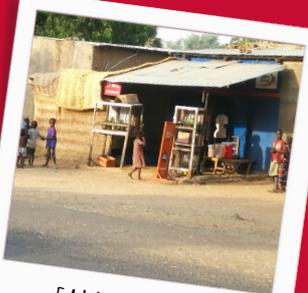
The journey consists of accelerating, decelerating, overtaking motorbikes and crowded minibuses crumbling along the way and other very **bizarre scenes, all to the sound of honking**. About halfway through my seatbelt got stuck, it wouldn't fasten. The surprising observation that I didn't need a seat belt in the back seat in Chad, nor the fact that no one else in the car was wearing one, didn't add much to my peace of mind... Nevertheless, we arrived well. Why? In the beginning, **Sister Marie Nadège**, who was travelling with me, said that we would entrust the journey to the Lord. Mamut immediately started stopping by the road, so we pointed out that **Christians can pray even while driving**. So Mamut and Usman at the front listen as we pray and add one decade of Rosary. Interesting, considering they are **Muslims!** We **stopped three times** during the journey for them to take out a rug and **pray towards Mecca**. So I believe it was thanks to all our prayers and mutual respect that we ended up arriving well!



COUNT THE PASSENGERS



MAMUT AND USMAN HAVING LUNCH



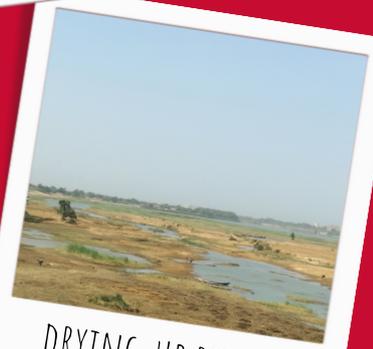
FAMILY HOUSE



TRANSPORT OF MATTRESSES



AVERAGE FULL MOTO



DRYING-UP RIVER



MOMENT PICTURE

Usman taught me how **Muslims tie the headscarf**, but it's the men's version. They say it's against the heat, but I only survived a few minutes in it! Along the way were **shelters made of plastic, sometimes metal fragments. Whole families live in them!** Further on, shelters were spaced farther apart and began to resemble huts, occasionally oblong, sometimes round, like a **Smurf village in an ochre edition!** Often **the roof was missing.** We also met some camels grazing by the roadside, tasted sesame with honey and sugar cane, the drivers had sheep meat in a local restaurant, I, seeing the level of hygiene, stayed with a baguette from the picnic, after all my stomach is not yet ready for such a dose of local bacteria.



OUR LUNCH PLACE



SUGAR CANE



FIND THE CAMELS



LESSON OF SCARF BINDING



COLUMNS OF SMOKE IN BUSH



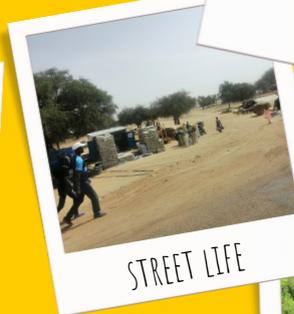
LUNCH TIME



SALE OF EVERYTHING



FIRE!



STREET LIFE



AT LEAST 15 PERSONS!



LITTLE LOADED MOTO

On the way, I see remarkable things, a **bush fire**, it scared me for the first time, but I was told it was normal here. I saw flames shooting from a distance and columns of smoke more than once. There are new and new people along the road, they stare at me through the car window, I stare at them, it's mutual. **I try to absorb how they live.** I am fascinated by the **sale of sweet potatoes, cassava, sesame and sugar cane on the ground** in front of the shelters amongst the sand and pieces of plastic... And I feel admiration for these people that they can live in these conditions!

Unfortunately, I had only one Kinedryl with me, the rest was left in the suitcase that really didn't fall down... But I made the trip anyway! And I was captivated by the **sunset**, big, red, just above the horizon, in fact much nicer than in the photo! I look forward to every single one I'll experience in this country!



AFRICAN SUNSET

Final destination - Ku Jericho

After a long journey, we reached our destination - the **house of the Chemin Neuf community in the village of Ku Jericho next to Moundou**, where I'll be living for the next few months! I have my room, yes, it has four brick walls, ceiling and floor! A **bed with a canopy**, as I call a mosquito net. I also have my own shower, the water only runs cold, after all, we are in one of the poorest countries in the world. I've met all the brothers and sisters who live here. And I also met Clotilde, my co-JET! The community in the village has started a school for the children in the area. I go there in the afternoons to help tutor children learning to write and count.

BY THE WAY, THESE THREE COLOURS IN THE BACKGROUND ARE FLAG OF CHAD. DID YOU KNOW THAT IT IS THE SAME AS ROMANIAN ONE?



My main focus is **helping out at the health centre**, which started as a small dispensary and gradually grew into what it is today. I am in awe of what the community has built here and how many people's lives it has already changed! I'll write more about it all in future JET news, but I can assure you now that medicine here is fascinating! Boy, 11 years old, **foot pierced 3 times through by a piece of wood**, ulcerating for a week before they came to us. A Muslim couple, **20 years of syphilis**, never cured. Plus their 7 children with various problems, we see this family here a lot now, they have gained confidence and may even get healed! Lots of **malaria**, the **children here are incredibly resistant to fever**, often coming by foot at **41° C!** It's not uncommon for them to get **cramps**, either febrile or due to malaria. A grain of **corn stuck in the cornea**. A mother who lost all of her 6 children as infants now believes her milk killed them, so she doesn't want to breastfeed her 7th baby. **Malnutrition**, kwashiorkor, bony chests and bloated bellies. After a few days of administrating **therapeutic milk**, they can even smile a tiny bit!

I LEARNED FIRST SENTENCE IN NGAMBAY: "MINGA BATÛ KARA". IT MEANS „I HAVE A CAT."



WE HAVE HERE A CUTE KITTEN CALLED EXAUÉ.



The adventure is about to start

So you've made it to **the end of my second JET news!** Please **take them with a grain of salt!** I've only been here for two weeks, and so far, I only see Chad **from the point of view of a tourist** who would like to be helpful... **I will need a lot more time to understand the culture, the mindset of the people, why things are the way they are!** If you want to get a picture of Chad based on my findings, please wait with your conclusions until the following JET news. I will try to share with you what I have discovered about this poor but beautiful country!

You can already look forward to a column on **gastronomy**, local currency, **diseases** and pathologies I would never see at home, **Ngambay language**, local **flora and fauna**, community life here in the house and life and hygiene outside. The **stories of mothers** who come with their newborns and infants for consultations. About the local **market**, where you can get just about anything if you know where to look, like Sister Marie Nadège. **And much more!**

AFTER THESE TWO WEEKS, I AM FILLED WITH EXPERIENCES AS THIS VAN WITH BARRELS. SIMPLY THEY CAN'T ALL FIT IN HERE!



TEREZA VEYERKOVÁ
COMMUNAUTÉ DU CHEMIN NEUF
CENTRE GABRIEL BALET
KU JÉRICHO
PROCURE DE MOUNDOU BP 61
MOUNDOU - TCHAD

Grégoire, who was JET here two years ago, filmed **a beautiful short reportage** about health centre, make sure to watch! :)



Thank you very much for your support. **You can pray for me, email me or write me a letter!** And if you would like to support financially my mission and projects of the community in Chad (health centre, school,...), you can donate on **this website**, it will make a difference! Thank you so much...
Yours Terez

