



More child refugees have fled Syria than any other country on earth.

There are also more internally displaced children within Syria than anywhere else in the world.

World Refugee Day 2014 will mark the presence of some 600,000 registered child refugees in Lebanon – more than 40 per cent of all Syrian refugee children fled across the Lebanese border. Almost a quarter of a million of these child refugees are under the age of four; most of them have known little but displacement and terror during their young lives.

As the war continues into its fourth year, the new normal for these children is a life uprooted and transplanted in a strange land, having lost parents, siblings or friends. Their new normal is manual labour instead of school; an overcrowded, makeshift home without water or sanitation and nowhere to play. It is a life of poverty, instability and deprivation.

This project is part of Save the Children Lebanon's mission to empower Syrian refugee children to become their own advocates, to use mediums like art, video, animation and photography to demonstrate the impact of war on each of their lives and demand that the world takes action to end this crisis.

The children who enrolled in photography workshops run by Save the Children took more than 7000 photographs over a two-month period documenting their lives as refugees. These are the stories and photographs of 30 of these children, who are living in informal settlements and makeshift homes across the Bekka Valley and Northern Lebanon.

The photographs and stories represent a kaleidoscope of shattered lives; a heartbreaking indictment of the world's failure to protect Syria's children from a brutal war and its consequences. They are also testimony to each child's courage and their ability to retain a sense of wonderment and playfulness in the face of so much suffering.

Each child is bound by a common yearning to return home. Each child's expression of that yearning is different. While they are united by tragedy and loss, every refugee child's story, and their experience of the events that uprooted their lives, is unique.

And with every day that passes, the number of children forced to flee their homes continues to grow. The children of Syria deserve an immediate global commitment to end their suffering. Apathy in the face of this ongoing catastrophe cannot become the new normal.

NAJEM

13 years old

*I took this picture of the moon over Lebanon..
the same moon over Syria...*



This is our house – its fine.



These are my friends. They are trying to take pictures so I took a picture of them.



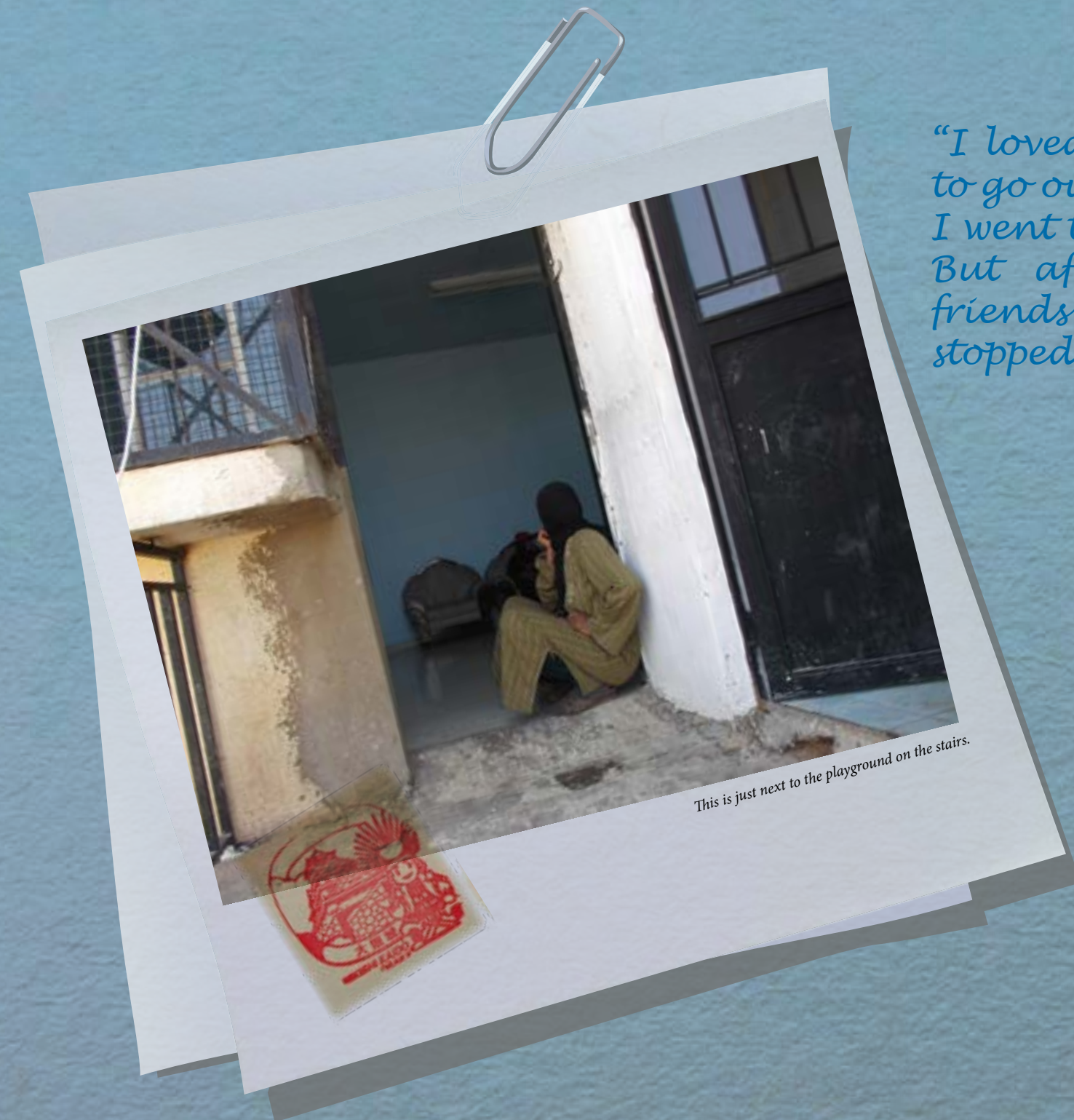
*This is my nephew Muataz filling water in the kitchen.
He lives with us and came with us from Syria.*

We've been in Lebanon for six months. I came with my mother and three sisters. The eldest is 25, I am the youngest. Only our grandmother is with us - the rest of the family is in Syria.

My father died long before the war. We live here in one room behind the playground. No one works so I don't know how we get food. Sometimes it is scarce but we have water most of the time. We have to go and get drinking water.

We came here because of the violence. It took us two days to get to Lebanon by bus. It was a very long and difficult journey. We were stopped at several checkpoints and they were forcing men to hand over their money. I wasn't able to bring anything with me here. I wish I could have brought my computer.

I loved Syria. We used to go out and have fun. I went to school. But after one of my friends was killed we stopped going. For more than a year I couldn't go to school in Syria. I miss school, my friends and playing with them. I hope the situation in Syria will become calm and we can go home as soon as possible.



This is just next to the playground on the stairs.

“I loved Syria. We used to go out and have fun. I went to school. But after one of my friends was killed we stopped going.”



SAMIR
13 years old



This is Rana's rabbit - he is bigger than her. We bought it for her here.



This is inside Rana's tent. She likes watermelon.



This is Rana asleep.

"It's been two years since I went to school in Syria. Armed men were going into schools taking children and my parents were very worried so they stopped sending me to school."



This is my cat. I got her from a neighbor when she was very small. I didn't give her a name yet. She sleeps outside.

Our family arrived ten months ago. I have one brother and three sisters. Two of my sisters are married and don't live with us. One has a daughter and the other has four children. My other sister teaches here.

My grandparents have been dead a long time. Some of our family is here and some of my uncles and aunts are in Syria. One of them visited us here and went back to Damascus. One of my cousins was detained for a year and a half.

We had to leave because there was a lot of shelling near our house. We took a car and crossed the border into Lebanon. It was easy to get across. Someone told us all of our house has been destroyed.

Life was great before the war. I used to go to school and play with friends. One of my friends managed to come to Lebanon but then had to go back to Syria because his grandmother was hit by shelling. I miss our home in Syria. We brought some pillows and some clothes but that's all.

It's been two years since I went to school in Syria. Armed men were going into schools taking children and my parents were very worried so they stopped sending me to school.

MARWAN 14 years old

"We had no food or water or electricity and always there was shelling every day and night. We were so afraid. All around us everything was being destroyed. For five months before we came here it was like that but getting worse all the time. We could not sleep or eat or move."

I came to Lebanon two months ago with my brother, two sisters and parents. My family has all gone to different places. Some have gone to Jordan and Egypt, but we don't know where they are. Some of my uncles, aunts and cousins are still in Syria.

We live in a garage that we share with other people. It has a small place for cooking and a toilet. We all share one room for sleeping and eating and playing. There is not enough room for us all. My father finds work occasionally but we have very little money. There is a lot of tension and arguing. But it is still better here even though it is very crowded and tense. There is no shelling. We no longer fear we are going to die every night. Sometimes it's hard for my father to get paid. They tell him to come back the next day for many days.

Everything was good before the war, when I used to go to school. We were happy and always playing. We had a big home with two living rooms and we all had our bedrooms and beds and toys. But for two years before I came here everything changed.

There was fear all the time. We would hear about friends and neighbours who were detained, gone, missing or dead. We could not go to school. Our school was destroyed. Then things started getting worse at home.

We had no food or water or electricity and always there was shelling every day and night. We were so afraid.

All around us everything was being destroyed. For five months before we came here it was like that but getting worse all the time.

We could not sleep or eat or move. We were trapped and hungry and scared.

We got some food sometimes but it was very infrequent and when it was gone we didn't know when we would get food next.

We were always hungry. All the windows in our house were broken and the roof and our kitchen was destroyed by the shelling. So we moved under the house. My grandfather died early in the war. My grandmother went to Jordan with her sister. She is very sick now.

I would like to be a doctor when I grow up. Before I wanted to be a footballer. I dream about peace in Syria so we can go home. The people here have allowed us to escape the shelling and fear but it is not our country.



This is my youngest sister. She likes to play with a doll she brought with her from Syria. She talks to it. She was the only one allowed to bring something to play with. It is good as she has no friends to play with here. She is starting school soon.



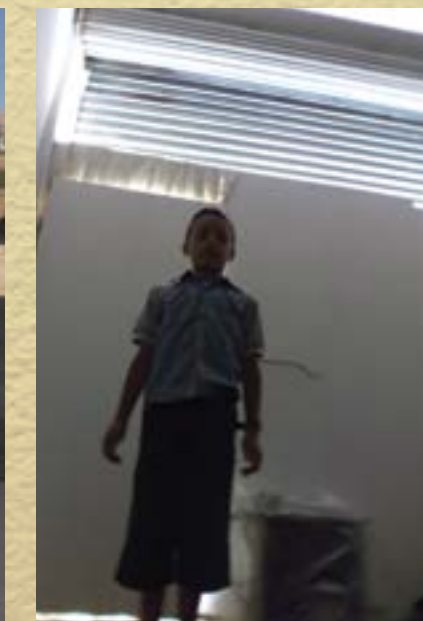
This horse is blind. I did not know at first; the owners told us. I feel sad for him because he is alone and cannot see. They use cords so he doesn't wander off or injure himself.



This is my brother playing with his toys. I took the photo suddenly because he is shy and doesn't like to pose.



This is my brother playing. He is trying to plant something in the ground to make it grow. Maybe it is a fruit tree.



This is the entrance to where we live now. I hope we can go home soon.

KHALIL 13 years old



This is my brother, grandmother and my cousin at my grandparents' house.



This is one of the beneficiaries who attends our school. We play together. Sometimes I can tell they are beneficiaries by the way they look.



My uncle bought this for me four years ago and I am very attached to it. I didn't give him a name yet. My brother put that yellow spot on it. I was very angry when he did this – I put the panda bear in the washing machine but I couldn't make the spot disappear. He did it as joke.

I am originally from Syria but I have been here 13 years. I was just two months when I came.

I don't know why my family decided to move but I think it was also because of fighting. In 2000 the year I was born. My parents are divorced and my father is in Syria but we are not in touch with him at all now and we don't know where he is now or what has happened to him.

I live with my mother, three brothers, maternal grandparents and uncles. My mother is a cleaner in a school. We rent one room with a kitchen and toilet, and we are trying to build on the side to make it bigger because there are many of us - 17, I think. I am in eighth grade.

I want to be a pediatrician when I grow up.

“My father is in Syria but we are not in touch with him at all now and we don't know where he is or what has happened to him.”



I have friends living in this tented settlement for Syrian families. This picture is from the inside. There are a lot of Syrians in Majdal and the problem is that the Lebanese landlords are now renting their apartments or houses for higher prices.

IMAD

14 years old

“We don't know what has happened to my father. No one knows anything about him or where he is. We have no way to contact him. He was a mechanic before the war. We don't know why they took him.”

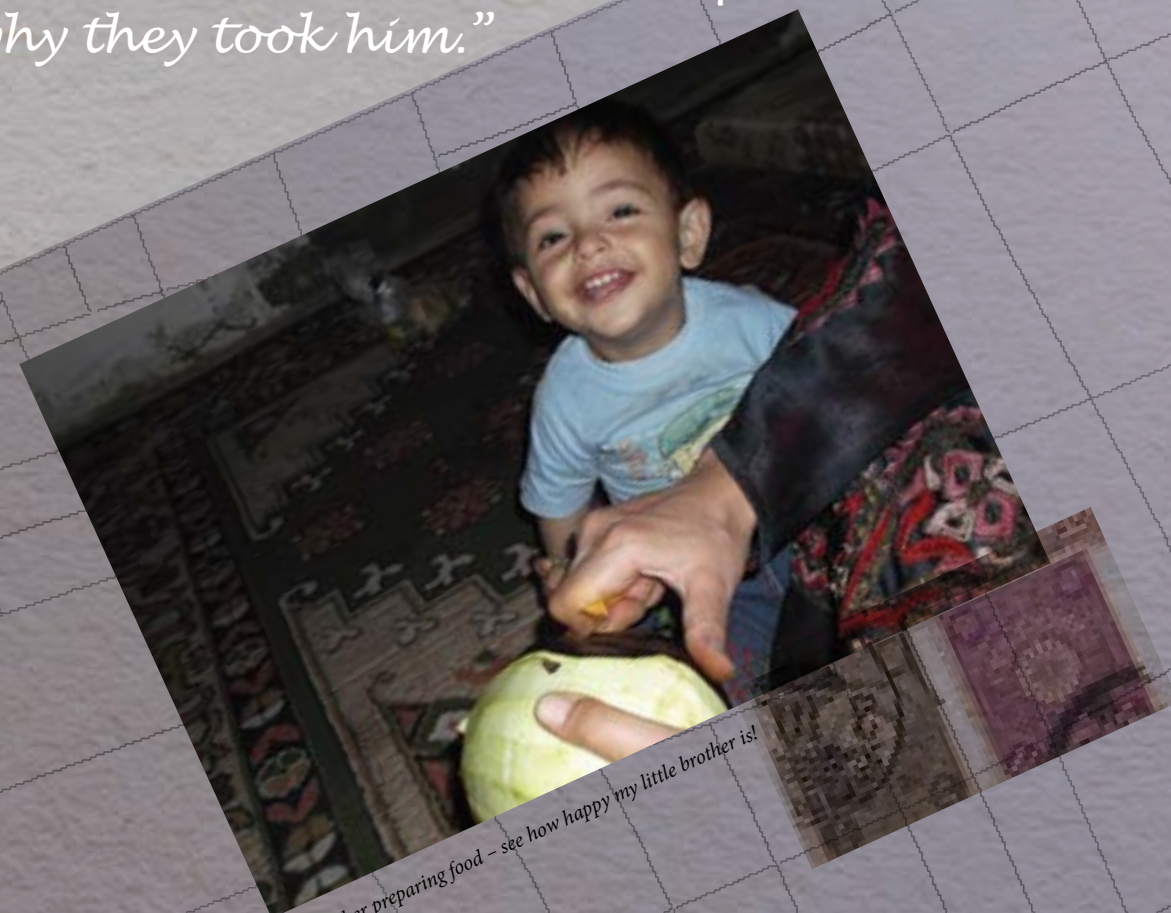
We've been in Lebanon for two months. I am the eldest; I have a younger sister, 11, and a brother who is 18 months.

My father has been detained. He was arrested at our house. Then our house was destroyed by shelling and we had to leave very quickly. We came through the mountains by foot. It was very difficult. My mother and I had to carry my baby brother the whole time so the journey was very slow. We didn't have anything with us, not even food. During the night we heard shooting and shelling close by. We were very frightened. Everyone was crying. Then we saw roadblocks and we had to run in a different direction.

Before the war life was great. But then it changed very quickly. It was very bad before we left. There was no food, no water, nothing. We were in an underground shelter and there was shelling and explosions all the time. We couldn't get a car. My mother thought we would all die so we had to run through back roads and get out on foot.

We don't know what has happened to my father. No one knows anything about him or where he is. We have no way to contact him. He was a mechanic before the war. We don't know why they took him.

We are living in a garage now. We couldn't carry anything so we just have a mattress. They charge us \$200 a month. A local NGO helped us pay the rent last month but we have no money this month and we are scared about what will happen to us. We will have to leave in ten days. We don't know where we will go. No one is working in our family.



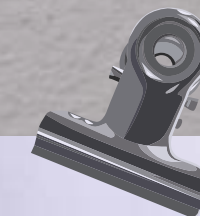
My mother preparing food - see how happy my little brother is!



My little brother Said. He is one and a half years old. We had to carry him across the border at night. He was heavy!



My cousin Omar, nine years old, is eating in this picture. We have relatives from four families here. Now that my father has been taken away, I am the oldest man in my family.



DIANA

13 years old

“I miss my friends in Syria. I don't know who is still there. When the war is over maybe we can all go back home and be together again. I don't fit in here.”

We came eight months ago because of the shelling. Everyone was so scared. My little brother couldn't sleep anytime he was frightened because we were living on the top floor. We were scared the shelling would hit the house and kill us all.

First my aunt moved here with her husband and she begged us to come here so we would be safe. We had just moved into our house in Syria. It had taken us a long time and we had just bought everything new for it. But we had to leave everything.

We couldn't bring anything except some clothes. I tried to bring some other things – pillows and important souvenirs - but I could not.

My older sister stayed behind in Syria. She has a husband, two sons and a baby daughter. She talks to us but we are very frightened for her.

I am not very happy here. I miss home and worry about my sister and her children all the time.

Our life not always easy before the war.

My father is dead so we did not have very much money but we had enough food to eat and it was simple. Now we cannot cook and have to get food assistance and we cannot pay the rent.

I would like to be a pharmacist. I had to stop school for almost two years but now I am very happy to be in school again. I have very poor English and would like to learn to read in English.

I miss my friends in Syria. I don't know who is still there. When the war is over maybe we can all go back home and be together again. I don't fit in here

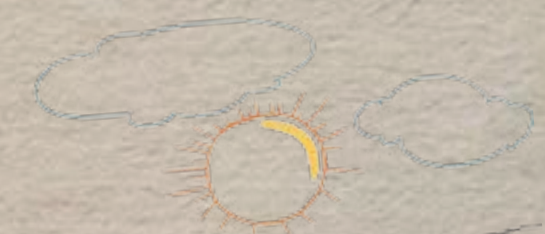


My sister playing with our neighbour. There aren't many activities or things to play with in the camp.



This is where the children play.

This is a Lebanese neighbor of ours. Her name is Mounira. She is pretty and likes having her photo taken.



SAMIRA 14 years old



I took this photo of my some of brothers and sisters while they slept.



My brothers and sisters outside. There is not much to do so we play with the baby.



This is my niece who is seven months old. She was born in Lebanon. I take care of her.

We arrived nine months ago. We came because of the shelling but we never wanted to leave. We took a truck and crossed the border.

Before we left half of our house was destroyed so we had to leave.

All my family is here, including my relatives.

I have seven sisters and four brothers, aged between 20 and one.

There are 16 of us living in a one-room apartment with a kitchen and a toilet.

Many things have changed for us here in Lebanon.

We can barely afford food or rent and everything seems so difficult.

Only two of my brothers are working selling flowers. My father used to be a taxi driver but he cannot work here.

Life was very nice in Syria before the war. I used to love taking photos. I would either use a mobile phone to take pictures or borrow a camera from a friend. We left in a sudden so I wasn't able to bring anything.

I miss school in Syria the most. We stopped going to school two years ago because of the school. The school was completely destroyed. I wasn't even able to say goodbye to my friends.

“Life was very nice in Syria before the war. I used to love taking photos. We left suddenly so I wasn't able to bring anything. I wasn't even able to say goodbye to my friends.”



These are my sisters and brother standing inside the house. We have some mattresses but not many. Three or more people share one mattress.



My sister playing with our neighbour. There aren't many activities or things to play with in the camp.

HOUDA 13 years old

"I am learning new things, like how to write in English. I'm glad Save the Children is helping us go to school. Without school, life in the camp would be very boring."

I arrived with my parents, grandparents, three brothers and two sisters one year ago. My eldest brother is 26 and works at the community center here. One of my uncles was detained in Syria. No one knows what's happened to him.

We live in a tented settlement in one tent that barely fits us all. My grandparents have their own tent. I heard that the mayor is going to ask us all to leave. If they ask us to leave we'll have to go back to Syria.

In Syria everything was destroyed. Whenever I saw tanks I would be so scared I would start shaking and my heart would beat very fast. In Lebanon it feels safer but I worry when they fight at the border and I can't stop my heart from pounding. It makes me think we are all going to die.

Life is not so good in the settlement. We fetch water from nearby but it is very dirty. We always see rats and snakes and many children where I live have stomach problems. We can't take showers because we have bad problems with sewage and waste. Lebanese teenagers come into the camp at night and block the sewage pipes so everywhere is dirty. We tried to clean everything but are unable to clear all the blockage in the sewage canal.

Some months we get assistance and food but it is gone. There is a woman here called Umptari who is helping refugees and she gives us toys and food. She is very nice. I wasn't able to bring anything with me except a few clothes. My father bought these clothes for me.

My father was a mechanic in Syria. Now he helps people carry things for them as a porter but they never paid him. They owe him a lot of money. Businessmen come to the camps for workers but then they don't pay them when the work is done. It has happened to many people.

Before we started at the school here I made a kind of class in the camp – I got a board, gathered all the children and started teaching them myself. It is better now and many of us go to school. I am learning new things, like how to write in English. I'm glad Save the Children is helping us go to school. Without school, life in the camp would be very boring.

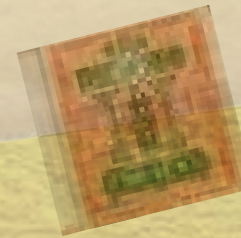
I miss my friends the most. I always dream about them and wonder if they are alive. Probably half of them are dead.



This is a present from my friend in Syria that I can put candles in. My friend sent it to me with my father.



This is my cousin Mala who is about one or one and a half years old. She can walk but all the sharp stones in the camp really hurt her feet.



This is my mother preparing food. We cook outside even if it's cold because once the tent almost caught fire when we cooked inside.



This is Youssef. He likes the Smurfs and he sings their songs.



This is where we sit to watch TV

MARWA
15 years old

“Our life was great but it will never be the same without my father if we don’t get him back.”

We arrived two months ago and I registered for school two days later. I have four sisters and two brothers. My father has been detained for more than one year now. We weren’t able to find out anything about him. We live with my uncles, aunts and all their children in a shop that used to sell falafel.

We came here because my mother was very worried that we would be killed after my father was detained.

For sometime we went back and forth to try and find out about my father’s whereabouts but we are worried that if we go again they won’t let us come back.

We were very lucky we found a car and it wasn’t very expensive for us to get here to Lebanon.

I stopped going to school after my father was detained. My mother insists that because she never had access to education that we should all go to school so we can have a good future. Our life was great but it will never be the same without my father if we don’t get him back. He was a mechanic. I also want to become a mechanic and engineer in the future.

I wasn’t able to bring anything from Syria. My brother supports us all now. He is 14 and works in a grocery shop. He worked for a week with a mechanic but he paid him so little he had to leave.



I decided to take the photo after my attention was drawn to the spots on each fig on the tree.



This is the mother of my cousin Noha. We all live together now. The owner said there were too many families living in such a small place. She asked each family to pay \$300 each but we had no money. There were four families in one room.



This is my little sister. I dressed her in her best clothes for this picture!



This is my sister washing her hijab.



This is a bed sheet that my aunt gave us before we left Syria, it has embroidery on it – we could bring very little but we brought a gas bottle, a fan, pillows, bed sheets and clothes. I had many things that my father brought me that I couldn’t bring when we came here. The only souvenir we have of him is his photo.



My sister Zeina and my brother Sami, who we call Abu El-Zouz. My father gave him that nickname as a joke.



These are our passports. My mother worked on renewing them for us so we don’t risk getting arrested in Syria.

SARA

14 years old

We've been in an informal settlement for the past six months. There are eleven members of my family in our tent. We were told last night we have just ten days left and then we must leave the camp. But where will we go? We have no money and there is no one we can stay with. I don't know what we will do. My family is very worried. My mother says we will have to go back to Syria but she is very scared for us to do that because of the shelling.

Nobody wants us here. In our camp there is some fighting between two refugee families but it's making trouble for us all. There are 22 tents and 30 families in the settlement. There is very little food or water and the tents have very little space. I think that is why people argue. There are 52 children living here. Some of them go to school now but at first there was no school. The water here is not drinkable but sometimes we have to use it and we get sick. There are toilets but they are flooded.

We had to leave our home against our will. We tried to stay and hoped the situation would get better but it got worse and worse. There was no food, electricity or medicine. Just fear. We couldn't bring anything so when we got here we only had what we were wearing. The mosque gave us some old clothes to wear. At first we thought we would just leave for a few days and return when the shelling stopped, but we cannot go back.

My father was a mechanic in Syria. We were not very wealthy but we had enough of everything. The food and medicine was not expensive. Here it is very expensive. It is very hard for us to eat sometimes. My father worked very hard for a Lebanese man who promised to pay him. He carried heavy things and did whatever he was asked. He worked for a long time and the man said he would pay him \$300 at the end. But he never paid him so we have no money for food now. People here think that we are no good. They tell us that even the tents are too good for us.

I am engaged. My fiancé had to leave school early because of the war and now he works doing casual labour. He is 19. We met in a building we were sheltering in after we were both forced to flee our homes. It is not an arranged marriage; our families did not know each other. He followed me to Lebanon. We are getting married for love. We want to get married in Syria.

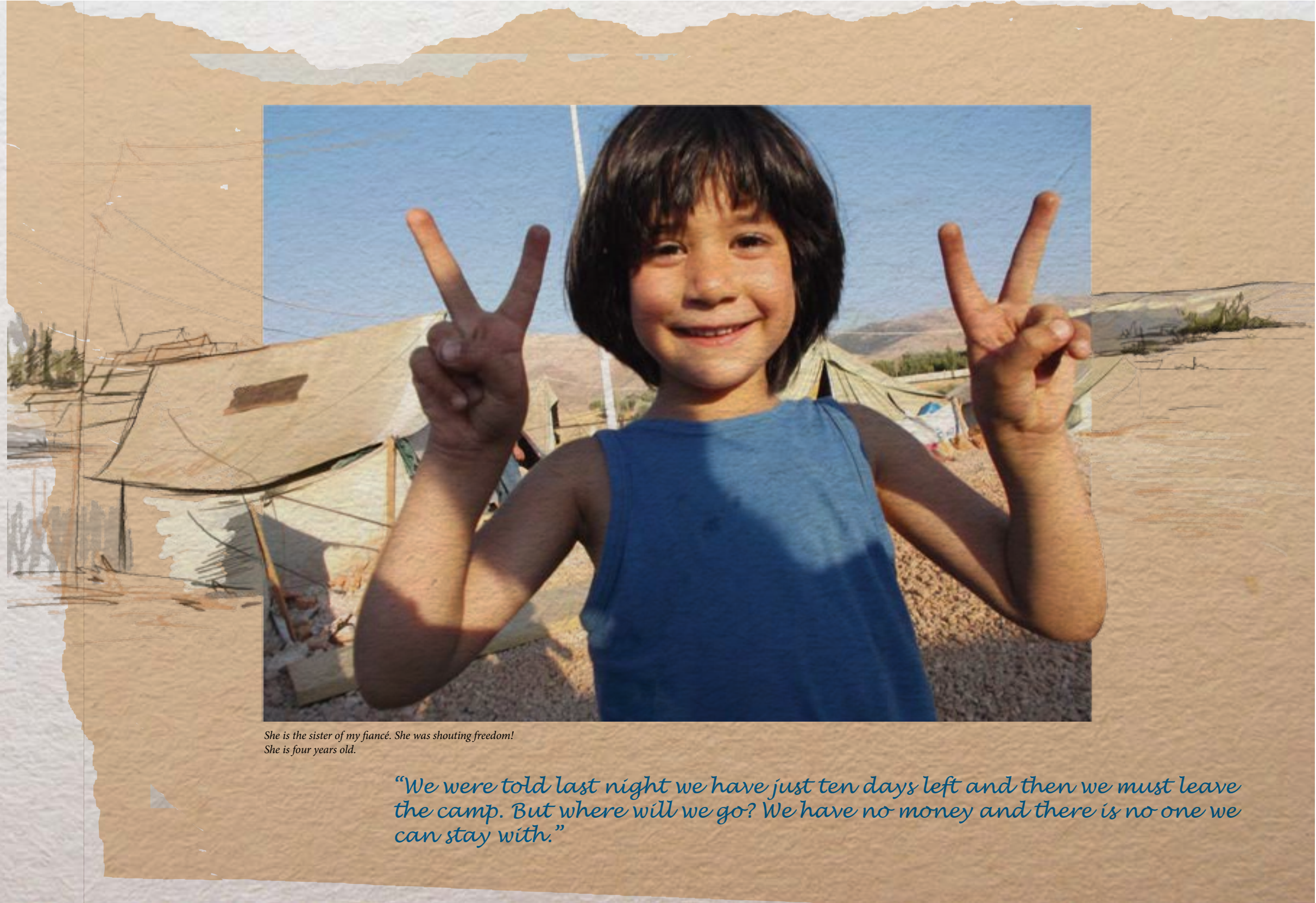
I would like to finish school and become a journalist. My fiancé says he will support me while I finish school.



These are children in the camp playing. There are no activities for them. The camp is dirty and there are insects and rats.



This was a shepherd I passed while walking to school.



She is the sister of my fiancé. She was shouting freedom! She is four years old.

"We were told last night we have just ten days left and then we must leave the camp. But where will we go? We have no money and there is no one we can stay with."

NIZAR
13 years old

*“I only went to Syria once before the war.
It is a beautiful country.”*

My family came to Lebanon when I was two months old.
My father decided to come here when there was previous trouble in Syria.

There was a sheikh here who helped us to find a place to stay and we still live in that house.

Other relatives have come since the war started, like my uncle, aunt and cousins.

They are in the same area by not close by.
I would like to be a businessman when I'm older.

I only went to Syria once before the war. It is a beautiful country.



This is a little refugee girl going to get water – usually the Lebanese children will come to play with the Syrian children, but sometimes they bully and beat the Syrian children.



This is my cousin. His entire family is here now. There are three families living in a two-bedroom apartment. My grandparents came here nine months ago.



These are my neighbors. The daughter of this woman is married and this is one of her children, Zeyn. Her daughter's husband is not there so they have no support.



These are my sister's friends from the school here. They are all brothers and sisters and they are from Syria.



I saw this lady laughing as she talked to some other women, so I took her photo.

MOUSSA 12 years old



This is Nada with my brother.

We've been in Lebanon eight months. We don't know where my father is. After my father was detained and our house was destroyed, my grandmother said we must come here.

We did not want to come but we were very afraid, hungry with no food and my mother was ill. My uncle was here before us but he does not live near us. My cousins and maternal uncle have also come since the war - they were in the same area as us in Syria but not close by. They arrived seven months ago. Their mother is dead. They live with us.

At our house in Syria we had a swing and lots of trees. My father was a businessman. It was a big house with a very big garden and lots of fruit trees. My mother loved the jasmine trees best. I liked my room. I didn't have to share it with anyone. Now we all share everything on two mattresses and we don't have enough blankets or dishes or cups. But it is not as bad as it is for some people. Save the Children put in doors and windows and electricity and water for us. We share the kitchen with my uncle and cousins and we live in a room beside the kitchen. I take care of my sisters when my mother is working and help my grandmother.

In Syria I played with my friends. We had a football team like the Premier League. We had nicknames of footballers. My friend was called Messi and I was Ronaldo. We all wore the same shirts with stripes and numbers and played football every day after school. We played mostly in my garden because of the size. I miss my father and my football team.

I used to go to school in Syria but then we had to stop because we had to move after our house was destroyed. And now I haven't been for more than one year. I want to go home more than anything and when I am older to be a footballer with a professional team.



*This is my sister my cousin playing.
My sister is always laughing!*



This is me wearing my football jersey! You can't tell it's me but it is.



This is my cousin in the house we share but this is not his room - we made it bigger. There are four families in total.



I did not know this lady but someone told me the next day she died.

"At our house in Syria we had a swing and lots of trees. I liked my room. I didn't have to share it with anyone. Now we all share everything on two mattresses and we don't have enough blankets or dishes or cups. But it is not as bad as it is for some people."

DIMA 14 years old

“We all sleep on shared mattresses. We have to fetch water from outside and sometimes people don’t want to give it to us.”



This is my baby sister. She laughs a lot and is very happy.

We left our home in Syria four months ago with my four brothers and sisters. My youngest sister was just one week old. There was so much fighting going on we had to leave – we were very frightened. My sister was just a newborn when we came here. There was a midwife in the hospital but we were scared she would not survive.

Some of our family is here, others are in Egypt but I have a lot of family members who are still in Syria.

We left the area and came straight here. When we got here we lived in an apartment for the first two months but it became difficult to pay rent so we had to leave. We went to an unfinished place with no windows or doors. We all sleep on shared mattresses. We have to fetch water from outside and sometimes people don’t want to give it to us. We share the house with one aunt and her children, as well as my uncle, his spouse and children.

My uncle is not working and my father is trying. Sometimes he finds a job and sometimes he doesn’t. My aunt is alone here without a husband so she can’t work. My father is supporting every one – he does everything related to construction to support us. He came here one day before us to find us a place to live.

Our family in Egypt is not safe there and wants to join us in Lebanon. My father is working to send them money so they can travel.

When I first came here I thought I would run into friends from Syria but so far I haven’t seen any of them. I don’t know where they are. I want to go back to school, live a normal life and become an art teacher in Syria.



This is Zeynab, who is also in the workshop. We’ve become friends since arriving here.



This is my cousin. She likes having her photo taken. See how she poses for the camera!



That is my sister in the first place we lived in Lebanon.

HADEEL 12 years old

"I miss my bed the most. The settlement where we have our tent is covered in stones and rocks, which makes it hard to sleep. I share a mattress but the ground is very hard and causes us pain, particularly on our feet when we are walking."

I've been in Lebanon with my four brothers, two sisters and parents for six months. The rest of our family is still in Syria. There are eleven people in our tent- our family and my uncle and severely disabled aunt. It is very hot and there is not enough air or space for us.

We share mattresses made for one person – I share with my sisters.

We had to leave. It was very dangerous where we lived and there was no food except for what we were given from people outside the city. We met with another family and decided to come here together.

We were scared that my brother would be forced to join the fighting if we stayed and everyday there was shelling and we would hear of more people that we knew being killed. I was very scared.

Our home was also destroyed so we had nowhere to go.

Then one of my cousins was killed. He was five years old. He was playing with other children outside his home.

The adults and his parents were there too when there was a big explosion nearby. They went to see if the other family was injured but a few minutes after they had gone, there was a big explosion right where the children were playing.

The adults came running back but my little cousin was already dead. The four other children around his age were badly injured.

The journey here was frightening because there were many checkpoints. At one checkpoint they wanted to take us away for investigation. We were very scared and crying. We gave them the money we had and they let us continue.

When we came here we had nowhere to go. We didn't know anyone. Then we found out about the settlement and got a tent. My father can't find any work here. My brother has a job with cars and my sister volunteers in the school here but no one else is working. We get food sometimes. We were given food for Iftar by a charity. But we have no water so it is very hard to wash or prepare food.

Our home in Syria was very nice. We had four bedrooms, two bathrooms, a very big kitchen and living room, as well as a garden with trees. My father owned a garage there and sold and repaired cars. We had a very happy life. I went to school with my friends. We had lots of space to play and everything we needed. Then things changed. Our school was taken over by armed men– they wouldn't let us in any more so for two years we could not go to school and we could not go out to play or to each other's houses.

I miss my bed the most. The settlement where we have our tent is covered in stones and rocks, which makes it hard to sleep. I share a mattress but the ground is very hard and causes us pain, particularly on our feet when we are walking. I brought my pillow with me but I couldn't bring anything else.

I started going to school again when I came here. It is the thing I like the best about being here. Maybe I can make some more friends. I don't know what has happened to any of my friends in Syria or where they are.

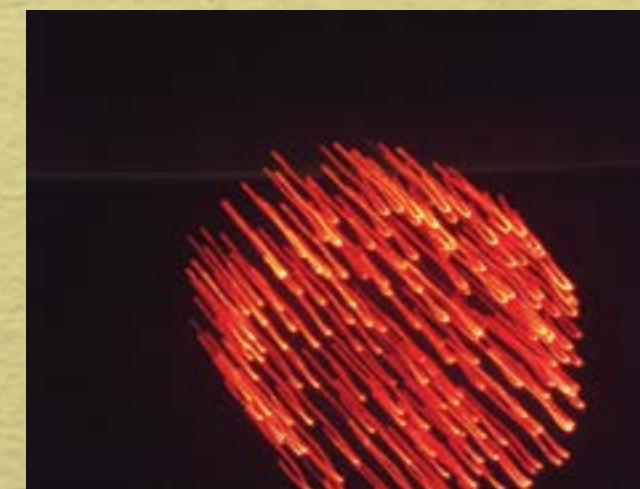


This is my friend sitting outside her family's tent. We have no toys or games to play with.



This is Lamis from next door, whose family also fled Syria. She is one year old. She has a new sister who was born here.

This is a firework from when there were celebrations for the Lebanese children graduating from school. I don't know if I will ever graduate. Nothing is certain anymore.



This is the newborn baby of the people in the tent next door who also fled Syria. What will her life be like here I wonder?



This is my mother preparing a hot drink for the new mother next door.

RANIA
13 years old

"I miss our home life; none of my friends are here. We only took a few clothes and so I don't have any of the things that I liked from my room or my clothes."



This is my brother Omar, who is nine years old. He likes to watch television a lot and play football. I took his photo in the garage. He would only let me take one picture- that is enough for him!



I wanted to take photos of what is precious to us from Syria. This is a mobile phone that my friend in Syria gave me before we left. I gave her a mobile as a present too. She is still in Syria but I don't know anything about her anymore. The phone works but I can't call my friend.

I've been in Lebanon with my parents and siblings for three months. We are two brothers and two sisters.

We are living in a garage-just the six of us. We share mattresses and there is a very small corner to prepare food.

They were shelling buildings around us. We left the day after there was an explosion and our kitchen and house was destroyed.

We left the next day.

My father left before us to find a job. I was scared on the way because there were so many checkpoints.

Some of our relatives are still in Syria and others are in Kuwait.

Only my aunt and her family came to Lebanon.

We had a good life before the war; we were very normal people.

My father was a house painter in Syria; here he is a daily worker taking whatever work he can find.

What I miss most about Syria is our house and school. I also miss our home life; none of my friends are here.

We only took a few clothes and so I don't have any of the things that I liked from my room or my clothes.

There is nothing here for us that we can enjoy. I hope we go back to Syria but mostly I hope we can find our home and live there again.



This is a very big garden near where we live but they won't let us play there any more and have put a fence around it. Now all we have is a very small space in front of the garage. We can't really play there but we spend time there so we're not always in the garage.

MAJID

13 years old

I came to Lebanon a year and a half ago with my parents and five brothers and sisters.

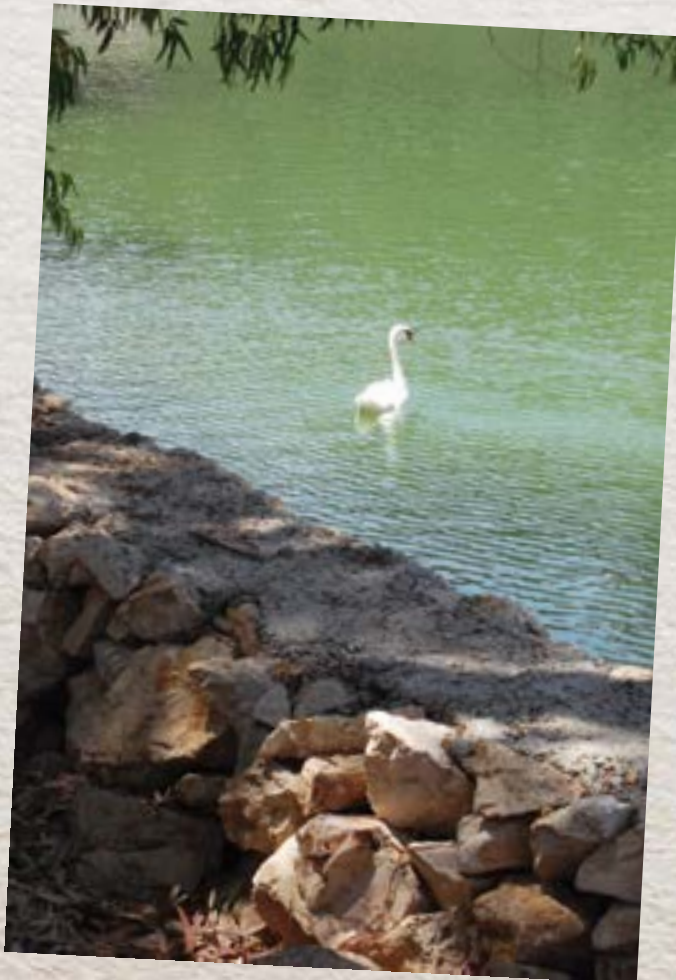
We left because of the shelling, which destroyed part of our house. The journey from Syria was terrifying.

My father's ID is torn in half so he couldn't cross the checkpoint. He came to Lebanon illegally then we joined him here.

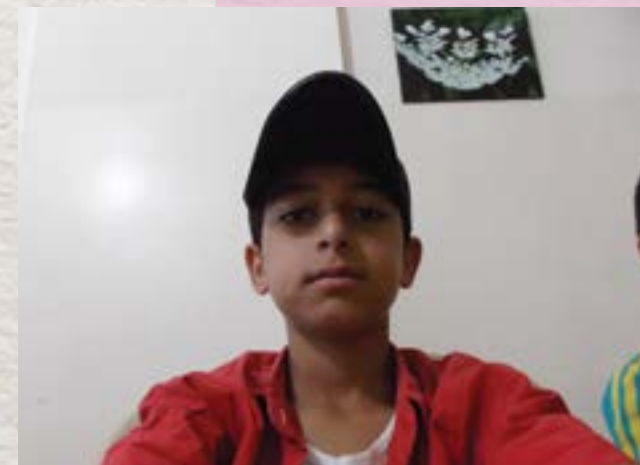
We were scared we might be stopped and asked to turn back. But we were able to come to Lebanon. I left school at the beginning of the war, so two years ago. I was in fifth grade. Armed men took control of the school.

All my friends are still over there and I have no idea how they are. My father was a taxi driver in Syria but here he works as a construction worker to pay the rent and electricity, which is almost \$400.

When I'm older I would like to be a barber. I worked for a hairdresser in Syria for four years after school. I hope I will go back to Syria. "Although we know people here I don't like it. It's not my country."



This is a swan on the lake. I took a photo of it because it was so white.



This is a self-portrait I took at home.



This is the view of where I live now. In the distance is Syria.

"Although we know people here I don't like it. It's not my country."

This is my sister Asma, who is four years old.



SABAH 12 years old

“Our house in Syria was very large with a big garden with trees. Now we live in a basement. It’s one big room with three small windows and it’s always dark.”



This is me with my friends in the photography workshop.



I brought this bear with me from Syria. I got him as a present.



This is close to my home.

I came to Lebanon one year ago with my nine brothers and sisters, my father and his two wives. My mother is long dead.

Our neighborhood was shelled and many houses were destroyed, including ours and my aunt’s.

My uncle was detained and we haven’t heard anything about him since then. We stayed in my uncle’s house for a while because it was away from the area under shelling. Then we decided to come to Lebanon.

My uncle took me and my younger brothers and sisters, and the rest followed with my father.

Our house in Syria was very large with a big garden with trees.

My brothers and I built a swing in the garden.

Now we live in a basement. It’s one big room with three small windows and it’s always dark.

I had stopped going to school a few months before we left Syria because my school was destroyed.

I want to become a pediatrician in the future and I hope the war stops.



This is my neighbour’s bird. It is always in a cage.



AYMAN
10 years old

“In Syria we were the ones helping other people and now it’s us who needs help.”



This was a flower near my house. It's pretty but has no smell.

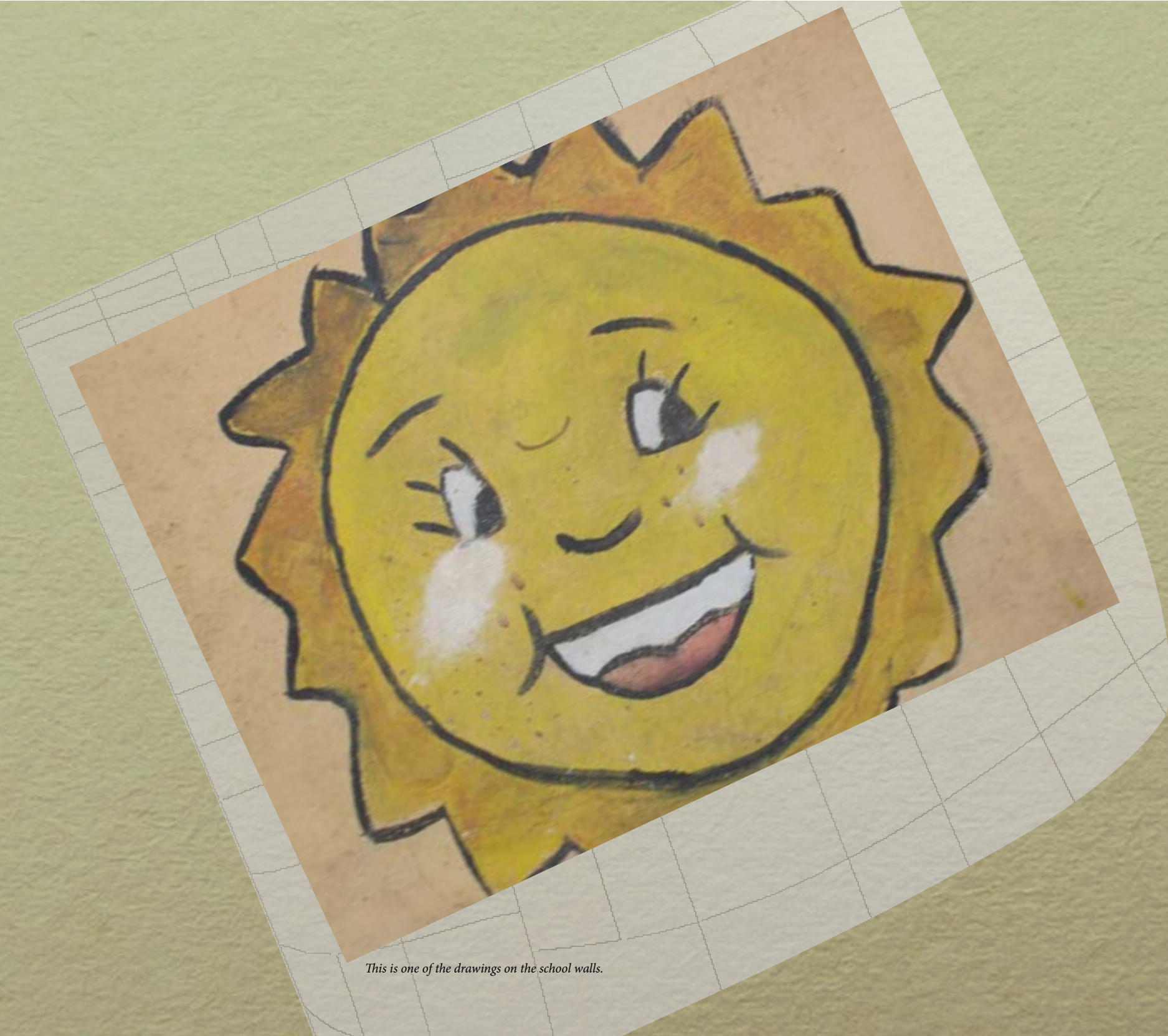
I came to Lebanon with my parents and sister one year ago. My other sister and my brother are in Turkey. We live in a basement with one window. It is always dark. Our house in Syria was very nice but we heard that it was stolen and destroyed. Our area in Syria was attacked and they were shooting at people.

One shot just hit the wall above my head. My aunt left her house and came to us. My mother called her best friends, who gave her money. I went in a car with my brother and his friend and my mother went in a different car with my aunt. On the way, my mother had a car accident so we had to stop.

When we reached the bus station there was a lot of shelling around us so we slept there. I was very hungry because we had no food. When we arrived in Lebanon I started crying. My heart was beating so fast I thought I would die. Is it possible that our town was destroyed? Every time I think of it, I lose my breath. I hope Syria will return to how it was before the war.



I was holding the Pepsi bottle but it was not open. It was Ramadan so I was fasting.



This is one of the drawings on the school walls.

LAMIA
12 years old

“Our home in Syria was very big. There was a window in every room. But here we live in a very small garage with no windows. It gets so hot that I feel I cannot breathe.”



This is my brother Hossam. I always take care of him and practically raised him as if he was my son.



The Iftar prepared by my mother and me.



My cousin Rayan who is always very naughty.

arrived in Lebanon five months ago with my parents and two younger brothers. We left after our neighborhood was completely destroyed. The journey to Lebanon took an entire day. Schools have been closed since the beginning of the war and many were destroyed.

So I started attending religion classes in my neighbor's house. But we stopped going after a seven year old girl was shot by a sniper on her way there. My father used to work as a taxi driver in Syria.

We sold the car before we left. Here he is unemployed and my uncle lends him money to pay the rent. Our home in Syria was very big. There was a window in every room. But here we live in a very small garage with no windows. It gets so hot that I feel I cannot breathe. I hope to become a civil engineer but I'm scared about not being able to go to school because my father doesn't have the money.



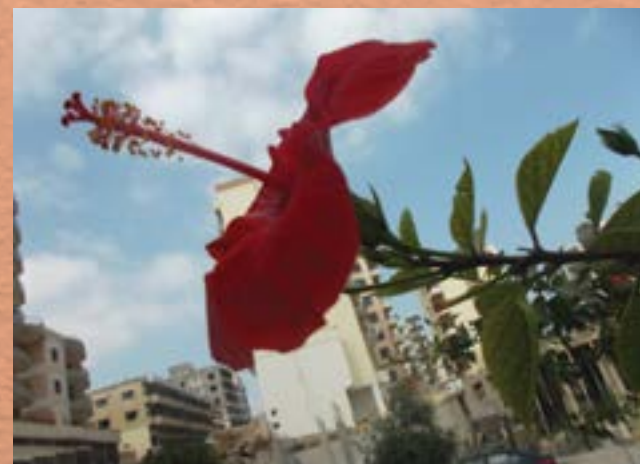
My sister Alia. She always likes to pinch my things. Whenever I buy something new she takes it. If I get the same thing again, she wants that too!

DALIA

14 years old



I took this photo near my school. I took this photo because I like trees.



This is a photo of a flower. I took this photo because I like nature a lot and this flower in particular.



This is an apple covered by ants. I took this photo because it looked interesting.

We fled Syria in October 2011. I came to Lebanon with my father, his four wives, my eight sisters and two brothers.

My birth mother died three years ago before the war started.

We live in a garage that consists of only one room, a toilet and a small kitchen that we built. Even though it is crowded and there is no privacy, I love it because we are all together and we have fun.

My father doesn't work because he cannot find anything here. My brother works in Beirut as a construction worker and two of my sisters harvest vegetables to support the family.

Before the war life was beautiful and everything was cheap, so we used to buy anything we wanted. I went to school and loved learning. The teachers were great. All my friends were there and we used to study and play together.

After the war started, my life became miserable. Our house was robbed, my uncle was detained and there was a lot of shelling.

The situation got worse and worse and we ran out of money. With time, it became more dangerous to stay so we decided to come to Lebanon.

There were many checkpoints on the way and we paid a lot of money to come here.

The road was very dangerous and we were surrounded by the echo of bullets and shelling.

When we entered Lebanon I was happy since there was no more war.

My brother found work and life became a bit better.

The thing I like doing here most is studying so I'll have a better future.

Thanks to Save the Children, my brother, one of my sisters, and I are able to go to school and learn.



This is a picture of a sea shell. I like the big ones because they look so beautiful.

FAHED

12 years old

"My favorite place in the house is the balcony because I can look at the view for hours."



These are my brother's friends. They were playing football and they won the game.



I took this photo from the balcony of my house. It's my favorite view, since it shows how beautiful Lebanon is, and I wanted to show that to the world.

I live in an apartment in Beddawi on the eighth floor with my parents, brother and sister.

My other brother and sister are married and don't live with us.

The apartment consists of three bedrooms, two living rooms, two toilets, and a kitchen. It's a really big house and I really love it because it has a great view of the sea on one side and the mountains on the other.

My favorite place in the house is the balcony because I can look at the view for hours.

My father works in Beirut as a construction worker and my brother works at a petrol station.

The income is enough to support our basic needs.

My unmarried sister doesn't work but helps my mother with the household chores.

My favorite things in life are swimming, playing basketball and drawing.

I hope to become an engineer or a doctor when I grow up.



This is a photo of a swan. I took the photo because it looked beautiful and I want to show the beauty of Lebanon to the world.



This photo is of a butcher shop. I wanted to show that in Tripoli everything is fresh and we don't have any frozen or bad meat.

SALWA
11 years old

“My father was detained at a checkpoint and tortured to death. They told us all his bones were broken”



0501: This is me and my friends in the photography workshop.

I am a Palestinian living in Syria. I came to Lebanon two months ago with my brother and mother.

My father was detained at a checkpoint and tortured to death. They told us all his bones were broken.

We left after our area was shelled heavily, which destroyed three buildings and many houses. But the place we went to was also unsafe, so we moved again.

Then we decided to come to Lebanon.

I passed fifth grade but I stopped going to school after the school was destroyed. When we were in Syria we used to play all the time.

It was very safe before the war. Now we can't play anywhere.

My uncle was arrested and his son was killed.

I only brought a small teddy bear that my father bought for me when I passed second grade. My mother works here as a house cleaner and my brother works in a bakery.

We live in a very small storage room with my grandmother and aunt.

There are no windows and it is not divided. When my aunt's husband arrives we will use a curtain to separate the two families.



My friend Sana took a photo of me.



One of my drawings. I like to draw a lot.



JAD
13 years old

“Before the war life was really nice back in Syria. I loved going to school because my friends were all there and the teachers were amazing.”



This is a photo of me that my friend took

My entire family now lives in Lebanon, including all my uncles and aunts, except for two who are still in Syria.

I live in a building with my parents, three sisters and one brother.

We share an apartment with three other families. My three uncles and their families, together with our grandfather, live with us.

One more family will arrive later this month.

I like where I live here because it's on the fifth floor and I can see Syria from here..

I like that we live together in one house. We sit, eat, have fun and talk together. My father and uncles work in Beirut as construction workers. The pay is enough to pay the rent and our basic needs.

Before the war life was really nice back in Syria.

I loved going to school because my friends were all there and the teachers were amazing.

My house in Syria was very big, and I used to love it because we grew all sorts of vegetables.

We were planning on opening a shop but then a rocket fell on it and it was destroyed.

When the war started, life became unpleasant and we stopped going to school because of the shelling.

One day, my grandmother was sitting on the balcony and my father told her to come inside.

A few seconds later some rockets fell and debris destroyed the chair she was sitting on.

She was lucky to have lived. After that we decided to leave the house, but as we were leaving another rocket hit our house while my father was still inside.

He was badly injured but survived. His body was full of shrapnel and his finger was cut off.

Nowadays, the UN helps us with food vouchers and Save the Children helps my brothers, cousins, and me to receive a proper education through the accelerated learning program. I love that I am learning French now.”



This graffiti represents the moon. I took this photo because it was Ramadan and the moon represents Ramadan.



This is a mural of some vegetables.



This photo is of my other sister. I took this photo because I love her as well.



These are some lamps I saw in a shop. I took this photo because it was Ramadan and they looked really nice.

MAYA
14 years old



This is my brother Bassem



This is our neighbor who works on repairing cars

I came from Syria with my parents and five siblings 18 months ago. We didn't want to leave even though the fighting was very close to us. My father was worried so he insisted we come to Lebanon. At the checkpoint they refused to let my sister cross because she didn't have all her documents.

My mother had to pay \$500 or else we would have all had to go back. We often thought about turning back because we saw how they were mistreating people. In Syria I remember Ramadan the most.

We all used to cook something in the neighborhood and share our food with at Iftar. My grandmother and uncles are still in Syria. One of my uncles was killed a few months ago. In Lebanon we live in a small apartment that costs \$400 dollars a month. We used to have a big house in Syria. I like the sea a lot in Lebanon. But everything seems difficult here and expensive.

I suffer from anemia and I cannot get any medication or vitamins. I try to eat but it is never useful. I want to become a doctor so I can treat anemia. I started school here but stopped in the middle of the year because I couldn't keep up in class. The system and courses are too difficult and different for me.



My friends playing hide and seek.

"I started school here but stopped in the middle of the year because I couldn't keep up in class. The system and courses are too difficult and different for me."



Bassem my brother relaxing at home and watching TV.



Mirna and Sawsan playing next to the building where we live



My friends at the entrance of the building.

MAHMOUD DALLE

13 years old



Al Aoudeh mosque on the way to my home.

I arrived one year ago with my parents, two brothers and sister.

We left our home after our area was invaded.

We went to my grandparents' house, where we saw a massacre. I don't want to talk about it. Thankfully my grandma and grandpa had left long before it happened. My aunt and her children were killed by a sniper. They were very little boys. A car brought us to the border. They didn't let us go through the checkpoint so we came in illegally.

There is nowhere for us to play here. In Syria, there was a playground where we played football. We could buy things like chocolate but here it is too expensive. My favorite football team is Real Madrid and I am a big fan of Cristiano Ronaldo. I passed Grade 5 but I haven't been to school for two years. There was fighting close to my school and my father didn't want me to get killed so I stopped going. We had a very nice house in Syria, with pink colors and white stripes. We also had a big garden behind it where we would play and have fun with friends. Here we live in a small storage room. My father had to divide it and build a kitchen.

I don't have any of my things from Syria.

I couldn't bring anything with me. My father is a construction worker and he does not always find work.

I want to become a dentist.

I like music and play the flute.

I enjoy going to school here because the teachers help us remember our courses, particularly after I stopped going to school for so long.



These are boats on the lake where we went on a road trip.



I wanted to get one of these balls but I didn't have money to buy one.



This is me and my friend Mahmoud.



RIMA

10 years old

*“One of my relatives was killed by a sniper.
The bullet went through one side of his head to the other”*



This is the school director, Mrs. Katy.



I took this photo while I was waiting for the bus to go to the activities.



I took this photo of myself in the mirror



My brother Raed holding his camera. He works with my father in selling juice and coffee.



My brother Saad dressed like a girl. My father likes to do that and he makes me look like a boy sometimes.



My friend Hala. I met her in Lebanon.



Saad standing near the kitchen window.



Saad playing with a cat near the parked car.

I came to Lebanon with my parents and seven brothers and sisters when the conflict was just beginning. I thought we would only come for couple of months but we've been here for three years now. One of my relatives was killed by a sniper. The bullet went through one side of his head to the other.

It was my father who pushed us to leave. Now the entire family is here, including my grandparents and aunt. We all live together in one apartment. My father sells juice and coffee to make money in Lebanon. He used to be a vendor in Syria too. My older brother no longer goes to school as he is helping our father. I don't like living here and I miss Syria a lot, especially our street, my neighbors and my friends. We used to have fun and play. In the garden we had orange trees, flowers and a cat with four kittens. We used to clean the garden then put a carpet down, where my brother would pretend to sell us things. We were told that our house was ransacked after we left.

I stopped going to school when I passed second grade. I started going back to school in Lebanon and now I am in fourth grade. I want to become a French teacher and go back to Syria.

BURHAN 13 years old

“The road to Lebanon was horrible; we spent seven hours on the road encountering a lot of checkpoints. My father’s cousin was killed on the way, and one of the bridges that we crossed was hit the next day, so we were lucky to have stayed alive.”

I came to Lebanon in September 2012 with my parents, five sisters and one brother. All of my family now lives here, except for my grandparents who are still in Syria.

My house here consists of two rooms, a kitchen, a bathroom, a small living room, and a balcony. I don’t like my house here because it is really small. Our situation here is not very good.

My father works in construction but work is scarce and the income is not good- it barely covers the rent.

The UN is providing us with food vouchers but the amount is getting smaller and smaller. Save the Children is helping three of my sisters and me to get a proper education.

In Syria, our house was a really big duplex and I really loved it.

My favorite room was the living room, since we sat all together there as a family to talk, watch TV and tell jokes.

Before the war, we used to go to school and life was peaceful and secure. After school, I would do some homework, and after that I would watch TV and play with my sisters and friends. My favorite places in Syria were the mosque and the river.

After the war started the situation became really bad. We had no water, no food, and the shelling surrounded us. The street parallel to ours was filled with armed men and checkpoints, and our house was hit and got partially destroyed.

The road to Lebanon was horrible; we spent seven hours on the road encountering a lot of checkpoints. My father’s cousin was killed on the way, and one of the bridges that we crossed was hit the next day, so we were lucky to have stayed alive.

I miss my grandparent’s house in Syria most of all, it has been a very long time since we have seen them. Nowadays I occupy myself with studying, since I want to become a doctor.

I wish that Syria could go back to being the peaceful nation it once was, and that I can see my grandparents again.



This is a photo of flowers. I took this photo because I really like to take photos of nature.



This is my little sister. I took the picture because she is my favorite sister.



This is also my sister, and I took this photo because she likes to be photographed.



This is also my sister - I couldn’t take a picture of one sister and leave the others because that would make them mad.



This is also my sister.



This is my other sister. I took her photo so she wouldn’t be jealous.

HADI 13 years old

“My uncle used to support us and give us money for rent and food, but now he has stopped since the debt became too big. Now my father is looking into migrating to Sweden or some other country, and if we can't then we will have to go back to Syria.”

We came to Lebanon in 2010 before the war started because my dad wanted to find work. At first we thought it would only be for only two months but suddenly it's three years now, and I haven't seen my friends in a very long time. We are living in an apartment on the ground floor, and it consists of two bedrooms, a living room, two bathrooms, and a kitchen. I don't like my house here because compared to our house in Syria it is really unpleasant.

My house in Syria was really beautiful and it had a very big garden where my dad planted roses, jasmine, basil and lemon trees. I used to plant and water them as well, and I really enjoyed working in the garden. My house consisted of three bedrooms, two kitchens and a bathroom.

My bedroom was my favorite room because I used to have privacy and all my stuff was there. I also had a computer that I used to play games on and have fun. I used to go to school in Syria but I didn't like it very much because the teachers were mean, so I dropped out. But after a while I began to regret it and wanted to return since all my friends were there and I couldn't see them anymore.

My father has diabetes and can't work and none of my other family members work either. I used to work helping my father sell coffee and juice but when he stopped, I stopped with him. My uncle used to support us and give us money for rent and food, but now he has stopped since the debt became too big. Now my father is looking into migrating to Sweden or some other country, and if we can't then we will have to go back to Syria.

I want to return to Syria, learn French and become a professional football player.



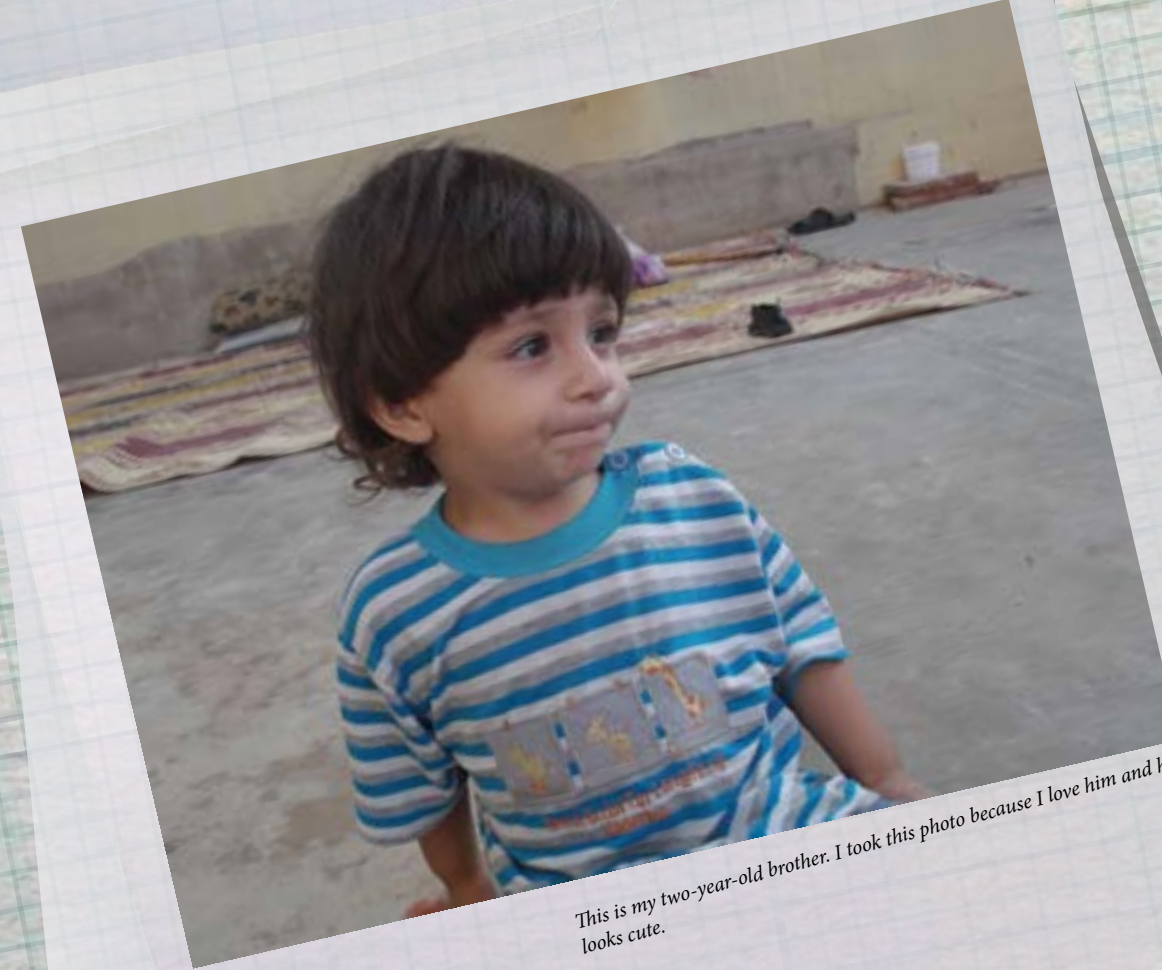
This is a fox that we saw on our trip to Zgharta.



This is a photo of a horse and carriage, which reminded me of my favourite TV show.



This is a photo of me. I like to see myself in photos.



This is my two-year-old brother. I took this photo because I love him and he looks cute.



This is my sister on the right, while the others are our neighbours. One of them broke his hand when he tripped going down the stairs of his aunt's house.



This graffiti is of Mickey Mouse. I took the photo because I have seen him on TV.

KARIMA

14 years old

“When we entered Lebanon, I became really depressed. Despite the fact that Lebanon is beautiful, there is no place like home. When I was in Syria everything was green, here it’s like an urban jungle.”

I fled my hometown in April 2012 with my mother, four of my eight brothers and two of my four sisters. My father is still in Syria because he working there in order to support us. My mother went this week to visit him. One of my brothers is in prison, while the other three and their families didn’t want to leave because they’re too attached to Syria. Two of my sisters are also still in Syria.

My house here is embarrassing to describe because it’s in terrible condition. Every day something is broken, one day it’s the sink, the other it’s the fridge. It’s in a camp and consists of two rooms, a kitchen and one toilet.

Two of my brothers work as welders here and the pay is good enough to support the whole family. They bring groceries, clothes, and everything we need. If it weren’t for them we would have gone back to Syria because of the lack of money.

Our life before the war was really fun. I used to go to school in Syria and although I didn’t like it because the teachers were very strict, the upside was that I got to see my friends. After school I would play with my friends in the garden in front of my house and our favorite game was dodge ball.

My house in Syria was like a castle to me and I loved it a lot. The living room was my favorite room because we used to sit down as a family, talk, watch TV and joke.

I miss how we used to sit all together, including my father and all my brothers, and my uncles and their children.

After the war started, my whole life turned upside down and I rarely went to school or got to see my friends anymore.

My cousin was my best friend, and we couldn’t see each other despite the fact that we lived near each other.

“There was a lot of shelling near our house, and one day it was hit and partially destroyed. We couldn’t sleep at all and the whole house would shake whenever the shelling started. I saw a lot of horrible things happen and a lot of bloodshed.”

After the battles became fiercer and the living conditions got worse, and food became hard to buy, we decided to come to Lebanon. We moved through Syria, encountering a lot of checkpoints, but the road was relatively safe. To come to Lebanon we crossed an illegal checkpoint at a river, but now it is full of mines.

When we entered Lebanon, I became really depressed. Despite the fact that Lebanon is beautiful, there is no place like home. When I was in Syria everything was green, here it’s like an urban jungle.

I wish that my family and friends can reunite again in a peaceful Syria. But for now, I would really like to change our house.



I took this picture because it was the first time I see a cow in Lebanon.



I took this photo of the carriage and horse since it was the first time I see them in real life rather than on TV.



This is a photo of my niece. She looks a bit cranky in the photo but she is usually much more beautiful.



This is a portrait of me. I printed this photo and I put it in a frame at my house because I think I looked beautiful in it.



This picture is of a lake that we visited. It’s a really beautiful place.



