

# “WHEN I SAW THE SHIP, I CRIED FOR JOY”

FADI, AMENA'S\* FATHER, 5, FROM SYRIA



**When the fighting in Syria became too intense, Amena’s family made the most difficult decision of all: to leave their home.**

Amena’s dad, Fadi, met a man who said he could get them to safety in Europe. Fadi paid the man almost everything he had to cross the Mediterranean Sea on a boat.

First the man took the family to a farm. **“We stayed at the farm for six or seven days,”** says Fadi.

**“Then he came and asked us to pack our things. It was midnight.”** The man let Amena – who has a heart condition and severe asthma – take an oxygen tank.

**“It was the only thing they let us take,”** says Fadi. **“They stole our mobile phones.”**

Then began the scariest day of their lives.

**“We went to the beach and waited,”** says Fadi. **“We started our trip at around 5am. Sinking was a real risk. The waves would go high and hit the boat. Every time the boat hit the waves, I would think that was it – our end.”**

Eventually the boat's engine failed. And Amena ran out of oxygen.

They were stranded in the middle of the sea for 10 hours before a rescue ship appeared on the horizon. **“When I saw the ship, I cried,”** says Fadi. **“I cried for joy.”**

Amena was immediately hoisted up for urgent treatment. Then she was taken to a hospital in Italy where thankfully she recovered.



**“I WILL PLAY  
ALL THOSE GAMES  
I CAN'T PLAY NOW.  
I WILL WALK THE  
WAY I WANT TO.”**

**MARIUM\*, 11,  
FROM MYANMAR**



Photo: Hanna Adcock / Save the Children

**In a busy refugee camp in Bangladesh, the sound of sisters laughing fills the air. But these strong girls have been through so much to get here.**

Marium and Fahira belong to the Rohingya community, who have suffered years of violence at the hands of the army in Myanmar. When their village was attacked, the girls and their family had to flee with only the clothes they were wearing.

Their father went back to the village to collect some of their belongings but didn't return. When Marium went to find him, she was shot in the leg by a soldier. She couldn't walk, so her uncle carried her on his back for 15 days, all the way to Bangladesh.

**“When we were fleeing, we couldn't take any property with us,”** says Marium's uncle, Rafiq.

**“We were starving and hiding in the hills. There were thorns everywhere on the hills. We used to sleep in the jungle at night, holding our kids in our arms. Then somehow we reached the bank of the river (the Myanmar-Bangladesh border).”**

**“Upon crossing the river, my uncle took me to hospital instead of doing anything for his family,”** says Marium. **“They put an iron stick in my leg there.”**

Now she's safe, Marium is determined to move forward. **“I will play all those games I can't play now. I will walk the way I want to.”**



**Save the Children**

**Savethechildren.org.uk**

Registered charity England and Wales (213890) Scotland (SC039570)

*\*name changed to protect identity*



**“ONCE WE CROSSED  
THE BORDER,  
WE FELT A  
WEIGHT OFF  
OUR SHOULDERS.”**

**SIRAJ\*, 13,  
FROM SYRIA**

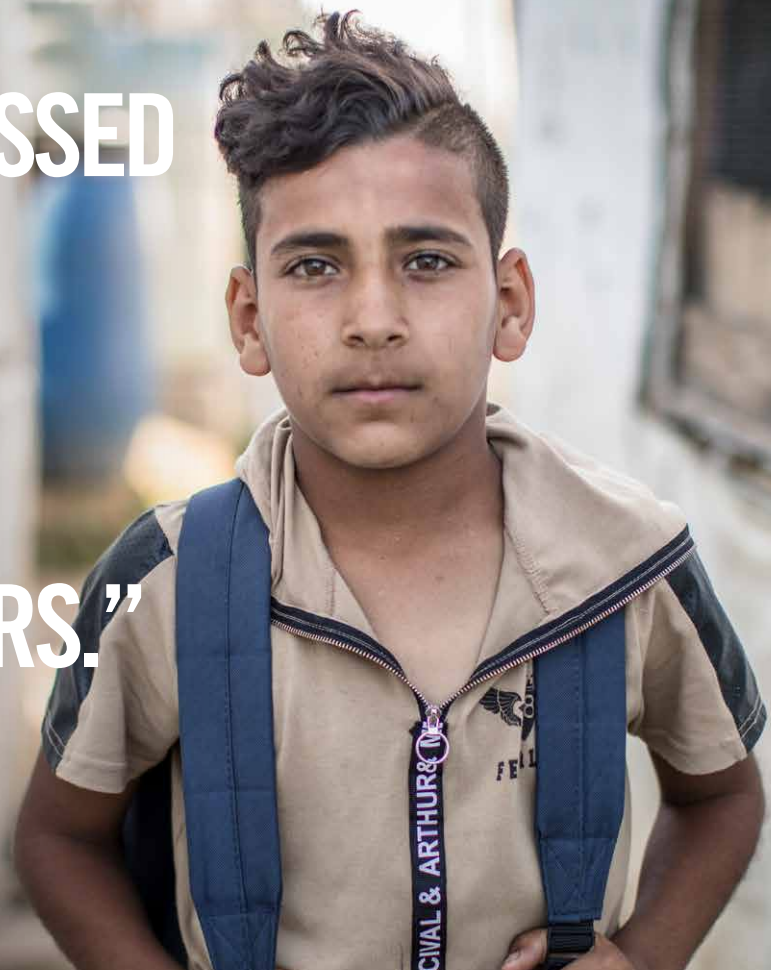


Photo: Jonathan Hyams / Save the Children

**Siraj was forced to flee the war and his home in Syria when he was six years old. He has grown up in a refugee camp in neighbouring Lebanon.**

**“I remember when we decided to leave Syria. I was playing with my cousins when my mum came and said that we had to go to Lebanon. We just went home and started packing.**

**“A car came to pick us up at 3am. We left the village with the headlights turned off. We were scared of the checkpoints. It was in the middle of the night, but we couldn’t risk turning on the lights because of the army, who shot at cars.**

**“The car took us to a place called Idlib. We left on a bus, but they didn’t let us bring any of our things – only the clothes we were wearing. Throughout the journey we were terrified. We were worried about the checkpoints. We were worried that they would send us back or not let us cross.**

**“Once we crossed the border, we felt a weight off our shoulders. We knew that everything was over. No more war.**

**“It didn’t matter to me where we lived, that it was in a tent and not in a house. What mattered was that we were at peace and that we felt comfortable with the people around us.**

**“This is what I’m thinking: I finish my studies, get a diploma, maybe become a teacher or a doctor. Then Syria goes back to what it was, and we all return, and I get a job there. I will have a house. And get married. And live a good life.”**



**Save the Children**

**Savethechildren.org.uk**

Registered charity England and Wales (213890) Scotland (SC039570)

*\*name changed to protect identity*

**“I AM NABILA.  
I AM COURAGEOUS  
AND I WANT TO  
MAKE MY DREAMS  
COME TRUE.”**

**NABILA\*, 13,  
FROM SYRIA**

**Have you ever met someone and thought straight away ‘they should run the world’? Nabila's one of those people.**

**“I am Nabila. I am courageous and I want to make my dreams come true.”**

But Nabila has earned her courage in ways she shouldn't have had to. She was forced to flee Syria five years ago, where she witnessed violence every day. She made the long journey to Za'atari refugee camp in Jordan.

**“Some policemen picked us up and took us to the Nassib Border Crossing. Then they brought us here, to the camp.**

**“I didn't want to leave Syria because my family and friends were still there. When I first moved here, it wasn't easy for me to adapt to the changes. The place was covered with dust. It wasn't easy to live in the tent – it's not like living in a caravan. The weather was hot, we didn't have water or electricity. Then, the living conditions in the camp got better.**

**“Children who have lived in warzones struggle a lot. As soon as they move to a safe country, they feel relieved – physically, mentally and emotionally.**

**“They should still keep going,” says Nabila. “Anyone who has a dream can still make it come true.”**



**Save the Children**

**Savethechildren.org.uk**

Registered charity England and Wales (213890) Scotland (SC039570)

*\*name changed to protect identity*