

FATHI, SAYID, AND YAMAN INSPIRED ABDUL'S STORY

The family fled to Turkey where they stayed for eight months before starting their journey to Germany.



Before war broke out in Syria, Fathi* was a tailor. During the conflict, he broke his shoulder so now he can't do physical work. He's planning on learning a new skill so he can find a job in Germany. His biggest hope is that his children can return to school.

'Where we lived in Syria, we could see nothing but fields,' says Fathi. 'We loved it there as there was no noise from the city, it was peaceful. Where we lived we could farm all year around.'

'Yesterday, Sayid* was telling me how to spell "Syria" in German. I hope my children will learn German quickly, and then teach me and my wife. We came here for our children, and for their education, so our biggest hope is that we can put them in schools and give them a better future.'

'Without Yaman's positivity and energy, it would be very depressing here.'

'Sometimes when I'm feeling sad I wake him up to play with me.'

'When we got on the boat from Turkey I thought this might be the end. Arriving on the Greek shore, I felt like I was reborn. Anything we brought with us from Syria, we lost on the journey, even our clothes.'

'I don't remember much about peaceful Syria, but I do remember my school playground and playing with my friends,' says Sayid, Fathi's 10-year-old son. 'From the journey to Germany, what I remember most are the crowds in Serbia. There was so much shouting and fear. My memories of Syria are only of violence.'

'I love football and my dream is to become a professional football player.'



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HASSAN AND HIS SON RAMI INSPIRED ALI'S CHARACTER

Hassan and his family were living under siege for several months before they were able to flee. They had no food and he and his family, like others, resorted to feeding their children grass to abate their hunger. It took them two months to reach Lebanon, where they live in a refugee camp.



‘When the shelling was happening, my children were so scared that they were wetting themselves. I also saw four children that were hit by the shelling. It was so tragic; I couldn’t even watch what was happening. Some children lost their limbs.

‘We had no food. No water. We had nothing at all. It was like that for months. When we didn’t find food on the journey, we ate grass. I used to lie to my children and tell them that the grass is edible. But who am I kidding? The grass wasn’t edible. They were saying “Dad, this is grass!” I was convincing them that we bought it in order to eat it, just like everyone else. I also ate it in front of them so they would be convinced, but it wasn’t edible.

‘I was watching my kids lose weight every day and I wasn’t able to do anything. My children lost more than a quarter of their weight. They were very healthy before.

‘Every time we walked, there was shelling and we hid until we were able to flee. Every place we moved to was also under attack. We didn’t think we would get out of the town. We used to stop for one day and walk for two days; it took us two months to get here. We got to a truck and were taken to the Lebanese borders. We waited there for two weeks until we crossed it.

‘My children and I have pain in our chests. My eldest son Rami has pain in his legs. I think it’s because of the long walk. We weren’t sure that we would be able to make it and survive. We took the risk of dying and left.

‘I consider myself living in heaven even though our situation is extremely bad now.’



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