

GIGANTES

LIBANO

Action Against Hunger will help the film director Hernan Zin and the production company Grupo Caribe from Spain to collect short stories about GIANTS – people who fight against hunger or experience hunger every day. The film, made for broadcasting and for screening at major film festivals, will show positive stories of people (mothers, doctors, humanitarian staff, agents of change, community leaders...) who dedicate their lives to eradicate hunger, or struggle to feed their families.

Mobile phones will be given to the selected giants, who will then film their lives for the period of 3-4 weeks. They will tell their own story through the footage that they made themselves. The production company in Spain will then put the film together. The filming will also take place in Bangladesh, Philippines, Gaza, Guatemala, etc.

The documentary will be premiered on the World Food Day (October 16th, 2018), and aims to change the perception about hunger among the wider public. The documentary will be subtitled in English and French.

ALI MOHAMMED AMER, 53

HOMS



Ali has two wives, and 12 children. His oldest child is 31, while the youngest is 8. One wife lives in Tripoli with 4 children, while the other wife and children are with him in the camp. Ali is from Homs, and was among the first families to arrive to Aarsal. In Homs, he had three houses and a number of cars. He used to have a vegetables and fruits retail business. Life was good, and he was happy with his family.

When the war started in Homs, ISIS and extreme groups quickly took over the power. Their house was on the front line where different groups were waging battles. It was then, in 2012, that he decided they should leave. Their home was close to the border, so they easily came over to Aarsal. The mayor of Aarsal welcomed Syrian refugees in the beginning. Him and family were hosted by a Lebanese family who wouldn't accept that they family paid a monthly rent. Later, as the conflict continued and the family realised that they won't be able to return home soon, he registered the family as refugees. The first organisation to help was Islamic Relief, and the family was entitled to 30\$ per person per month. Islamic Relief soon offered him to find a spot for a camp and become the camp's elder. This was in 2013.

However, ISIS also takes over Aarsal and confiscates all food and fuel deliveries. Initially, the camp had more than 170 families, but roughly 50 fled to avoid the horrors of an ISIS rule. It was only in 2017

that the Lebanese army retook the city. Now the camp houses 145 families and Ali is in charge of all relations with NGOs and aid distribution. He also helps families who need any other kind of assistance. The camp has widowed women who are sole breadwinners for their families, and Ali helps them as well. E.g. the weekend earlier, the city was struck by heavy rainfall. The camps, situated in mountainous areas, were flooded. He immediately got in touch with humanitarian organisations, and then personally helped families to drain their tents.

Ali receives no financial assistance from agencies today, as the majority of his children are of working age and the family is no longer eligible to receive financial aid. One of his sons is a doctor and works in a hospital in Tripoli, and one is a butcher. Sons provide for income for the family, and his only occupation is being the elder (shawish – leader of the camp in Arabic) in the camp.

Of the three houses he used to have in Syria, he knows that only one is still possible to live in. He wants to return home, but people in the camp want him to stay because they like him and he treats everyone as equals.



KHALED HASSAN, 43
HOMS

Khaled is married and has two wives. His first wife, with whom he had three boys, is in Syria. When the war began, they fled just across the border into Lebanon. One of their boys died in 2014 (Khaled was too emotional to talk about it). His wife thought that the pain was unbearable and decided to return to Syria. He hasn't seen her since. He was sending her money for a while, but soon enough all savings were gone. He married again in 2015 and has no children with his second wife.

In Syria he was a farmer, and had sheep. When the fighting became too intense around his village in 2012, he took his sheep and moved closer to the Lebanese border. He fed his family by selling dairy from the sheep. When the milk started drying out, he sold the animals as he was afraid that sheep would become unprofitable. He then went to Lebanon in search for a better life. He came to the camp in 2014. He could sustain his living from the proceeds of the sheep sale. People in the camp were friendly, however, with an estranged wife back in Syria, he started to feel lonely and in 2015 decided to get married again.

When ISIS took over Aarsal, the refugee population was put under additional hardship. The original elder of the camp (shawish) was not able to cope with the mounting problems in the camp, so Khaled was asked to take the role of a new elder. He hesitated in the beginning, as he doesn't like the spotlight, but the feeling of loneliness and the desire

to be around people convinced him that he should take the task even though it doesn't give him an income. He hasn't regretted accepting ever since, and has been helping people and coordinating aid for the camp. Khaled is a member of the WASH committee for the camp.

The money he earned from the sale of his sheep is long gone. He and his wife have no other income or cash assistance, only food rations that are often lacking in nutrients.

"Even though I'm not earning any money for being a shawish, the thought of being available to help someone else, helps fill the emptiness that I feel."

Khaled has no material possessions and no means of acquiring any. If the life continues like this, he says, he will go back to Syria. He would like to save some money because he wouldn't want to begin from scratch again, but it's not likely that he will be able to earn any. By returning to Syria, he would at least be at home among his own.

**NOUFA
JAAFAR, 58**
BAALBEK



Noufa was born and raised in Baalbek, Lebanon. She married at 17, and now has six children, four girls and two boys. Her husband is agricultural engineer and the family own a large farm, with an apple orchard and 50 beehives. Her girls are all married and now have their own families. Sons both work within agriculture. She is very connected to land and farming.

Consequences of Lebanon's civil war that devastated the country in 1970s and 80s are still visible in Baalbek. Noufa was young when the war started. She comes from a very simple family. Her parents refused to enrol her to school, regardless of how much she insisted to go. Her brother supported her desire for education and enrolled her to school secretly. Because her parents denied her schooling, she insisted that all her children should get degrees. She always memorised their school schedules, and at times, she would stay up all night to make sure that her kids don't fall asleep while studying for their finals. In 2006 during Israel's war on Lebanon, she fled with family to Syria for 28 days. They were taken in by a Syrian family who considered them as their own. Noufa will never forget that, and the fact that people could show such generosity in times when they needed it most.

Decades ago, governmental agriculture agency would come and check the quality of their apples to purchase the harvest, however the quality was not good. She then gathered neighbours, collected apples that fell on the ground and started making apple cider. Through the years, she stopped spraying the trees, making her cider organic for

which she now has a certificate. She founded a cooperative, through which she gathers women and teaches them about methods of organic farming. "Because I didn't get the education that I wanted, my aim is to support women and help them become independent, more confident and self-sustainable."

A few years ago, Noufa went for a training about organic farming to Jordan and realised she was more knowledgeable about organic farming than the trainers who were teaching.

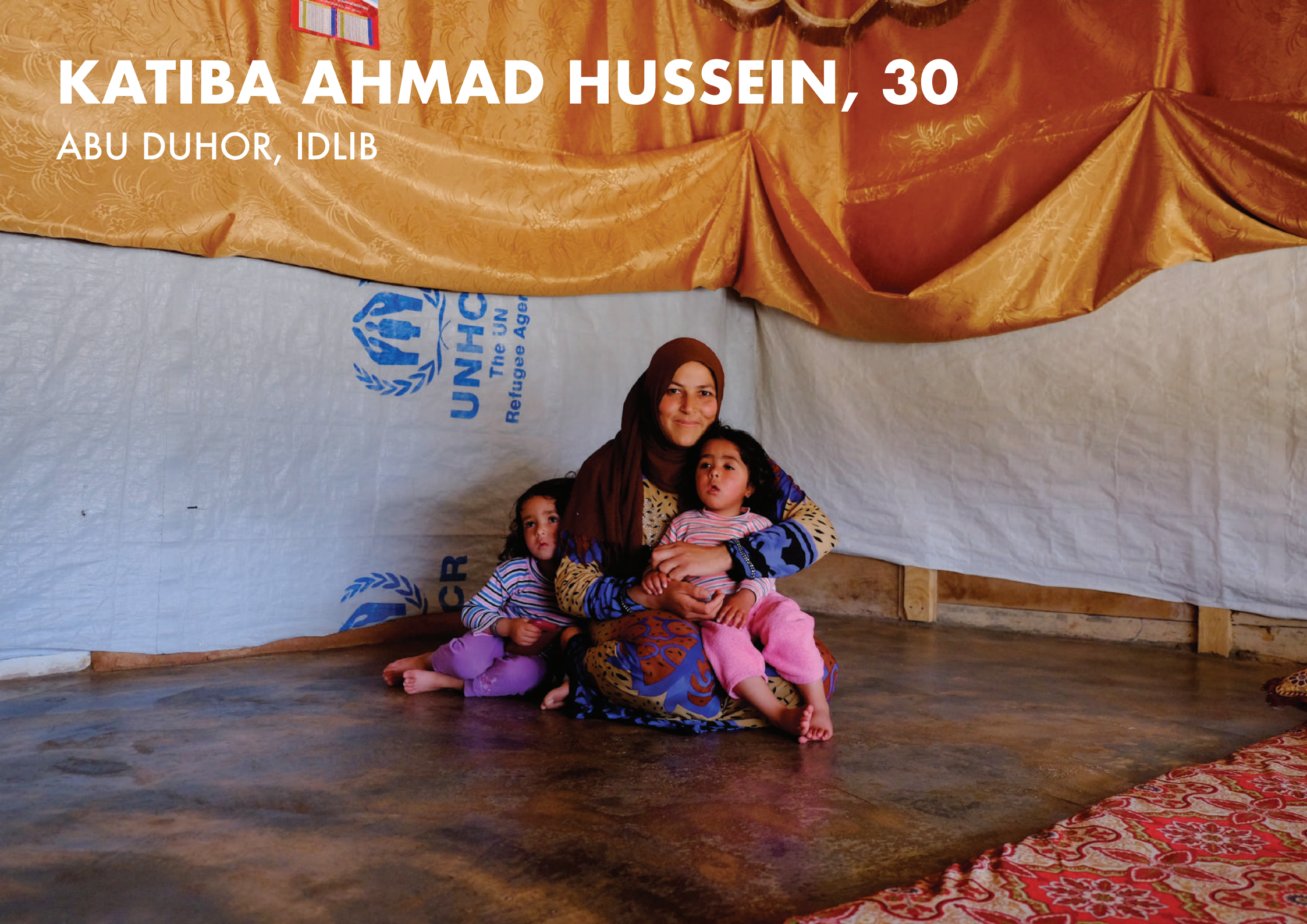
She sends annual results from her cooperative to the ministry of labour, which in turn has good relations with Action Against Hunger. AAH asked about projects to engage with, and the ministry recommended Noufa's cooperative. When the contact was established, AAH asked if the cooperative would be ready to employ Syrian refugees. Noufa accepted, particularly eager to improve nutrition among the refugee population. She has trained 475 women about different ways to preserve food and how to recycle cooking oil. She also trained 60 women (40 Syrian and 20 Lebanese) on how to make soap and pasta sauces as a part of a microcredit project. The response from the Syrian women was: "Thank you. Thanks to you, we are born again."

She really understands what Syrian refugee women are going through. "Lebanon should not feel that Syrians are a burden. Instead they should look on the positive side and see what Syrians are contributing to this country."



KATIBA AHMAD HUSSEIN, 30

ABU DUHOR, IDLIB



Katiba is a widow with four kids - two boys and two girls. The oldest boy is 7 years old, the second is 5, and the twin girls are 2,5.

She arrived to Hermel in 2012, then only with one child. She was there for a few months, living under harsh conditions when she heard that her husband was arrested in Syria over a family dispute, and decided to return. She was back in Syria for five years, got one more child (one boy), and was pregnant with two twin girls, when her husband was killed by the family he was in dispute with. When the war started to enflame again in 2016, she was forced to leave. Her trip back to Lebanon was excruciating. She was on an overcrowded bus with many refugees. At every checkpoint they would be forced to get off the bus for security checks, which was very strenuous for an 8 months pregnant mother of two. She went to Hermel, because she had been there before and because her sister was already there with her own family.

The tent she lives in houses 12 people (Katiba, four children, and her husband's parents and sisters in law). Winters are particularly tough because they heat the tent with gas heaters, which is very expensive. The house gets very cold at night. The money she earns working in the fields pays for her children, while the others are taken care of by one of her sisters in law who also works in the fields. Her income is 2000 LBP per hour (1,75\$). Her biggest income was 180\$ that she earned working

two shifts. She also gets 27\$ vouchers per child from WFP. The money she gets, she spends all on kids. Whatever she has in mind to buy, her children would want something else, and she is happy to oblige.

One of her daughters, Dalal, was severely malnourished. Katiba noticed that she looked different from her twin sister, and thought she displayed mental impairment. She didn't know how to help her. Action Against Hunger was mapping the needs in the area and visited her tent. AAH staff recognised severe acute malnutrition, and helped her get treatment for her daughter. AAH also gave her two goats to help feed the family with dairy products. Her daughter is now much better, and continues to show progress.

When asked if she would want to go back to Syria, she says that she has nothing left there - her husband is dead and her house is no longer there. She would like to stay in Lebanon because she would like to see her children grow up in safety.



KATIBA'S KITCHEN



KATIBA'S LIVINGROOM



KATIBA WITH DAUGHTER BASIMA AND SON AHMAD



FAMILY BATHROOM



THE STABLE WITH GOATS THAT KATIBA GOT FROM ACTION AGAINST HUNGER

KAFAA AHMED HAMAD, 41

ALEPPO



Kafaa is a mother of nine: five boys and four girls. Only two go to school. She married at 14, and her husband is 14 years older than her. He got back problems due to strenuous physical work while trying to provide for his family, but is now not able to work. They are 15 in the household. One of her daughters is married and lives with her husband and two children together with the family. Kafaa never went to school and doesn't know how to read or write.

In Syria, they lived close to the airport and were constantly in the line of fire. When the bombings began, they would spend most of their time hiding under the stairs. They decided to flee to Lebanon, but didn't feel welcome when they arrived. Their camp is located between a river and a landfill. When it rains, the river floods and the garbage slides into the camp, their tent gets flooded. It's constantly dirty, infested with bacteria. The family keeps washing hands to avoid getting sick.

Four of the children are working in the fields (two boys and two girls). They live in a camp where the camp leader is forcing refugees to work. Her two children (9 and 11 years old) work from 2 AM till 5 PM. They earn 6000 LBP (4\$) per 8-hours shift, and are forced to give 40% of their income to the camp leader who claims it's to pay the rent of the land where the camp is situated.

Back in Syria, the family had comfortable life. Her husband worked as a driver, and they had a piece of land that they cultivated.

"In Syria we lived like kings and queens, and here we live like servants. Work here is not an option, it's a must, the shawish (camp leader) is forcing us to work." They receive 400.000 LBP per month in food assistance (about 270\$), which is hardly enough for 15 people. They are indebted to the greengrocer who refuses to give them more vegetables before they pay the bills. The two youngsters (9 and 11) who work two shifts often come home crying from exhaustion. Many children in the camp think of committing suicide. From the money they annually earn working the fields, roughly 500.000 LBP end up in camp leader's pockets. The kids dream of a proper meal that includes chicken or meat: "Meat is expensive and we are 15 people. I would have to buy a lot in order to be able to feed us all, and we simply have no money for it." Their usual meal consists of fried potatoes, rice and bread.

Kafaa would love to go back to Syria. Although things look bad, she is optimistic about the future and thinks that things will eventually turn out well.



THE FAMILY BEDROOM



SITTING ROOM. IN THE PHOTO ARE KAFEE'S
SON IN LAW AND HER TWO GRANDCHILDREN



THE FAMILY KITCHEN



KAFAA'S SONS, YOUSEF AND AHMAD



THE BACK SIDE OF KAFAA'S TENT

NISREEN IBRAHIM SHARIF, 24

KAF HALAB, ALEPPO



Nisreen is mother of two boys and a girl. Her youngest is the daughter who is 4, and her oldest boy is 7. She was married at 14; her husband was 24. He was previously married to another woman with whom he has four children. His former wife now lives in Syria with their 1 year old child, while their other three currently live with Nisreen in Lebanon.

When the war started, they took the kids and moved from one part of Aleppo to the other up until 2015. When it became too unsafe to stay, they decided to flee to Lebanon. It took them two days to reach the Lebanese border. At the time, she was pregnant with her little daughter, which made the journey particularly difficult. She delivered the girl in their tent as they didn't have enough money for a hospital.

Nisreen explained that they were also poor even before the war in Syria and most of the time couldn't afford food. Before getting married, Nisreen went to school and wants her children to go to school as of next year.

Her husband works sporadically. In best case, he earns 200\$ per month, which is not enough to support their needs. Her husband's daughter (13years old) is also working in the fields. Nisreen explained

that she doesn't treat her husband's children from previous marriage any differently than her own, as, she says, it's not their fault.

Nisreen wakes up every morning at 7 AM to clean the house, and then makes food for her family. Their meals are mostly consisted of fried potatoes and bread. In the evenings, the family often sit together. Nisreen would rather stay in Lebanon as her situation back in Syria wasn't better before, and the family wouldn't have a place to return to anyway. She has hope that things will get better in time.



NISREEN'S FAMILY TENT



NISREEN WITH CHILDREN

OMAR IMDYFEH, 20

RAQQA



ZAHIIYE IMDYFEH, 21

RAQQA



Omar is one of seven boys out of 11 children. The family of 13 lives in a tent in a medium sized camp in West Bekaa. When the war started, the family immediately left refusing to wait for the situation to deteriorate. When they crossed the border, the Lebanese were very welcoming.

His father is the only male earning income, and his oldest sister Zahiyye (21) is also working in the fields. The parents belong to the same family, and six of their children display different types of disability (four are deaf and two are blind). Omar finished 8th grade in Syria, and couldn't continue because they had to leave. He never enrolled in school in Lebanon. His dream is to get married and start his own family, however he doesn't have an income and is not able to save money for the wedding.

Zahiyye, 21, used to play football in Syria, and would now like to become a nurse. She finished ninth grade in Syria, but never enrolled in a school in Lebanon. Unlike her brother, she would like to continue studying and get a degree. She works from 5 till 11 AM, comes back home to help her mother with chores, and then goes back to the fields

to work the second shift. She said that life in Syria was so much better because both parents were able to work.

Now she has no time to breathe because she's always working. She often meets with her friends from the camp, and they always talk about work, sometimes clothes and boys. All siblings are very close to each other, and she as the oldest is seen as a role model by her younger brothers and sisters. The family is very tightly knit; they often sit together when she and her father are not at work, and joke with each other.



ZAHIIYE WITH HER YOUNGER SISTER



OMAR AND ZAHIIYYE'S
MOTHER AND SISTER
IN THE FAMILY KITCHEN



OMAR AND ZAHIIYYE WITH THEIR YOUNGER SISTER

KHALED MAHMOUD HAMMOUD, 37

RAQQA



Khaled initially fled Syria in 2012. He found a job in Lebanon, worked for about 3 months, but then decided to return to Syria. Khaled, his brother and his cousin helped 52 Syrian Sunni soldiers escape from Raqqa to Homs. The move angered other groups, and the three were forced to leave Raqqa for Homs. He says he's apolitical, and just felt he needed to help. While he was in Homs, he received a tip that groups were planning to arrest them, so he decided to flee back to Lebanon (2013). His brother managed to escape to Jordan, but his cousin was caught by the groups and killed. His journey to Lebanon was hard, and he had to pay 800\$ in bribes to escape.

Khaled was married back in Syria and has two boys, but when he was forced to flee to Lebanon, his wife could not join him. She was kept hostage along with her children and Khaled's parents. When ISIS came to Raqqa, they confiscated his house, booby-trapped it and later blew it up. His wife blamed him for that, and refuses to speak to him ever since. She also doesn't allow him to speak to their children.

He tried for 1,5 years to persuade his wife to come to Lebanon, but she refused. He then started feeling lonely and after a year and a half decided to marry another Syrian woman from the camp. They now have two small boys.

Khaled has three brothers and four sisters. One of his younger brothers was forced into joining ISIS. His brother tried to escape three times. During his final attempt to flee ISIS, he was followed and ambushed. He was shot several times in his legs and head, and as a consequence is still suffering from severe health issues. ISIS finally gave up their pursuit after the family paid a ransom of 5000\$.

Before the war, he had a good life with his wife and children, and was helping his father with his steel business.

Khaled has been working all types of jobs in the camp, once managing to earn a salary of 450\$. His wife also works in the fields and earns 6000 LBP per day. Both Khaled and his wife explained that their children mean everything to them, and that they would sacrifice everything in order to give them the best education and care. They want to give their children everything that they themselves were denied when they were younger. Khaled would like to go back to Syria one day when the war stops and when the situation stabilises.



KHALED WITH HIS SECOND WIFE AND TWO CHILDREN

AMINA AL ABOOD, 24

SER, HOMS



Amina and her husband were forced to flee to Lebanon in 2011, only five days after their wedding. She has four children, two boys and two girls, all born in Lebanon. Their oldest is five year old son, while the youngest is only four months old.

Before they left home, their village had been sprayed with heavy air raids. Amina says that the bombing was so heavy that there was a lot of blood on the streets. When women started to be harassed, they took the difficult decision to leave. Their departure – a 12-hour-long journey – was rough, in spite of the short distance between their village and the Lebanese border. Lebanon was also difficult in the beginning, as they continued moving around the country due to increasing rent prices. Their current monthly rent in the camp in Aarsal is 30.000 LBP (roughly 20\$).

She doesn't work, their only income are the food cards she receives from Action Against Hunger, worth about 170\$. There is not much money for anything else. Her youngest son was recently ill, and she had to take him out of hospital because she couldn't afford it. Her husband has problems finding a job, as there are many refugees and too little to do in Aarsal. He would go elsewhere to find employment, but he only has the permission to be in Aarsal.

Amina had a tough childhood. She is one of three siblings. Her mother never really treated them well, and eventually left the family. Her father remarried, and her stepmother treated them even worse. Her father is now the camp leader of the camp where they live, but he refuses to help the family. She hasn't seen her mother in 17 years.

Two of her children are displaying signs of disability, and all children are stunted. Amina said that she was anaemic during her pregnancy. At the time, they were not registered, which meant that they didn't receive any food assistance – her nutrition was very poor. Their meals now mainly consist of pasta, rice or potatoes. Other vegetables are too expensive, while fruits are a luxury to be enjoyed once every two weeks.

Her dream is that her children get a proper education. She doesn't want to go back to Syria because she has nothing left there. Her house is torn down, and she has no other family but her husband and children.



AMINA WITH HUSBAND, CHILDREN AND MOTHER IN LAW

ZAINAB MOHAMMED DAR, 28

SAHEL, HOMS



Zainab has four children, the oldest is 12 and youngest only 4. She was 15 when she got married, her husband was 17. Her husband has one more wife and two daughters. When asked if she gets along with his husband's second wife, she says she doesn't, but she considers his two daughters as her own.

They left Syria in 2014 when the airstrikes intensified. Zainab wanted to protect her children, so leaving was not an option. They first came to another camp in Lebanon, but there was not enough space for them. They had to move to the camp where they are now in Aarsal. Before the war, she says, they had a good life. Her husband worked as a mechanic and had his own shop. Zainab wasn't working, but dedicated herself to children. She finished high school just before she got married.

Now, WFP card is the main source of income for the family, with her husband occasionally getting some work here and there. Overall, they have 250\$ a month for food and basic necessities, there is no room for much more. For example, her son is anaemic and needs medication, which they simply can't afford.

Zainab is a volunteer with Action Against Hunger. She met the AAH team when they were visiting the camp. She wanted to do some-

thing to help, and the AAH team encouraged her. She also got support from her husband. Her task is to monitor the situation in the camp and call AAH if people in the camp need help. For example, there was a lot of heavy rain for a few days, and the camp was flooded. Many tents were filled with water and mud, and she called AAH for assistance. Her own tent is on a higher ground than most of other tents in the camp, so she offered people shelter until water retreats. She feels very empowered by the volunteering job, and is happy to be able to help.

Her children and their future are the single most important thing for Zainab. Three of four go to school and are all A students. She would love to be able to give them everything, but even the simplest luxuries like chocolate are unaffordable. She says that her children understand their situation, and never ask for anything they know the family can't afford. Whenever she has some money, she always asks the kids what they would like to have.

When asked about the future, Zainab says she would love to return home to Syria, have a good life again and certainly wants her children to get university degrees.



ZAINAB WITH HER CHILDREN