

Station 5:

Bflo: Mohammed / Syria Language: Arabic

Hello, my name is Mohammed, I'm from Syria. We had a very simple life there. I used to work in printing. I lived in Syria with my family.

I'm married and have two kids, a boy and a girl. We were comfortable (in Syria), and did not have as many responsibilities as we have currently. I did not know how it felt to have too many responsibilities until I immigrated. I lived my life normally; I would work, and not pay attention to the news. We were happy!! thanks to Allah, until all those problems started. We remained in this bad situation for about 10 or 11 months, and we couldn't tell who was with us or against us anymore, even those closest to us, family and relatives. Nobody could tell how or where things were going to end up.

Suddenly one day when I arrived at work, I was told that I had to leave within 24 hours. Considering the nature of my position at work and the fact that I was close to the general intelligence department, my name was on the list. I moved accordingly; within twelve hours I was out of Syria, leaving everything behind. That first week felt like seven years, not seven days. It was very hard and difficult, for myself and my family. I moved by myself to Libya, then I started recalling memories with my family, how we were before, and what we had we become. I wasn't financially rich or poor - I was right in the middle - but I had everything I needed in Syria. Thank Allah, I had everything I needed. I had a house, and I had my family.

I stayed in Libya for ten months, and I could not tolerate it anymore. My family couldn't tolerate it either, so they first moved to Egypt in order to come to Libya. However, they could not get into Libya because the situation there was not stable either. After nine months I sent my Family (my wife, Abdulrahman and Alaa) to Egypt and followed them the next month. We were together in Egypt but it wasn't like Syria; we were all scattered everywhere, we stayed in rental places, it was like a new life. Listening to the bad daily news, phone calls about people dying, and that caused a lot of stress and anxiety.

We stayed in Egypt for one month, and then we moved to Jordan, to a secured house. I entered Jordan to visit, not to reside. I arrived on June 8th, 2016 as a visitor and on the 9th the revolution started in Egypt. The border was closed and I thought things would get better, because my intention was to go back to Libya, but it did not happen. I didn't go back to Libya. It wasn't only that the border was closed, I was trying to cross the border illegally. I stayed in Jordan for the first month, second month, and third month in the secured house and I started to give up, there was no solution, then I considered the idea of traveling. I went to different embassies and I wasn't welcomed at their doors, all embassies said NO. We tried to talk to the United Nations Office that provided us with nutrition coupons about traveling, but they told us that they would call us if we were eligible. I stayed like this from 2013 to...four years in Jordan.

OK: Carina Evangelista / Philippines Language: Tagalog

Fleeing one's native land is an equation that illustrates that fear, desperate need, and utter loss of hope is greater than whatever love for that land is pledged or deeply felt. The fear in what one is ready to abandon is greater than the fear of the unknown—even when one could not grasp fully what lies ahead, where one might land, whether one could mince and swallow all that is unknown because foreign—from language, way of life, culture, values to the taste of water, the cut of one's shadow at dusk, the extreme cold or extreme heat wherever one landed.

As the Filipino poet Virgilio Almario wrote:

...it stings, the truth
How dark and vast the ocean,
As you lie still on the shore:
Blanketed in the moss of forgetting.

Bflo: Zubaida / Iraq Language: Arabic *Zubaida sings the national anthem of Iraq, from a popular poem written by the Palestinian poet Ibrahim Touqan in 1934. **Please note: As with most national anthems, this song is usually sung strongly, with spirit. Zubaida's haunting version here is tender and sorrowful.*

My homeland!
My homeland!
Glory and beauty,
Sublimity and splendor,
Grace and majesty
Are in your hills, in your hills

Life and deliverance,
Pleasure and hope
Are in your air, in your love

Shall I see you, will I see you
Safely comforted, blessed,
Victorious and honored
Shall I see you in your eminence?

Reaching to the stars,
Reaching the stars!
My homeland!
My homeland!

OK: Maria Trejo / Honduras Language: Spanish

My story is, well my childhood was a little difficult. I grew up with my grandparents in a town called Sonaguera, so at the same time I had everything and I had nothing, because my dad was in jail, my mom worked to be able to send some money to my grandparents and from the age of seven I was an abused girl who suffered physical and psychological abuse. At the age of 13, it was time to go back to my parents; my dad had already been released and my parents did not have money to give us an education.

My mother used to take me to work. Unfortunately, life in Honduras is a little poor and the lack of education, the lack of culture there, you work from a very, very young age, and my mother took me to houses to work, to take care of children, wash clothes, wash dishes. She worked, my dad worked, my other sisters worked and there were many of us, there were about eight of us, among whom there were seven women.

At that time, any home we were going to I was touched, I was used, and I did not say anything because when it happened the first time in my childhood, it had already happened to my sister. When my sister told my grandmother, my grandmother put a knife to her tongue; she told her not to repeat that again nor ever tell anyone. So then when it happened to me my only option was to shut up, because I was afraid. They beat me every day, and when I went to those houses with my mom, working from house to house, I was touched, and I finally said to myself "no more".

I left home, I ran away, I started working on my own. I tried to give myself an education. I finished junior high school, thank God, and in a span of that time of my life I got into the army, but I got out. I left because at that time I already had a baby girl. I got pregnant at 16, that girl is the product of a rape, and I had responsibilities.