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**ICRC: Syria’s Decade of Loss – Youssef’s Story**

23-year old Youssef Ilia is a Syrian living in Germany. He arrived there after travelling through Turkey and Greece, leaving his parents and little brother behind.

He travelled with nine friends on a journey that took almost a month. He lost 35kg during the arduous trip.

Once he had settled in with his older brother, also in Germany, he tried to restart his studies, which didn’t work out.

He also tried to get an apprenticeship as an engineer. He is now working part-time in a garage, trying to figure out his future.

He speaks to his family and friends in Syria whenever they have electricity and in between his shifts at the garage.

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**SHOTLIST**

Soundbite (German) Youssef Ilia, Syrian refugee

00:00:00 *“I am Youssef Ilia. I'm from Syria, from Al-Malikiyah, Syria. I grew up there and went to school there until I graduated from high school. My city is on the Duggan-Iraq border, in the north.”*

00:00:19 *“I was there until I graduated from high school. Then I came here. I was almost 18 years old. Yes, and since I've been here I've been to school and working.”*

00:00:34 Exterior of Youssef’s building

Soundbite (German) Youssef Ilia, Syrian refugee

00:00:51 *“I wanted to go to university like a normal person, build my future and all sorts of things. But unfortunately it didn't work.”*

00:00:58 *“Then we talked to my father. I had to get out of Syria. I'm out over the border. Illegal. Because I couldn't do otherwise. Then I went to Turkey.”*

00:01:13 *“From the border to Istanbul. That was 24 hours on the bus. In Istanbul we were in Aksaray.”*

00:01:24 *“For three days or so we were 45 or 47 people in a small boat. Also, dangerous, really dangerous. We are on the water for an hour and a half, as far as the Greek border.”*

00:01:39 Youssef in his bathroom and on the computer

Soundbite (German) Youssef Ilia, Syrian refugee

00:02:11 *“It's very different in Syria than here. Very different. Also how the people live there.”*

00:02:19 *“You have to learn the language and follow the rules. You have to do what's right. Done, off. So you have to get used to it. I've got used to almost everything.”*

00:02:33 *“I think I'm still me. But I live here and do what is necessary so that I can continue to live here.”*

00:02:45 Youssef driving his car in the countryside

Soundbite (German) Youssef Ilia, Syrian refugee

00:03:21 *“I think it's really good here. So I'm happy with everything, I just miss my family.”*

00:03:30 *“I come from a family of musicians. Everyone makes music. So is our family. Painting, drawing and that sort of thing. For example, my father paints a lot. And he does a lot of other things in his spare time too. When it's free to switch off, he paints.”*

00:03:55 *“But I was the kind of person who always wanted to work. Something to do with metal. I've always been interested in cars, automotive mechatronics, mechanics and such.”*

00:04:05 *“And since I was a child, I've always been happy to be able to watch. So after I got here, I wanted to move on.”*

00:04:15 *“I really miss my father. I'd been with my father every day for the last three years there.”*

00:04:22 *“The last three or two years in Syria before I came to Germany. He talked to me so much, he taught me so much, showed me so much and how to talk to people, how to behave, etc.”*

00:04:43 *“He taught me everything. Everything and when I think about something or have any problems, I have always been honest with him. Always. No matter what it was. I'm about to cry.”*

00:04:56 *“My mother. My mother. The best. I really missed her. My mother always calls me on her own when I'm sad, when I have something, by herself. I don't know how she does it. A mother's heart is always like this.”*

00:05:21 *“My mother is always like this when I have something. She calls me and asks what's up, what are you doing? How is life going And when I say everything is fine, she says, don't lie to me, I know it. She then talks to me until I laugh. Then she hangs up.”*

00:05:32 *“I really miss her. My father, my little brother, my aunt who is there.”*

00:05:44 Youssef calling his brother from home

00:06:01 Youssef calling his father from the park

Soundbite (German) Youssef Ilia, Syrian refugee

00:06:22 *“Sometimes I feel sad. I think that I am alone after all.”*

00:06:35 *“I just have to get by. I always try to get along, but there are points where I can always need help.”*

00:06:43 *“I met my girlfriend at work, in the shisha bar.”*

00:06:49 *“We worked together there. Our first date was on Valentine's Day and we've been together ever since.”*

00:07:04 *“It wasn't a real relationship straight away, we slowly got to know each other. We've been together for almost 6, 7, 8 months. And she helps me with everything.”*

00:07:17 *“I also talk to her about everything. She also talks to me about everything. We are always there for one another. We get along well. We get along well. She helped me with my application and my résumé. How to talk”*

00:07:33 *“What to wear. Such things. So without her I couldn't have done a lot. I always thank her.”*

00:07:50 Youssef and his girlfriend Nina cooking together

Soundbite (German) Youssef Ilia

00:08:29 *“Nina ate so much Arabic food, everything I always do. I only do Arabic food. She wants to learn all of that too. You taste everything.”*

00:08:41 *“I like cooking. There is one dish that almost all of Syria likes to eat.”*

00:08:49 *“With minced meat, eggplant and rice. Everything is cooked together. And then I'll make a salad with it. We can do this today, shall I?”*

00:09:03 Youssef and his girlfriend Nina walking together in the park

Soundbite (German) Youssef Ilia

00:09:42 *“Before the war it was the most beautiful country in the world.”*

00:09:45 *“No matter where you went. Everyone had respect, people were really good. Yes there are exceptions, but most of them were nice and helpful.”*

00:10:02 *“The door was always open to everyone. If you needed help and knocked on a door, you got help. You feel different there.”*

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