International Committee of the Red Cross

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| **Footage Under Embargo until 00:00 ET / 06:00am CET March 10**Easy to preview and to download[www.icrcvideonewsroom.org](http://www.icrcvideonewsroom.org/) |

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

23-year-old Ahmad was in 9th grade and early teens when he had to interrupt his education because of the conflict. He hasn’t been in a classroom since then.

He has lived in Lebanon since 2014. He suffers chronic back and arm pain due to injuries he sustained during the conflict. He is unable to carry weights or get involved in any work that requires him to carry heavy loads, and his condition worries and stresses him.

A talented math student and chess fan, he wanted to become a teacher or lecturer had he had the chance to continue his education.

Currently unemployed, Ahmed and says he cannot see a future for himself neither here nor back in Syria. He believes his lack of education severely limits his career prospects.

Life in Lebanon is difficult for him and medical treatment for his chronic pain is too expensive. He occasionally works with the ICRC mental health team as a volunteer in his area, which he says gives him purpose and something to do.

Location: Al Bireh, Lebanon.

Filming Date: 01.02.2021

Languages: Arabic

On-screen credit: ICRC

Producer: Charbel Barakat, Rasha Abou Dargham

Camera: Charbel Barakat

Editor: Christopher Nicholas

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Restrictions, if any: He requested not to mention his family name.

Duration: 04:31

Production Reference: 20200201-Lebanon-Ahmad

Soundbite: (Arabic) Ahmad, Syrian refugee in Lebanon

*00:00 “In our village, everybody liked me. I was sociable with the young and the old. I was very popular and funny. I used to tell jokes. Now, there is no place for laughter. Life doesn’t make me laugh anymore; no jokes, no fun. Life has stopped; just a daily routine of waking up, getting through the day, and going back to sleep.*

*00:32 I was in 9th grade when the problems started. Everything was relatively ok until 26 November 2011. The next day things escalated in our village and schools were closed. That was the last day I opened a book, it was a science book.*

*00:52 I stayed for twenty days in a different area until they announced that the road to Lebanon was semi open. I walked for one hour, then got on the top of a diesel truck. There was no space so I rode on top. It was freezing and windy, I could feel it in my bones; I didn’t think I’d make it to Lebanon alive.”*

01:17 Driving through the streets near Ahmad’s home.

Soundbite: (Arabic) Ahmad, Syrian refugee in Lebanon

*01:25 “Two of my friends, Ahmed and Soliman lost their lives in the crisis.*

*01:35 I found out about it from the news and stories I heard from friends. When you lose a dear friend, it’s like losing a kidney or limb; it can never be replaced. Death news has become routine. All of these things affect my mental health.*

*02:12 I used to have more money when I was ten years old than I do now at 24. I never used to think about money.*

*02:25 I have none of the usual personal belongings that I used to have at home. I used to have a wardrobe, a desk and a computer. I used to have seven or eight chess boards, one for each family member. I was a good and competitive chess player, playing with the adults.*

*02:55 It’s no longer available. Even if we had a chess board, I would not be able to concentrate or focus and play like I used to.”*

03:08 Ahmad sitting in his living room.

Soundbite: (Arabic) Ahmad, Syrian refugee in Lebanon

***03:17 “****I was in a camp when a Red Cross staff member asked if I’d like to volunteer in the mental health support group. I agreed because I like to help people.*

***03:33*** *Seeing people happy makes me happy; I felt relieved, it’s better than being alone. But due to COVID-19 everything now is online and it’s not the same.*

***03:52*** *If other nations go through a fraction of what Syrians faced, they would lose their minds.*

***04:05*** *Hard days shall pass; maybe it’s over for my generation and we are unable to help*

*our country. Many people were deceived, some hit rock bottom, others gained; war teaches you a lot.”*

**04:31 ENDS**