



Diamonds

Syrian refugees have a mother called Syria. She is not in Jordan, nor in Lebanon, but you can still see her from the borders, as well as the fire, smoke, and grief. Refugees just stand on the border and talk to her through all their pain. They are very tired, cold, hungry, thirsty, and sick. They want to hug her and be with her. They just want a little mercy and protection. Unfortunately, they were forced to leave and their beloved Syria was taken away from them.

Hasna, 34 years old, left Al-ghouta Syria in 2013, and dreams of the day when she can go back and rebuild her destroyed house. She is married and has four girls and one boy. When the brutal civil war in Syria started, she moved from house to house, from one village to another to keep her children safe. “We kept moving inside Syria for a year. We left the houses with only the clothes we had on. We were exhausted, tired, and scared. It was heartbreaking to see men trembling with fear and women crying for their young children every time a shell broke in their house and they couldn’t escape,” Hasna said.

“The smell of the burnt furniture left at us once we entered a house, omnipresent, nothing was the same. A bomb broken into our house, burning everything. Many of our family members were killed. We had to flee to Jordan to escape the fighting in Syria.” As Hasna was leaving her neighbourhood, she looked back at the scene of destruction, where every street was pockmarked from two years of shelling.

Hasna and her family were lucky to have someone to drive them to the Jordanian border; they didn’t have to take the long terrifying walk through the desert. They arrived in Jordan in 2013 and moved to Zaatari refugee camp. Sadly, they felt that their freedom was taken away from them. After two months, they moved to an informal tent settlement in Mafraq, northern Jordan.

It is sad that none of the children in the informal tent settlements are going to school. War has shattered their dreams of getting an education. They starve from hunger. They have no option but to play in the dust, walking in bare feet. “I swear that I am really tired. It is so hard to see my children hungry, not going to school, and without clothes to be warm,” said Hasna’s husband, his eyes full of tears.

War didn’t only affect the investment of years working and building houses to ensure their families a decent life, but the mother’s health as well. A year ago, Hasna got pregnant and gave birth to the beautiful Jawaher, which means “diamonds.” Medair’s Community Health Team

saw baby Jawaher two months ago while doing home visits and found her in a state of severe acute malnutrition.

The Health Team is currently visiting Syrian refugees and vulnerable Jordanians to sensitise and mobilise the community by sharing information about available services and delivering health promotion messages, especially information on young children, pregnant and lactating women, and Gender-Based Violence. The Health Team also trains the communities on adequate infant and young child feeding practices, and nutritious and healthy food. Malnourished children and pregnant or lactating women are screened and referred into Medair's nutrition programme.

Jawaher had a red MUAC, an assessment that indicated she had severe acute malnutrition. At the age of eight months, her weight was only 4.6 kilos. The baby girl was taken by the family to a local hospital because she was not taking breast milk or anything else. The hospital called Medair for assistance, as she was not responding to the treatment. Two of us from the Health Team went to the hospital and stayed with the baby for 90 minutes, feeding her Plumpy'Nut therapeutic food. She accepted it and has been eating since," said Elsa, the Health and Nutrition Project Manager. "It was amazing after 30 minutes to see her get energy again and to see her making noises. An eight-month-old baby should make noises and interact with people and after 90 minutes she was doing that. Then we knew that she was starving and in need of food," added Elsa.

A snow storm hit Jordan and baby Jawaher is living in an informal tent settlement in a cold village in Mafraq. How cold can a small child with severe acute malnutrition be and survive? Elsa discussed Jawaher's situation with the hospital and asked them to give her hospital treatment at that time, as it was too cold with the snow for her to stay in the tent. The hospital agreed, as long as Medair staff came to assist the mother with feeding the little girl. This was done for three weeks. The snow was finally melted away and Jawaher's health got better and she was sent home. Medair brought her home, as her parents were not able to pay the transportation costs.

Jawaher will be on Plumpy'Nut for the next the two months and her mother Hasna is breastfeeding her. Medair's Health Team is providing Hasna with health awareness and education about best practices for feeding Jawaher and the other children. Medair monitors her on a weekly basis. Medair also provides the family with transportation to the clinic for Jawaher's weekly follow-up exam, because otherwise they would not be able to go. After a month on Plumpy'Nut, Jawaher's MUAC nutrition assessment shows that her health is steadily improving.

Hasna is now feeling better to be back at home with all of her children and to see Jawaher's health getting better. "Thank you, Medair, for helping us. You brought my child back to life," she said.



Jawaher before PlumpyNut treatment



Hasna holding Jawaher whilst under the care of Medair