

The background image shows a classroom setting. In the foreground, two young girls are smiling and looking towards the camera. Behind them, other children are seated at wooden desks, some looking at books. The wall is decorated with a grid of colorful children's drawings. A yellow box in the top right corner contains the text 'WHY COMICS?'.

## WHY COMICS?

***Why Comics?*** Educational Charity brings contemporary humanitarian and social issues (such as racism, conflict, migration, trafficking and climate change) into the classroom through interactive literary comic books based on real-life testimony.

Our resources build empathy and enhance learning for 7-18-year-old students and teachers alike, alongside national-curriculum relevant lesson plans to support multiple subjects.

**\*\* Download our [Teaching Guidance Note](#) for a step-by-step guide to using our resources \*\***

# Meet Khalid...

Khalid is from Damascus in Syria.

Since the start of **Syria's civil war in 2011**, the violence, conflict and destruction has ravaged the population. Khalid was one of the many protesters during the Arab Spring. His hobby was photography and he began sending pictures of protests to the media. Khalid wanted to make a difference, but he was caught. Khalid was imprisoned and tortured. He was even forced to watch his friend tortured to death.



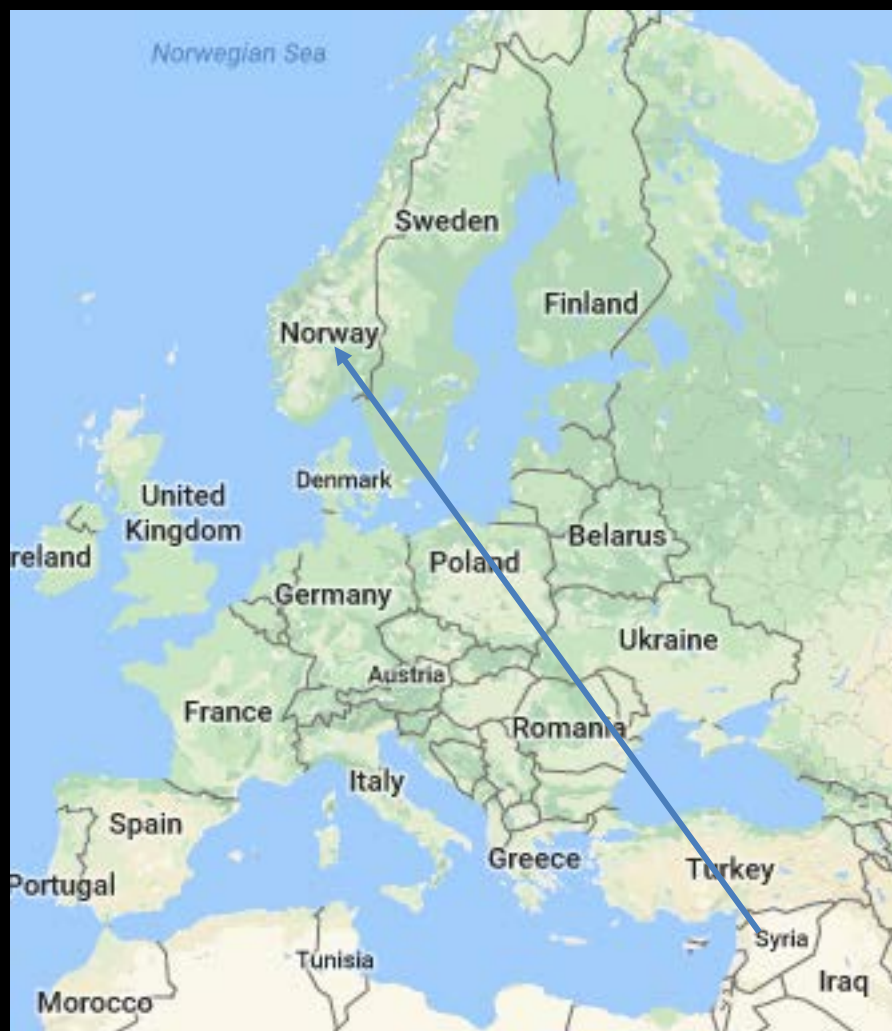
Khalid's father paid a large bribe for his release. Over a number of months he was nursed back to health by his parents. However, masked men soon came looking for Khalid. He had to leave, without even a chance to say goodbye to his parents.

Khalid fled across Europe for safety. He has now been granted Asylum in Norway.

**Funded by Norwegian People's Aid**



# Where is Khalid from?



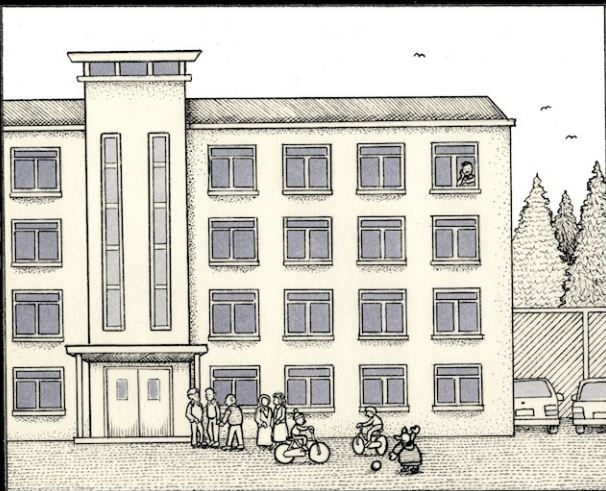
Khalid travelled from  
Damascus, Syria to  
Norway where he  
received asylum.

Syria to Norway is over  
3500 km.

*Now read Khalid's  
Story as a class*



# KHALID

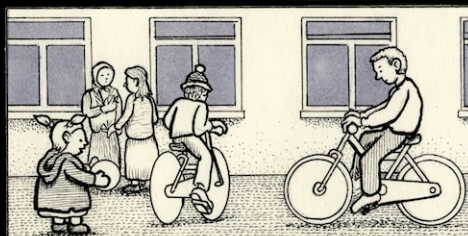


MY NAME IS  
KHALID. I'M 24.

I ESCAPED FROM  
SYRIA AND I  
HAVE BEEN IN  
THIS ASYLUM  
CENTRE FOR  
THREE MONTHS.



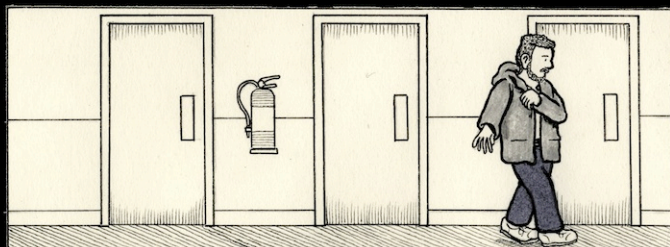
SIGH



DAYS PASS SLOWLY.

I'M WAITING FOR  
MY APPLICATION  
TO BE PROCESSED.

I WATCH THE  
CHILDREN RIDE  
IN CIRCLES  
OUTSIDE.



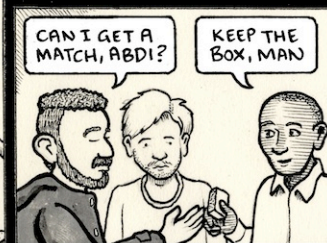
MY FAMILY  
ARE STILL  
TRAPPED IN  
DAMASCUS—  
I WORRY  
ABOUT THEM  
EVERY DAY.  
I MISS THEM  
ALL SO MUCH.



HERE I HAVE A  
DIFFERENT  
FAMILY. A FAMILY  
OF ESCAPEES.



BOSNIANS, KOSOVS, KURDS,  
SOMALIS—WE COME FROM ALL OVER.



CAN I GET A  
MATCH, ABDI?

KEEP THE  
BOX, MAN



I'M GOING FOR A WALK.  
TIRED OF BEING COOPED UP.



SEE YOU  
GUYS LATER.



HI  
KHALID!

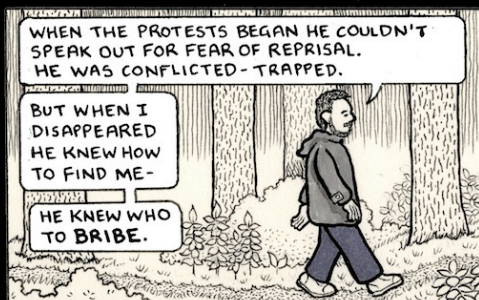


NOT MUCH OUT HERE.  
BESIDES TREES.





MY FATHER WAS  
IN THE ARMY.  
MANY ORDINARY  
PEOPLE WERE.



WHEN THE PROTESTS BEGAN HE COULDN'T  
SPEAK OUT FOR FEAR OF REPRISAL.  
HE WAS CONFLICTED - TRAPPED.

BUT WHEN I  
DISAPPEARED  
HE KNEW HOW  
TO FIND ME -

HE KNEW WHO  
TO BRIBE.



WITHOUT CEREMONY I WAS THROWN INTO THE  
STREET - BATTERED, BLOODIED AND BLINDED BY  
THE SUNLIGHT. WHEN I LIMPED UP TO MY DOOR  
MY MOTHER DIDN'T RECOGNISE ME.

BUT WHEN SHE  
DID - SHE WEPT.

AND WHEN SHE  
WEPT - I WEPT



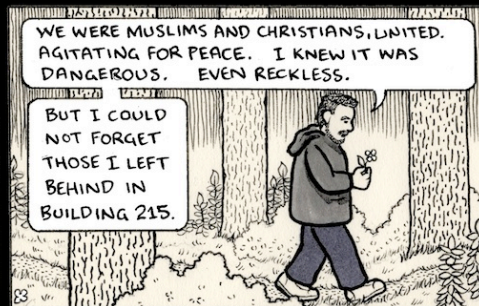
MY FAMILY NURSED ME IN MY BED FOR MONTHS.  
MUM MADE ME ALL MY FAVOURITE FOODS.  
I JOKED WITH HER THAT IT HAD ALL BEEN  
WORTHWHILE JUST FOR THE PAMPERING.

SHE LAUGHED.

THEN TOLD  
ME NOT TO  
JOKE ABOUT  
SUCH THINGS.



WHILE I SLOWLY RECOVERED, THE CONFLICT  
ESCALATED. HORROR PILED ON HORROR.  
WHEN I COULD LEAVE THE HOUSE, I HELPED  
FORM A SECRET MULTI-FAITH GROUP  
WRITING PAMPHLETS AGAINST THE REGIME.



WE WERE MUSLIMS AND CHRISTIANS, UNITED.  
AGITATING FOR PEACE. I KNEW IT WAS  
DANGEROUS. EVEN RECKLESS.

BUT I COULD  
NOT FORGET  
THOSE I LEFT  
BEHIND IN  
BUILDING 215.



THE PRICE OF MY FREEDOM WAS FIFTEEN  
THOUSAND U.S. DOLLARS IN THE HAND OF  
A CORRUPT OFFICIAL. FOR OTHERS, NO PRICE  
IS HIGH ENOUGH.



THEY ARE STILL IN  
THAT TORTURE  
CHAMBER. EVEN  
NOW. TO THIS DAY.



TO THIS  
VERY MOMENT.



THE SECURITY FORCES  
BEAT ME WITH STICKS



THEY HUNG ME  
UP AND SHOUTED-



"THERE IS THE FREEDOM  
YOU WANTED! HOW  
DO YOU LIKE IT?"



THEY PUT OUT THEIR  
CIGARETTES ON MY SKIN



THEN I WAS TAKEN TO BUILDING 215 - A PLACE  
SYRIANS PRAY NEVER TO SEE FROM THE INSIDE...



I WAS DRAGGED TO THE BASEMENT AND  
PUSHED INTO A CELL ALREADY CRUSHED  
WITH ABOUT EIGHTY OTHER MEN...

SOME OF THOSE MEN HAD  
BEEN THERE SINCE THE  
TIME OF HAFEZ AL-ASSAD

FIFTEEN YEARS



I WAS PRESSED UP CLOSE  
TO THE CUTS AND BRUISES  
ON THEIR BODIES

WONDERING WHAT  
WOULD HAPPEN TO ME

THERE WAS NO LIGHT  
IN THEIR EYES

THEY WERE LIKE SHELLS

EMPTY VESSELS

TO BE FILLED WITH DESPAIR

NEXT DAY - THEY  
CAME FOR ME



THEY HUNG ME FROM  
THE CEILING BY MY  
ARMS - TIED TIGHTLY  
BEHIND MY BACK.



THEY PUT MY FEET IN A BOWL OF WATER -  
THEN SHOCKED THE WATER WITH ELECTRIC CABLES



THEY TIED ME NAKED TO  
A METAL BED-FRAME AND  
DEMANDED THE NAMES OF  
OTHER PROTESTERS



WHEN I REFUSED  
THEY PLACED RED HOT  
COALS ON MY STOMACH  
AND GENITALS



AND THEN THEY LED IN  
MY FRIEND MUSTAFA



THEY ELECTROCUTED HIM  
AND BATTERED HIM  
IN FRONT OF ME

THEY  
MADE ME WATCH



UNTIL  
HE WAS DEAD



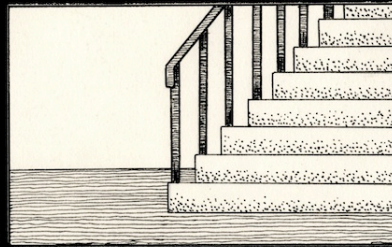
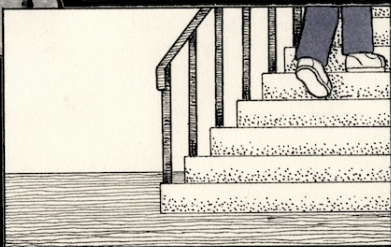
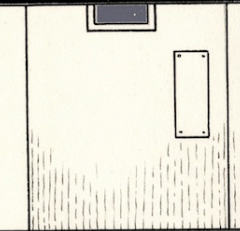




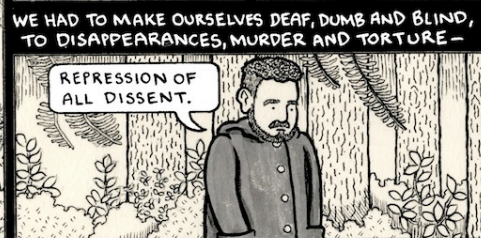
SO ONE DAY MY MUM CALLED, VOICE SHAKING.

MASKED MEN HAD COME TO THE HOUSE AND TURNED THE PLACE OVER LOOKING FOR ME.

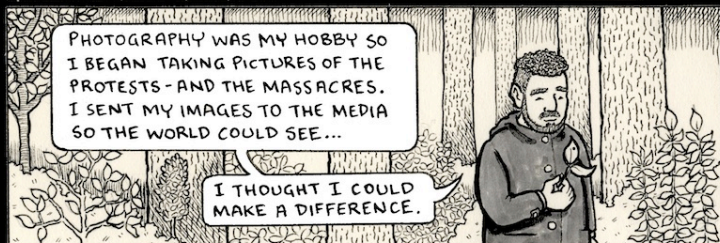
IF THEY FOUND ME I WOULD BE DEAD FOR SURE - AND NOW MY FAMILY WERE IN DANGER TOO.







I JOINED THE PROTESTS - BUT KEPT IT SECRET FROM MY FAMILY. MY MOTHER WOULD HAVE LOCKED ME IN MY ROOM TO PROTECT ME. WE MARCHED IN GLORIOUS UNITY. WHEN THE SECURITY FORCES SHOT US, IT HARDENED OUR DEFIANCE ...







Khalid finally received asylum in Norway  
and can begin the healing process.

# Discussion Points

1. What are your initial reactions to *Khalid's Story*?
2. What surprised you? How are your life experiences different from Khalid?
3. In what ways are they the same?
4. What additional provided resource (i.e. video, news article, infographic, documentary, etc.) did you find most interesting and why?
5. How was experiencing *Khalid's Story* in comic form different from simply reading it?
6. In what ways was this story different from most refugee stories seen in the news today? Did you relate to it any differently?
7. Discuss the issue of PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) in the context of refugees. How do you think Khalid feels now that he's 'safe' in Norway?
8. If you could speak to Khalid, what would you say or ask?



If you want to talk to someone about the issues you've read about in the comic, please use the links below

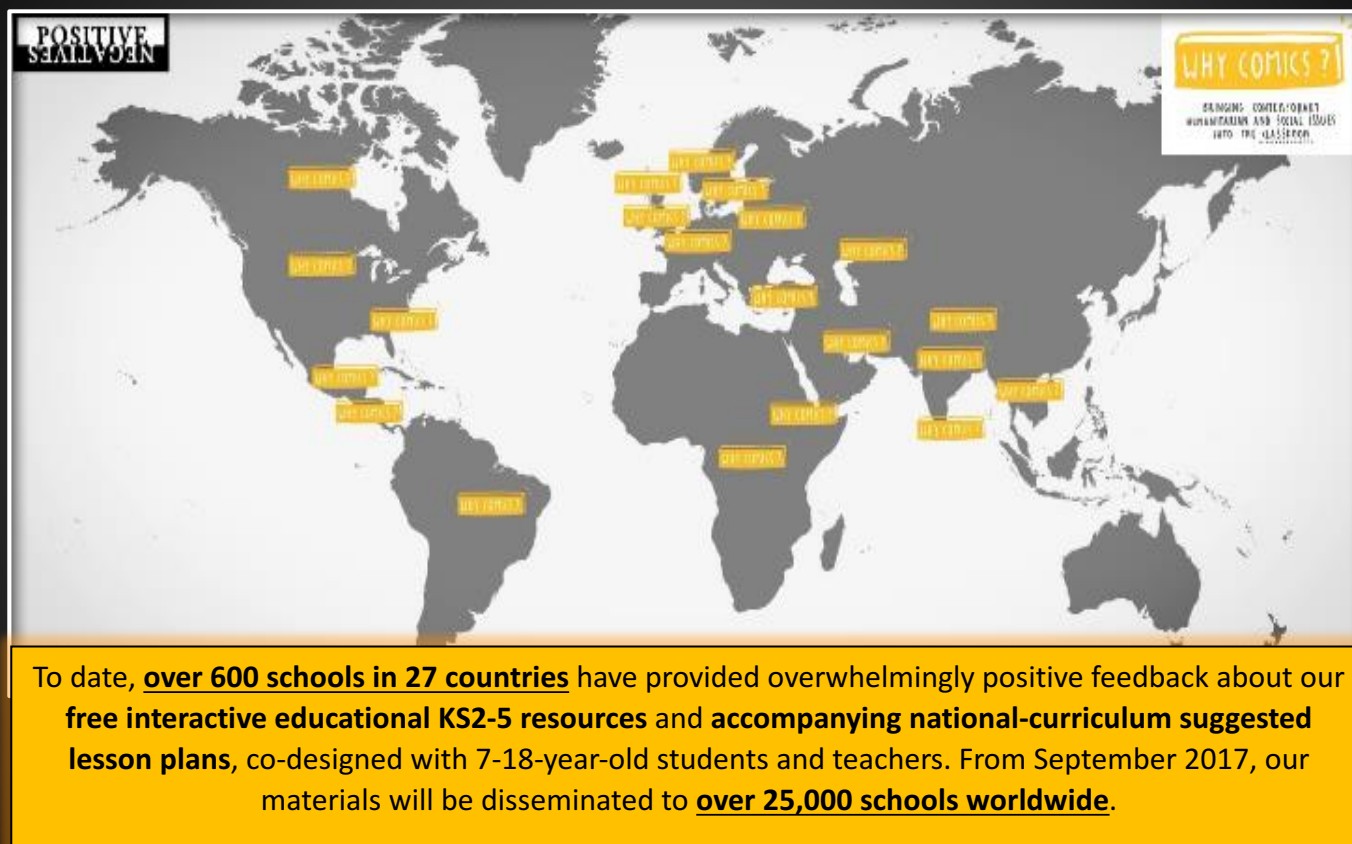
- **Asylum Seeking**  
[Refugee Council](#)  
[Government Asylum Helplines](#)
- **General mental/emotional health support**  
[Young Minds](#)  
[Mind](#)
- **Post Traumatic Stress Disorder**  
[Young Minds](#)
- **Migration and refugee issues**  
[Doctors Without Borders](#)  
[Red Cross](#)  
[International Rescue Committee](#)  
[CARE International](#)  
[Migrant Help UK](#)
- **Racism**  
[Childline](#)
- **War/Conflict**  
[Child Helpline International](#)

\* Don't forget to read our page about [Staying Safe Online](#) \*



BRINGING CONTEMPORARY  
HUMANITARIAN AND SOCIAL ISSUES  
INTO THE CLASSROOM

# We Need Your Feedback!



Please help us by filling out a [short anonymous SurveyMonkey questionnaire](#) after you have used our materials for our funders.  
This helps ensure that our great resources remain free.





BRINGING CONTEMPORARY  
HUMANITARIAN AND SOCIAL ISSUES  
INTO THE CLASSROOM



**SOAS**  
University of London

# Get in touch!

## We'd love to hear from you



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