



Ukraine: Amnesty responds to catastrophic human rights crisis



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A child looks through the window of a train in Lviv, Ukraine. Over 11 million people have been displaced since Russian forces invaded on February 24.

Ukrainian civilians at risk of war crimes—your support ensures Amnesty teams are on the ground exposing human rights abuses

“The missile struck at night, and I smelled the fire and felt the waves,” said Nadiya (name changed). “All of my family, we all live in the corridor of the apartment building from the first day of the war.”

Nadiya is 16 years old and was speaking with Amnesty International researchers at a shelter in Lviv. Nadiya had been evacuated there alone from the other side of the country—from Kharkiv in eastern Ukraine where she lived with her family.

Russian forces reached the suburbs of Kharkiv in the first days of the invasion. They tried to encircle the city, and they fired relentlessly and indiscriminately into densely populated civilian areas.

Amnesty’s field investigators in Ukraine have been exposing the extent of the

For two months, civilians
across Ukraine have seen
their cities razed

Russian military’s siege warfare tactics. Amnesty’s team has verified evidence of the use of cluster munitions, which are banned under international law. They’ve also interviewed people under siege in five cities, documenting witness testimony of war crimes including killings of civilians and destruction of civilian infrastructure.

For two months, civilians across Ukraine have seen their cities razed. As in all conflicts, the most at-risk people have suffered disproportionately. The war has had a devastating impact on older people, people with disabilities, and children.

In addition to Amnesty’s on-the-ground researchers, another Amnesty team—the Crisis Evidence Lab—has been analyzing satellite imagery and using video and photographic evidence to expose unlawful attacks, including strikes on hospitals and schools, which have killed or injured civilians.

In the coming weeks and months, Amnesty will publish further evidence of possible war crimes in Ukraine—evidence that will be used to hold perpetrators to account. Amnesty’s work on the human rights crisis in Ukraine is just beginning.

**Thank you for helping
protect Ukrainian
civilians in danger**

GOOD NEWS

CAMEROON

Freedom for students after 7 years in jail

On December 16, Cameroon's Supreme Court reduced the sentences of three students imprisoned for sharing a joke. The students are now free.

The students' nightmare began in 2014 shortly after Fomusoh Ivo Feh sent a sarcastic text message to his friends about the Boko Haram armed group. A teacher saw the message and reported it to the police, who arrested Fomusoh and two of his friends, Afuh Nivelle Nfor and Azah Levis Gob. The three students were found guilty on terrorism-related charges in November 2016 and sentenced to 10 years in prison.

It took seven long years following the friends' arrest for them to win their freedom. Amnesty supporters were part of the global campaign and sent more than 300,000 letters to Cameroon's President Paul Biya asking him to end the injustice against Fomusoh, Afuh, and Azah.



Fomusoh Ivo Feh and two friends were imprisoned for sharing a joke.

IRAN

Atena Daemi released from prison

"I'd like to thank you for your empathy, solidarity, support and struggles all these years which have been my family's moral support and my inspiration," Atena Daemi said in a message to supporters after her release from jail in Iran on January 24.

"I hope that we'll achieve our first and last wish, which is freedom, public awareness, and the realization of human rights."

Atena is a courageous young human rights activist and prisoner of conscience. For five years, she was wrongly imprisoned for her peaceful activism in support of civil rights, children's rights, and women's equality. Peacefully protesting is not a crime and Atena should never have spent any time behind bars.

Atena faced unfounded accusations, threats, and verbal and physical assaults for her courage and persistence in advocating for human rights. Her freedom is to be celebrated!



Atena Daemi is a courageous human rights activist persecuted for her work.

HONDURAS

An important victory for water defenders



"We are so happy. Actually, we are euphoric! We have won at last!" said Orbin Hernández following his release from prison in Honduras. "It is thanks to support from inside and outside Honduras that we are now free!"

Orbin is a teacher and one of eight Guapinol River Defenders freed after 914 days behind bars. The Guapinol River Defenders peacefully campaign to protect their community's source of water from being contaminated by mining, but in 2019 they were falsely accused of committing crimes against a mining company. Despite committing no crimes, they were found guilty—a verdict that Amnesty International described as outrageous.

Amnesty declared the men prisoners of conscience and mobilized the Urgent Action Network to write letters calling for their release. On February 10, Honduras' Supreme Court finally ruled that the men should never have spent one day in jail.

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Ensaf Haidar led a global campaign to free her husband, Raif Badawi.

SAUDI ARABIA

Raif Badawi is finally out of prison

Prisoner of conscience Raif Badawi was finally released from jail in Saudi Arabia on March 11. Raif spent 10 years in prison after setting up a website for political debate.

This is good news for Raif, his family, and everyone who campaigned with them. Amnesty International supporters mobilized by the thousands to lend support to the campaign to free Raif.

Unfortunately, Raif remains stranded in Saudi Arabia, as he is banned from leaving the country for the next 10 years. Amnesty will continue to call for Raif to be allowed to be reunited with his wife, Ensaf, and children, who live in Quebec. Thank you for your solidarity with Raif and his family!

IRAN

Release of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe and Anoosheh Ashoori was long overdue

On March 16, Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe was released from detention in Iran. It was news that her family and supporters had hoped for every day since Nazanin was arrested six years before.

Nazanin, a British-Iranian charity worker, was detained in April 2016 as she was about to board a plane back to the UK after a family visit with her young daughter. After an unfair trial, she was convicted on false national security charges. Amnesty supporters repeatedly called on the Iranian authorities to free her.

Released at the same time as Nazanin was Anoosheh Ashoori, another British-Iranian dual national. Anoosheh had been detained in similar circumstances. For years, the Iranian authorities have targeted foreign nationals with bogus charges to put diplomatic pressure on other governments.



Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe and Anoosheh Ashoori arriving in the UK after winning their freedom.

GUATEMALA

Prisoner of conscience Bernardo Caal Xol freed

Bernardo Caal Xol was reunited with his family after more than four years of imprisonment.

Bernardo Caal Xol was reunited with his loved ones on March 24 following his release from a penitentiary in Guatemala after more than four years.

Bernardo is a respected Indigenous teacher, trade unionist, and defender of the rights of the Indigenous Maya Q'eqchi' people. He was wrongfully imprisoned in 2018 for defending the rights of Indigenous communities affected by a destructive dam project on the sacred Cahabón River. Prosecutors lacked any factual evidence to support the charges of robbery and illegal detention.

In a special message for Amnesty supporters who had long campaigned for his release, Bernardo said, "You gave me hope of freedom and now I am free. I am now with my family, I am now with my daughters, I am now with my wife. My mother has already cried with happiness to see me free. Thanks to each one of you!"

YOU'RE DEFENDING HUMAN RIGHTS DURING ARMED CONFLICT

Armed conflicts displace millions of civilians and kill many thousands each year. Survivors are maimed, tortured, raped. Amnesty International's researchers spend thousands of hours on the ground interviewing witnesses and survivors. This evidence is the basis for Amnesty's global advocacy and campaigns. All of Amnesty's work on armed conflicts is made possible through your generous support. Further information on this vital work can be found at [amnesty.ca](https://www.amnesty.ca)

Colombia

Armed conflict increased in many regions in 2021. At least 100,000 people were displaced, or forced to stay put with limited access to food and drinking water. Conflict has particularly affected the rights of Indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants. Killings and threats against human rights defenders have reached alarming levels.

Colombia

Nigeria

In north-east Nigeria, armed groups and the security forces are committing serious human rights violations. In the past year, armed groups abducted and killed hundreds of civilians. Government forces have carried out attacks against civilians during counter-insurgency efforts. More than 3,500 people died in inter-communal violence and bandit attacks in 2021, and more than 5,000 people were abducted for ransom.

Nigeria

Democratic Republic of the Congo

For over a quarter of a century, different combatants have been fighting in the DRC at various times. Government forces, armed groups, and foreign armies. Over the past year, there have been indiscriminate attacks, looting, and destruction of homes and crops, particularly in the east and south. Between May and November 2021, armed groups and government forces unlawfully killed more than 1,100 civilians in North Kivu and Ituri provinces. More than 300,000 people fled their homes.

COLOMBIA

A child walks among Colombian soldiers patrolling near a checkpoint at the Colombia-Venezuela border on September 14, 2021.



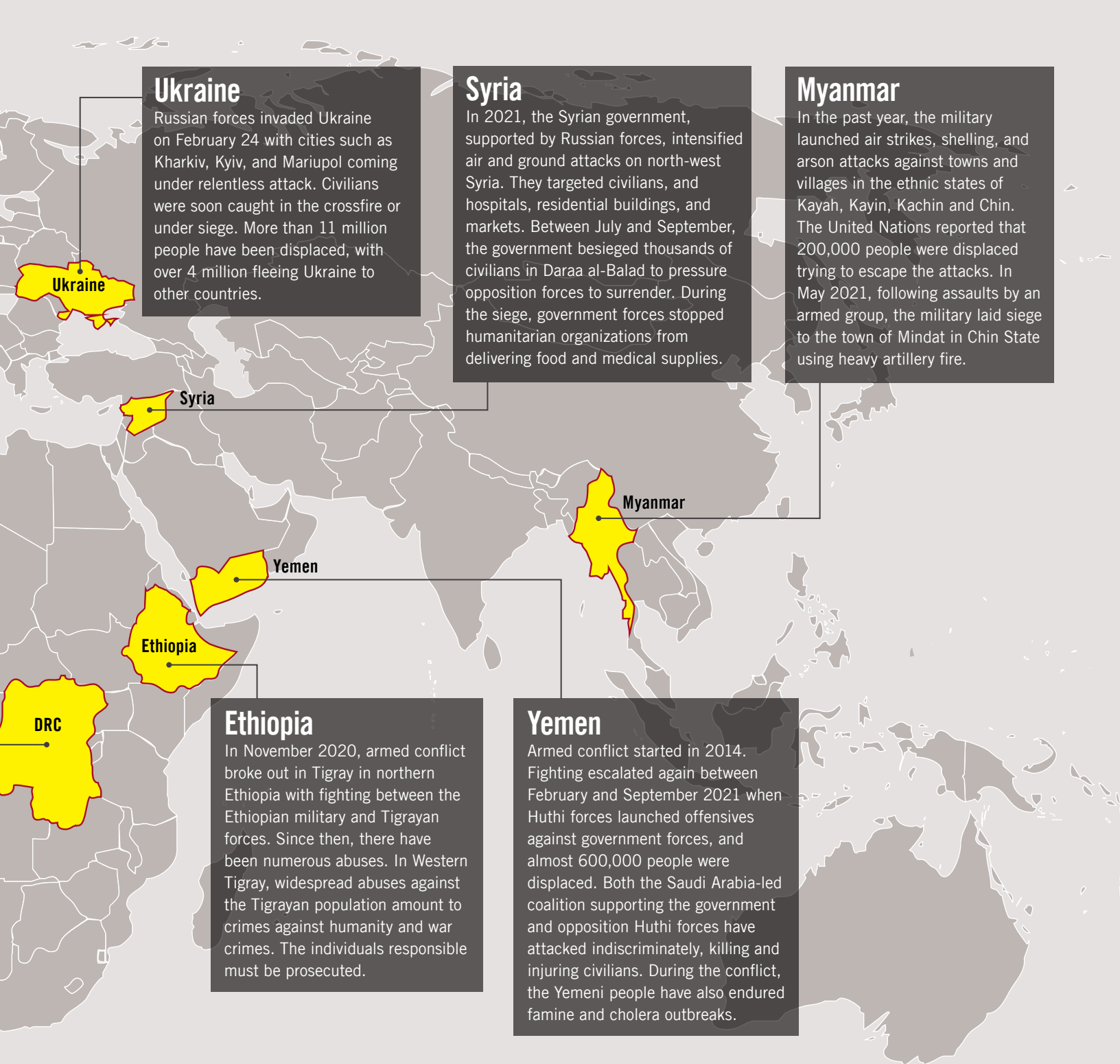
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DRC

May 26, 2021: At a hospital in Beni, a city in northeastern DRC, surgeons operate on a man shot during an attack by an armed group.



ALEMIS HUGUE/AFP/Getty Images



Ukraine

Russian forces invaded Ukraine on February 24 with cities such as Kharkiv, Kyiv, and Mariupol coming under relentless attack. Civilians were soon caught in the crossfire or under siege. More than 11 million people have been displaced, with over 4 million fleeing Ukraine to other countries.

Syria

In 2021, the Syrian government, supported by Russian forces, intensified air and ground attacks on north-west Syria. They targeted civilians, and hospitals, residential buildings, and markets. Between July and September, the government besieged thousands of civilians in Daraa al-Balad to pressure opposition forces to surrender. During the siege, government forces stopped humanitarian organizations from delivering food and medical supplies.

Myanmar

In the past year, the military launched air strikes, shelling, and arson attacks against towns and villages in the ethnic states of Kayah, Kayin, Kachin and Chin. The United Nations reported that 200,000 people were displaced trying to escape the attacks. In May 2021, following assaults by an armed group, the military laid siege to the town of Mindat in Chin State using heavy artillery fire.

Syria

Myanmar

Yemen

Ethiopia

DRC

Ethiopia

In November 2020, armed conflict broke out in Tigray in northern Ethiopia with fighting between the Ethiopian military and Tigrayan forces. Since then, there have been numerous abuses. In Western Tigray, widespread abuses against the Tigrayan population amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes. The individuals responsible must be prosecuted.

Yemen

Armed conflict started in 2014. Fighting escalated again between February and September 2021 when Huthi forces launched offensives against government forces, and almost 600,000 people were displaced. Both the Saudi Arabia-led coalition supporting the government and opposition Huthi forces have attacked indiscriminately, killing and injuring civilians. During the conflict, the Yemeni people have also endured famine and cholera outbreaks.

ETHIOPIA

The wreckage of a tank photographed on January 12. The Ethiopian military and Tigrayan forces have been engaged in armed conflict since November 2020.



UKRAINE

Firefighters at work on March 14, in Kharkiv, eastern Ukraine, shortly after an explosion caused by a rocket fired by the Russian armed forces.



Climate justice: New issue of Amnesty's comic book coming soon

Following the smashing success of our popular comic book on rechargeable batteries and human rights, we're publishing a new comic with Petroglyph Studios in June. Follow our characters Andy and Samira as they fight back against an expensive highway expansion that threatens the health and wellbeing of their community. Learn how they work with others around the globe to create neighbourhoods where everyone can live and enjoy the benefits of a healthy environment. This comic is part of our human rights education series on energy transition and climate justice, and it supports the launch of Amnesty's new report on batteries in September 2022. Find out more and take action at tinyurl.com/recharge-for-rights



Disappointment as court rules in Goldcorp's favour over public's right to know

Human rights supporters were disappointed when a Federal Court ruled on March 2 that the Canadian government can maintain secrecy about the diplomatic help it gave to Goldcorp, a Canadian mining firm accused of human rights abuses in Guatemala.

York University law professor Shin Imai had petitioned the court to order the government to remove redactions from documents detailing exchanges between Canadian officials, Goldcorp, the Guatemalan government, and the Inter-American Human Rights Commission. Because the court ruled that the government was justified in removing key details from the communications, the Canadian public now won't know how far its government went to influence the case. Learn more about this important case at tinyurl.com/goldcorp-ruling

Amnesty supporters show solidarity with land defenders

Amnesty supporters across Canada and around the globe showed their solidarity with Wet'suwet'en land defenders in British Columbia this past winter. They sent 500 Valentine's Day messages of support for land defenders who were criminalized and arrested for trying to protect Wedzin Kwa/Morice River from the controversial Coastal Gaslink pipeline. Supporters also wrote 11,000 letters to Public Safety Minister Mark Mendicino and BC Premier John Horgan calling on them to respect Wet'suwet'en rights. Learn more at tinyurl.com/wetsuweten-solidarity

Thank you to all who took part in our 2021 donor survey!

Thank you to the thousands of supporters who participated in our Donor Survey in 2021. We wanted to share just a few highlights of the survey. First off, we learned that Amnesty's donor base is increasingly diverse with almost one in three being racialized—higher than the general population in Canada. The diversity of Amnesty's donors increased from 20% in our last survey in 2012 to 31% in 2021.

Donors were passionate about all areas of Amnesty's human rights work, but the areas that donors felt were most important were: **1.** Defending the human rights of women and girls; **2.** Stopping torture and political killings and disappearances; **3.** Stopping human trafficking; **4.** Protecting the rights of refugees and migrants; and **5.** Advocating for the rights of Indigenous Peoples in Canada and around the world.

Thank you again to all who took the time to share your views with us!



Indigenous people protesting in 2010 against the actions of Canadian mining company Goldcorp in Guatemala.

THE POWER OF YOUR WILL: You can still provide for your loved ones and support human rights long into the future



Graham Allen, seen here with one of his sons, is an Amnesty legacy donor.

“As supporters of Amnesty International’s human rights work, I believe we share similar values. We want a better world and realize it will only happen when we take action. That’s why I made the decision to leave a gift in my Will to Amnesty.

A few years ago, I sat down with my two sons to see how they felt about my leaving a gift in my Will to Amnesty. I’m proud to say they were enthusiastic. They told me my decision reflected my core values—to build a world free from torture. A world where everyone sees their human rights protected.

It gives me great joy to know that I can provide for my sons and support human rights worldwide long into the future.”

—Graham Allen, Amnesty International legacy donor

LEGACY GIVING

If you would like more information on how to leave a lasting gift to human rights, please fill out and return the coupon enclosed with this publication.

You can also contact Hala Al-Madi at halmadi@amnesty.ca, 1-613-744-7667 ext 223, or visit: amnesty.ca/legacy



ACTIVISM GUIDE

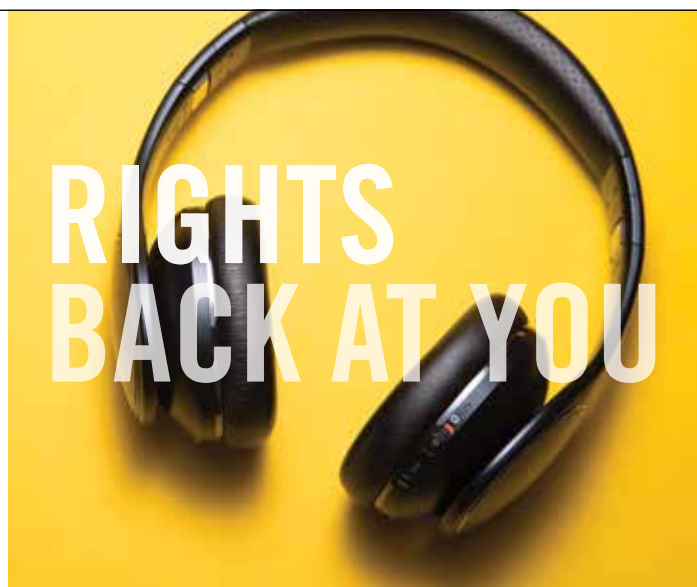
Activism guide: A resource for getting more involved

Looking to get more involved with Amnesty International? Our seasonal Activism Guide is your resource for the latest actions and opportunities.

Visit amnesty.ca/activismguide to learn more and to subscribe.

Amnesty’s brand-new podcast: *Rights Back at You*

The struggle for human rights shapes news around the globe. Join Amnesty International, one of Canada’s largest human rights organizations, and untangle the chaos of your newsfeed. Want to hear compelling stories from people who fight back? Learn more about the systems that define our world? Or hang out with people who believe a better world is possible for everyone? *Rights Back at You* features stories from frontline activists that cut right to the heart of human rights—being human. Visit amnesty.ca/rightsbackatyou to sign up and be the first to know when an episode drops.



Refugee

By Rawand Mustafa

~~lost for words lump in my throat on the tip of my tongue~~
unable to think of anything to say through intense confusion shock a feeling of
tightness pressure in the throat due to emotion failing to retrieve a word from
memory but retrieval is imminent

~~there's no place like home is where the heart is anything but at odds are a smooth sea~~
~~never made a skilled sailor throw the baby out with the bathwater from the bottom~~
~~of my heavy heart a drowning man will clutch at straw do you understand~~
to have an affinity for one's home over every other place with which one has the
strongest emotional
connection is the place that one regards as home by no means conflicts with the
chances or balance of probability in favour of easy situations can never improve you
discarding something valuable along with other things that are inessential or
undesirable very sincerely weighed down with grief someone who is in a very difficult
situation and who will take any available opportunity to improve it do you
understand



About the writer

Rawand Mustafa is a Palestinian Syrian student living in Canada. She recently graduated from the University of Windsor's English and Creative Writing program. Rawand draws inspiration for her writing from her experiences as a first-generation immigrant oscillating between Eastern and Western cultures, and she is particularly impassioned by the struggles and resilience of Palestinian and Syrian refugees.

Rawand's poem "Refugee" speaks to the frustration of non-English speakers communicating in English, particularly focusing on the frustration of refugees who, on top of carrying the trauma of war, persecution, natural disaster, or alienation, struggle to express that trauma in a foreign language. The use of idioms is commonly considered a hallmark of language proficiency and their manipulation in this piece depicts the struggle

to communicate through the figurative lens of western perception. The crossed-out expressions are representative of another barrier that is overcome by the refugee speaker in their struggle for self-advocacy and self-actualization.

"Refugee" was first published in *The Matchstick*, Amnesty Canada's arts and human rights magazine. *The Matchstick* can be read at thematchstick.org