

# Siba's Story

## In her own words

**Name: Siba**

**Age: 19**

**Sister to two children: a younger brother and a six-year-old sister, Meral.**



Siba travels with her brother and her sister Meral, six-years-old.  
Photo: Anna Pantelia/ActionAid

**“M**y name is Siba. I fled from southern Syria after life became too dangerous for us.

**The turning point came when a bomb went off and my father was injured in the face and hands. After that, the whole family fled to Jordan.**

My parents are still there. But I came to Europe with my brother and sister, who is six-years-old.

All I long for is to have a peaceful life for me and my family.

I hope to go to Germany. I also dream of being reunited with my parents. So, once the necessary paperwork is done, I want them to join us too.

Although things are very bad in Syria I still have warm feelings for my home country. There is no place like it. But right now it is too dangerous for us.

Although things have been tough it has been good to be able to come to this women friendly centre.

I feel at home here. I met Anna, ActionAid's cultural mediator. She is also Syrian, so I feel very comfortable with her.

**When I heard Anna speaking Arabic, I let myself go. I could finally relax. It was as if I had found home again.**

I also got a dignity kit (containing soap, fresh underwear, sanitary towels, a toothbrush, toothpaste and baby wipes) at the centre. The kit will be very useful for our everyday needs.

**I know I have a long road ahead but I am determined to find safety and to chase my dream of becoming a doctor.”**



Siba with Anna, the ActionAid cultural mediator at Kara Tepe refugee camp.  
Photo: Anna Pantelia/ActionAid

# Narges's Story

## In her own words

**Name:** Narges

**Age:** 20

**Mother of two children: a two-and-a-half-year-old girl, Reihaneh, and a one-year-old boy, Mohammed Sajat.**



Narges and her daughter Reihaneh in ActionAid's woman friendly space in Moria Camp.  
Photo: Anna Pantelia/ActionAid

**"I** was born in Iran, but my family are Afghan. When I was 10-years-old, my father decided to move us back to Afghanistan. After just three months, we realised we were not safe. Even if someone attacked us and tried to kill us, there was nothing we could do so we fled back to Iran.

I got married when I was 16 years old. It was my parents' decision. Our life in Iran was tough. **Being Afghans living in Iran, we didn't have any rights.** We could not go to school and it was the same for my kids.

I still dream of going to school one day. I want to study and be useful in some way. I want to be able to help others. I want the same thing for my kids. I want them to be good people and to do what's right. I think we'll make it. I'm optimistic about that.

Getting to Lesbos was very difficult. The hardest part was at the border between Iran and Turkey. We had to walk all night.

**When we finally reached Istanbul, the human traffickers smuggling us locked us up in a dungeon with 150 people, until we gave them more money.**

I was terrified and very upset. We had given them all our money for this journey and now we were scared for our lives and the lives of our children. When the time came to get onto the boat, we saw more than 50 people crammed in a nine-metre boat. They forced us into the boat by pointing their guns at us.

**I couldn't believe it when we reached the shore alive. At that moment all that mattered was my kids were alive and I had them with me.**

There were volunteers waiting for us on the beach at Lesbos. They gave us dry clothes and food. I was so happy. I felt so relieved.

I've been here in Moria refugee camp for a week. We've been registered and we've got our papers, but we don't have money anymore for the boat ticket to Athens, so we have to stay here until we find a way to get on with our journey.

Meanwhile, I come to ActionAid's women's friendly space every day. I feel calm when I'm here. It's really friendly and warm. **Sometimes I think of my home in Iran. I miss my mum and dad. I don't know how and when I will see them again."**



# Ryad's Story

## In his own words

**Name: Ryad**

**Age: 35**

**Father of two children: Hamad, son, nine-years-old and Rahf, daughter, five-years-old.**



Dad Ryad holds up his five-year-old daughter, Rahf, at Kara Tepe registration centre in Lesbos, where they were registering as refugees.  
Photo: Anna George Makkas/Panos Pictures/ActionAid

**“We** arrived in the dark at four o'clock this morning. It took us seven gruelling hours to get here.

Our journey started in a van from Iraq. At the Syrian border we walked for two hours. Then we got into another car and kept going. We passed through Dir Alzour, Al Raka, Aleppo, Edleb, Antioch and finally Izmir.

**From Izmir we got on a boat, but it broke down in the middle of the sea. It was terrifying, but the Greek coast guard helped us.**

Instead of an hour, the boat journey took us two and a half hours.

We are from Mosul in Iraq, which is controlled by ISIS. **In Mosul men are not allowed to shave. If we did, the Taliban whip us and women are not allowed to go out without wearing the burka.**

In Mosul I used to work as a refrigeration technician and my wife as an anaesthesiologist's assistant in a hospital. Then one day we left in secret.

**I want to go somewhere where I can protect my children and live the rest of my life as a human being. I feel relieved that we are finally free.**

I don't care which country we go to, but at least we've left a place where anyone who shaves is whipped.”