PRESS RELEASE

What do you want to be when you grow up?
UN photo exhibition on the aspirations, dreams, and power of girls caught up in humanitarian crises

(New York, 29 July 2019): Dina, a teenager in Iraq, had her own bedroom before Daesh burnt down her home. Today, she shares a tent with 11 other family members in a camp for the displaced. Dina wants to grow up to be an engineer so she can build back her own home.

Dina’s story and that of 30 other girls caught up in crises is the focus of a photo exhibition called One Day, I Will which opened at United Nations Headquarters today. The girls featured in the photos, aged from 6 to 18 years, are dressed up to show who they want to be when they grow up, using costumes and props from their immediate surroundings. The award-winning photographer, Vincent Tremeau, captured the image of each girl’s hopes for the future, providing a unique insight into how living through war or conflict impacts their dreams of a future.

“These girls are like girls everywhere – they dream of becoming a teacher, a doctor, a lawyer, an engineer,” said UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed about the exhibition. “There has to be space to dream—for all young people especially girls who are forcibly displaced from their homes and struggling simply to stay alive. Individually and collectively, we can help them realise their aspirations.”

Girls in crises face formidable challenges. They are two and a half times more likely than boys to be out of school. Crises can trigger patterns of sexual violence against girls. More than half of the 30 countries with the highest rates of child marriage are fragile and conflict-affected.

Also speaking at the opening, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Mark Lowcock, said: “Combining an artistic approach with a documentary purpose, the images highlight how critical education is for girls in humanitarian crises. Over the past two years, I have heard stories from dozens of girls in crisis-affected countries. Stories of fear. Of escape from violence and terror. And stories of hope and resilience. Of strength and determination. All of this is captured in these photographs.”

The portraits will be displayed on the outside fence of the UN Headquarters on First Avenue and in the UN Visitors’ Lobby from 29 July to 9 September.

The event marks the launch of the 2019 World Humanitarian Day campaign honouring women humanitarians around the world during the month of August, using the hashtag #womenhumanitarians. World Humanitarian Day is marked on 19 August each year, the anniversary of the Canal Hotel bombing in Baghdad.

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