

## Captions for the “UNICEF Photo of the Year 2016”

### First Prize 2016

#### Iran: Defending the right to smile

Smiling against all odds. A brave smile, maybe even a moment of real joy. It is the resilience, the radiance of a girl in an Iranian garbage dump which turns this photo by Arez Ghaderi, a photographer still not well known in the West, into a symbolic image: the “UNICEF Photo of the Year 2016”. An expression of a sometimes desperate hope. The hope that even the worst living conditions cannot fully destroy the vitality of children.

Iranian freelance photographer Arez Ghaderi met the beaming girl in a camp somewhere in the Razavi Khorasan Province. Baluchi families from the border region near Pakistan and Afghanistan migrated here in search of a new life. While the adults look for work in the nearby villages, the children stray through plastic mountains looking for things that could still be useful. They take care of their little siblings and their families’ animals. And they play. No – poverty cannot make people happy. Nowhere. But the photo taken by Arez Ghaderi reveals a fundamental children’s right: the right to sometimes simply be carefree no matter what.

Over the last 25 years, the country of Iran has managed to reduce child mortality from 54 to 16 deaths per thousand births. In the same period, Iran’s literacy rate has increased from 54 to 85 percent. As in other emerging countries, however, many children here have an extremely harsh childhood.

Photographer: Arez Ghaderi, Iran, Freelance Photographer



## Second Prize 2016

### Greece: The hour of enchantment

Night has fallen in Idomeni. A night between further days spent in a state of waiting in uncertainty. More than 12,000 refugees, mostly from Syria and mostly children and adolescents, are stranded here near the Greek-Macedonian border. Stopped on their way to Germany, the promised land. Volunteers have improvised an open-air cinema to entertain the children with movies. To allow them to escape from the camp's drab reality and to let their thoughts fly free.

Photographer Ali Nouraldin, born in 1985 in Gaza, currently residing in Cologne and working for various international media, captured this moment of enchantment during a lengthy stay in Idomeni. What he found most touching were the anxious but also hopeful questions the refugees asked him. A little refugee child, for example, once took him by the hand and listened intently to his description of schools in Germany. Or people lining up for hours to get a map which they could study to find a way north. Full of streets they weren't allowed to pass. Nouraldin took pictures of children in tents, waiting in line, behind fences and amid puddles in a mud-soaked camp – and this one magical moment: the fascination of being able to forget reality – at least until the closing credits – reflected in their faces.

Photographer: Ali Nouraldin, Palestine, Agentur laif



Third Prize 2016

Syria: The children who must endure

Douma, the 9th largest Syrian city, not far from Damascus. Another war-torn city full of apocalyptic scenes - a grim canvas of blood, pain and death. Inconceivable for everyone, perhaps even more so for the children.

Photojournalist Mohammed Badra, born in Douma, studied architecture and currently works for epa. The war changed him: he had to witness it first-hand, he provided first aid for the Red Crescent – the sister organization of the Red Cross – and he became involved with the psychological support of victims. Badras' picture of two festively dressed young girls, the steady gaze of the girl in white, the nervous gaze of the girl in red, the wall littered with bullet holes – an almost surreal moment amidst the gunfire and explosions.

About one million people are caught between the front lines in Syria. Children die in bombarded schools, work in morgues. The last remaining hospitals close. In the other pictures of his photo series, Badra captured a both touching and incredible will to survive: playgrounds in trenches, decorated with Mickey Mouse pictures. Pillows and balls behind bars. And a Ferris wheel in a concrete bunker - assembled from the remains of rockets.

Photographer: Mohammed Badra, Syria, epa (European Photopress Agency)



Honorable Mention:

Germany: When an “old person’s disease” torments children

Rheumatism – that’s something only old people get, isn’t it? Unfortunately, it isn’t. It affects approx. 30,000 infants, children and young people in Germany alone, making it one of the three most widespread chronic diseases among children. Rheumatism is neither easy to diagnose or to treat. It can affect joints and bones or, in more serious cases, internal organs or even the iris of the eye.

Young German photographer Benedikt Ziegler, a graduate of the University of Applied Sciences and Arts Dortmund, accompanied young rheumatism patients over a longer period: at home and with friends, in specialist clinics and support groups, during and after therapy sessions with water, cold and movement. As a silent observer, Ziegler captures the patients’ emotions and shows what barriers and handicaps they have overcome, shows their pain, but also happy moments of joy and recreation. He wants to provide information and at the same time raise awareness for a fate of which the wider public is still mostly unaware.

Photographer: Benedikt Ziegler, Germany, MA Photography (University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Dortmund)



## Honorable Mention

### Lebanon: Mohammed loves to swim

To stand on one's own feet – that's usually a metaphor for the hope to be independent, to have a job or maybe even start a company. For Palestinian Mohammed, who turned twenty in 2016, it is something he can't even dream of. He literally, not just figuratively, has no feet and no legs since he was hit by a cluster bomb, a kind of ammunition used in the 34-day war between Israel and Hezbollah in 2006.

Mohammed lives in a Palestinian refugee camp in Southern Lebanon. That's where photographer Laura Boushnak, born in 1976 in Kuwait and also a child of Palestinian refugees, went to find her parents. Fortunately, she found them safe and well, but also found Mohammed, a young man both mentally and physically traumatized. Since then, Boushnak has accompanied Mohammed in his daily struggles.

The photographer, who has worked as a Middle East reporter for news agencies AP and AFP for some time, documents the suffering of a now young man whose injuries prevented him from attending school and from taking care of his relatives, traditionally his duty as the only son in the family. He finds his moments of joy in swimming – where he can keep up with all the healthy people whose lifestyles he would like to share. Mohammed urgently needs new prostheses; he depends on doctors who adjust them for him. And on people who finance them.

Unexploded cluster bombs – just like land mines – remain a threat for civilians for years after a conflict has ended. The risk is particularly high for children. 119 nations have banned this kind of weapon so far – but the great powers continue to produce them.

Photographer: Laura Boushnak, Palestine, Freelance Photographer, Rawiya Collective



## Honorable Mention

### Ukraine: Warriors in the making

A forest 60 kilometers west of the Ukrainian capital Kiev. A summer camp for boys and girls from 8 to 16 years, organized by one of the approx. 80 volunteer battalions subject to the Interior Ministry. Their ideology: ultra-nationalism and right-wing extremism.

Here, children, even little girls, are trained for war, learn how to handle assault rifles, practice urban warfare with fake weapons, have to undergo punishment drills wearing bulletproof vests and helmets, sing patriotic songs with their fists over their hearts. The faces of children: exhausted, crying, curious, proud – and during the daily 30-minutes of free time, like regular teenagers from next-door, happy, wearing sneakers and using smartphones.

Italian photographer Alex Masi, born in 1981 in Turin, a Graduate of the London College of Communication and winner of numerous international awards, hopes with his photo documentaries to open the world's eyes to developments that are not at the forefront of international news. His photo series about the summer camp in Ukraine sheds some light on some of the most disturbing aspects of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. It shows how hatred and militarism have permeated society in this conflict, not even stopping at the children.

Photographer: Alex Masi, Italy, Freelance Photographer



## Honorable Mention

Yemen: Those who can't forget

It is called “the forgotten war” – the war in Yemen between a coalition led by Saudi Arabia and Shiite rebels, known as Houthis. It is a conflict that has indeed been mostly forgotten by international news coverage.

Yemeni photographer Yahya Arhab (epa), born in 1975 in Sana'a, doesn't understand why this war would be labeled a forgotten one. Every day, he sees and photographs those who will never be able to forget this war: the ones who have flee from air strikes, who have to hide in underground bunkers, who have to salvage their belongings from destroyed houses, who have seen their schools collapse, who have to play in cemeteries, who have to stand in line for food.

Arhab not only captured moments of suffering and distress, but also moments of bewildering solemnity: the festively dressed girl on her way to prayer, a boy carrying his schoolbooks, an armed girl during a women's rally in honor of the rebels.

According to UNICEF, 82 percent of Yemen's population now depend on humanitarian aid, almost half of them children.

Photographer: Yahya Arhab, Yemen, epa (european pressphoto agency)



## Honorable Mention

### Europe: Just wanting to arrive!

They started their journey in order to flee the war in the region of Aleppo, Syria: two brothers with their families, 13 all in all, including six children and a pregnant woman in her seventh month. Their destination: Sweden.

It took them 29 days alone to get there from Serbia. Their journey included hours and hours of walking, illegal border crossings, five nights next to a train station in Budapest, endless bus and train drives. 2.30am: a stopover at a deserted train station in Kiel. The picture of little Nabib, wrapped in a blanket, sleeping, shows the loneliness of such a journey. Other images by Brazilian photographer Mauricio Lima capture the exhaustion, the hardships and the helplessness. But they also show the lightheartedness, curiosity, cheerfulness and hope of the children. And they particularly show the importance of solidarity and warmth.

Mauricio Lima, born in 1975 in São Paulo, has worked as a photographer in Afghanistan, Iraq, Ukraine and other countries. Together with the two refugee families, he has been in Horgos, Roszke (Hungary), in Budapest, Salzburg, Munich, Kiel, Padborg, in a number of places in Sweden and, for the time being, their final destination: Kristinehamn and Backhammar. There, Lima was able to capture a happy ending: their asylum requests being accepted, the quick enrollment of the children at the local school – all driven by their parents' objective to build a new life for themselves and their children. His earlier work, carried out with the same effort and intensity and featured, for example, in the New York Times, won him a Pulitzer Prize, two World Press Photo Awards as well as other prestigious awards from Latin America to China.

Photographer: Mauricio Lima, Brazil, for the New York Times



## Honorable Mention

United Kingdom: What's so bad about pink?

"My favourite colour was yellow" is the title of a photo series about girls in the UK by Glasgow-born photographer Kirsty Mackay, and a nod to her own biography. For some, the color pink, dominating in Mackay's pictures, has become a symbol of a consumption-driven manipulation of girls. The protest organization 'Pinkstinks', for example, criticizes the industry for tempting girls (and their parents) with products that reinforce obsolete gender stereotypes.

Mackay herself points out that pink hasn't always been a symbol for femininity. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, white was the recommended color for babies. Or blue for girls and pink for boys. It is only since the 1980s, according to US professor Jo B. Paoletti, that pink has become a strongly feminine color and "has reached the level of moral imperative in the age group of three to seven".

But is it really a problem when little Flo sweeps the floor in front of her pink playhouse with a pink broom, wearing a pink dress? Kirsty Mackay has a more relaxed view on the issue. She states that the girls she photographed were very proud of their pink bedrooms and that the pink phase has become a right of passage. Most of them would come out the other side before adolescence anyway.

Photographer: Kirsty Mackay, United Kingdom, Institute



## Honorable Mention

### India: Good things come together

Since photographer Jordi Pizarro, born in 1985 in Barcelona, has lived in New Delhi, he keeps coming across news reports about a noticeably high rate of twins being born in certain places in India. This almost certainly came as a surprise as India usually has one of the lowest rates of twin births in the world. So he traveled to the village of Kodinhi in Kerala to portrait some of the numerous twins. And since he likes to mix fantasy and reality in his photos, he made them look like they were from a long-gone era. They look “old”, like remnants from a time when people could only marvel at such strange phenomena.

The phenomenon of the many twins in Kodinhi is a strange one, indeed; 250 pairs of twins are known in Kodinhi alone, and rising – for reasons unknown. The suspected reasons have already included pollutants, hormone treatments, incest, etc. In other communities with a similarly high number of twins, soil and water samples were analyzed, and also blood samples of parents. Yet, there is still no proven scientific explanation for the phenomenon. Pizarro, whose works have been published, among others, in National Geographic, New York Times, Time, Le Monde and Der Spiegel, has not pondered on the matter any further. He simply calls his portrait series of twins in Kodinhi’s palm gardens “Good things come together”.

Photographer: Jordi Pizarro, Spain, Freelance Photographer

