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UNICEF Photo of the Year 2017

## The face of a tormented childhood

**The UNICEF Photo of the Year 2017 shows the horrors of war and displacement, reflected in the eyes of a distraught child. Two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning photojournalist Muhammed Muheisen took the picture of five-year-old Zahra from Syria in an informal tented settlement near Mafraq in Jordan. Zahra's face represents the quiet sadness of millions of children in crisis areas around the world.**

The second and third prize of the international photo competition document the fate of mothers and children from the Muslim Rohingya minority forced to leave their home country of Myanmar. Photographer K.M. Asad, born in Bangladesh, captured the moment where a mother carries her child across the sea to land. Kevin Frayer (Canada) shows the utter despair of a little boy climbing an aid truck in a refugee camp in Cox's Bazar (Bangladesh).

"Children's eyes tell the truth", stated Elke Büdenbender, patroness of UNICEF Germany, at the award ceremony in Berlin. "The image of little Zahra vividly tells the story of the horror and desolation she already had to live through. You have to look at this face over and over again. It's a symbol of the fate of millions of children."

"The UNICEF Photo of the Year 2017 is an appeal to all of us. We cannot afford not to be touched by the fate of children who suffer from war, displacement and exile", said Peter Matthias Gaede, board member of UNICEF Germany. "Zahra's face is a call for action to end the destruction of children's lives by war wherever possible."

"Renowned photographers from all over the world handed in more than 100 spectacular photo series from the world's hot spots, but also subtle photographic essays about sensitivities and friction in rich countries. They provide a deep, esthetically excellent and complex insight into the current states and interrelationships of the world", said Jury Chairman Prof. Klaus Honnef.

### The winning picture: Zahra's face

For photojournalist Muhammed Muheisen, born in Jerusalem, the face of five-year-old Zahra is the symbolic face of a tormented childhood of an entire generation of Syrian children. He met Zahra in an informal tented settlement in Jordan. In 2015, Zahra's parents fled the war in Syria with her and seven other children. As Syria is about to enter its seventh winter of war, there's still no end in sight to the shooting, killing and starvation. Like Zahra, millions of boys and girls often have a bleak childhood in refugee camps and makeshift dwellings. For many years, Muhammed Muheisen has documented the humanitarian tragedies in the Middle East, Europe, Pakistan and Afghanistan, for example, for the AP.

### The second prize: The exodus of the Rohingya

A seemingly tranquil moment of a Rohingya refugee and her child arriving on the beach of Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh. The photojournalist K.M. Asad, born in 1983 in Dhaka and working for several international media, captured this moment on September 14, 2017. Thousands of members of the ethnic Rohingya minority fled the large-scale violence and persecution in their home state of Rakhine in Myanmar on foot or by boat. According to UNICEF estimates, there are approximately 320,000 children among the refugees. Asad's picture of mother and child who look like they were ascending from the sea is an image of life and limb saved... for now.

### **The third prize: Utter despair**

It was on September 20, 2017 when aid transports arrived at a Rohingya refugee camp near the Bay of Bengal. Photographer Kevin Frayer witnessed the moment when a weeping boy had pulled himself up onto an aid truck, wrapped his arms around the leg of the man standing over the food, reached out and tried to make eye contact with the man he hoped would help him. Frayer, born in 1993 in Canada, worked many years for AP in the Middle East and now works for Getty Images. UNICEF provides refugee camps with clean water and sanitation, vaccines, plastic sheets, supplementary food and sets up emergency schools. But there is still a lack of funding. UNICEF needs USD 76 million alone in the coming months to provide the children on site with the bare necessities.

### **The jury also awarded honorable mentions to ten other photo series:**

- **Jacob Ehrbahn**, Denmark (for Politiken), photo series: Waiting with their last ounce of strength
- **Leona Ohsiek**, Germany (Student at the University of Applied Sciences, Hanover), photo series: When dad is everything
- **Ana Palacios**, Spain (Freelance Photographer), photo series: Stronger than the sun
- **Andrew Quilty**, Australia (Agence VU), photo series: Bismillah's sense of snow
- **Yuliya Skorobogatova**, Russia (Freelance Photographer), photo series: Peaceful coexistence
- **Christian Werner**, Germany (Freelance Photographer), photo series: Nothing is over
- **Anush Babajanyan**, Armenia (VII Agency), photo series: Creating hope together
- **Zohra Bensemra**, Algeria (Agentur Reuters), photo series: Freed, but not free of fear
- **Toby Binder**, Germany (Freelance Photographer), photo series: On the losing side
- **Anna Boyiazis**, USA (Freelance Photographer), photo series: On the girls' right not to drown

**The international contest "UNICEF Photo of the Year" was initiated in 2000 by UNICEF Germany. Since then, the organization has honored pictures and photo series of photojournalists each year that document the personalities and circumstances of children in an outstanding way. To take part in the competition, photographers need to be nominated by an internationally renowned photography expert. For detailed information, please go to [www.unicef.de/foto](http://www.unicef.de/foto). The competition is supported by DZ BANK.**

**Free printout of the photos as well as of the related texts is only allowed within news coverage about "UNICEF Photo of the Year 2017" and with copyright information of the photographers or the author and their agency.**

**If you have any questions, please contact the UNICEF press office: Rudi Tarneden and Katharina Kesper 0221/93650-235 or -315, email [presse@unicef.de](mailto:presse@unicef.de) or Angela Rupprecht (Project Manager UNICEF Photo of the Year) 0173/9109323.**