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UNICEF Photo of the Year 2018

## Every child matters!

**The message of the UNICEF Photo of the Year 2018: every child matters – no matter where and under which conditions it was born, which ethnicity or religion it belongs to, whether it is healthy, sick or disabled. Countless children all over the world are forgotten or even mistreated and shunned for such reasons. In his winning photo of a little boy from Togo, Spanish photographer Antonio Aragón Renuncio captures the inherent courage and optimism of children, which shines through despite the harshest living conditions.**

**The second and third prize pictures also document the duality of children’s vulnerability and strength. In a refugee camp in his home country, Bangladeshi photographer Turjoy Chowdhury took pictures of the stateless babies of Rohingya parents who had to flee from the violence in Myanmar. This year’s third prize was awarded to Israeli photographer Rina Castelnuovo for her photo series about a Palestinian boy from the Gaza Strip. Muhi suffers from a rare disease and can only survive in Israel, where the necessary medical support is available.**

„Children have the enormous strength to remain hopeful, no matter how dire the situation,” explained Elke Büdenbender, patroness of UNICEF Germany at the award ceremony in Berlin. The image of the little boy with orthotic legs captures his matter-of-fact attitude and his hopeful nature – despite experiencing poverty and discrimination. It’s a call for all of us to help ensure that every child has a fair chance in life.”

“The UNICEF Photo of the Year 2018 illustrates the plight of countless forgotten children worldwide. It encourages us all to take action towards a world where all children, including children with disabilities, can grow up in safety and dignity,” said Peter-Matthias Gaede, vice-chairman of UNICEF Germany.

“Photographers from all over the world handed in more than 100 outstanding photo series this year. They cover vital issues in the lives of children everywhere on the planet: climate change, war, exploitation, grief, friendship or just the yearning for a childhood. Once again, the photographers managed to tell the stories behind their pictures in a gripping, symbolic or fascinating manner”, explained Prof. Klaus Honnef, Chairman of the Jury of photo experts.

### **The winning picture: A boy from Togo**

Rumors, myths and distorted notions shape the thinking of many people when they are confronted with children with mental or physical disabilities. In West Africa, these children are often shunned by their families or even mistreated. The “Saint Louis Orione Center” in Bombouaka, in the northernmost part of Togo, is a sanctuary for such children. About 70 boys and girls have found a safe home there and receive the medical care they need. They have the opportunity to play and are no longer seen as inferior. One of these children: the boy with leg orthosis, photographed by Spanish photographer Antonio Aragón Renuncio during one of his regular visits to the Center. More than 93 million children around the world grow up with moderate

and severe disabilities. These children need to be seen, so that they, too, can be valued, demands UNICEF. Antonio Aragón Renuncio has taken that to heart.

### **The second prize: Born homeless**

The second prize of the international competition held by UNICEF Germany captures the fate of newborn babies from the Rohingya ethnic minority. Neither Myanmar nor Bangladesh accept these children as their citizens – born whilst fleeing their homes, with no birth certificate. The pictures were taken by Bangladeshi photographer Turjoy Chowdhury.

### **The third prize: Across all borders**

The third prize tells the story of a little boy across the borders of the Middle East conflict. 9-Year-old Muhammad suffers from a rare autoimmune disease that could not be treated in the Gaza Strip, where he was born. When he was still a baby, his parents therefore had to bring him to Israel to be treated. Due to an infection, he lost his lower arms and legs. Since 2013, Israeli photographer Rina Castelnuovo has accompanied Muhammad and his family. She even directed a movie about “Muhi”.

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

- **Veronique de Viguerie**, France (Freelance Photographer), photo series: Between life and death
- **Jesco Denzel**, Germany (Freelance Photographer), photo series: On unsteady ground
- **Shayan Hajinajaf**, Iran (Freelance Photographer), photo series: Their only monuments are those in graveyards
- **Karolina Jonderko**, Poland (Napo Images), photo series: Looking for solace in vinyl babies
- **Camilo Leon-Quijano**, Colombia (Freelance Photographer), photo series: Fighting their way out of misery
- **Ana Palacios**, Spain (Freelance Photographer), photo series: Freed from slavery
- **Hashem Shakeri**, Iran (Freelance Photographer), photo series: When the water will be all gone
- **Brian Sokol**, USA (for UNICEF), photo series: Traumatic motherhood
- **Marlena Waldthausen**, Germany (FH Hanover), photo series: Finally - no longer teased
- **Tariq Zaidi**, United Kingdom (Caters News Agency, Getty Images), photo series: Preserving dignity in the face of hardship

**The international contest “UNICEF Photo of the Year” was initiated in 2000 by UNICEF Germany. Each year since then, the organization has honored pictures and photo series of photojournalists 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.**

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**If you have any questions, please contact the UNICEF press office: Rudi Tarneden and Katharina Kesper 0221/93650-235 or -237, email [presse@unicef.de](mailto:presse@unicef.de) or Angela Rupprecht (Project Manager UNICEF Photo of the Year) 0173/9109323.**