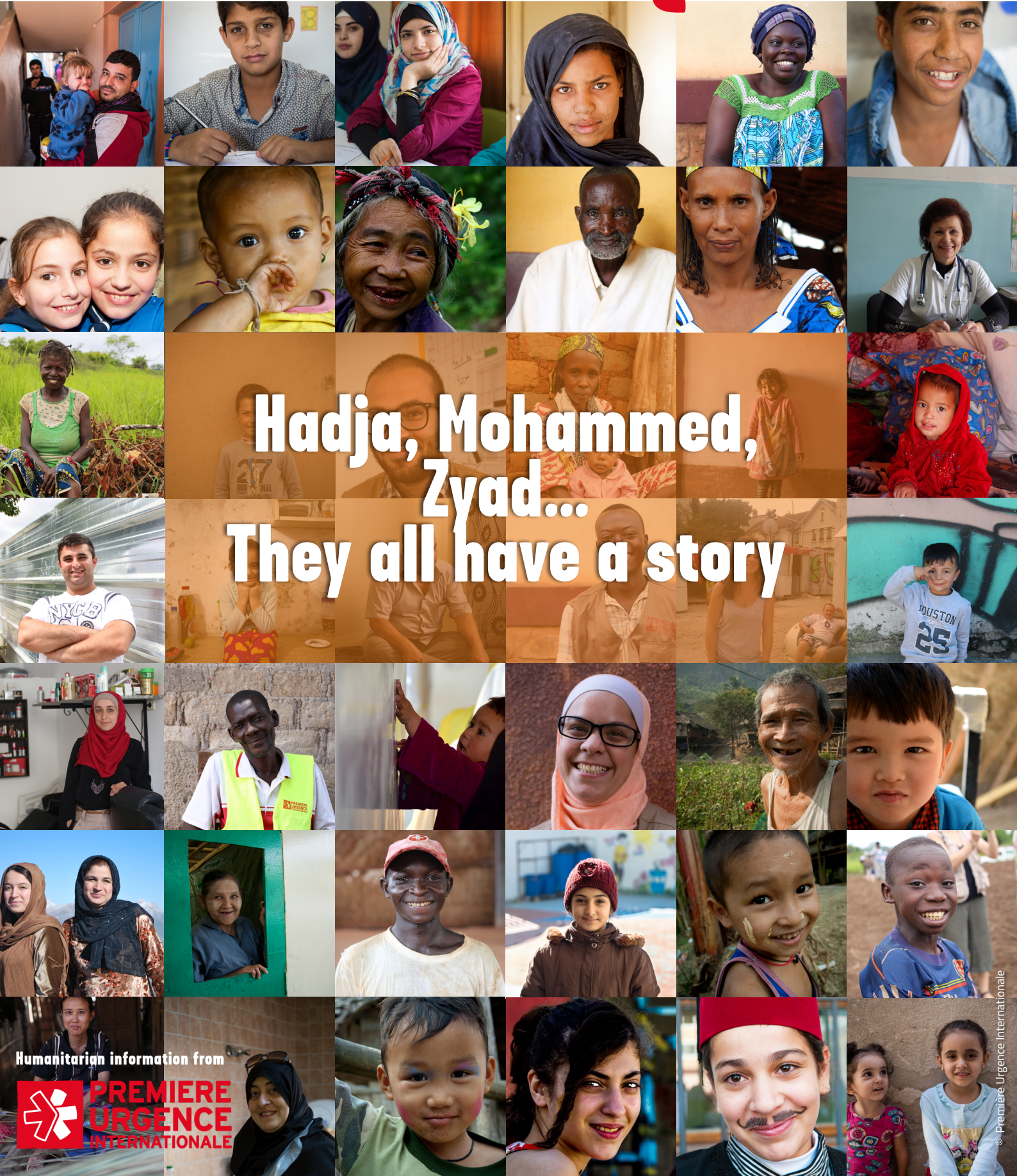




Their CHRONIQUE

Quarterly magazine
December 2017

n° 125



Hadja, Mohammed,
Zyad...
They all have a story

Humanitarian information from



**PREMIERE
URGENCE
INTERNATIONALE**



2017 has been characterised by a number of **grave humanitarian crises**. Some, like that which impacted the “Rohingya” ethnic group, have attracted intense media attention. Attention that’s completely warranted. Shameem Ahsan, Bangladesh’s Ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva defined this crisis as «the largest exodus of any one country since the genocide in Rwanda in 1994.»

In 2017, the battle for Mosul in Iraq hit the headlines, generating significant need for humanitarian aid within the country. Last July, Première Urgence Internationale invited the French public, via an exhibition held in Paris, entitled, “Ma ville me manque” to come and meet those displaced by war, those who had lost everything. Yemen, the poorest country in the Arab world before this current conflict, is today in the grip of the most serious global humanitarian crisis. The joint efforts of various NGOs, including **Première Urgence Internationale, have carried the voices of those affected** to the media and policymakers in order to spotlight one of the most brutal and deadly conflicts in existence today. In September, all eyes turned to the Caribbean, to tropical cyclones...and Hurricane Irma.

Whilst these humanitarian disasters drew media attention in 2017, other countries experienced crises away from the media’s glare, with little or no coverage. The Occupied Palestinian Territory has though, been full of news this year as it marked the 50th anniversary of the Israeli military occupation and the 10th anniversary of the Gaza blockade. In Mali, according to a report by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), approximately 3.83 million people are affected by the political and security crisis. In Ukraine, armed conflict and its effects, which have endured all too quietly for the past three years, have severely affected people’s living conditions.

Operating in the theatres of “forgotten” crises or those that demand immediate action, **Première Urgence Internationale’s teams continue to provide vital assistance** in difficult and often dangerous environments. Thanks to the support of our donors, we’ve been able to assist more than **7 million people** affected by these crises, that’s close to 5 per cent of the global population requiring emergency assistance.

Behind these numbers and crises, are the people, the women, men and children whose lives have been uprooted and whose dreams have been shattered and it’s to them that we pay tribute. **Hadja** - a victim of Boko Haram, **Zyad** - forced to flee Mosul, **Mohammed** - who grew in the Gaza Strip and has known only war, **Makiya** - a tiny little girl from South Sudan who survived severe malnutrition, and so many others. These are the faces of the people caught up in these wars and disasters. People who, despite the tragic events they have experienced, are trying to survive and regain their independence and dignity. For this last issue of the year and by way of looking back at our work in the field during 2017, **it’s their stories that we’ve decided to tell you.**

Jean Javogues

Director of Communications and Fundraising



DIARY

Diary Salif is Senegalese. She arrived in **France** seven years ago and since October 2017, has lived in a hostel, a temporary emergency shelter, in which Première Urgence Internationale operates. Today, she is fighting for her children to go to school.

"When I first arrived in France, it was very difficult. I worked as a cleaning lady until I was forced to stop because I didn't have the right papers to work. Then, in 2013, owing largely to my doctor who was treating my TB, I obtained my residency permit. I'm now able to work but as I don't know how to read or write, my job prospects remain limited.

I then brought across my children, who'd remained behind in Senegal. I wanted to do that quickly because my sister planned to force my eldest daughter into a marriage with a wealthy elderly man who already had three wives. That wasn't the kind of future that I'd envisaged for my daughter. She was only 16 years old, and money cannot buy you happiness. Since my children arrived in France, we've drifted from one place to the next. Thankfully, I'm now able to work as a cleaning lady and therefore have an income.

Right now, the most important thing is for my children to be able to go to school. You can't do anything if you don't know how to read or write. We're now in this hostel and I'm waiting for someone to find us a home where we can live. Then, it will be possible to enrol my girls in a school. I often think back to the time I spent selling bananas, mangoes and other fruit. I'd like to do the same thing here, but that's difficult. Dreaming grates on my nerves so I try not to..."



HADJA

Hadja Madouva Oumar fled from the violence perpetrated by Boko Haram. The young girl sought refuge in the town of Mora in the far north of Cameroon.

"I grew up in Kerawa, a village located on the border with Nigeria. One day, Boko Haram decided to take our livestock. Then, our neighbours were kidnapped by its members. My father was brave enough to climb the wall and run away, after having buried our grain and other food supplies. A few days later, we searched for him and found him in Mora. He was exhausted after his dramatic escape. The head of the district welcomed our family and negotiated some shelter for us. A little while later, our father succumbed to a devastating disease. We'd sold everything we'd carried with us to pay for treatment for him. But it wasn't enough.

In Mora, one of the areas in which Première Urgence Internationale operates, my father, as head of the family, had been selected as a beneficiary of one of their projects. We'd seen our father's name listed, however, a few days after the list of beneficiaries was displayed, he died. Our mother wasn't able to leave the house during the forty days following her husband's death as our tradition forbids that. That's why the responsibility of representing my family fell to me. Première Urgence Internationale gave us containers, cups and coupons that we exchanged for some water. Then, they issued us with coupons which we used to obtain some sorghum, maize, rice, groundnuts, cowpeas, oil, sugar and salt. These foods helped us get by for 60 days rather than 90 days because we shared them with our neighbours. We couldn't eat whilst watching others die of starvation.

I'd like to return to Kerawa, but I recently heard that our stash of food had been discovered and the walls of our house destroyed by members of Boko Haram. All we have left are our tears."



Makiya

That same day, Abraham, a community volunteer responsible for monitoring severe malnutrition in **South Sudan** for Première Urgence Internationale, visits households in Kangabar. In one of the dwellings, a little girl is crying. She's a year old and

her name is Makiya. Abraham takes a closer look at the child. Her arms and legs are extremely thin, so much so that her skins looks too big for her. Her face is skeletal, her large eyes, sad and sunken, she is extremely pale. *"Makiya?"* The little girl shows no response when the community volunteer talks to her. *"She's been ill for two weeks now,"* her mother explains, *"and she's getting worse each day."* Makiya is suffering from severe vomiting and diarrhoea. Abraham takes hold of a calibrated band to measure around the little girl's upper arm, one way to determine if she is malnourished. A healthy child's arm should have a circumference of more than 135 mm, Makiya's arm measures only 130 mm.

There's no time to waste, the little girl's health is a major concern. Abraham manages to convince her mother to go to Première Urgence Internationale's nutrition centre, based in Malek Miir. The little girl's mother finds her faith once more. Upon their arrival at the centre, Makiya is coughing a lot and has a high temperature. She's immediately taken care of by a doctor: she weighs just 7.3 kilograms. The diagnosis is quickly established: Makiya is suffering from severe malnutrition and experiencing medical complications. She needs urgent treatment. An hour and a half later, the little girl is transferred to the stabilisation centre in Majak Kaar, which is better equipped. During the journey along dusty tracks, the little girl's health deteriorates again. Her skin is deathly pale and blood tests confirm that she needs a transfusion. Unfortunately, this type of treatment isn't available at the centre. It's in Aweil Town, two hours drive from Majak Kaar where Makiya is finally taken, that the little girl receives both her transfusion and treatment. She'll have to remain in hospital for several days.

A few weeks later, Makiya is eating a sufficient amount and has regained her appetite.

She'll continue to receive extra food rations until she makes a full recovery.

Maria

Maria is 75 years old. A bag in one hand, a walking stick in the other, she gets off the shuttle bus that ferries passengers to Mayorsk's checkpoint. They're coming from the non-government zone in the Province of Donetsk, in Eastern **Ukraine**. As the crowd throngs at the passport control counter, Maria, back hunched, walks slowly toward Première Urgence Internationale's tent. *"I need to sit down for a while. Please can I have a glass of water?"* Maria asks a member of Première Urgence Internationale's team. Maria has always lived in Horlivka, in the Province of Donetsk. Her two sons, travelled to the city of Mykolaiv, in Southern Ukraine, as soon as the conflict began. Maria stayed behind as she's retired and feels trapped by the conflict: *"I'm too old to move and strongly attached to the place where I live."*

During the course of her life, Maria worked as a teacher in a nursery school. But now, rather than enjoying her retirement to the full, she's risking her life. In fact, to enjoy her pension entitlement, she's forced to cross the front line once a month. For Maria, this crossing is becoming more and more difficult. As winter approaches, the weather is growing increasingly cold and wet. The ground is also becoming particularly slippery. In winter, in Ukraine, the temperature can fall by 18 degrees.

"I need to collect my pension to buy sausages, cheese, a few pastries," Maria explains. On the verge of tears, she adds: *"We don't need this war... we don't want this suffering."*



*We don't need
this war...we
don't want
this suffering. »*

Houra

Houra Hassan, 27, lives in Eastern Chad. She has three daughters: Mariam, 9 months, Adijo, 3½ and Adjia, 5. Her three little girls have each successively suffered from malnutrition during a period where Houra was struggling to feed herself and therefore produce milk.

Houra first found out about malnutrition at the health centre. Before that, she didn't know it existed, believing that her daughters were "just" unwell. In light of her own experience, today she's able to spot malnourished children in other families and advises mothers to visit the health centre within which Première Urgence Internationale operates. In the future, she'd like to see her children go to school, and then, after that, have a field, just like her. At the moment, however, the village does not have a school because parents have not been able to raise enough money to pay for a teacher.



M. K

In Homs in Syria, a city particularly affected by years of turmoil, residents are returning to the most heavily impacted areas. Amongst them, is M.K., a businessman who's been able to reopen his restaurant thanks to Première Urgence Internationale's support.

In the Al Tameenat neighbourhood to the north of Homs, the "Matham Saade" - or - the "Good Fortune Restaurant" is doing well. It's owned by M.K., a Syrian man in his fifties. The business opened thanks to Première Urgence Internationale's efforts and has no rival competition within a kilometre radius. His main customers are currently workers who are busy rebuilding the neighbourhood, as well as former neighbours who, slowly but surely, are gradually returning. M.K. was one of the last to leave Al Tameenat in March 2012. After four years spent staying in friends houses, community shelters, in besieged neighbourhoods and in government zones created by agreements signed between the different warring factions, he decided to return with his wife in the spring of 2016. *"For four months we stayed in the ruins of our apartment without electricity,"* the restaurant owner recalls. The refurbishment of his home by teams from Première Urgence Internationale was completed two months ago. M.K. takes pride in being able to work again: *"I'd had enough of sitting across from my wife watching time slip away."* In his restaurant, he's preparing foul mudammas (beans with oil and garlic), hummus and heart shaped falafel.

The restaurant owner's family have been severely affected by the crisis. Two of M.K.'s brothers were killed in the fighting, two of his sisters are now in Europe, and his two other sisters followed their husbands to Idlib, a city in the north of the country during the rebel evacuation brokered following the end of the siege of the Old City in 2014. Three of M.K.'s four children sought refuge in Lebanon.

Only his youngest daughter, 15, remained with him. *"She left school when she was 11. God willing, I hope she'll be able to resume a relatively normal education at the start of the next school year."* His daughter's school is among the buildings that Première Urgence Internationale is currently renovating.



Mohammed

Mohammed Abu Hassan is 16 and lives in the Gaza Strip. His ambition: to develop computer-based tools which can provide help in situations of armed conflict such as that seen within the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

"I've grown up in a time of war. I was in the first year at school the day the Israeli air attacks began during the first crisis in 2009. My classmates and I left the school building and walked away, we were frightened. Everyone was frightened. What's more, many people were injured. There was an air of anxiety. This marked the start of the first Gaza War. During the conflict in 2012, people were terrified. The noise of the bombs dropped by the F-16 fighter jets was very close and the aircraft would fire indiscriminately. In 2014, when I was 12 years old, another war began in the Gaza Strip. On one occasion, I remember, as I tried to run away, I fell over and broke my hand. It was in 2015 that I began to design websites and apps for Android. Following on from that, I took a few computer courses and moved on to iOS programming. I then created an assistance app called «ILAN.» It's a tool that provides assistance to people in times of war and in emergency situations. Indeed, people are unable to call for help in these kinds of situations. This app enables them to make a phone call quickly.

It's possible to contact the Civil Defence, an ambulance or send a text message to a friend. It's extremely fast. To make a call, you simply click a button. The app will locate you without you having to do anything.

My wish is to leave the Gaza Strip so that I can continue my work, learn to program and develop other tools to help people. Here, every moment of your existence is consumed by the war."

ZYAD

Zyad is an Iraqi. His life under threat, he fled the city of Mosul with his wife and children. Today, he's living in a tent in the Bardarash Camp in Iraqi Kurdistan and works for Première Urgence Internationale. In the 1990s, Zyad worked in Mosul as a police officer, specialising in bomb disposal. In March 2017 while the battle of Mosul rages, he reflects upon his experience:

"I started working in 1990 during the time of Saddam Hussein. In 2003, my work became more intense as a result of the bombings carried out by the United States Air Force. Problems with terrorists also began at this time. They began to attack Americans and the Iraqi police. On two separate occasions they tried to kill me but I was incredibly fortunate and able to walk away unscathed. These people obliterated my home with explosives. At this point, I moved my family into my father's house. A place of safety. I was forced to flee Mosul, alone.

I went to Iraqi Kurdistan. The first thing I did was to look for a job. Then, I began to look around to find a safe place to live with my family. But just as I began my search, Islamic State (IS) arrived in Mosul, where my family were still living. The road between Mosul and Kurdistan was closed. The situation was deeply troubling: I couldn't sleep or eat. I was afraid even to phone them, because if anyone makes a phone call to Mosul, IS finds out about it and the entire family is killed. They believe that they're spies. It was a desperately difficult situation. In Mosul, women weren't able to go out without completely covering their hair, their hands. I waited, and finally, I was able to get my family out of there. We moved to the Bardarash Camp to live because we had nothing left. We'd lost everything fleeing Mosul: our jobs, our home, our money.

One day I hope to return to Mosul. I still have relatives who live in the city. But what can I do? I told them to move here to Kurdistan but nobody listened to me. My mother told me: «I'm not moving away from here. I'll die here.» That's her choice. I asked if she wanted to come with me when I went to get my wife and my children. I miss my city. I got married there, I studied there, I worked there."

« I miss my city »



© Livia Saavedra/ Première Urgence Internationale

VISIT US ON www.premiere-urgence.org

FOLLOW US



QUESTIONS?

Feel free to get in touch:

Tel: +33 (0)1 55 66 99 66

Email: donateurs@premiere-urgence

La Chronique is published by Première Urgence Internationale, an international solidarity NGO
Headquarters: 2 rue Auguste Thomas, 92600 Asnières-sur-Seine, France. Tel: +33 (0)1 55 66 99 66.
www.premiere-urgence.org

Publication director: Thierry Mauricet | Coordination: Laëtitia Chadenat | Graphic design: Chiara Ciampa. The whole
Première Urgence Internationale Team worked on this newsletter.
PRINTER: Cap Impression/DELIVERY : Adarys