

UK FOR REFUGEES

Embracing voices and telling stories

“

*To stand with refugees means
you're giving someone who
has struggled hope and
another chance at a better life.*

HAMZEH & AMANY, SYRIA **page 9** ▶

”



ISSUE 01

**REVIEW OF
2023**

**Lights,
Camera,
Action:**

Putting a spotlight
on refugee stories

**Reaching Far
and Wide:**

Bringing refugee stories
to social media

**Voices of
Resilience:**

(Former) refugees share
their stories at UK for
UNHCR events

Welcome to the first edition of our newsletter UK FOR REFUGEES

Get ready for an inside look into our Storytelling Programme and a recap of the incredible activities, events and campaigns we've accomplished hand-in-hand with our storytellers. We're thrilled to share these highlights with you!

First and foremost, what is UK for UNHCR's Storytelling Programme?

The Storytelling Programme is a welcoming space where we embrace the voices of forcibly displaced people.

We firmly believe that refugees should have the agency to share their stories in the ways that feel most meaningful and appropriate to them.

Our incredible storytellers have been sharing their journeys on our website and various social media platforms. They've also been the stars of our public engagement campaigns, events and other activities.

“

Each refugee has a unique story to share, and taking the time to sit with us and listen will help you understand why empathy and support for refugees are vital.

NAJEEM, AFGHANISTAN page 6 ▶

”



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency
United Kingdom for UNHCR

**UK FOR
REFUGEES**

2023 RECAP

1. LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION: Putting a spotlight on refugee stories

In early 2023, we highlighted the inspiring journey of Samin, one of our storytellers and the Director–Producer at *Optimum Pixel*, in a feature published by *Metro*. [Click here to read his full story](#)

METRO.co.uk

FIRST PERSON

My family sought safety in the UK but my dad had to stay in Iran – it was 9 years before I saw him again

“
By supporting education for everyone, you’re allowing communities to prosper and evolve equally. That’s the main message I want to share. Refugees like me should not be classified in terms of what you are, but rather how you’ll help change the world for good.

”

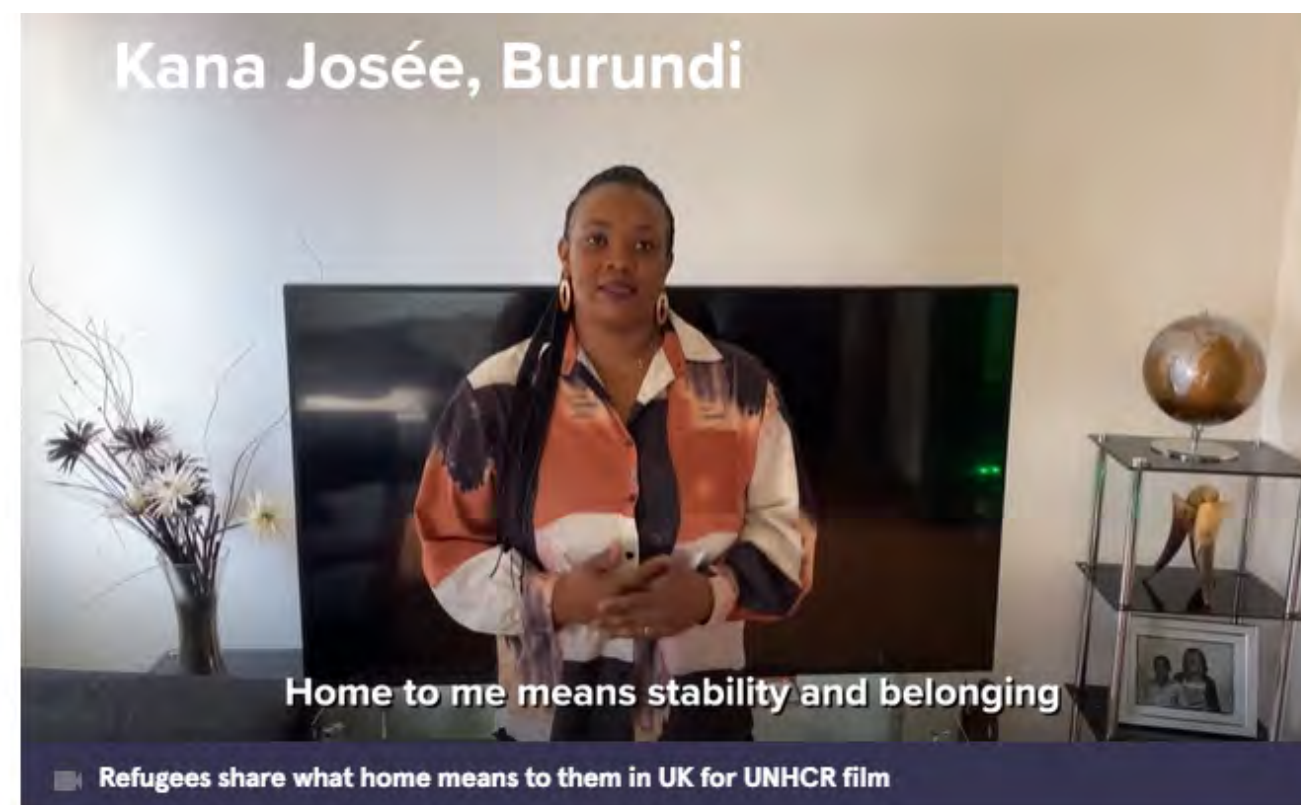
During Refugee Week in June 2023, we were fortunate to feature ten of our storytellers – from Bangladesh, Burundi, South Sudan, Syria, Uganda and Ukraine – who opened their hearts to share what home means to them in a mini documentary as part of our *Gallery of the (New) Home* campaign.

[Click here to watch the mini-documentary](#)

“
Home is a timeline. It holds our past and it frames our future.
”
WILLIAM, BANGLADESH



Kana Josée, a former refugee originally from Burundi, an entrepreneur, humanitarian, author and UN Women UK Delegate, shared what home means to her:



NEWS POLITICS FOOTBALL CELEBS TV CHOICE ROYALS

EXCLUSIVE: Refugee celebrates 'sense of stability at last' as UK offers hope and relief from suffering

“Home to me means stability and belonging. The picture means a lot to me because I chose passport and my living room. The reason why I chose passport is because I was born a refugee and I lived in so many countries with the refugee status.”

”



◀ KANA JOSÉE was interviewed by *The Mirror* and her story was also published on our website.

[Click here to read her story on our website](#)

[Click here to read the article in *The Mirror*](#)

This winter, six incredible storytellers — Alexandra, Maysara, Najeem, Vera, Amany and Hamzeh— shared their personal stories in our *‘Beyond the Headlines’* campaign. Partnering with celebrity photographer and author Pattie Boyd, they crafted a powerful portrait series, a reminder of the human stories beyond the news headlines.

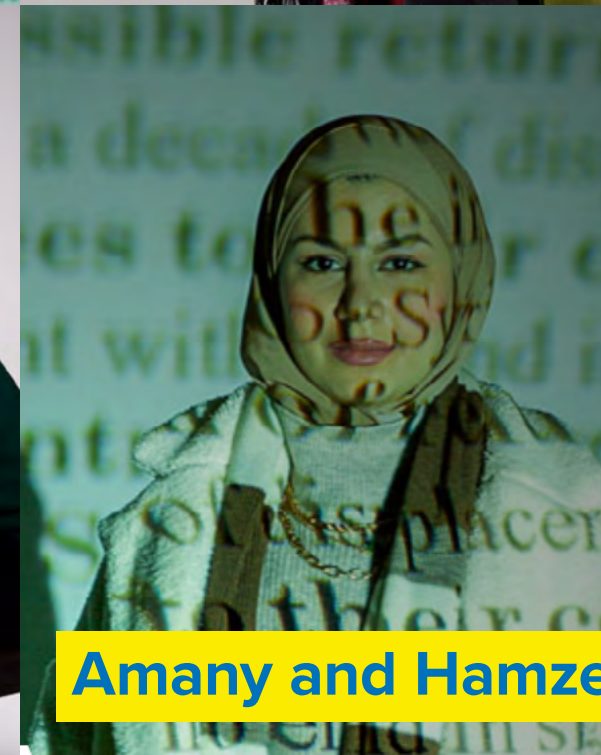
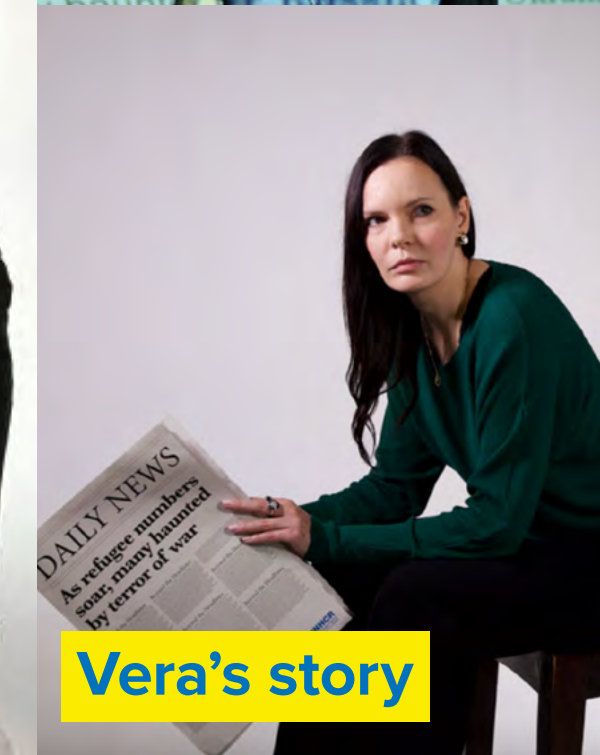
In this portrait series, each photo weaves genuine refugee stories with real news headlines. Amidst news dominated by conflicts, it highlights the often-overlooked personal stories — ranging from winter memories to passions and hopes for the future.

The campaign gained notable media coverage, including an interview with Maysara, a student originally from Syria, on Planet Radio.

[Click here for Maysara’s interview](#)

[Find out more about *Beyond the Headlines*](#)

6 Lights, Camera, Action



◀ [Click here to watch behind the scenes footage and an interview with Pattie Boyd](#)

Stylist Magazine interviewed Alexandra, an inspiring artist and art curator, along with Pattie Boyd. They shared their remarkable journeys and what it's like to be a part of our 'Beyond the Headlines' campaign.

To read the article, please visit this link

STYLIST

DISCOVERFITNESSSTYLIST EXTRA

QSUBSCRIBE

LIFE

This photography series will make you think differently about the reality of life as a refugee

BY MADELEINE BOURNE 30 DAYS AGO

BROUGHT TO YOU BY UK FOR UNHCR

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency
United Kingdom for UNHCR

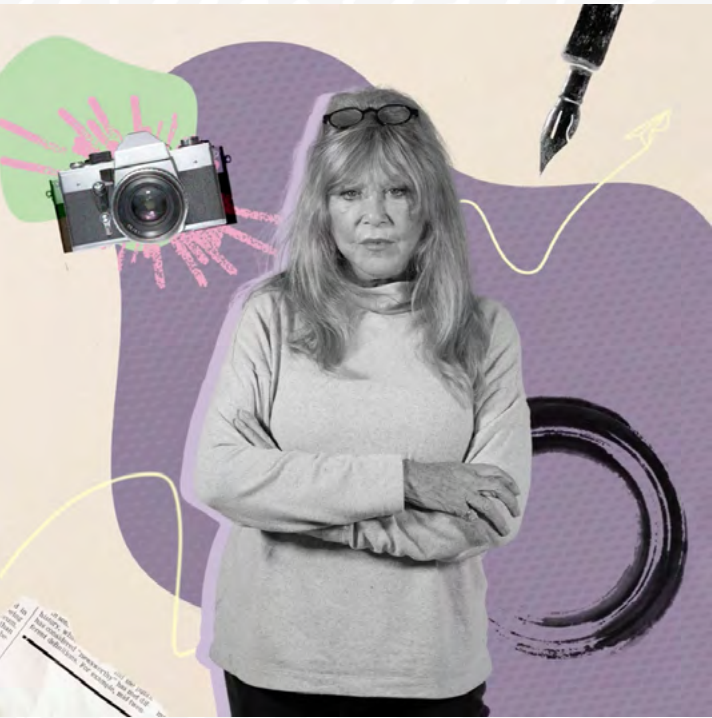


“It’s important to see past the sometimes-dehumanising media headlines that surround refugee crises and consider the experiences of people who have been forced to flee their homes in search of a safer place to live.”

PATTIE

“I remember the fear and anxiety that penetrated through my veins when I woke up on the brisk morning of February 24, 2022. I immediately knew I had to leave.”

ALEXANDRA



2023 RECAP

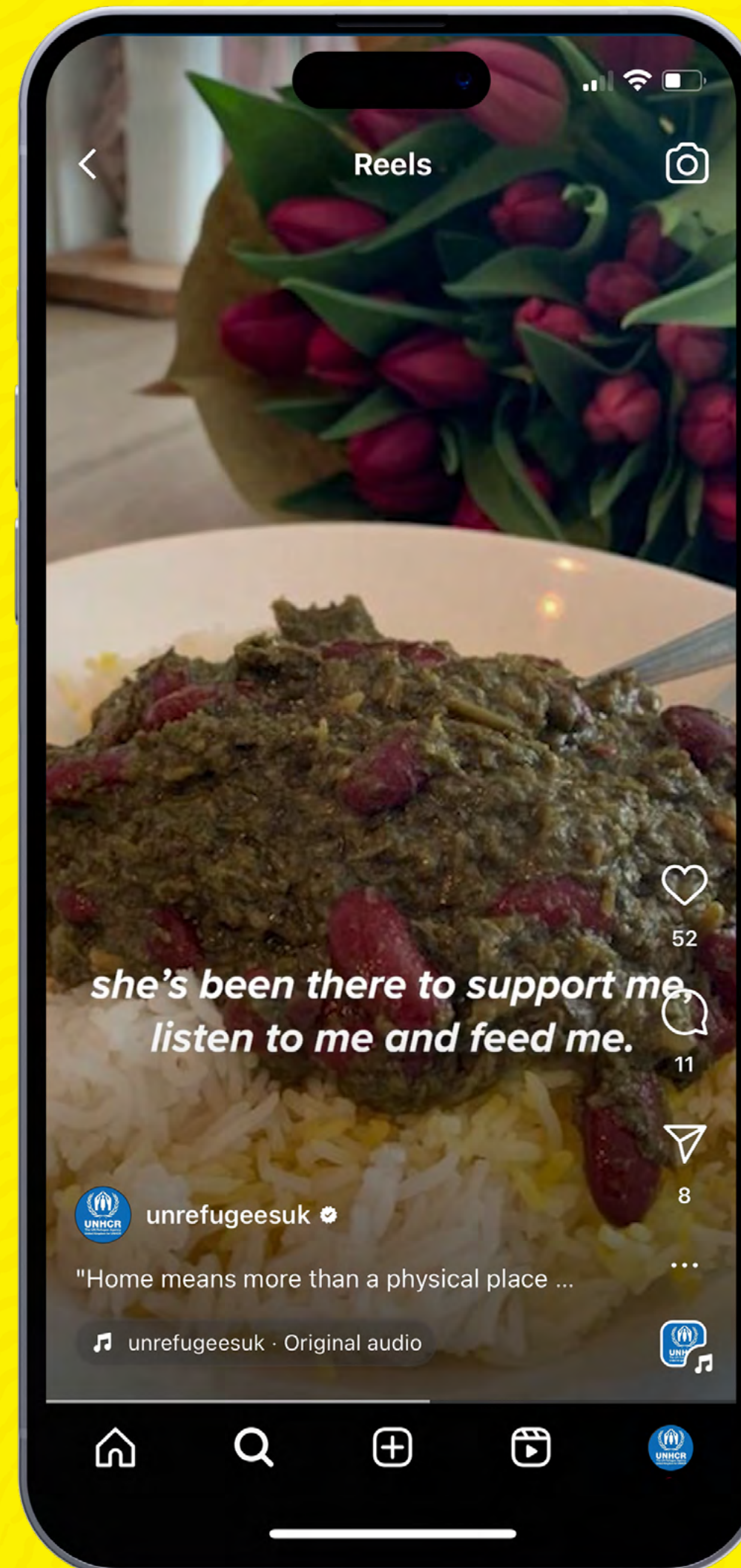
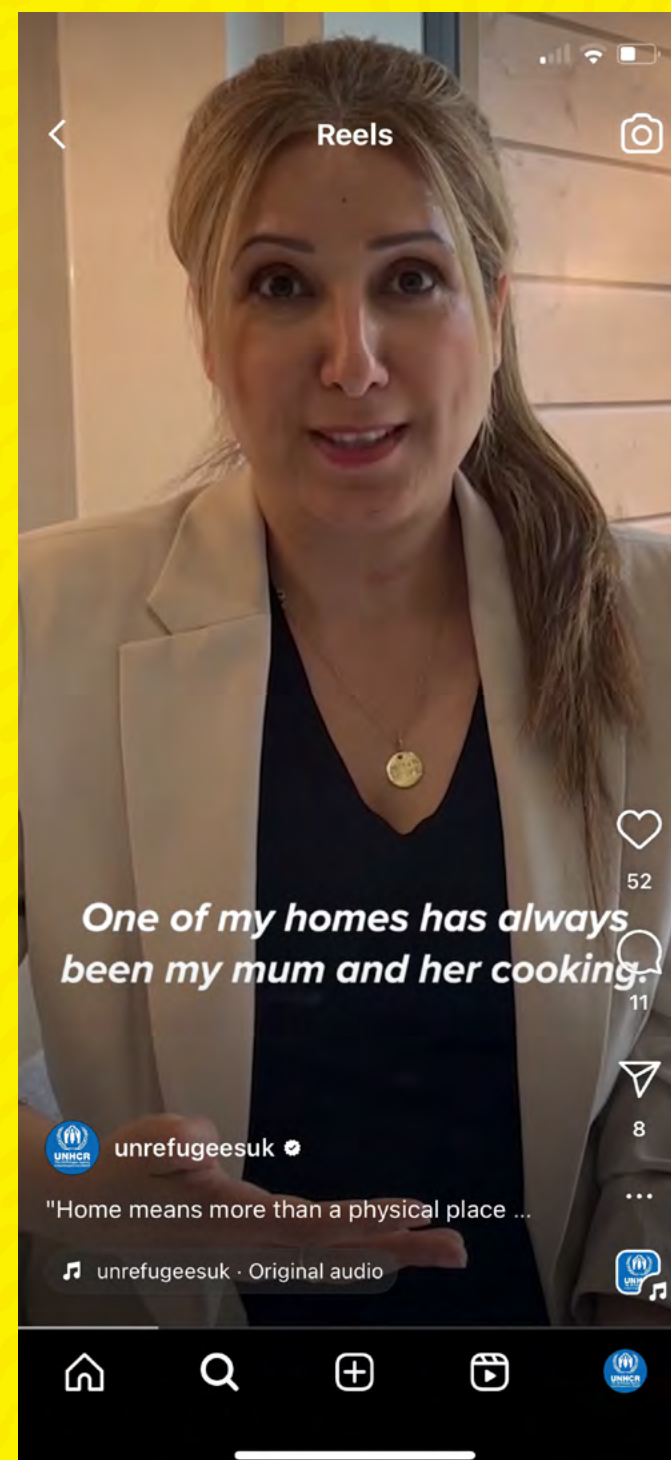
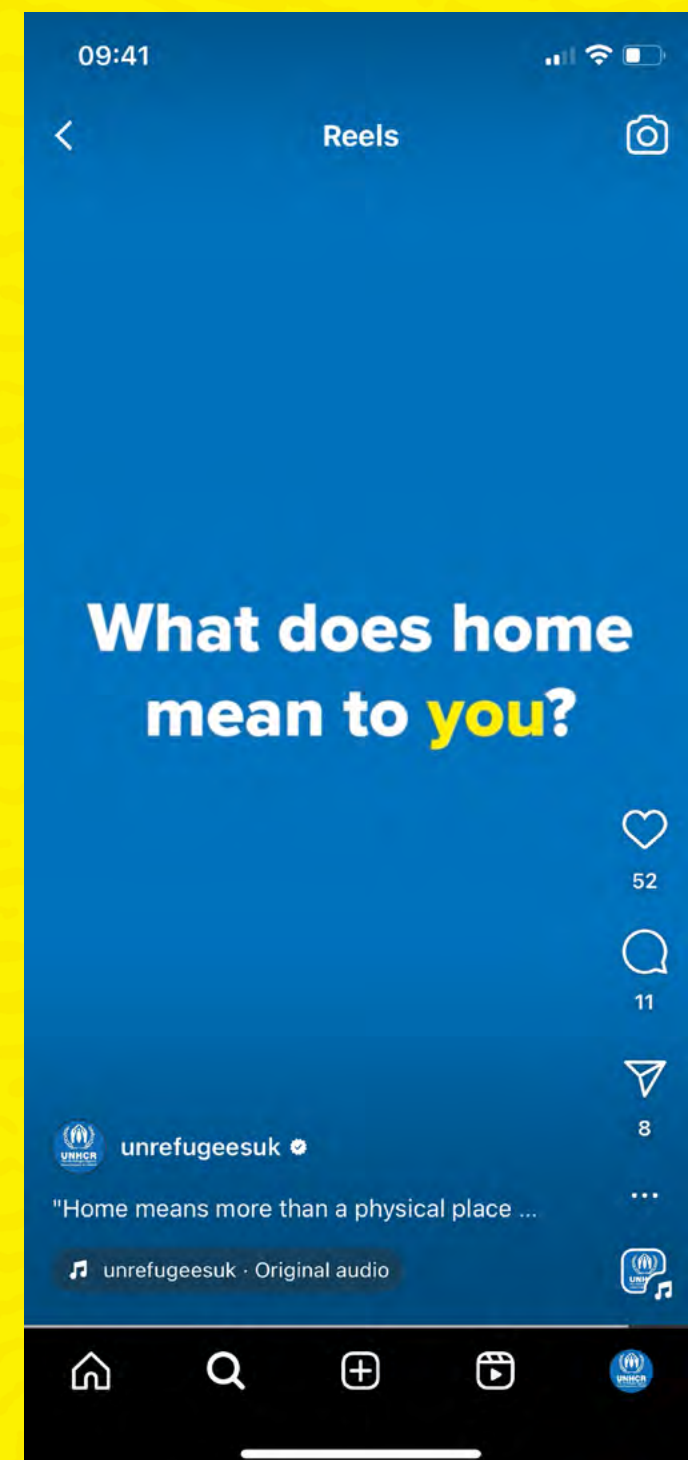
2. REACHING FAR AND WIDE: Bringing refugee stories to social media

We showcased the experiences of storytellers on our social media channels. The significant reach and engagement of these videos further emphasised each person's unique stories, raising awareness for the refugee cause.

- ◀ For instance, Baharak's story got a fresh spin on our Instagram feed, where she spoke about the meaning of home to her.

[To read more about her story, click here](#)

“
*She feeds me, listens to my
journeys and makes me feel
right at home.*
”



We also posted the heartwarming story of Hamzeh and Amany, a young couple from Syria, on our Meta channel in support of the *‘Beyond the Headlines’* campaign.

[Click here to read their story](#)



▲ In September 2023, HAMZEH wrote and performed *‘Penguin’*, his life story (so far) at *Live Theatre* in Newcastle, to critical acclaim.

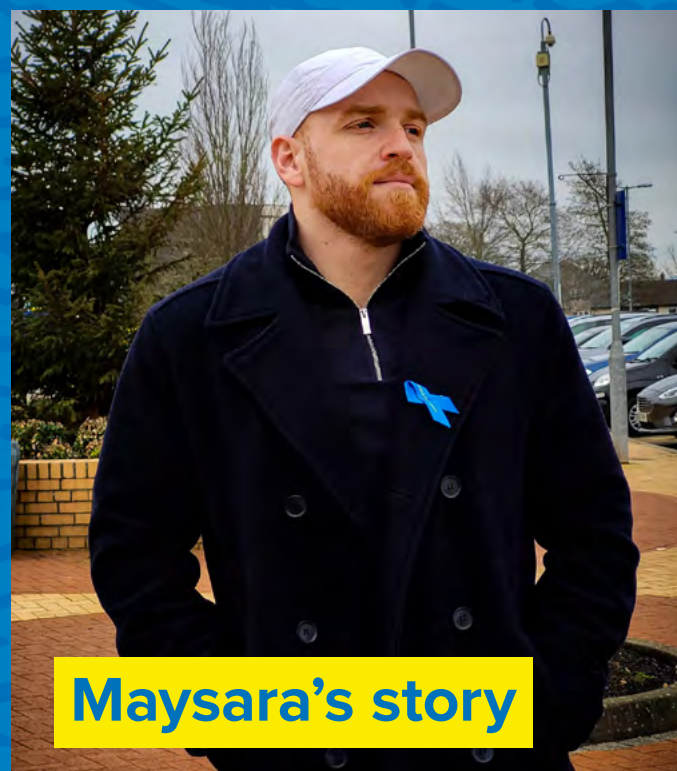
“To stand with refugees means you’re giving someone who has struggled hope and another chance at a better life.”

2023 RECAP

3. VOICES OF RESILIENCE: (Former) refugees share their stories at UK for UNHCR events

Our storytellers have played a significant role in key events over the past year. Maysara and Mouhyedin, a student and a business owner, respectively, both originally from Syria, shared their inspiring stories at a reception for our donors, giving their unique perspectives on forced displacement, UNHCR support and adapting to life in the UK.

It was a heartfelt opportunity to connect with and thank supporters for their generous commitment to refugees and displaced people.



SPEAKERS



Emma Cherniavsky
CEO of UK for UNHCR



Maysara
Student at Durham University



Mouhyedin
Founder of Falafel Fella

▼ Emma Cherniavsky, Chief Executive of UK for UNHCR, joined by our storytellers Maysara (on the left) and Mouhyedin (on the right) at a donor reception.



“
Ultimately, being with family and people I love and care about reminds me of home, because family is home. Being safe makes me feel home.

MOUHYEDIN

”

Kana Josée, an entrepreneur, humanitarian, author and UN Women UK Delegate, also took part in a panel discussion during the launch of the charity's *Emergency Fund* — a critical new initiative to support UNHCR's lifesaving emergency response work.

[Click here to find out more about Kana Josée](#)



▲ Kana Josée (middle) speaking on a panel at the launch of the UK for UNHCR Emergency Fund.

2023 was made extraordinary by the incredible support from our storytellers. A warm and heartfelt thank you to our incredible storytellers for sharing your inspiring stories and supporting our work.

If you'd like to volunteer for our Storyteller Programme and have the opportunity to participate in our projects, please contact us at mystory@unrefugees.org.uk

We'd love to hear from you!



**UK FOR
REFUGEES**