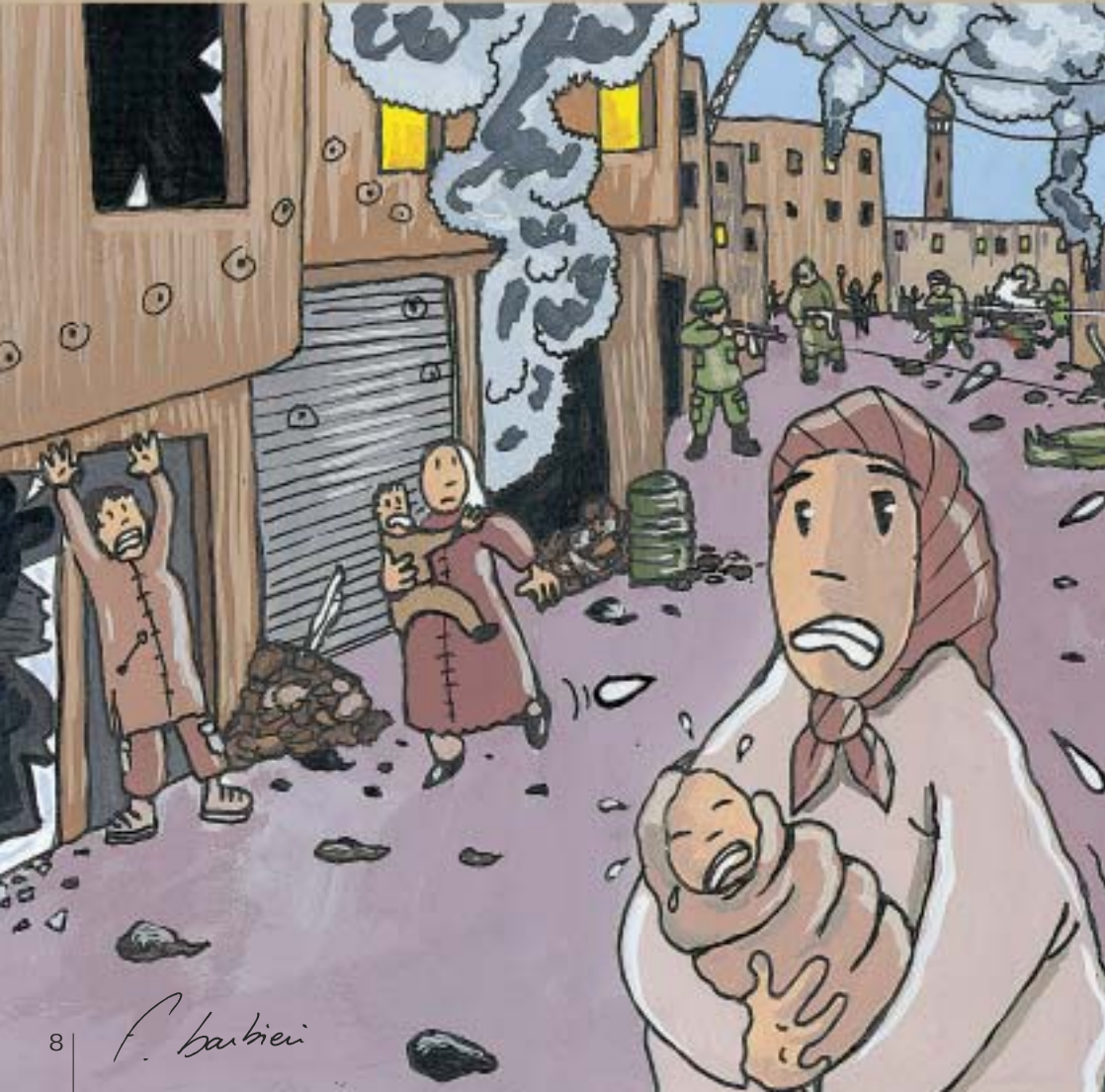


AMIN'S

AFGHANISTAN IS A DIVIDED COUNTRY. HOSTILE DESERTS AND TALL MOUNTAIN RANGES SEPARATE THE AREAS WHERE PEOPLE LIVE. THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES ARE DIVIDED INTO MANY ETHNIC GROUPS AND CLANS. IN 1979, THE FORCES OF THE SOVIET UNION INVADED AFGHANISTAN. MANY RESISTANCE FACTIONS, CALLED



ESCAPE



MUJAHEDIN, FOUGHT AGAINST THE SOVIET TROOPS DURING THE 1980s. WHEN THE SOVIET ARMY PULLED OUT OF AFGHANISTAN IN 1989, RESISTANCE FIGHTERS WHO HAD FOUGHT THEIR SOVIET INVADERS FOR TEN YEARS, BEGAN TO FIGHT AGAINST EACH OTHER TO GAIN CONTROL OF THEIR COUNTRY.




EUROPE

AFGHANISTAN
Kabul


ASIA

AFRICA



10 YEAR OLD AMIN LIVED WITH HIS PARENTS, BROTHER ABDUR AND SISTER ALIFA, IN THE CAPITAL CITY, KABUL. AT FIRST, THERE WAS CALM.

Hey, Amin!
Pass the ball over here!




BUT EVENTUALLY KABUL BECAME A WAR ZONE. THE CITY WAS SHELLED NEARLY EVERY DAY - FIRST BY ONE AFGHAN MILITARY GROUP, THEN BY ANOTHER . MANY CIVILIANS WERE KILLED DURING THESE ATTACKS.

THE CIVIL WAR BETWEEN THE DIFFERENT FACTIONS OF THE MUJAHEDIN CAUSED MORE AFGHANS TO FLEE THEIR HOMES AND COUNTRY. AMIN AND HIS FAMILY WERE ALSO FORCED TO FLEE.

They are killing civilians.
We must leave Kabul.


Pack quickly
children.
We must
leave at
once.



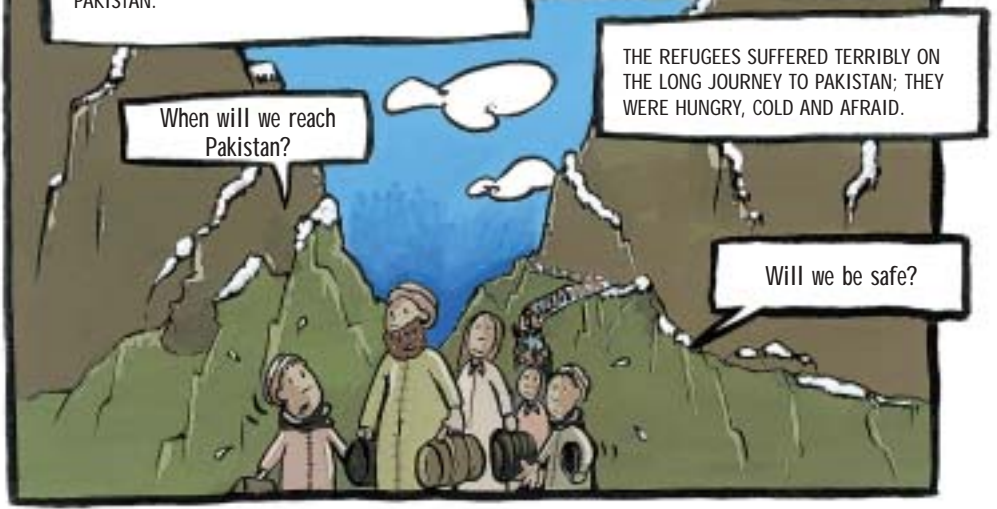
Why are they shooting at us?

They are shooting at everyone!

MEANWHILE, PEOPLE SUSPECTED OF HELPING THE ENEMY WERE BEING KIDNAPPED, TORTURED AND EXECUTED. TENS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE FLED THE CITY.



MANY AFGHANS TRIED TO FIND SHELTER AND SAFETY ELSEWHERE IN THE COUNTRY, WHILE OTHERS JOINED THE MILLIONS OF REFUGEES WHO EARLIER HAD FOUND THEIR WAY TO NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES SUCH AS IRAN AND PAKISTAN.



When will we reach Pakistan?

THE REFUGEES SUFFERED TERRIBLY ON THE LONG JOURNEY TO PAKISTAN; THEY WERE HUNGRY, COLD AND AFRAID.

Will we be safe?

THE REFUGEES HAD TO PASS THROUGH MANY ARMED ROADBLOCKS WHICH WERE SET UP BY THE VARIOUS FIGHTING GROUPS. OFTEN, THE SOLDIERS STOPPED THE TRAVELLERS AND DEMANDED PAYMENT BEFORE LETTING THEM PASS. OTHER TIMES, THE SOLDIERS WOULD CHECK PEOPLE'S BELONGINGS, LOOKING FOR WEAPONS. ANYONE SUSPECTED OF CARRYING WEAPONS WAS SEVERELY BEATEN.



What have you got in that bag?

You have to pay to use this road.



Abdur!

My son!
My son!

THE RIVAL MUJAHEDIN GROUPS HAD PLANTED MANY LAND-MINES IN THEIR WAR AGAINST EACH OTHER. THE VICTIMS WERE OFTEN NOT SOLDIERS, BUT CIVILIANS. AMIN'S BROTHER WAS KILLED BY A LAND-MINE AND HIS FATHER WAS ALSO INJURED.



I can't walk any further.

You can make it, Grandma.

It's getting colder. I'm worried about the children.

THE REFUGEES HAD TO WALK 300 KILOMETERS TO SAFETY. CROSSING THE MOUNTAINS WAS A TERRIBLE EXPERIENCE.

ONCE THEY REACHED THE BORDER, UNHCR STAFF WERE ABLE TO HELP THEM.



THEIR FIRST NEED WAS FOR MEDICAL CARE.

AMIN, HIS FAMILY AND OTHER AFGHAN REFUGEES WERE ESCORTED TO A REFUGEE CAMP IN PAKISTAN. THERE, THEY WERE SAFE. THEY HAD SHELTER, FOOD AND WATER. BUT AMIN AND HIS FAMILY GRIEVED FOR ABDUR. THEY LONGED FOR THE DAY WHEN THEY COULD RETURN TO THEIR HOME IN AFGHANISTAN.

