

Hamam's Story



Hamam at the Kara Tepe refugee camp.
Photo: ActionAid

Hamam is 10-years-old and is from Iraq. His hometown has been severely damaged by war. This war has lasted several years and it's no longer safe for the people who live there, especially for children.

Hamam's family, including his one-year-old baby sister, managed to escape Iraq. But they then had to face a long, hazardous boat voyage.

Hamam said: **"I was really scared going into the boat. It was our first time ever going onto the sea. The boat was filling up with water."**

Worried and afraid, cold and tired, Hamam's mother offered to take them back home. They were faced with a choice to either return to a country at war or to take this perilous boat journey.

Hamam remained brave: neither the sea nor his fear could change his mind.

"My mum tried to comfort me. She said: 'Don't be scared, we will go back. But I said: 'No, mum, I don't want us to go back'."

Hamam and his family made it across safely and are now staying in Kara Tepe refugee camp on the Greek island of Lesbos. Hamam's mother, Hanaa, spoke about how relieved she is to see her son enjoying life again:



Hamam and other Iraqi children at the Kara Tepe refugee camp.
Photo: George Makkas/Panos Pictures/ActionAid

"In Iraq, even when the children play, they play at war because their childhood is filled with nothing but war", she says.

Happily, Hamam and his family are now safe. He is enjoying playing with other children his age and is ready to start a new life with his family.