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CHIME THROUGH THE YEARS

“BETWEEN ONE HATRED AND THE OTHER” BY AMINA HUSSEIN

CHIME FOR CHANGE Through the Years: The Female Fabric is a series curated by CHIME Managing Editor Mariane Pearl featuring stories from the CHIME journalism platform archives by women around the world.



The author, a journalist, takes a much-anticipated trip back home to Syrian Kurdistan from Barcelona where she lives, when Turkey starts launching bombs on civilians.

It's 4 pm when I make it home. The journey through dry and wild mountainous landscape contrasted starkly with my memories of this place: one of spring and abundance.

I am exhausted, my sisters and I kiss, there are welcomes and there are tears. When they head to the kitchen to prepare the meal, I connect my smartphone to the internet. Headlines read: "Turkey military operation to claim the North and East of Syria."

I had never been in a war zone. The local media show people fleeing bombs, jet fighters circling the sky as reporters run after witnesses. My sister puts food on the table but nobody eats. The rest of the world seems to have abandoned us even though the war is broadcasted live on television. You can't help but think you will be the next victim, one more among millions of anonymous women and girls referred to as casualties or collateral damage.

Suddenly, we hear close-by explosions, everything is shaking, my nephews and niece scream. The night is long; hours stretching forever. The first victims I see are siblings Sara and Muhammed 8 and 10 years old. Airstrike. He dies, and she loses a leg. People don't know where to hide, we still have light and the Internet but hospitals are overflowing. The mosque calls for blood donation, it's chaos, it's war. When the bombing stops in the morning, people bury the dead.

I write about my nephew who can't sleep, he hugs me and says "auntie, I don't want to die." It hurts me to the core so I play videos and songs on my phone to distract him. During the following month, we live in fear of bombs, we hear the cries of children and see the people desperate for safety. I have come home indeed, and I stand as close as I can to the innumerable anonymous people who suffer from the war but have nothing to do with it.

The international press leaves after the first week of conflict. So, it's up to us citizens and the local press to post the genocide on social media documenting the daily struggle of millions of us caught between one hatred and the other. Here on the frontlines where "an eye for an eye" still makes the world go blind.

Fact Box:

- Over two weeks, 300,000 people escape from their villages, living in school premises with nothing more than the clothes on their backs.
- Kurds are the largest ethnic minority in Syria, and make up between 7 and 10 percent of the Syrian population, between 1.6 and 2.5 million people.





