

FOUR FAMILIES IN MAFRAQ

“I think independent filmmakers, documentary filmmakers - they are journalists.”
- Robert Redford

“So I will come to put you on trial. I will be quick to testify...against those who...deprive the foreigners among you of justice...says the Lord Almighty.” - Malachi 3:5



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MAFRAQ, JORDAN

Mafraq is a frontier city in the northern Jordanian desert, close to the Syrian border. Although only an hour's drive from the capital, Amman, it's not on the tourist trail. In fact, it's been dubbed "a forgotten city" by residents. When the Syrian civil war began, the city's population was about 60,000. Now it's closer to 138,000. Syrians living in the Mafraq province have reached over 288,000.



Downtown Al-Mafraq during evening "rush hour."



Looking toward Syria from Umm el Jimal heritage site.

FOUR FAMILIES:

With segregated schools, inflated rents and the risks of working illegally, the Syrian refugees swelling the Jordanian town of Mafraq have exchanged the problems of their homeland for new dangers. Four families invited the documentary team into their homes in order to share their struggles. They, along with nearly six million other Syrians, have been displaced. Theirs is a redemptive story.



Muhammad Shehab and his wife live in a storage unit.



PBA Alum Anisa Stechert and Amal before departing.

THE PRODUCTION:

In 2017, students and professors from the Intercultural Studies program traveled to northern Jordan on a humanitarian aid trip. A news documentary team consisting of a SoCM professor and two students embedded themselves to independently investigate the Syrian refugee crisis. The goal was to make a human connection. In 2018, a third student returned to follow up.



Mhanna (right) was a law student before the civil war.



A missile explosion nearly killed Muhammad Shehab.