Maral

We moved to Armenia three years ago, as a result of the ongoing war in Syria today. Life in Armenia is good, but the only problem is the lack of jobs. I have two sons and both of them work for a very low amount of money. We tried to move to Sweden but the men who organized the trip tricked us, as we landed in Montenegro where they caught us with a fake Visa and imprisoned us for a month. Then they sent us back here to Armenia. What we want is for the war to finish in Syria so that we could go back and live instead of just existing. I was born in Syria, I was married in Syria, anywhere you go around the world you could not find a place like the Syria before the start of the war.

Vahan Swimmer

I started to swim when I was five years old. I had a friend who was going to swimming classes and he was a year older than me. He teased me a lot telling me that "Everyone who turns five should start swimming" and as a result he made me very jealous. When my parents asked me what I wanted for my birthday I told them that I want to go swimming, they kept their promise and my father started taking me to swimming classes. One of the problems that Armenian professional swimmers face in Armenia is the army, before I went to the army I was the best Swimmer in all competitions even during participating in a tournament in Europe I came out third, but as you can see now for the first time after serving in the army I lost all my distances in the local competition here in Armenia. My dream is to make swimming a mainstream sport in Armenia because a lot of people say that swimming is not a sport made for Armenians, but I do not understand, how come Armenians can be great in wrestling and weightlifting but not be good at swimming? It is all about the desire in my opinion. My current short term goal is to get accepted into the American University of Armenia because I have heard that you have a lot of good professors and the BA diploma is very credible as well.

Vahan Hookah

Although I was born in Aleppo, Syria. I was raised in a village called Al-Safita. In our village you rarely met any Muslims, we were all Christian Arabs. There were some Armenians there as well just like I, but they did not speak Armenian very well. I moved to Armenia three years ago with my brother, because we had to escape the country in order not to serve in the military because it was and still is very dangerous to serve in the army especially when you are amateurs like us. Since we could not travel to Armenia by airplane we had to take the bus, travel to Lebanon where they treated us very badly because we are Syrians, and from Lebanon we travelled to Yerevan via Dubai. The road to Lebanon was very dangerous but we had to take the risk, The bus that was in front of us was attacked by rebels, three people were killed that day but we had to move continue our journey because of our fear of any potential attacks. Ever since that day I decided to be optimistic towards life, just like the Americans say "When life gives you lemons, make lemonade." Although we would love to go back to Syria one day, we cannot complain of our lives here in Yerevan, me and my brother have jobs and a house to live in, which is more than what millions of Syrians have today, so I can only say "Alhamdulillah" (Thank god)