



RELEASED: Tuesday 21st November 2017

FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT: PEOPLE WITHOUT PAPERS

An ABC iview special

My father told me to go. I'm travelling on my own – Mahmoud

It was over a year ago that Mahmoud left his home in Afghanistan to make a solo journey to western Europe, 7000 kilometres away. Along the way he would face what he calls “unspeakable hardships”.

Mahmoud was 12 years old.

Now in Calais, northern France, the boy sleeps rough and hustles for food near what's left of “The Jungle”, an old landfill site that was home to thousands of asylum seekers from Africa, the Middle East and Asia, before authorities wrecked their camp and threw them out.

Still his journey is far from over.

Like many before him, Mahmoud plans to dodge local police and sneak on to a London-bound truck. Then, he thinks, he will leave all his worries behind.

When I reach Britain I'll have a happy life and I will start going to school. I want to become a good human being – Mahmoud

Young Mahmoud is one of a cast of characters in a series of five short documentaries made for ABC iview by Foreign Correspondent producers Poppy Stockell and Emma Morris, exploring the daily struggles facing undocumented migrants in Calais, Dunkirk and Paris.

Fear pervades their lives. Fear of police who are accused of indiscriminate violence. Of locals who resent the influx of strangers. And of fellow migrants.

When Africans and Afghans fight they use knives. It terrifies me – Mahmoud
I'm just afraid. How could I not be afraid? – Almaz, 17, from Sudan

Most migrants dispersed when The Jungle was pulled down. But now lone newcomers like Mahmoud and Almaz, as well as entire migrant families, are trickling into the area.

We will never be at ease – Calais resident Jacqueline

They play cat and mouse with police who destroy the first seed of any permanent camp, pulling down tents and confiscating sleeping bags.

They are living in the woods, on the ground – Annie, refugee activist

There is minimal government help with food or clothing or shelter. So the migrants must live by their wits, with some support from volunteers who say they are witnessing an emerging tragedy.

More and more 14, 15, 16-year-olds are choosing to risk their lives to go to the UK. We're seeing such horrible deterioration of mental health in child refugees, really worrying levels of self-harm and self-destructive behaviours – Annie, refugee activist

People without Papers, a snapshot of itinerant migrants in search of a future, premieres on [ABC iview on Tuesday November 21](#). It will also be broadcast on the ABC News channel.

For further information contact:

Peri Wilson, Communications Specialist, News and Current Affairs
00 8333 2263/0409 888 866 or Wilson.peri@abc.net.au