

## **Horrible Night: Trina Ehsan**

It was a horrible night, and no one had slept or even rested because of the non-stop shooting through the darkness, in our previously friendly neighbourhood. The incessant screaming, yelling and crying, along with the deafening sound of round after round of gunfire, continued until the sun rose, when our female neighbour was taken away. Her only crime was going shopping by herself. They didn't care about the young children left crying and screaming for their poor mother, or her elderly and lonely parents who had previously lived safely with her; their sole carer, responsible for their wellbeing and safety, was simply taken. Meanwhile her husband, working far away in a different city, had no means of knowing what had happened or of helping.

I spent the night trembling, hiding under the dining table with my children, fearful for our survival, of the fighters breaking into the house, bullets coming through the walls, my husband being killed at the door, or being kidnapped or raped. Thoughts of every possible end to this long night, filled my head. I tried to protect my children in the only way I knew, keeping them close to my heart.

Yousef, our first son, who was seven years old at that time, was shaking with worry. He looked at me and asked, 'Mum, what's happening? Why are they shooting?'

Then our six year old, Mustafa, weeping, yelled, 'I don't like shooting!'

'When will it stop?' asked Yousef.

They were consistently asking these questions, but I didn't have any answers.

Our little one-year old twins, Mujtaba and Lema, were terrified of the shooting too. They couldn't talk properly, but they cried and cried, and their faces asked me thousands of questions such as, 'Where has the peace gone? We need to sleep but can't with this noise.'

I tried to help them rest, but they couldn't with all the noise, and I couldn't do anything except hold them tight, pray, and hope for a quiet, safe, and peaceful moment... and wonder when this phase would pass, when the hardship would end.

Finally, there was quiet once again and we have to leave our country as soon as possible, we had to leave all our belongings behind. Make this decision was incredibly difficult. We were devastated. Our entire being and life as we knew it would depend on this decision.