

Transcript for **Yusra Mardini, a young refugee**

My name is Yusra. I used to be just like you. I had many friends, I went to school and I loved to go to the pool in my hometown in Syria. My coach said if I worked hard enough, I could make it into the Olympics one day. Then the war came and everything changed. I couldn't swim or meet with my friends as often as I wanted. My life was in danger. I had to escape Syria.

My parents finally agreed that my big sister Sara and I could travel to Turkey. It was hard to leave my family behind but I had no choice. If we made it to Europe, my parents and little sister would follow.

We needed peace.

In Turkey we boarded a boat to Greece. Then disaster happened. My sister and I jumped into the water, trying to pull the boat to shore. For more than three and a half hours we gave everything we had. We couldn't give up. Most of the people in the boat couldn't swim. They needed us. We all made it to Europe alive! Suddenly I was a refugee. I had to rely on the kindness of others. Borders were closing across Europe. We didn't know where to go or what to do. We finally arrived in our new home, Germany. I was safe. I wanted everything to be normal again. I wanted to swim. So I started practising again. My coach helped me achieve my dream to swim at the Olympics. I may not have won a gold medal, but I won something far more important. My dignity. My name is Yusra. I am a refugee who found the strength to rebuild my life with support from my new community. I am proud to stand for respect, safety and dignity for all people fleeing violence. Together we can help others.