

## Transcript

### Seeing life through a lens: The age of image-making

Camera phones entered the marketplace in 1999.

Year: 1999 -2020. Total number of mobile phones 8,440,000 – 4,780,000,000

Smartphone cameras are now everywhere.

Arguably, they have democratised photography, making the smartphone camera an important tool for many.

Many images and video captured on smartphones have contributed to changing the world.

In Tunisia, Mohamed Bouazizi set himself on fire in an act of protest.

*Note: Mohamed Bouazizi: 29<sup>th</sup> March 1984 – 4 January 2011*

Alan Kurdi, a three-year-old Syrian boy was found drowned in the Mediterranean Sea near Bodrum, Turkey.

*Note: Alan Kurdi 2 September 2015*

Omran Daqneesh was injured by an airstrike in Aleppo, Syria, encapsulating the horrors of war. These images were shared globally.

The image of Alan Kurdi brought attention to the refugee situation, and shifted public consciousness – at least for a while.

Such images can say more than a thousand words.

Images of Omran went viral on social media.

They triggered fiery debate – the Syrian regime saying the image of Omran was fake.

Such images can be used and misused by political groups and the public.

Some images lead to political change.

The image of Mohamed triggered protests which led to the Tunisian president stepping down. It was a catalyst for the Arab Spring.

*Note: Tunisia, North Africa. 17 December 2010*

Where there is conflict or civil unrest, the use of smartphone cameras has been instrumental. Refugees use smartphone cameras in a variety of ways.

The Syrian war is one of the most documented civil wars in history, largely due to the smartphone.

Smartphones assisted the communication, mobility, navigation and locatability of Syrian refugees.

Smartphone cameras played a very important role in circulating images of the horrors of war.

This map was shared thousands of times by refugees on WhatsApp. It was used to make the dangerous journey to Europe.

Isra'a prepares for the sea crossing. *'They need to have their phone charged to use the map. And this bag is waterproof for your phone. Then we can call the Greek Coast Guard. Don't call them yet. No I won't call them now. I am leaving it till the end. Please call them.*

*NOTE: This footage is from BBC / Open University "Exodus: Our Journey to Europe".*

Upon arrival in Europe, refugees wait a long time for their asylum claim to be processed. Their smartphones play a different role in their lives while they wait.

Pikpa camp on the island of Lesbos, Greece is home to the most vulnerable refugees and is run by volunteers and donations. Smartphones help pass the time and access vital information.

*Note: Photography by Knut Bry and the refugees at Pikpa camp.*

Pikpa camp is rare. Currently 20,000 refugees are stuck in Moria camp on Lesbos island.

We don't see many images of this humanitarian disaster.

This is the age of image-makers, image-fakers, image-sharers and image-gazers. But what we don't see also matters.

This film was made by Gwri Pennar and Marie Gillespie. It is dedicated to 70 million refugees around the world.

*Note: Produced by [www.VinewoodStudios.Co](http://www.VinewoodStudios.Co) for The Open University, 2020*