

“Mahmud – My Syrian Translator”

Rati Mujiri

(Nonfiction prose)

“Bad News is Good News” – Have you ever heard these words? Probably yes, if you have known at least even one journalist. This is a phrase which describes a journalist’s everyday life best of all and for sure, leaves its trace. “Mahmud – My Syrian Translator” is a real story that, which happened to the author of this book, when he worked in conflict zones as a journalist. Most of the heroes characters of the story are real people.

Everything starts in the city of Kilis, which is located on the Turkey-Syrian border. A Georgian journalist, who has arrived to cover the conflict and problems of Syrian refugees, accidentally comes across a Syrian refugee Mahmud Dobagh, who offers to be his translator. Mahmud moved to Turkey with his five-year old son after his wife’s tragic death in one of the explosions in the Syrian city Aleppo. “Mahmud – My Syrian Translator” is a dialogue between the author and Mahmud, and about the dangers which the narrator, cameramen and the translator had to face during their work in conflict zones.

Here you will learn why “bad news” may be “good news”; what price people pay to survive a war, people who used to be ordinary talking heads in TV boxes; what journalists go through and what dilemmas they face before bringing the information to you.

Real people, who became the characters of this story, tell their true tragedies, how they survived and how their family members died, how they used to live in the terror of war. They describe what it means to be a refugee.

Along with the Syrian conflict, the book reflects the developments in other conflict zones: the post-Mubarak period in Cairo and the events in the Tahrir Square, the Revolution in Kyrgyzstan in 2010 and the tragedies of the city of Osh as well as Georgian soldiers’ stories during the operation “Iraqi Freedom”.

The text is a first person narrative by a young Georgian journalist. Despite the dramatism and tragism of the stories, the text is imbued with humor and irony – self-irony, first of all.

This is a text about young narrators' fears and phobias, suspicions and passion. The author's uncompromising attitude to events unfolding around him spotlights the intrinsic absurdity of the events. In a word, this is a collection of real stories on the borderline between fact and fiction.