

COPYHER

comics as eyewitness

July 2020

Kenya

Pakistan

Lebanon

Brasil

front line defenders

cypher

/ˈsaɪfər/

The dictionary definition of cypher is ‘a secret or disguised way of writing’. In many ways, this is the essence of comics storytelling – the image, rather than the word, is a disguise for many words, that can convey meaning, emotion, and can re/frame an entire narrative.

Rap and hip hop culture has taken the word and ascribed a new meaning: ‘an informal gathering of rappers, beatboxers and/or breakdancers in a circle, in order to jam musically together.’ This, too, we find relevant to this project, in that we are bringing together artists and HRDs in freestyle collaboration of activism and art with the aim of informing, elevating and inspiring.

For us, this captures the spirit of why we are working in comics and guides how we facilitate the process of creative production.

Co-Producers:

Beldan Sezen and Adam Shapiro

Cover art by Nomes Dee

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frontlinedefenders.org/cypher



Cypher - Comics as Eyewitness // part one



adam shapiro

In July 2020, Front Line Defenders is launching the first edition of a *Cypher*, a digital comics magazine that advances the organization's storytelling and narrative framing work in collaboration with and in support of HRDs. Working with artists from around the world, including the award-winning visual storyteller, Beldan Sezen, as creative director, the 'zine will be a monthly publication featuring 3 or 4 stories of HRDs, their work and the challenges they face.

As part of its visibility efforts, Front Line Defenders works to develop new means of presenting the work and lives of HRDs and deliver those stories to new audiences, beyond the human rights community that already works to support HRDs.

Comics offer unique, creative and different ways of engaging audiences than videos, reports or infographics, and can be disseminated across digital platforms that can reach audiences that otherwise might not pay attention to more traditional forms of reporting. And by working with artists to put their talents in the service of human rights, Front Line Defenders is enabling partnerships between the artists and the HRDs that can extend beyond the magazine and bring those stories to new communities to which the artists have access.

Front Line Defenders comes to this following a four-year process of developing, producing and disseminating the nonfiction graphic novel, *La Lucha: The Story of Lucha Castro and Human Rights in Mexico*. That book, published in English, Spanish and Italian, presented the work and lives of women human rights defenders in northern Mexico. Following the publication in Spanish, Front Line Defenders worked with educators and human rights defenders in Chihuahua state in Mexico to develop a curriculum to use the book in schools in the state. Since 2017, the book has been used by thousands of secondary school students and initial work is underway to develop the project to the national level. This book, and its reception, demonstrated to Front Line Defenders – and to HRDs – how this form of powerful storytelling can be effective and impactful, including reaching audiences (i.e. students) that HRDs rarely have the ability to engage.

Front Line Defenders is excited to bring the stories of HRDs to new audiences through this medium and it is a true credit to the immensely talented artists who are working with us to bring them forward. And it is to the HRDs and their faith in this work and trust in Front Line Defenders that we owe the biggest debt, as we try to use this platform for their voices, perspectives and experiences.

And it ultimately is to you, the readers and users of this content, to whom we turn for feedback, suggestions and support. By sharing these stories, reposting them, and sending them to contacts who otherwise do not pay attention to human rights stories, you are helping visible-ize the HRDs – exactly the tonic needed to counter the efforts to shut down, lock up or silence these courageous and resilient activists putting themselves on the front lines to advance and defend all of our rights.

Cypher - Comics as Eyewitness // part two



beldan sezen

2020 is showering us with plenty to observe, engage with and I'm once again reminded about something dear to me - the power of comics as an eyewitness.

In the moment of a happening, there is a moment of chaos which I think is a moment of unaltered truth. All that is said, talked about, reported, eye-witnessed, requested and observed is fairly unfiltered. It takes time to alter reality. *Cypher* is an attempt to preserve those "unofficial" voices.

Visual storytelling as a counterbalance to the implemented versions of all those "alternative truth" seekers; not because the version we depict is the "right one" but because owners of a de facto totalitarian system do their best to control our judiciaries, executive orders and news outlets.

So what's the advantage? I'm glad you ask. In our current times we deal with an overload of images and information that can be overwhelming, hard to digest or simply noise for click-bait or compartmentalization. In comics, it happens in the "empty" space between the frames or in the space given between two lines that allows the reader to connect and draw conclusions. As Scott McCloud puts it: "Every act committed to paper by the comics artist is aided and abetted by a silent accomplice. An equal partner in crime known as "the reader".

Such is the art and power of comics.

Cypher pushes yet another boundary since the "equal partner in crime" is set through the collaboration between the Human Rights Defenders and the artists. The "empty space given" is the space of isolation which we aim to break, which you dear reader make happen.

July 2020

Kenya

On the morning of 4 May, despite a court order issued the day before restraining authorities from conducting evictions, and despite the COVID-19 pandemic, approximately 8,000 people were forcibly removed from the impoverished Kariobangi neighborhood of Nairobi and their houses were flattened. The Kenyan Government only gave last-minute notification and did not taken any measures to provide food, temporary shelter, access to water and sanitation or any type of compensation. Thousands of people were left homeless and in need of urgent assistance.

Human rights defender Ruth Mumbi rushed to the scene and gathered and published testimonies of the victims of the Kariobangi evictions, encouraging human rights organizations and journalists to document the impact of the displacement. She raised awareness of the dire humanitarian situation and collected funds to assist the evicted families. A long time defender, Ruth subsequently received messages by an individual claiming to be a police officer, threatening to make her 'disappear'.

Artist: Nomes Dee, illustrator and digital artist.
[Instagram](#)

KAIROBANGI SLUMS

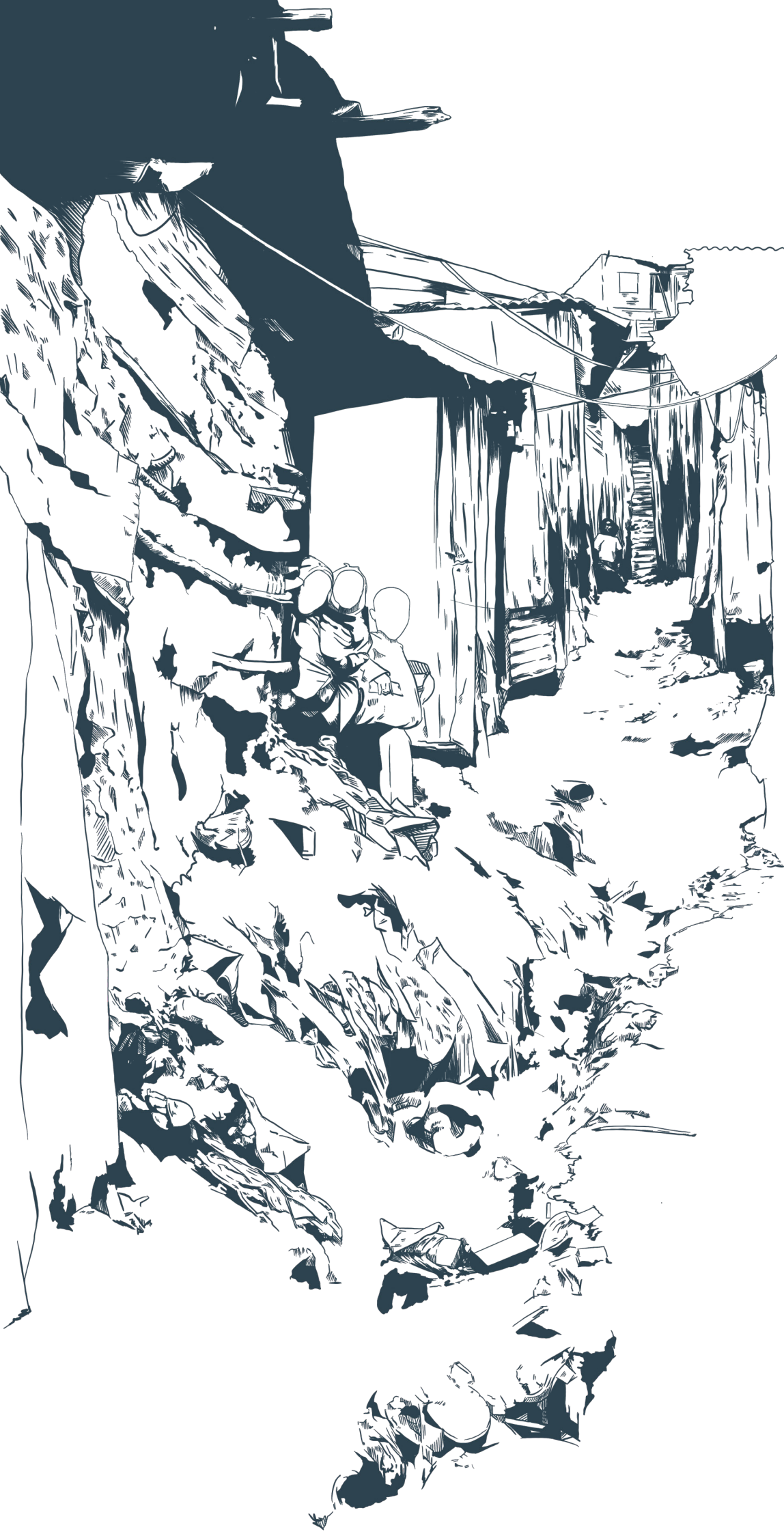
+ COVID 19

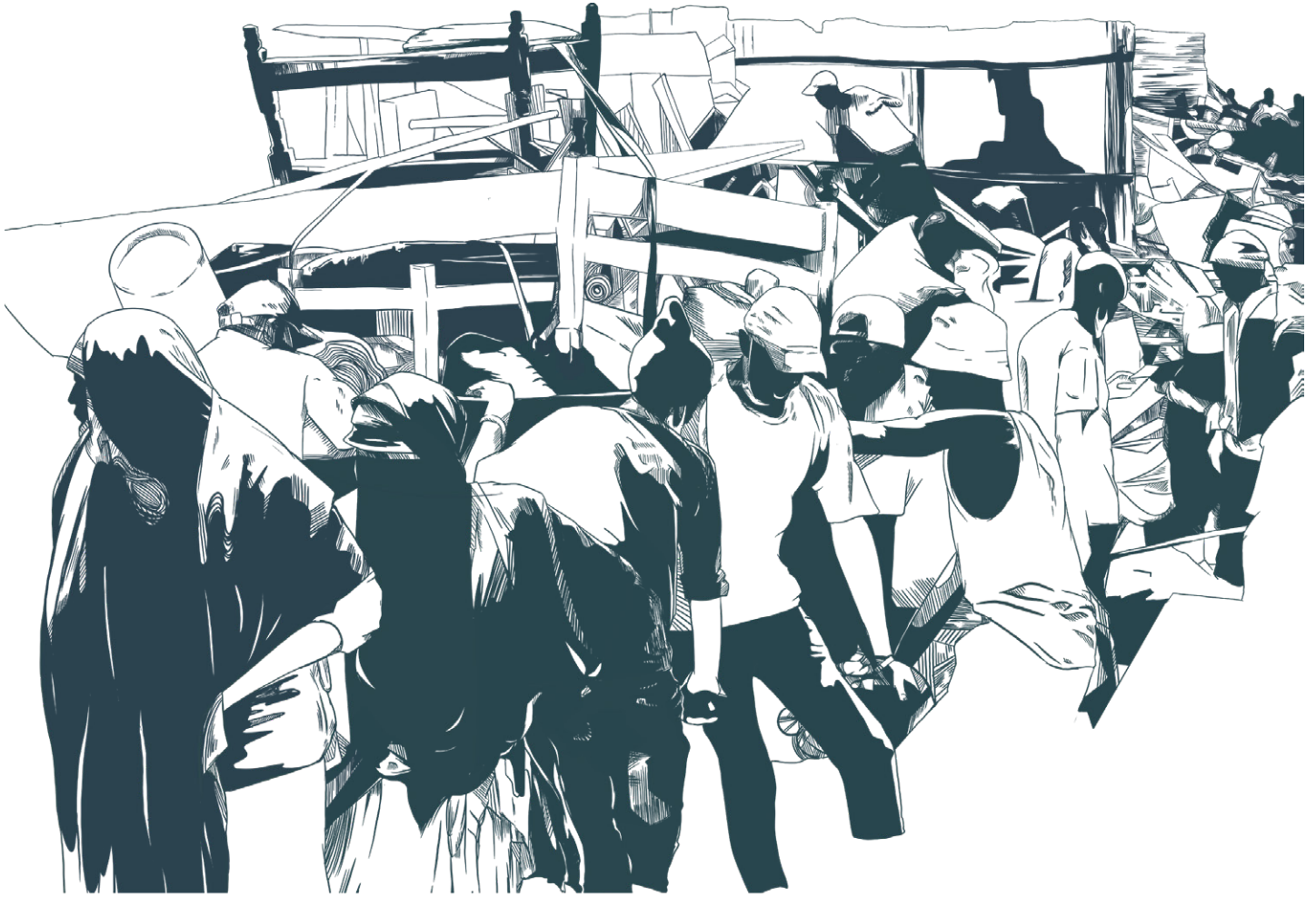
Written and Illustrated by
Nomes Dee

On the 13th May 2020, Kenyan Human Rights Defender Ruth Mumbi released a statement detailing threats made to her via cellphone. These threats were presumably made in relation to media publicity around the demolition of 500 homes and the displacement of over 1,500 individuals in the slum of Kairobangi, Nairobi, Kenya. With regard to the Ruth Mumbi case; one is drawn to analyse the role of Social Media with regard to the proliferation and dissemination of information by the public, the relationship between law enforcement and civilians in a post colonial Kenyan democracy, and finally, to suggest a solution to systemic violence and corruption through non-violence engaging with the community and utilising the services provided by the state. Democracy and Human Rights are highly contested fields today especially in Africa. Arguably this is largely because of the optics on social media and the 24 hour news cycle contributing to an endless flow of sensationalist media. Without

the use of honest communications within communities, sharing and disseminating information can become divisive. Due to the nature of the media and the way it is shared, it is imperative that factual information be reported and verified by officials to ensure the collective has the ability navigate the modern issues of the post-colonial landscape. Constitutional change and democracy work best when the community is involved in positive ways and can believe in the system. Individuals like Ruth Mumbi are essential in reminding both the Government and the People of their rights and responsibilities as citizens according to the values commonly attributed as good in the society.

On Saturday 2nd May 2020, Ruth Mumbi received a call from a Human Rights Defender at “Kairobangi Youth Transforming for Change” (YTC). This phone call informed Ruth that the residents of the Kairobangi Sewerage Village had been issued a 24 hour verbal eviction notice. This caused panic among residents and Human Rights defenders as the residents claimed to be paying land rates to the Nairobi City County. Furthermore, as the WHO





had declared the status of COVID-19 as a global pandemic, this created a proverbial perfect storm that resulted in a large number of families losing their homes in an already stressful financial period. In response to the eviction notice, Ruth shared the documentation with the Nairobi Human Rights Networks (HURINET), appealing for the network to support the residents blocking the eviction notice through taking the matter to court on the residents behalf.

Urban sprawl and unplanned structures erected by the public are not unique to Kairobangi. It is common for informal housing and even makeshift commercial buildings to be built in areas that are

more densely populated by low-income residents. This presents multiple issues for city councils, as in order to use the land for its intended purpose the squatters must be evicted. The dilemma is often both moral and economic. Council workers must dismantle new economic zones as residents often do not pay the rates and adhere to council building and safety codes in the way that legitimate enterprises do (Macharia, 1992). In the case of the Kairobangi Sewer Village it is unclear if the rates being paid to the council were legitimate, and therefore arguably the residents should have been protected or at least given enough time to relocate. In these circumstances it is common for the

residents of these sprawls to approach human rights defenders in order to assist them with their needs and court official matters.

On Monday, May 4th 2020, advocate Dr. John Khaminwa filed a suit in the High Court with the intention of blocking the evictions. Even though the OCPD was served the suit, they allegedly refused to accept the document and the eviction proceeded in spite of the attempts made by Human Rights Defenders.

The evictions of the slum displaced over 1,500 individuals in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and during the rainy season in Kenya. Furthermore, due to the short notice of the evictions, the families had little time to prepare alternate living arrangements and could not afford the cost to shelter their families. Having witnessed the events that day, Ruth Mumbi gave an interview to the British Broadcast Corporation (BBC) later that evening. In this interview she detailed numerous humanitarian issues that had arisen due to the policing of the

public, especially during the enforced quarantine.

On Tuesday May 5th 2020, Ruth Mumbi along with Human rights defenders; Beatrice Karore, David Wanyoike, and Emily Kwamboka visited Kairobangi again in order to show solidarity and assist those affected in any way they could. As local media was not reporting on the issue, the human rights defenders called upon Boniface Mwangi, who told the stories of those affected on his Twitter platform. Boniface is a photojournalist and social media activist who has brought publicity to multiple domestic socio-political issues through these public forums. Due to the publicity they were able to garner, the human rights defenders assisted the affected families immediately. Through the use of mobile money, individuals were able to donate substantial amounts directly to three destitute mothers and ensure that both mothers and children were able to find shelter and feed themselves for the nights to come. Through social media and the spreading of awareness using digital platforms, the human rights defenders used the resources available to them to assist those most in need. The attention amassed through social media caught the eyes of local news channels resulting in the issue being reported on a national level the following day.



As almost half of the population of Kenya has access to the internet, the rise and democratisation of social media has provided new forms of power and liberation to the individual. With the wide reach of this media comes many complications as not all information received is necessarily factual or is in fact what is purports to be. It is important when facing perceived injustice to bring the issue before a court of justice and a jury of your peers. However the court of justice and the court of public opinion at times can differ in the time it takes to reach a verdict and in the final outcome of that case. In both circumstances the provision of factual objective information is imperative in the community deciding an outcome. The use of social media is undoubtedly one of the most powerful and quick forms of sharing information, however if this information goes unchecked it is possible for sources to manipulate reality for public reaction.

On the morning of May 12th 2020, Ruth received a threatening phone call. The person on the other end of the line alleged to be a police officer at Kairobangi Police station, and he asked that Ruth read the text message they had sent. The message read;

“Niaja, nakupea warning hizo picha umepost uchangiwe kwa Kariobangi uzitoe haraka sana, usitake kujuwa mimi ni nani kam hutaki familia yako ikukose kabisa enderea kupost picha za watu but kama hautakuwa umetoa by Kesho

Thursday haifiki kama hujakosekana tosheka na hizo umechangisha utaumia sana endelea.”

Translated in English as:

“Hey, am warning you, the pictures you have posted to get people to donate to the evicted in Kairobangi, delete them at once. You wouldn’t want to know who I am. If you do not want to disappear from your family, then keep posting those pictures. But if you do not deleted them by Thursday, I will make you disappear. Be satisfied with the donations you’ve received so far or else you will get hurt”





"NIAJA, NAKUPEA WARNING HIZO PICHA UMEPOST UCHANGIWE KWA KARIOBANGI UZITOE HARAKA SANA, USITAKE KUJUWA MIMI NI NANI KAM HUTAKI FAMILIA YAKO IKUKOSE KABISA ENDEREA KUPOST PICHA ZA WATU BUT KAMA HAUTAKUWA UMETOA BY KESHO THURSDAY HAIFIKI KAMA HUJAKOSEKANA TOSHEKA NA HIZO UMECHANGISHA UTAUMIA SANA ENDELEA."



Upon receiving the threat of her disappearance, Ruth reached out to her social media informing the public and Human Rights Defence groups such as Frontline Defenders of the developments. As she reported the message to the Kairobangi Police Station she was accompanied by Beatrice Karore and Wanyoike David. The Deputy OCS asked to see the message and assured Ruth that he would personally deal with the matter. In spite of this, Ruth went ahead and reported the incident in order to have it on public record.

Today in Kenya, it could be said that there is a low public perception of the police force, with high crime rates and high perceived corruption of police officers (Livingston, 2013). Furthermore, a lack of proper training and extenuating circumstances for the officers themselves suggests to drive the individuals to act with impunity (ibid.). The threat that was made to Ruth Mumbi was alarming especially as there have been incidents of excessive force used by the police during the quarantine period that COVID-19 presented. Because Ruth is able to share with her platform and supporters globally, the visibility that social media provides allows a form of protection. These platforms encourage frequent updates and there are people who would monitor Ruth ensure that she is accounted for, reducing the

chance of her disappearance.

By the time the police report was made, the number that had sent the threatening message began trending on social media. The Chief Security officer of Airtel informed Mumbi that she should report the offense to the police and that Airtel would comply with law enforcement and investigative agencies as needed, however no further contact has been made to Ruth by either law enforcement or Airtel personnel. Furthermore, the identity of the caller, while known by Airtel, remains unknown to the public.

Through acting as an individual and creating her own support networks Ruth has found a way to actively engage a community in a constructive way, that immediately feeds into the Kenyan economy and the benefits those most impacted. It is extremely important to celebrate the resilience and dignity of the individual that chooses to stand up for what is right. It is necessary to ensure that we use the public services provided to us and that we ensure those services are functioning as they should be.



"ALL I HAVE TRIED TO DO AS AN INDIVIDUAL AND A CITIZEN IS TO MAKE HUMBLE CONTRIBUTION TO ALLEVIATE THE TREMENDOUS SUFFERING THAT PEOPLE WHOSE HOMES WERE DEMOLISHED IN KARIOBANGI SEWAGE HAVE BEEN SUBJECTED TO."

- RUTH MUMBI

Pakistan

On 13 November 2019, a group of four plain-clothed men intercepted Idris Khattak's car near the Swabi Interchange of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The men put black sacks over the faces of the human rights defender and his driver and drove them to an undisclosed location. The defender's family became aware of his enforced disappearance only after the driver was released 2 days later.

Idris is a human rights defender who documents and advocates against a range of human rights violations in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the former Federally Administered Tribal Areas in Pakistan. On 16 June 2020, more than 6 months after last being seen, a private media channel, Geo News, announced that Idris was being held in State custody.

Artist: Koi Nahi

The day before my father disappeared, he told me he was worried. He was reluctant to let me take the train to Karachi. The railways are not safe, he had said, and that he had a bad feeling.

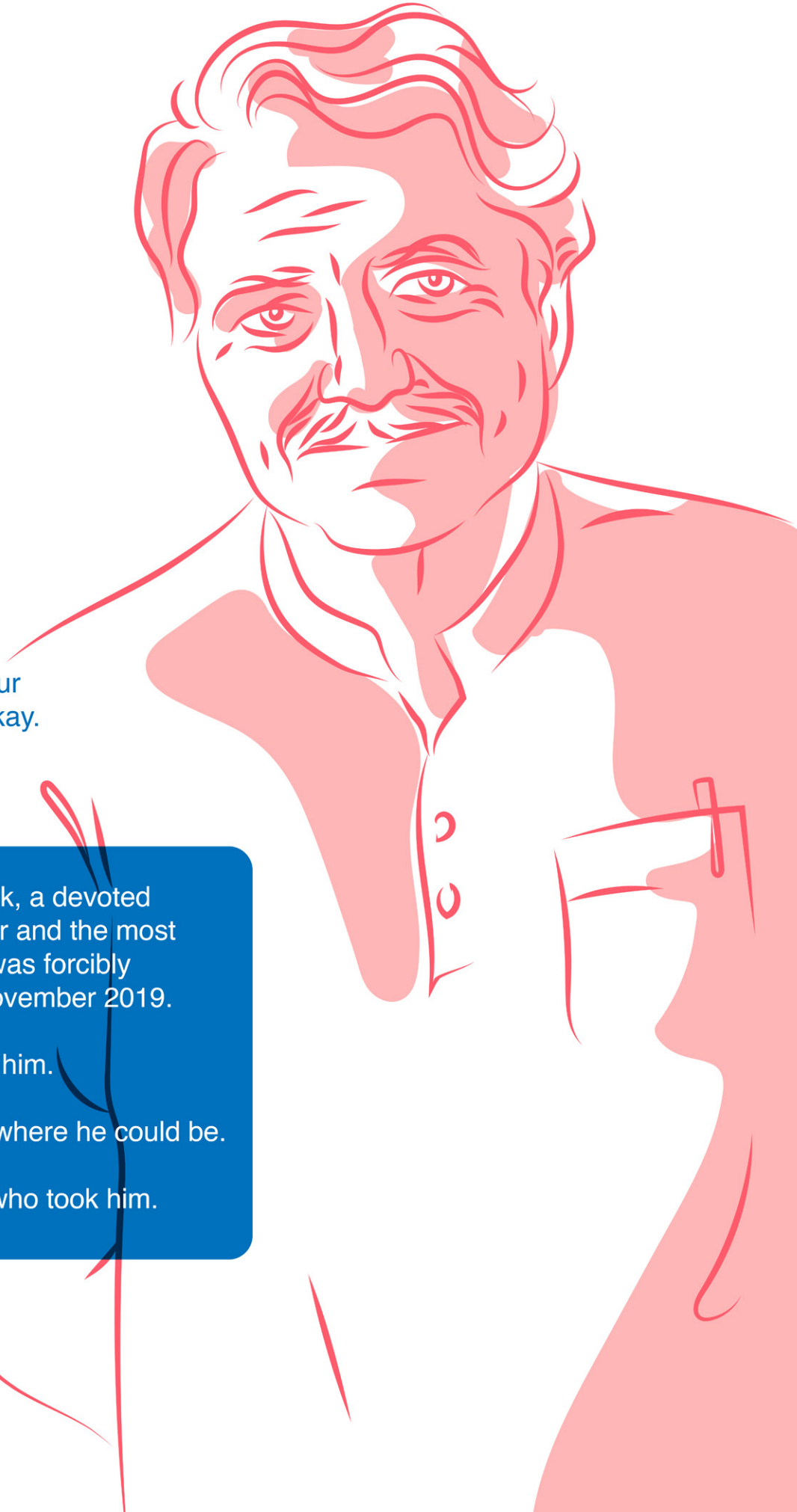
We reached a compromise that he would call me every hour to check on me.

I remember wondering how he thought a phone call would save me if the train really had crashed and burned.

I realise now that it was one of the small gestures that parents make when they don't know what else to do.

I recognise it because now all I want is to do the same for him...





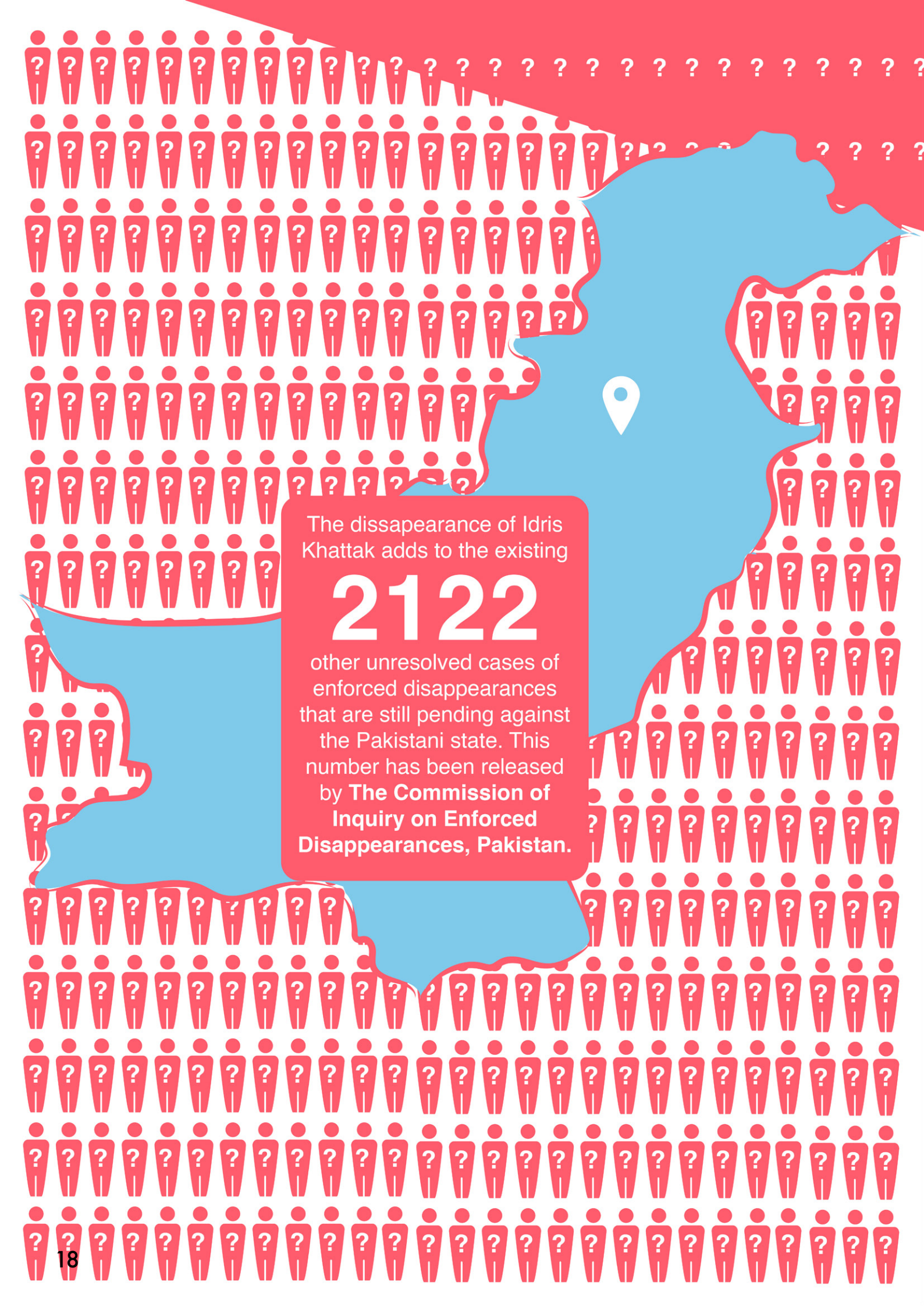
... Call him on the hour
to make sure he is okay.

My father, Idris Khattak, a devoted
human rights defender and the most
selfless man I know, was forcibly
disappeared on 13 November 2019.

I have not heard from him.

No one has any idea where he could be.

We don't even know who took him.



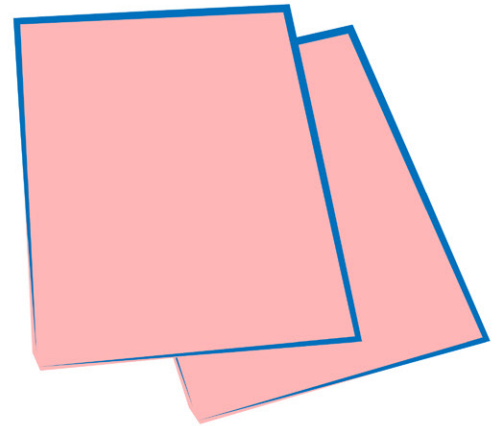
The disappearance of Idris Khattak adds to the existing

2122

other unresolved cases of enforced disappearances that are still pending against the Pakistani state. This number has been released by **The Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances, Pakistan.**



The country has a long history of targeting human rights defenders with enforced disappearances, as a tool to quell their dissent and criticism of the administration and military policies. Many of the human rights defenders who have been arrested or subjected to enforced disappearance in Pakistan have been deprived of their basic right to medical assistance or contact with their families. Further to this, many are kept in degrading conditions, and are often subjected to abuse and torture. Those who are released are threatened into silence and face the risk of further violence against themselves and their families if they dare to speak out.



My father reported on them regularly, gathering first-hand information for human rights organisations like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch

The irony is lost on no one.



I had boarded the train, and almost forgotten about my father's promise of calling me. When I reached Lahore after nearly five hours, I glanced at my phone to see no missed calls from him. Puzzled, I called him. He answered to say he was very busy and that he would be staying with his friends for a few days. He also added, strangely, that his phone was almost out of battery and he had left his charger at home.



ISLAMABAD



It was only on my way back to Islamabad on the train that I got a text message from my friend telling me he was sorry that

my father had been abducted.

I stared at the phone. How could someone joke about something like that?

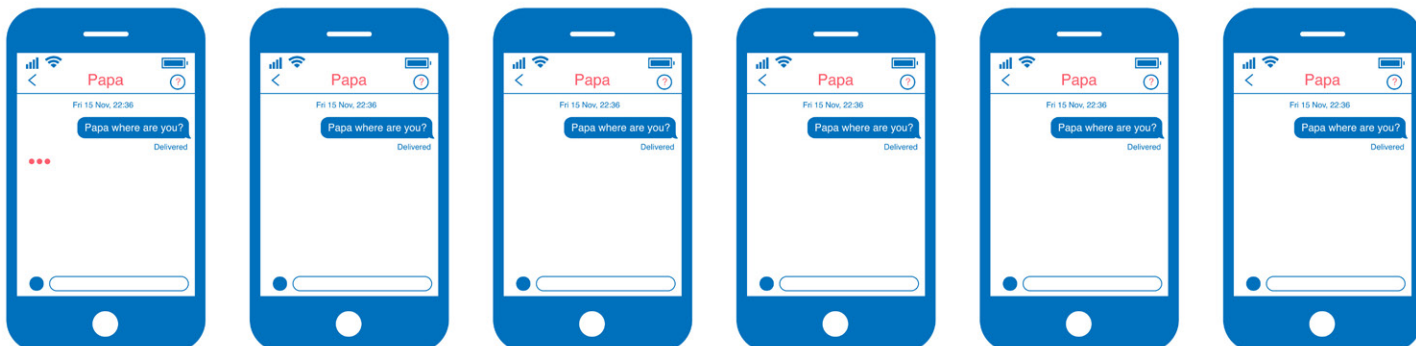
When I had eventually gathered myself, I asked him how he knew what had happened to Papa. He sent me a screenshot of a news article.



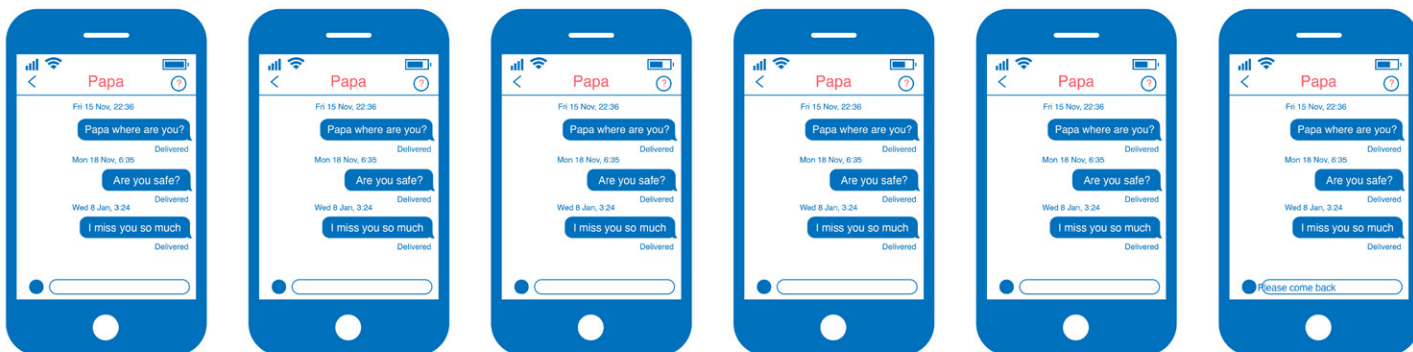
#WhereIsIdrisKhattak



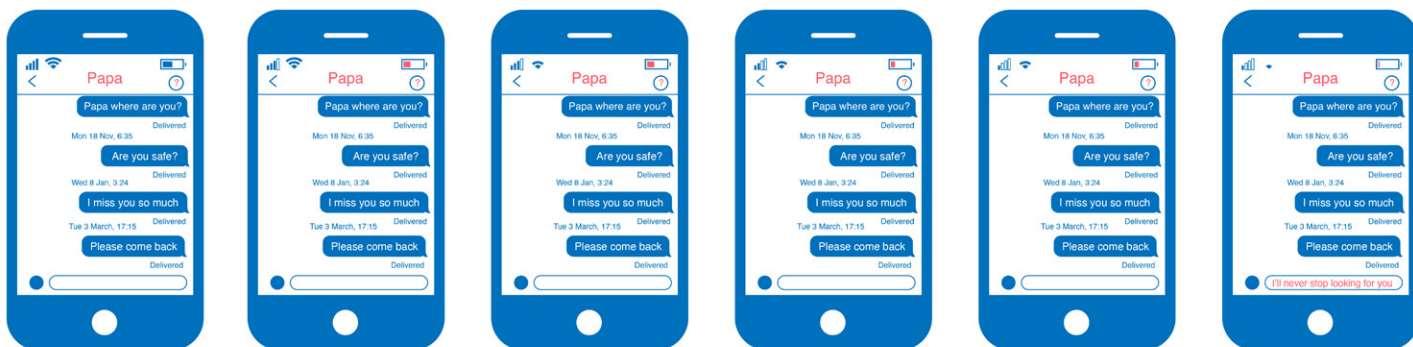
When someone you love gets taken away from you, it catches you by surprise on some days and on others, it is all you can think of.



I believed Papa would be home in three days.

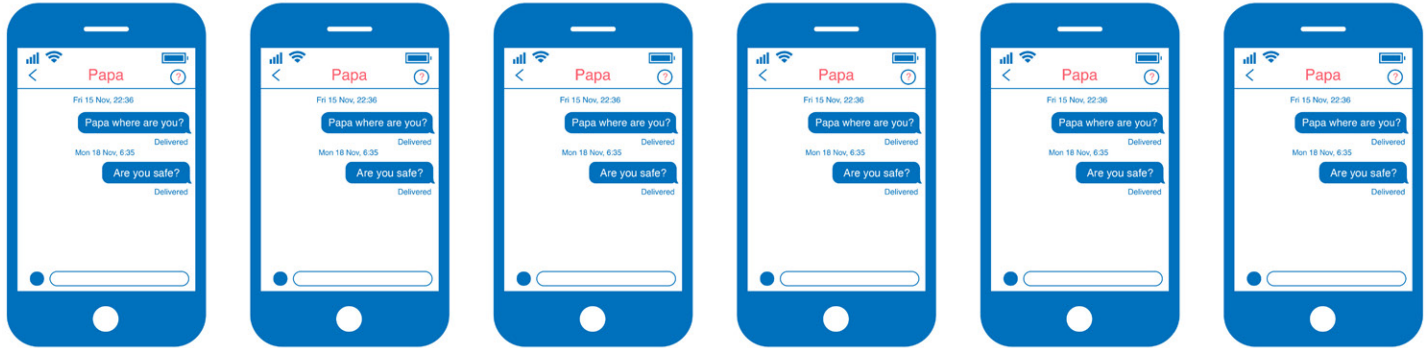


Days turned into weeks.

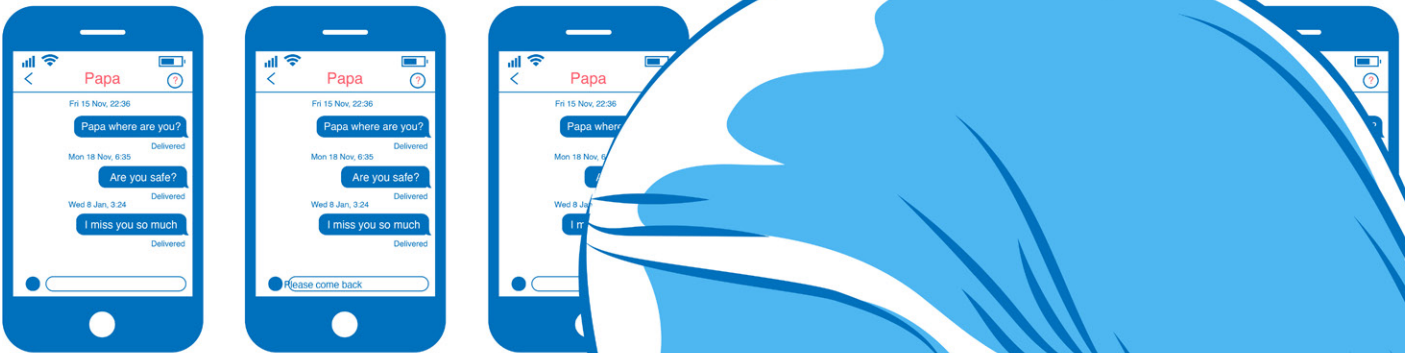


Weeks turned into months.

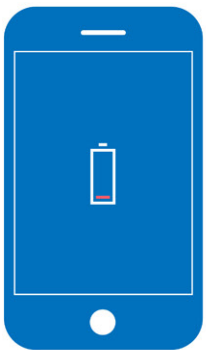
Like so many others who have been taken away from their families, you never lose count of the days.



You hope every morning when you wake up that that that is the day



where you finally stop counting.



There is so much anger to hold on to. From the indifference from the police to the swings and roundabouts of the courtroom.



My father is not a casefile. He is a human being who cannot be wiped away like an inconvenient streak of dirt.



He is a person, with people who are looking for him. We deserve answers, and he deserves the protection of the law.

URGENT APPEAL

On 13 November 2019, a group of four plain-clothed men intercepted Idris Khattak's car near the Swabi Interchange of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The men put black sacks over the faces of the human rights defender and his driver and drove them to an undisclosed location. The defender's family became aware of his enforced disappearance only after the driver was released on the night of 15 November 2019. The family had not been contacted by any persons demanding a ransom, suggesting that **the incident was not a kidnapping.**



On 23 November 2019, Idris Khattak's brother filed a **habeas corpus petition** in the Peshawar High Court. However, it was not until 10 January 2020, that the court ordered the government to report on the defender's whereabouts.

Idris worked extensively on enforced disappearances, making his abduction even more chilling. Along with his family, many civil society organizations campaigned relentlessly for his return – **we finally had a breakthrough.** Over half a year after he was last heard from, Pakistani authorities finally admitted that they had Idris in their custody.

Pakistan authorities say that they will be charging Idris under the **1923 Official Secrets Act**. The punishment under this act can be up to 14 years of imprisonment or even a death sentence.

Front Line Defenders calls on the authorities in Pakistan to carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the disappearance of Idris Khattak and determine his whereabouts. It calls on the authorities to guarantee his physical and psychological security and integrity, as well as that of his family.

Ask #WhereIsIdrisKhattak

16.June.2020

One of my father's friends called me and I hadn't noticed I'd missed a few calls from him. I got worried that something bad had happened.

He called again and told me that the authorities had agreed to having him in their custody!



Right after the call I started seeing tweets, the first one by Geo News confirming this.



 #WhereIsIdrisKhattak

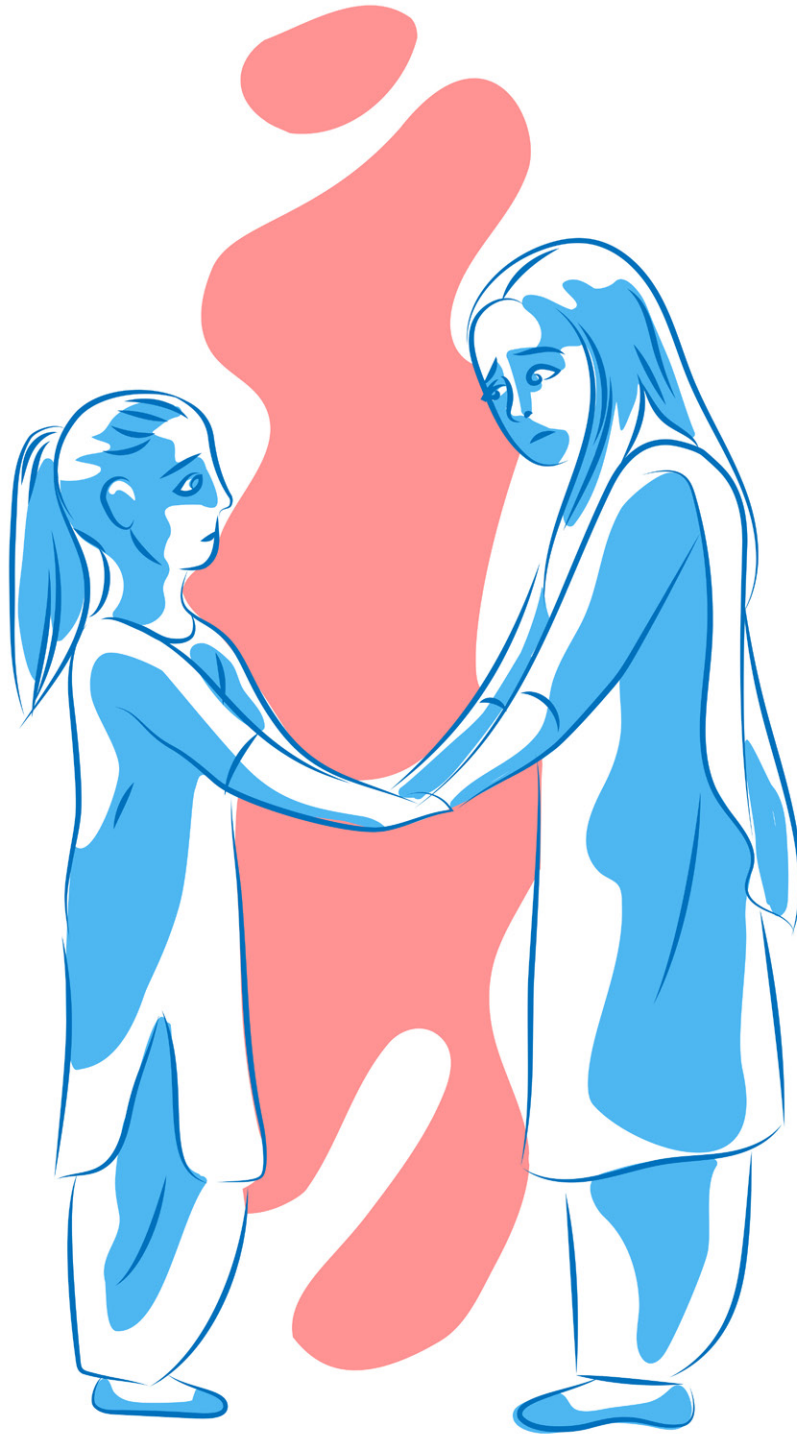
Eventhough I was angry at how easily they could accept just this tiny bit of news, I was so relieved. I was relieved because this meant Papa was alive and that he would be coming back soon or maybe we would see him in court.



I couldn't stop smiling.

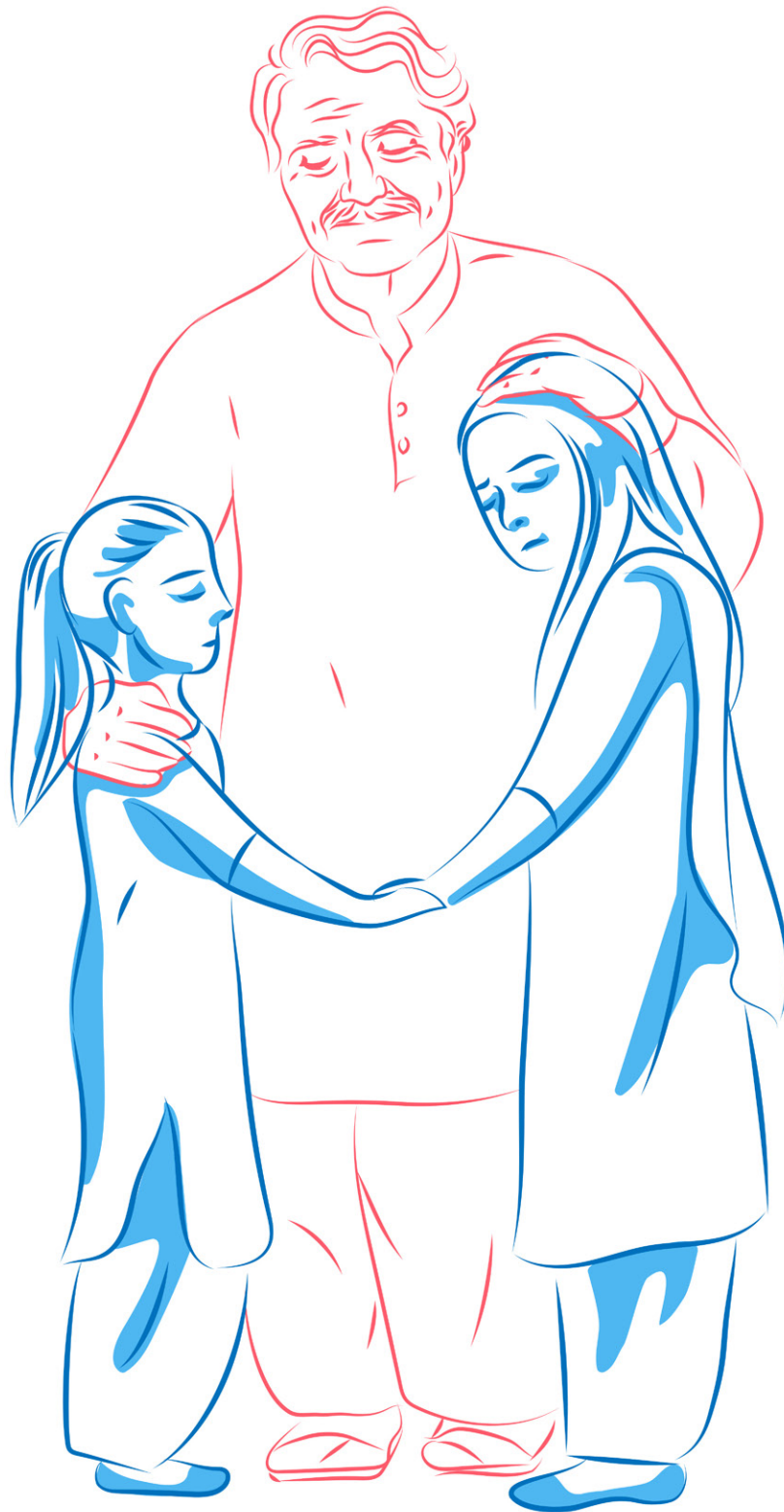


It is also easy to sink into hopelessness.



But then I think of what he would do in a situation like this for someone else.

He would be brave,



and that strength is something that no one will ever be able to disappear.

Lebanon

As the COVID-19 pandemic spread in Lebanon, it combined with popular protests, corruption and economic mismanagement to cause a complete economic meltdown. With inflation out of control, the value of the currency depreciating daily and a political vacuum, poverty rates and food insecurity are increasing.

In the midst of this, domestic workers in the country were abandoned – first by their employers, who fired them and put them out to the streets, and then by their own countries' embassies, which closed their doors and refused any assistance. Into this void, Eгна Legna – an organization of Ethiopian domestic workers – worked to collect and distribute food packages and funds to help those left on the streets.

“Banaat” is widely used in Lebanon to refer to domestic workers and when used by Lebanese in this context it is derogatory and understood as derogatory, both in terms of sexism and racism. For instance, a 60 year old domestic worker will always be a “bint” to a Lebanese woman much younger than her. But the term is also used in an affectionate/intimate way between colleagues, so the women domestic workers in this story would refer to the group as “banaat”, as the activist does in this story when relating the events. We have used “banaat” in the text.

Artist: Pascale Ghazaly wears multiple hats: she illustrates, designs and paints. Engaged in social and political struggles, she has worked with local and international NGOs and created artistic content for multiple causes. Her designs and illustrations were selected to take part in several exhibitions, her papers published on different platforms

Find her work at [Behance](#)

Egna Legna

by pascale ghazaly



we didn't know it would evolve this fast ...

the first 4-5 days, banaat were being dropped frequently until 35 of them were there in front of the Ethiopian embassy in Lebanon



some haven't been paid for 10 months,

a year,

or years!



they were dropped there by family-employed drivers or security guards.
the families were mostly rich

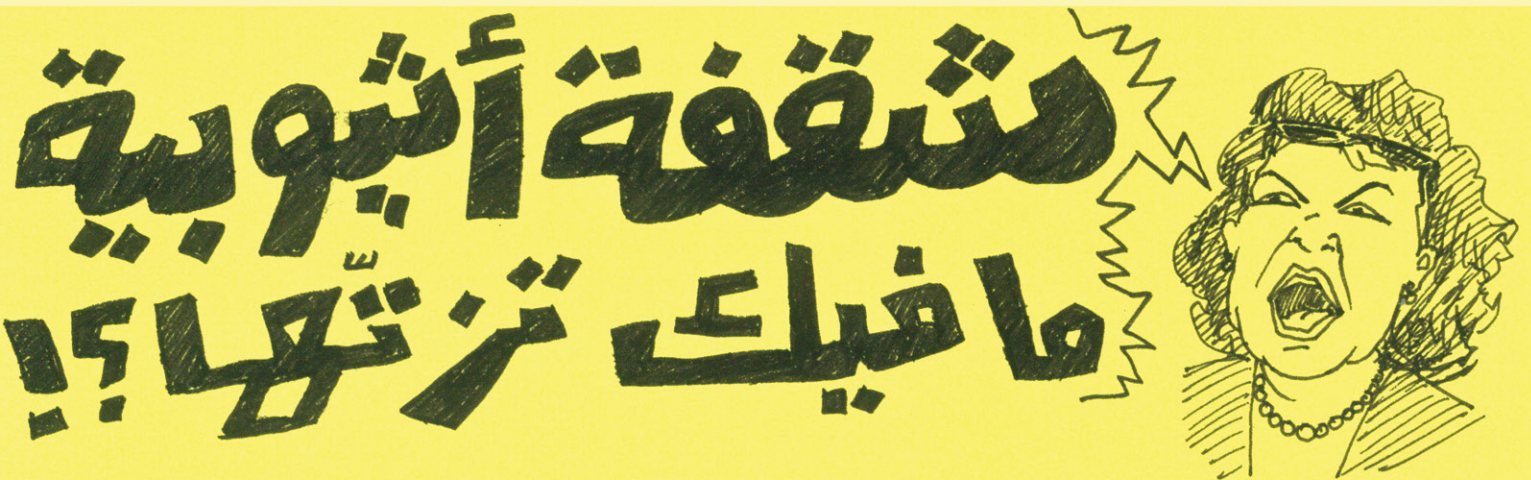
I stood there in awe

“what is happening?!”





we fought with them, told them they better bring the legal documents and pending salaries but the drivers were scared of their employers



It's just some Ethiopian, why couldn't you throw her out?



it wasn't because of Covid-19 and the economy that all this happened. this has been happening for years! ... but definitely not at this fast rate



we started providing emergency assistance



Flour



Lentils and Rice



Salt



Oil



Pads



Tea

We started providing some basic food items and hygiene products to support them



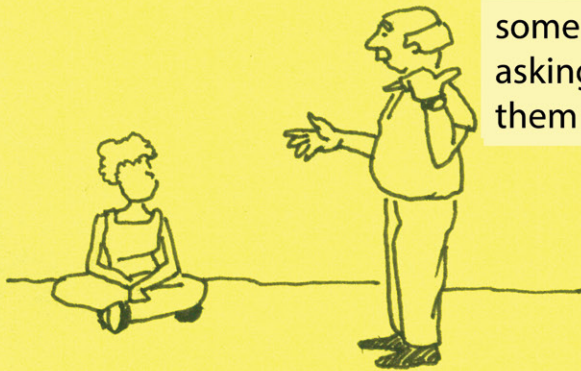
some people came



they either helped us



or filmed what was happening



some started showing up asking banaat to go with them for freelance work

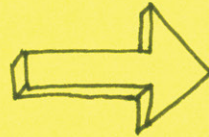
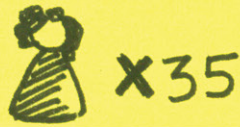


some were tricked and ended up assaulted

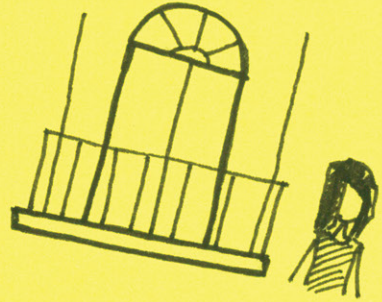
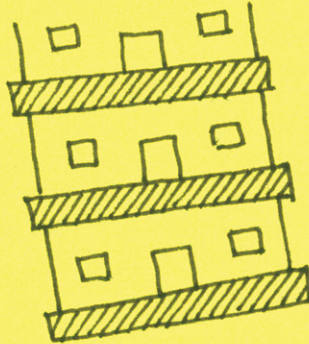
And people started saying that it's their mistake, and that they are greedy for money



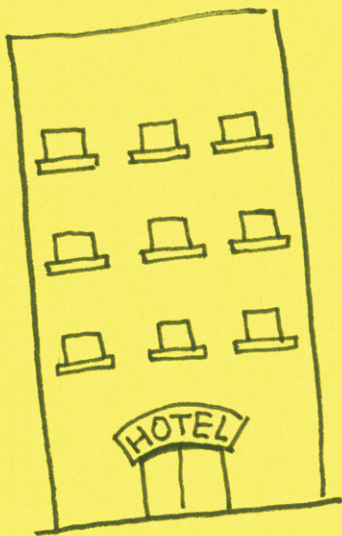
we need to protect them **ASAP!**



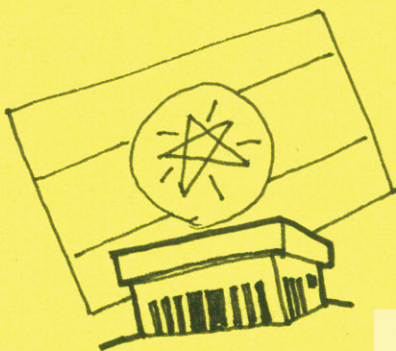
Caritas offered shelter for the first group



and some lebanese women we knew welcomed some in their homes

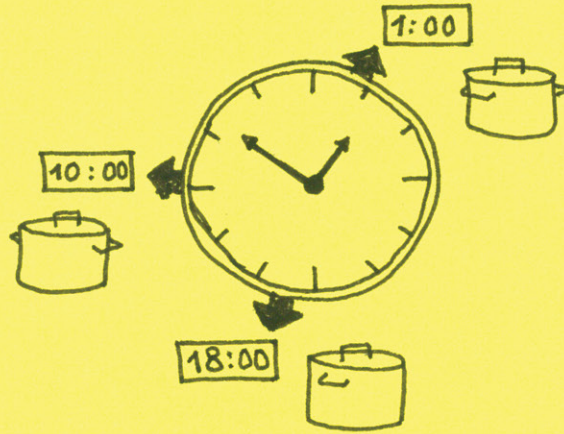
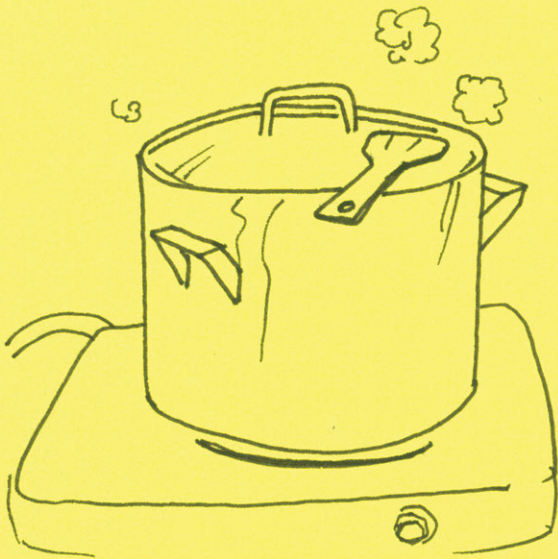


we were able to secure 1 hotel and 3 apartments in different regions of the city

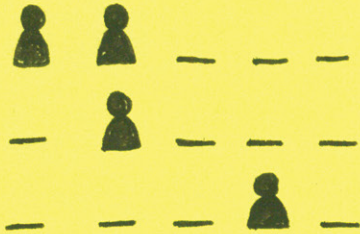


The embassy helped with legal documents but we still needed money to pay the tickets and keep providing what is needed

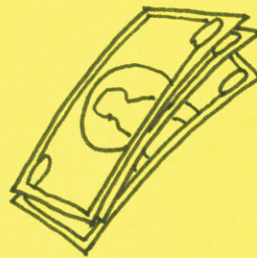
we make everything here
food (breakfast, lunch, dinner) and assistance kits



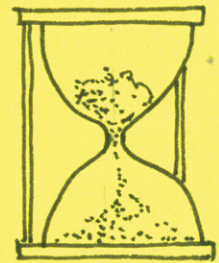
it requires a huge amount of effort
we are short on many things



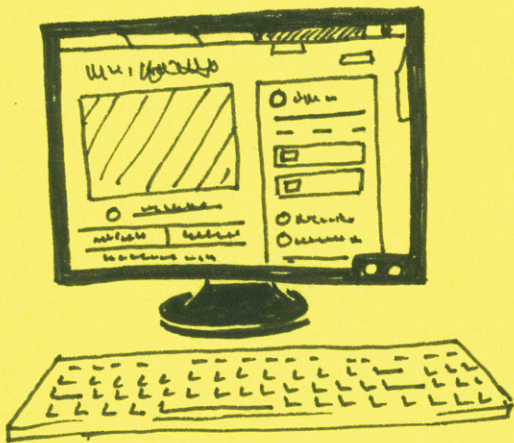
people



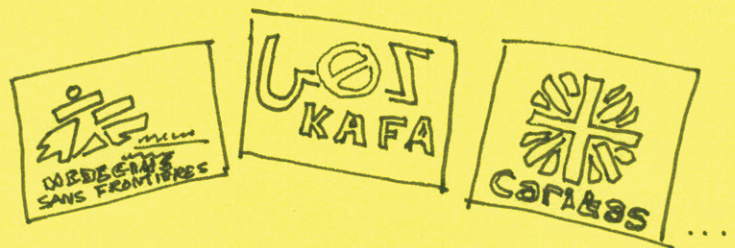
money



Time



we launched a funding campaign



and some organizations are helping us

we are doing all this by ourselves
and just for the sake of humanity



“we only have each other
to keep going and hold on”

Mekdes

Brazil

Rosa Luz is a trans Afro-Brazilian musician and human rights defender. Through her music and art she addresses social and political issues, and visibilizes the struggle of two of the country's marginalized groups.

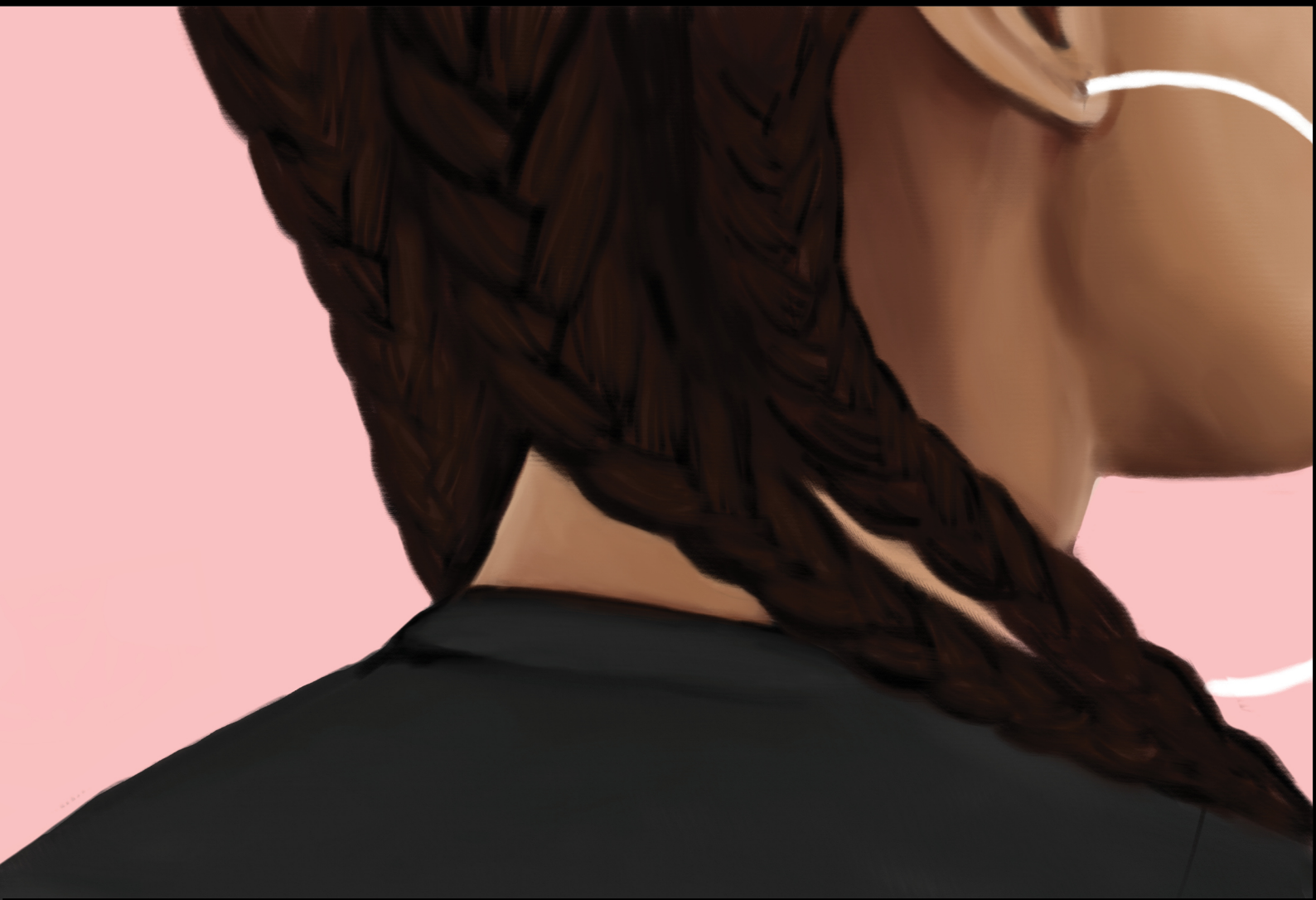
She became the focus of intense wrath and threats on social media, with herself and family vulnerable to attack, when she released a song addressing racism in the country, and calling out politicians for feeding into it.

Brazil has one of the highest rates of murder for trans people for many years, and the 'digital terrorism' she faced on social media was promoted by popular figures from Brazil's right-wing. Rosa refused to be silenced, however, and returned to social media platforms to continue her critical messages to advance the rights of her communities.

graphic arts credits : Lyv on [Instagram](#)

“Does any trans person feel safe in Brazil?”

“My family and I are physically unprotected and I believe everything that is happening hurts our basic human rights to exist”



Brasil de Fato

UMA VISÃO POPULAR DO BRASIL E DO MUNDO

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HATE CRIMES

At least 124 trans people killed in Brazil in 2019: report

Brazil is ranked first among the world's deadliest countries for trans community, a new survey showed

AFROPUNK.



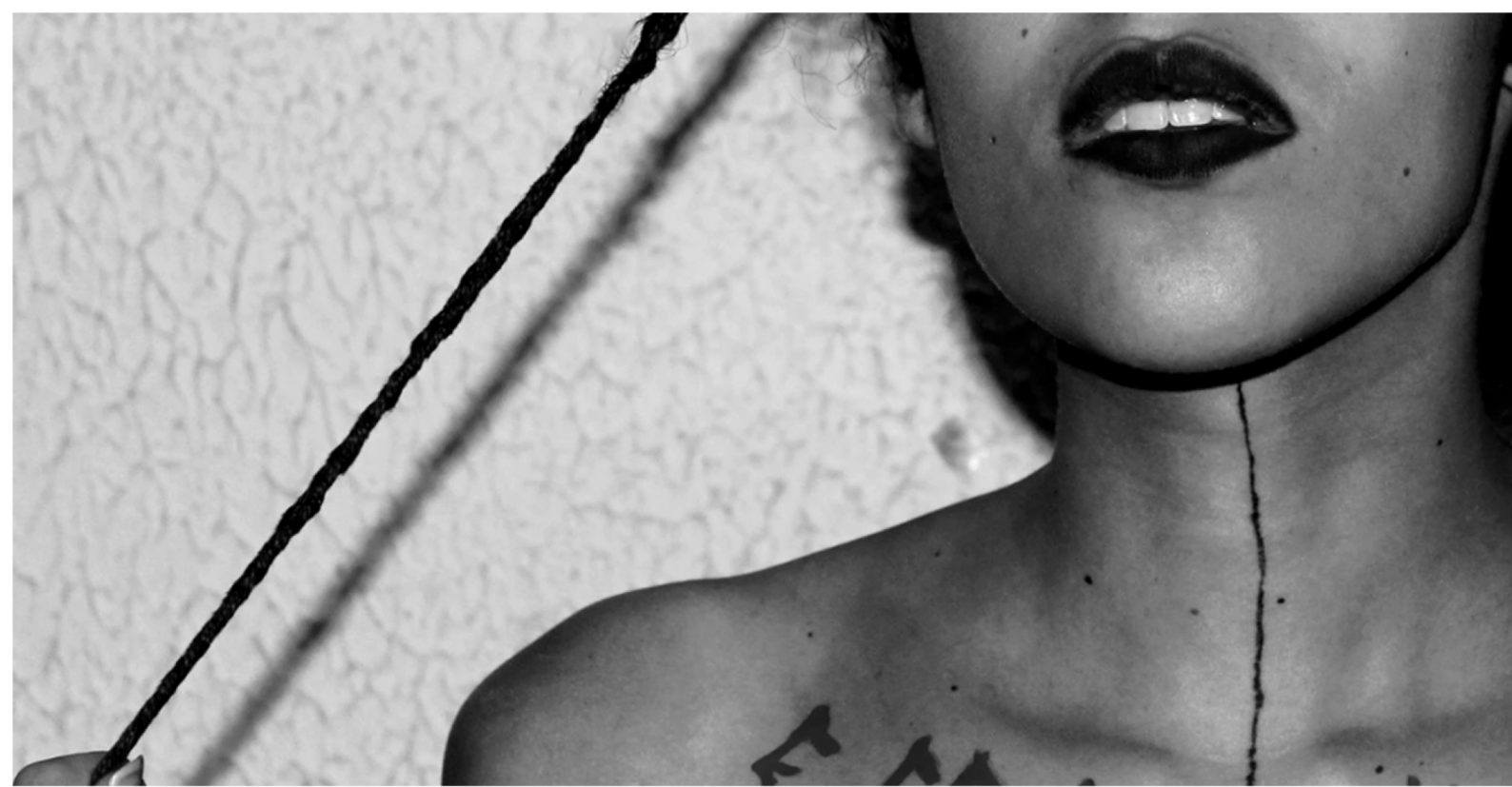
Rosa Luz: artist, musician, YouTuber, and trans activist

Rosa Luz started her channel to talk about her empowerment process as a black, poor, trans girl, but she goes beyond the usually expected from a trans woman who starts a vlog about her life. The Rosa channel approaches from tv series to politics, to hip hop culture.

Rosa would define *transvesti* as a South American gender identity that is expressed in a feminine way and is not in male/female binaryism.

I don't transit between genders. I'm a transvesti.

SOU UMA TRAVESTI.



Brazil has the highest transgender homicide rate in the world. We don't have enough spaces to express ourselves, and in order to have these spaces we have to fight; it's not easy.

A lot of the time, we just lose the strength to fight.

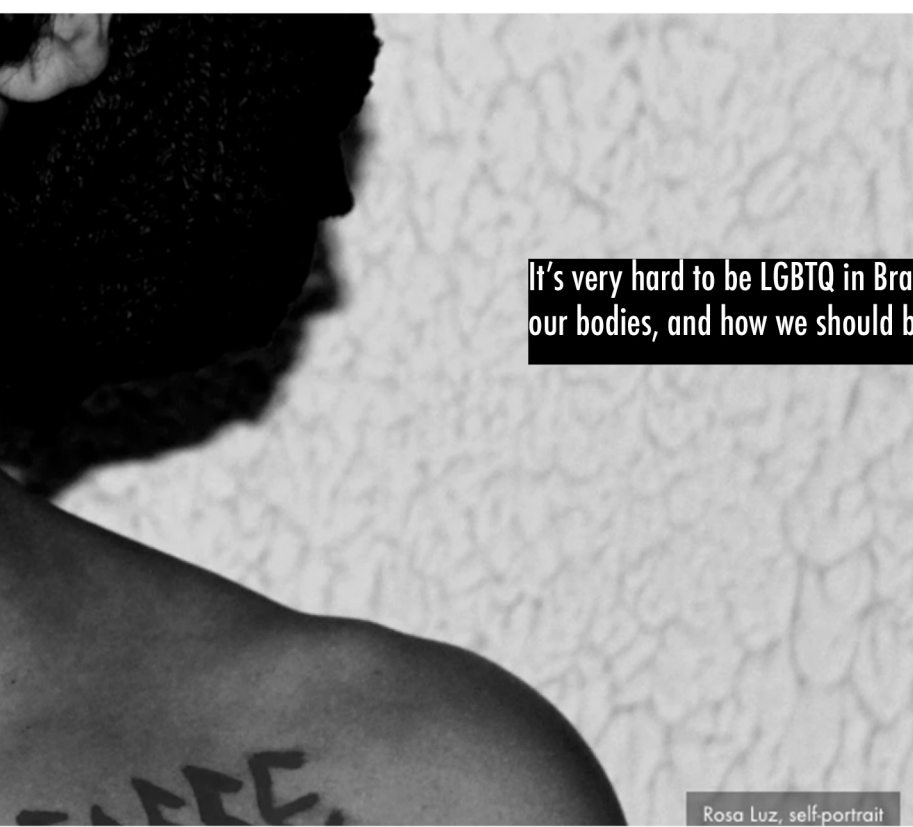
About 90% of trans women and travestis [person assigned male at birth who has a feminine, transfeminine, or "femme" gender identity] in Brazil are in prostitution right now.

There are no other options.

Once I disclose that I'm transgender, I can't get any work.

For me, my YouTube channel was the last option before prostitution, and it's working, but I'm an exception.

Politicians don't represent my community: they don't represent black, trans people from the ghetto. I don't believe in them, and I don't think anything will change. I'd like a black president. A black, female president."



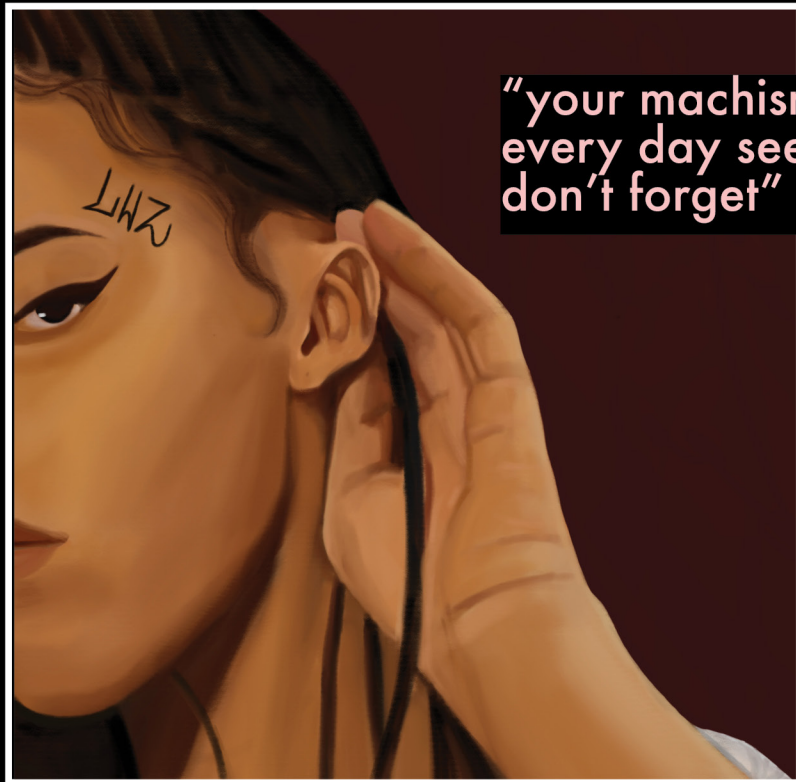
It's very hard to be LGBTQ in Brazil. There's a lot of prejudice about our bodies, and how we should behave. "

Rosa Luz, self-portrait





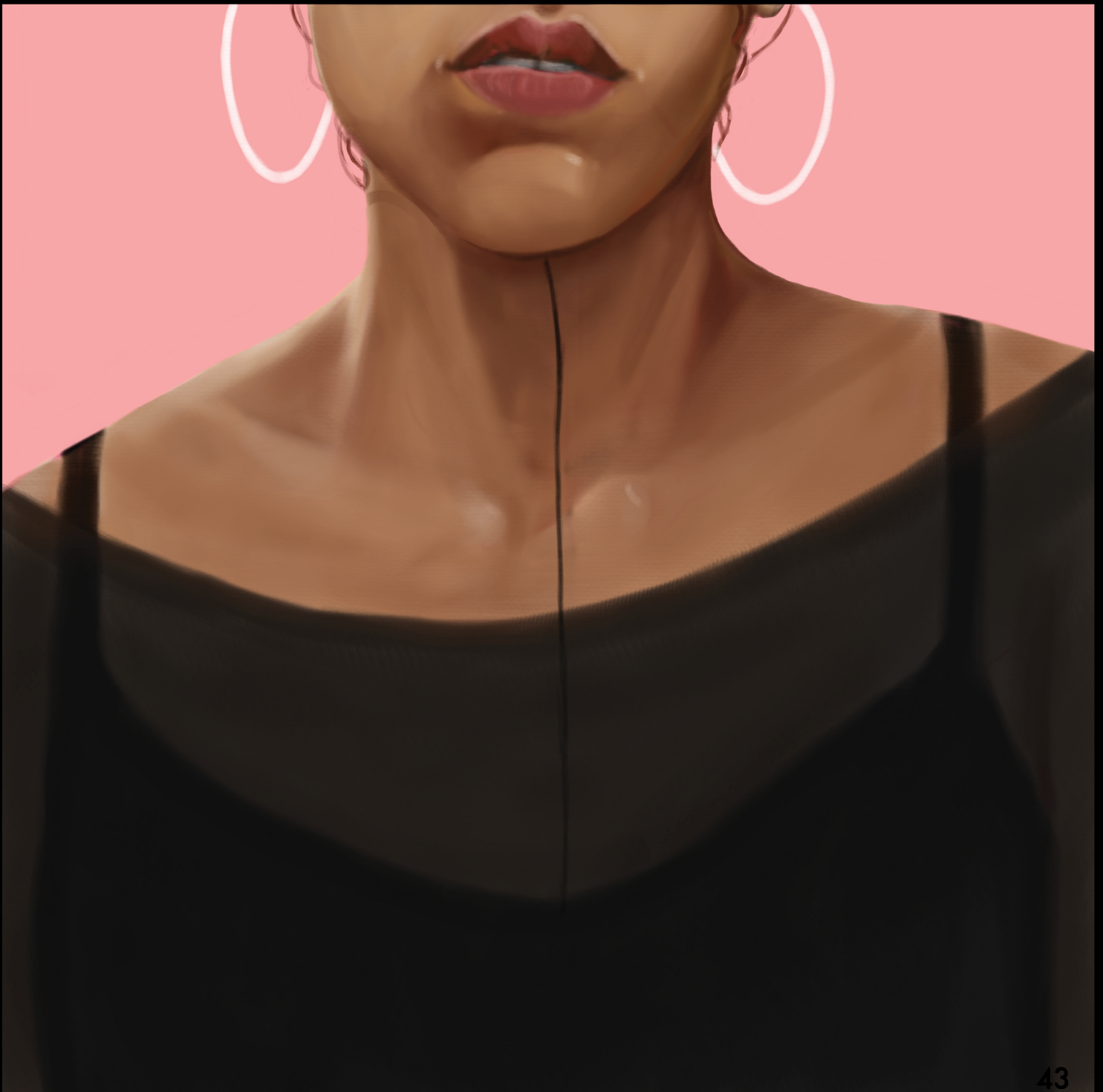
"I arrive that way with respect"



"your machismo kills every day see that you don't forget"

When we go out, we don't know if we are coming back home alive.

We don't know if we will be allowed to access public services or places. Especially right now, when the way society has been reacting to our accomplishments is getting worse, with a very 'anti-trans' and 'anti-gender' rhetoric and agenda that has been implemented in the government."





"sugar daddies are trying to fuck with me"



"meanwhile politicians are trying to kill me"



"cause I am a travesti."

“if you try to kill my black sisters”



“you just will be my next dinner”



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“And it is to the HRDs and their faith in this work and trust in Front Line Defenders that we owe the biggest debt, as we try to use this platform for their voices, perspectives and experiences.”



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