

*the*  
Bulletin

News from Biblica Europe

September 2023

# Hope behind the wire

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God's Word for  
refugees



*Also inside:*

Open.Bible: 183 translations freely shared  
Iraqis meet Jesus through a Bible study app  
A new Bible for Zimbabwe  
Your place in the mission



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## Dear friends,

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### Welcome to the Biblica Bulletin!

Earlier this year, many of you supported our campaign to provide trauma-healing resources to people in disaster zones. Thank you!

For a while now, we have translated, sent and used these Bible-based booklets and workbooks with refugees – both adults and children who have been through traumatic and lifechanging experiences and need urgent help to process them.

In this Bulletin, we share a few stories of refugees sheltering in Egypt (p4-5) and Iraq (p7-9), and how your support sends them first aid for their emotions and a hope that lasts a lifetime.

I was struck by the words of one woman who recently took part in a trauma-healing course. She said: **“I have forgotten every sadness in my life when I found Jesus.”** We provided the resources and the opportunity, and God brought her out of trauma into peace and new life.

It’s exciting and humbling to be part of this mission. At the back of the Bulletin (p11) you will find more ways that you can join in. Thank you for your partnership - together, we’re sending God’s powerful Word to the hearts that need it most.

*Geof Morin*

President/CEO, Biblica

## About Biblica

Biblica, The International Bible Society, exists to bring God’s Word to people across the globe in a way they can understand so they are transformed by Christ and inspired to join His mission for the World.

## We are Biblica Europe

We are part of the worldwide Biblica family. Biblica Europe’s task is to reach people with God’s Word throughout Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa.

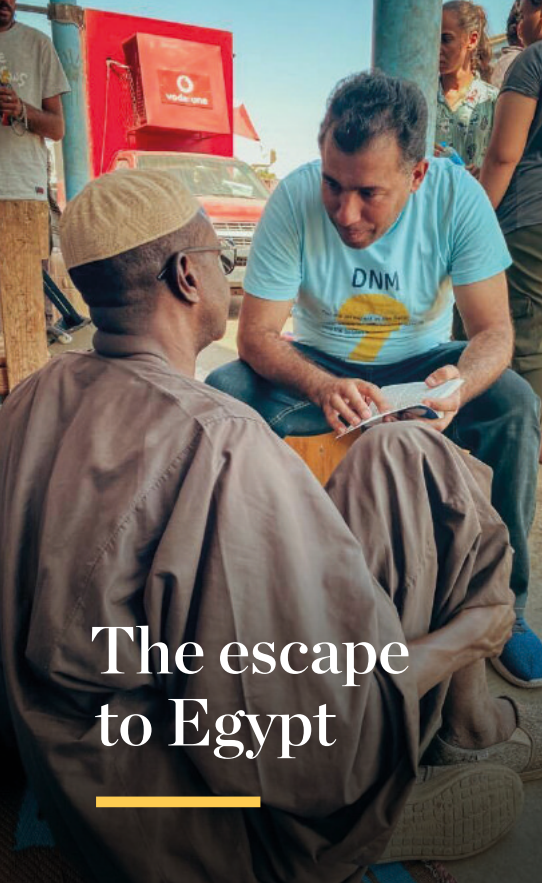
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## The escape to Egypt

In April this year, a violent conflict began in Khartoum, the capital of Sudan.

Despite attempts at a cease-fire, the conflict is still going on in Khartoum and the Darfur region. Many families, fearing for their children's safety, have fled the area, and now 5,000 people every day cross the Egyptian border looking for sanctuary.

It's a refugee crisis that hasn't gained much attention in our news cycle, but Biblica's team in Egypt has been on the scene offering help and hope to families waiting in Aswan.

### We had to run

The people we meet fled for their lives on crowded buses, travelling for five days with only a few possessions. There are adults without shoes, and babies without nappies. We often see mothers collapsing into tears as they finally reach safety.

It's striking to remember that Jesus' family fled to Egypt too.

It may be safer across the border but it's not easy. Many families are split up as the Egyptian authorities restrict the number of men who can enter.

The transportation system is overloaded, so lots of Sudanese refugees have to wait in Aswan for days or weeks before they can travel further into Egypt. Some make shelters in the street where they can sleep and find shade. It's over 40°C in the sun.

Our team meets new arrivals and brings them water, food and medical assistance with our partners Sanad Ministries.

Sally says, "They arrive at the bus station still in shock... I met one woman who lost her sister and her son. Then her husband couldn't cross the border. She was crying all the time."

"The kids are hungry," says team member Luther. "I will never forget this one lady - it seemed like she had come from a rich family... She said, 'This little bag is all that we could carry out of our home. We had to run because the militia were

coming and taking over the mosques, churches and homes. Everybody was fleeing for their lives."

### Hungry for hope

"These refugees need emotional support," our team member Sally explains. "Most of them have no plans for what to do next."

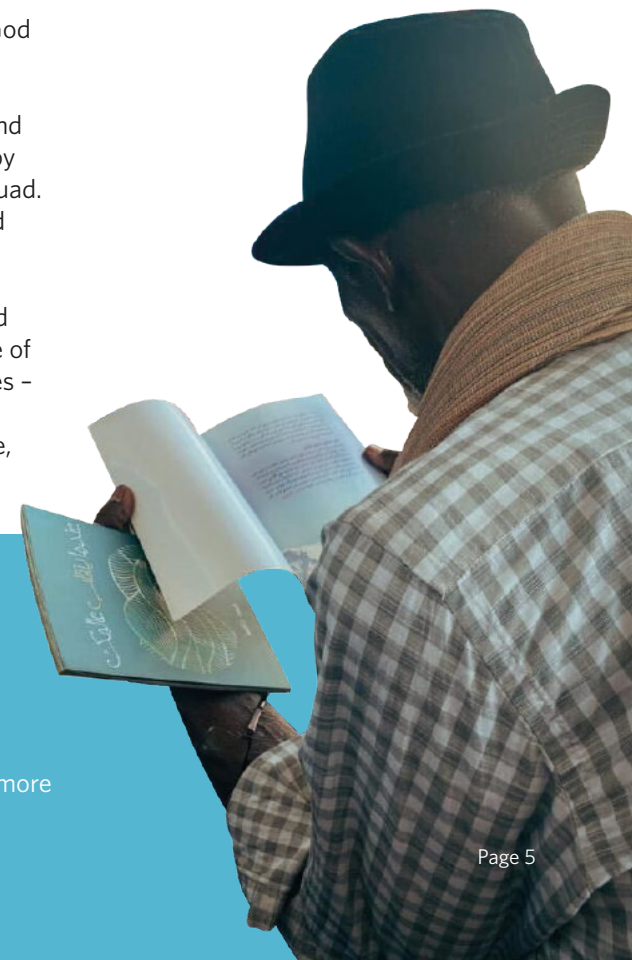
Our team give out free booklets to those who want to read while they wait. The topics covered in some of our crisis and trauma-healing resources grab the attention of people who have been through so much, and they immediately begin to read about how to process what they've been through with a God who understands.

"In Aswan, we are observing more and more people who are traumatised by what's happened," says Biblica's Fouad. "They have high levels of anxiety and stress."

"Muslim Sudanese women come and ask for our booklets. We have some of Biblica's disaster response resources - *When Your Whole World Changes* in Arabic and *A New Hope* in Sudanese,

which quotes from the Sermon on the Mount - we have given out 4,000 copies of that one. We can see how helpful the booklets are and we need more, for adults and children alike, to help them find comfort in uncertainty; to provide hope and healing.

"Please pray for the people who have seen so much destruction in their country. And pray that our team will be an instrument of Jesus's peace, offering love and hope."



## Support

You can help more refugee families to process their experience and find new hope - give at [biblicaeurope.com/disaster](https://biblicaeurope.com/disaster) to get more resources translated and shared.



# Freely received, freely given

One of Biblica’s aims is to exhibit ‘radical generosity’ with our translations of the Bible. We know that we freely received God’s Word in our own languages, and want to freely pass that gift onto others.

When Bible translators, educators, church leaders or missionaries want to produce their own booklets and materials using an existing translation of the Bible, they usually have to pay for copyright. Through our **open.bible** project, we’re changing that.

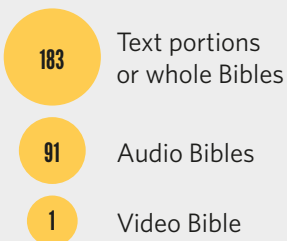
Open.bible was launched in 2019 to offer the widest range of Scriptures available under an open Creative Commons license. Since then, we have been praying that the resources freely available on open.bible will inspire more Bible translation agencies to do the same.

And it’s happening! Every month we see new partners—currently 27 and counting—contributing translations and versions of the Scriptures that were previously unavailable for free.

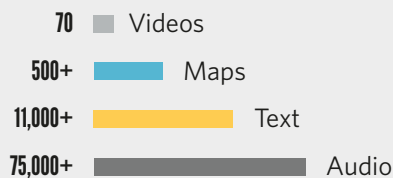
We now have 183 whole or partial Bible translations available for free on the site, as well as 91 audio Bibles (brilliant for those who can’t read). The audio Bibles alone have been downloaded over 75,000 times in 2023.

Open.bible is easy to use and we’re excited that it’s making it much easier for workers to take God’s Word to people around the world who haven’t heard the Gospel yet. Type in **open.bible** to see it for yourself.

## On open.bible so far



## 2023 downloads



**2023 visitors**  **7,000**

# The Word reaches refugees though a simple app

You might remember the story of the **Discover app** from our last Bulletin. This small, simple Bible study app has travelled the world by Bluetooth and been used by a huge variety of people to share Jesus with their neighbours, especially in places where it’s hard to find a Bible.

Places like Iraq. Our partner there recently shared this story.

When Afina\* became a Christian, her life was under threat, even from people in her own family. But after persecuting her, some of her family members became followers of Jesus too!

Afina and her husband were so transformed by the Gospel that they started sharing their faith with anyone and everyone, despite the risks.

Using the Discover app, Afina started to lead Discovery Bible Studies at a nearby refugee camp. The refugees were Iraqi people displaced from their own towns and villages by conflict. Through the studies, a woman and her daughters all came to faith in Jesus.

One day, this family was suddenly told to leave the camp and go back to a very unstable, dangerous area. Afina was terrified about what might happen to them.

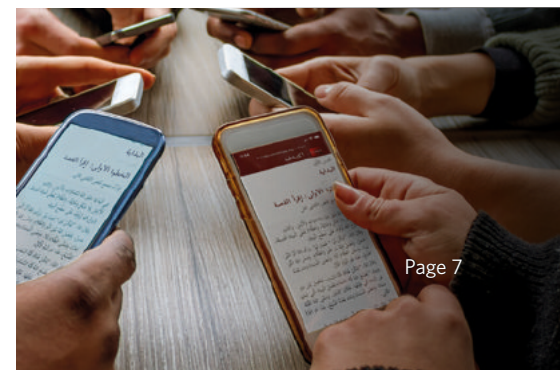
When she hadn’t heard much news from the family, she decided to take a huge personal risk to try and visit them. What she found when she arrived was beyond her imagination. Not only was the family safe, they had been bravely sharing what they had learned about God from Afina. As a result, people in this dangerous part of Iraq were coming to faith and being baptised.

Today there are over 700 Discovery Bible Study groups in Iraq. Our partner said:

***“This movement of God is incredible. It reaches into places where many cannot go, and it travels beyond the country borders man has created.”***

The Discover app uses some of Biblica’s Bible translations: Arabic, Farsi, Swahili, French, Ukrainian, Russian, German, Kurdi Sorani, Amharic, Hindi, and Spanish.

\*not her real name



# Hope behind the barbed wire

In Iraqi Kurdistan, 30 miles from Mosul, there is a huge refugee camp cordoned off by barbed wire. Here, around 6,000 Yazidi adults and 2,000 children spend their days, living in limbo.

Laura from Biblica spent some time there this summer. She reports:

*“Walking through the refugee camps, the physical living conditions are not terrible, but the sense of oppression is tangible. Many kids have lived here all their lives and know nothing beyond the barbed wire fences.”*

*“The fences were set up ten years ago by the UN to protect these Yazidi refugees from IS, but the war is over now and the UN long gone. It’s still not safe for them to go back to their homeland. Their villages were destroyed and haven’t been rebuilt. They at least feel safe under the Kurdish authorities.”*

*“You don’t see a lot of men. Some are out in the fields harvesting watermelons, but most of the men are missing because they were targeted by IS, and if they didn’t comply, they were shot.”*

*“IS persecuted this people group terribly. The women and girls were taken as sex slaves. One young teenager told us a harrowing story of how she had escaped when IS members tried to abduct her. Her mother fought to save her, crying, ‘Take me, take me instead!’ despite relentless beating. I don’t know how or why, but the soldiers relented and this girl was spared. I can’t imagine her emotions as she lives with that experience.”*



There’s a school in the camp, built by an NGO that left years ago. The school has five different sessions every day for various languages and age groups, so each child only gets one fifth of the normal education time.

*“I can’t describe the hopelessness that I saw on those children’s faces,” says Laura. “They looked so forlorn and lost. All they’ve known is within those barbed wire fences. I really believe their entire countenance can change as they find healing for all the trauma that they have experienced.”*

Laura visited with partners from One Child and the Middle East and North Africa Trauma Healing Resource Centre to see how we could help to bring healing here. Using our combined resources, materials and expertise, we have helped both children and adult refugees in other countries to start

working through and recovering from trauma and getting to know a God who sees them, loves them and offers hope. That’s what we want to see happen for this camp community, forgotten by the world.

*“It’s time to work together to do more than we could ever offer alone,” says Laura. “We have several years of discipleship materials for young people who are lacking any purpose in the camp. We have these great trauma-healing tools like The Survivors that we can offer. Healing brings hope.”*

*“Please pray. I believe this is God’s timing to bring hope to the hearts and minds of these kids, so that they can believe that there is a future for them beyond the barbed wire.”*



## Support

Your donations help us translate and provide the Bibles, trauma-healing resources, and materials for children that can change the lives of refugees like these. Give today at [biblicaeurope.com/donate](https://biblicaeurope.com/donate)





# Translation news: The Ndebele Bible

At the end of June, we celebrated the launch of the new Ndebele Bible.

A thousand people including 400 local church leaders gathered in Bulawayo to receive a Bible and celebrate with singing and dancing!

Northern Ndebele is the native language of some 2 million people in the south of Zimbabwe, with some speakers also in Zambia and Botswana.

We had already launched the digital version of this Ndebele Bible on an app six months previously. By June's launch party, over 16,000 unique users had already downloaded the app. This new translation is clearly already valued by the community, as the joyful launch event demonstrated!

## Why was this translation needed?

There is a full Northern Ndebele Bible, but it uses very formal language like the King James translation, which is not well understood by young Ndebele-speaking people today.

Biblica released a contemporary translation 20 years ago, but due to issues with how the language was used in some parts of the scripture it wasn't embraced by the community like this translation has been.

Over 84% of Zimbabweans identify as Christian. However, there has been an increase in churches adopting indigenous practices, demonstrating the need for a Bible that everyday Christians can read, understand and live by.

We're thrilled that this is finally a reality for Ndebele speakers.



# Your place in the mission

If you share our passion to bring God's Word to everyone, everywhere, there are lots of ways you can help make it happen!

## Keep informed

Each month we share a short story by email about the life changing impact God's Word is having around the world. We'd love you to be included.

Email [europe@biblica.com](mailto:europe@biblica.com), sign up on our website, or send back the enclosed form, and we'll make sure you receive the latest news.

You can also follow and share our updates on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram - find us [@biblicaeurope](https://www.instagram.com/biblicaeurope).

## Pray

Praying for this work makes you a partner in everything God's doing to reach and speak to people through His Word.

Please pray for our translation teams, and for our partners helping people to access and use new Bible materials. Pray that many people every day will be set free and transformed by Jesus Christ as they meet him in the Scriptures.

Visit [www.biblicaeurope.com/praying](http://www.biblicaeurope.com/praying) to see where we need prayer more widely.

## Give a gift

We can't do anything without funding, so giving a gift is a great way to invest in this mission. Your gift will help us translate and take the Bible to people in hard-to-reach places.

If you'd like to help, please fill in the enclosed form and send it back to us, or give a gift online at [www.biblicaeurope.com/donate](http://www.biblicaeurope.com/donate)

## Help to break new ground with a regular gift

To really invest in the mission, you can set up a regular gift. Reliable monthly income allows us to plan new innovations, translations and much-needed resources. Even just £15 per month would make a big difference to our progress.

You can set up a standing order easily through your own internet banking - our account details are: Biblica Europe Ministries Trust, Danske Bank, Sort code: 95-01-21, Account no: 80552763. Choose the amount and frequency that suits you.

Please call us on +44 (0)28 9073 5875 to let us know you've done this.



“God’s grace, from creation to redemption, is an act of radical generosity – freely given, freely received.

This grace is communicated through another act of radical generosity: free access to God’s Word for everyone, everywhere.”

— Geof Morin, President/CEO, Biblica



If you'd like more copies of The Bulletin for your church or group, please get in touch

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