

On the Frontlines: Insights into the State of Protection in 2021

The Global Protection Cluster's End of Year Event

1 December 2021

Speaker Profile: Aya Abdullah



"Believe in us. Invest in us and you will see, we will all be stronger for it." – Aya Abdullah

Speaker & Organizational Profile:

Aya is a young woman who has been a refugee for most of her life. She fled from Iraq to Syria after surviving 6 years of war. In 2011, Aya and her family fled to Turkey when the war began in Syria. In Turkey, Aya began working with partners of the United Nations (UN) Refugee Agency in different cities and projects. Her life took a turn when she met Brandon Stanton in 2015. He was interviewing Syrian refugees who were being admitted into the US but had not yet left the country, and Aya was his translator. After learning about her life story, Brandon initiated a petition on the website change.org to attract attention. The petition was signed by over 1 million people. In 2017, Aya, her mother and siblings were reunited with her father and resettled in Switzerland through the UNHCR resettlement program, where she is now studying International Relations at Webster University and is a delegate of the Global Youth Advisory Council of the UN Refugee Agency. She is also the President of the Webster Humanitarian Association at Webster University.