

# Video Script 'The Long Way Home'

**Total Time: 15 minutes**

" I want to go home."

" I am always thinking of home."

"Everything is hard."

" I do want to go home."

**Narrator:** Right now there are more than 19 million people around the world who are refugees. People who have been forced to flee their home country and can't risk going back there. Another 20 million people are internally displaced. Still in their own country, but driven from their homes. That's nearly 40 million people worldwide. All hoping to find a way back home.

Many different factors can create refugees. War politics racial hatred, natural disasters often result in millions being driven from their homes and poverty makes their problems worse.

There are refugees on nearly every continent and the area hardest hit is here in Africa. War and famine have produced a refugee crisis of mammoth proportions. Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia, Mozambique, Angola and dozen other African nations have all been a part of this crisis.

This is Rwanda, the small mountainous country in Central Africa, which hit the headlines in mid 1994 with horrifying accounts of carnage and genocide. Almost the entire population fled their homes, with only the belongings they could carry.

For a refugee this is how the story begins:

FIRST STAGE (graphic)

**Nzangwa Yiniana:** (11-year-old, Rwanda)

I had to flee from my home. They told us there would be fighting. We carried a few belongings like food, sleeping mats, pots for cooking. I don't know where my father is?

**Consolata Nyrabaguizu:** (16-year-old, Rwanda)

We moved from our home to Kigali, but the fighting followed us. Then we were all separated and I don't know where my family is. I have dreams where I am still with my brothers and sisters, but when I wake up they are not there.

**Narrator:** Running from the fighting, trying to find food and shelter, with no home, no real protection many fail to make it to safety. The war in Rwanda forced these people from their farms, their jobs, their villages and their communities. This is the Rutare camp in northern Rwanda. Millions of Rwandans fled across the borders to Zaire and Tanzania to escape the fighting and the massacres. But these people only made it as far as here. Since they have not left their own country, they are known as Internally displaced people or IDPs. The Rutare camp sits on the barren summit of 8000-foot mountains. Water and firewood is scarce. The shelter is basic and the situation desperate. Around 80,000 people all relying on outside help for clean water, food, medicine and clothes.

**Dr. Gerald Sinkomo:** (Rutare camp, Rwanda)

To be a refugee is a really a bad experience as specially from the interviews I had with the refugees themselves. I mean they feel that they are kind of dependent people who have to depend from everything rather they depend on the goodwill of the others. Even if they are something to do there is nothing to be done. So they are not in control of their lives.

**Narrator:** Each day is very much like the one before. The tiring chores of collecting water and scavenging for firewood and building materials. All basic necessities that we take for granted.

**Dr. Gerald Sinkomo:** (Rutare camp, Rwanda)

It is really humiliating to be a refugee. Most of them feel that it is a humiliating experience. Ranging from the poor, the rich, the educated, everybody. Actually most of them have a tale to tell how they escaped death and most of them are single people, lost their families by contact. I went to the orphanage, I met a 4-year-old kid, who was able to recall how their parents were cut down, the people with the pangas. Then I asked the kid, what they experienced. The kid was able to recall what happened. Then I asked her, 'Do you think, you will forget this thing?' They told me it will not be very easy to forget the experience.

**Narrator:** For those who have lost their families, life can become incredibly lonely and depressing. This is the Unaccompanied Children's Centre in Byumba. These children lost their homes and their families as well. Many don't know if their mothers and fathers, their brothers and sisters are alive or dead.

**Heather Macleod:** (Byumba Unaccompanied Children's Centre, Rwanda)

Some of them have seen people with machetes killing their own families in front of their eyes and some of them have had their own injuries with machetes. So we had some children with severe cuts. They've seen people who they know, neighbours and people who've lived in their same village actually killing their own families. Children need adult attention and they need individual attention. My desire is very rapidly to get these kids out of this big conglomeration of kids and get them into families. To get these kids out has just got to happen.

**Narrator:** Residents in neighbouring countries usually accept refugees, since they know that they have nowhere else to turn. But sometimes refugees are driven back at the border. This was the case with Rwanda's neighbour Zaire. Faced with the prospect of more than a million refugees streaming into their country, Zaire stationed armed guards to turn back anyone who tried to cross over, but it proved impossible to stop the massive tide. This is the refugee camp of Goma, just across the Zaire border. It is the largest gathering of refugees ever. An estimated 1.2 million people squashed into a tiny area of barren rock. Enormous pressure was placed on the land and on the people. Cholera and diarrhoea claimed the lives of thousands every day. Refugees don't choose to leave their homes willingly. They are forced out. They have very little control over their situation. Surviving until they make it back home is usually their only goal. Some can spend months, years, even the rest of their lives as refugees, never seeing their homes again. If they are unable to return, they are forced to consider life in a different country. Some refugees never make it out of the refugee camp. This is the longest phase of the refugee's journey. Waiting to go home.

## SECOND STAGE (graphic)

**Narrator:** Nyangombe refugee camp in Zimbabwe has been home for thousands of Mozambicans for nearly 10 years. Shops, a school, a church, even a small hospital all catering for the people living here. These people are not permitted to live outside the camp or farm the land or even to take a job. Barbed wire surrounds the area.

**Luka Zindua:** (Nyangombe camp, Zimbabwe)

I saw so much fighting in Mozambique. One day the RENAMO bandits came to my house and took all our belongings. Our clothes, everything. So we decided to flee from Mozambique to this camp here in Zimbabwe. In Mozambique, I was a teacher. One day I was coming home from school and our bus hit a land mine and was destroyed. I lost some of my friends. It is not very easy for me being a refugee. It's very difficult, because I have nothing I can call my own. I cannot do anything in terms of improving my standard of living, because I am not living in my own country.

**Cecilia Zindua:** (Nyangombe camp, Zimbabwe)

I find it hard not having our own garden for food. We receive rations. If only we had some land to plant our own crops but it is impossible here in the camp. I am looking forward to going home one day to my original job. I was a traditional midwife in Mozambique. Then I can earn some money.

**Narrator:** Many of the refugees in this camp, have set themselves up in small cottage industries. In an attempt to make some extra money to be productive. But most of their goods are sold to each other and there is precious little money to go around.

**Bernado Mariposa:** (Nyangombe camp, Zimbabwe)

I feel disturbed because I don't have the things that I need for a normal life. I could plough or run a business. But there are no opportunities here in this camp.

**Narrator:** On the surface, life in these camps follows the same routines as any village. The daily chores, children playing, meal times, there is even time for singing and dancing. But beneath the smiles, there are always memories of horrible circumstances that brought them here.

**Florence Zindua:** (Nyangombe camp, Zimbabwe)

I still remember the day, when the bandits came and took everything. Our chickens, our clothes and even the sewing machine.

**Fungai Zindua:** (Nyangombe camp, Zimbabwe)

I also remember that night, when the bandits came. I was only 8 when we fled from Mozambique. I remember having to walk from our homes to a camp in Mozambique. It was run by FRELIMO and we stayed there for quite some time before moving to this camp here in Zimbabwe.

**Florence Zindua:** (Nyangombe camp, Zimbabwe)

I am a little worried about going home, because I have heard there is still fighting going on in some parts of Mozambique.

**Narrator:** And the troubles end on arrival at the refugee camp. Having to live with so many restrictions all these years causes major problems. Family relationships break down, self respect falls, while divorces, thefts and alcoholism run at a high rate.

**Luka Zindua:** (Nyangombe camp in Zimbabwe)

There is no peace of mind, because I am always thinking of home.

**Narrator:** But for these people the end has come. They are preparing to start on the last leg of the refugee journey. They'll soon be returning to the homeland, Mozambique.

THIRD STAGE (graphic)

**Narrator:** Mozambique struggled through 13 years of revolutionary war, 16 years of civil war and a terrible drought. It became one of the poorest countries on earth. The result over 2 million people left their home to find food and safety. Three quarters of them became refugees. Now most can take the next step in the refugee cycle. They can return home.

**Gracia Manuel:** (Derre, Mozambique)

We were very sad when we left our houses, we left everything. We had no food, no clothes, no plates. We had to run all the time because of the war. We arrived in the camp, with nothing. I feel so happy coming back to my home. We're able to produce food and take care of ourselves. We can work our own fields grow our own food. We needed help for the first month, but it is so good to be back.

**Antonio Manuel:** (Derre, Mozambique)

Before the war it was a good life here. We could have our own houses, we could go to the fields and produce food, we could have good clothes. But when the war started, all those things went, just like that. Even before we left our home, the situation was very bad. We used to sleep in the bush, because it was safer. Then we realised the war was going to carry on, so we decided we had to run away from this place. It was a really bad situation. Now I feel very happy, because I can see that life has changed here. I do not know what will happen in the future. All I know is that I am happy now, because I am in my own home. That's all I know.

**Eduardo Derre: (Mozambique)**

Before the war, the life was very good, because what I say, the life was normal, they could produce their food, they could dress nicely and they could travel. Naturally I think anyone have this pride of being what he is, you know and if there is some situation which will make him be different, then I think it is not normal. Most of them, they are really very happy because I know that they have been suffering for a long time and know that they are come back to their original homes. They are very happy because they can produce foods, they can grow wherever they want to grow. There is no problem. Nobody can stop them to go anywhere they want to go. So I think it is very good for them.

**Narrator:** But for some refugees going home is simply not possible. Continuing war or famine can force them to carry on living in a different country. They are eventually moved on from refugee camps to new lives as residents in a third state. Their own country was their first, the place they fled to was their second, so their new home is called a third state. Here they will have to try and cope with a whole new set of problems, language barriers, new customs, social practices and different climate. Eventually they will hope to adapt and become citizens.

But they will always be refugees, living in someone else's country. For all the refugees who make it back home and for the few who manage to start lives in other countries, there are millions who still wait and try to survive.

In the last few years, the number of refugees in the world has more than doubled. There are many reasons. An increase in the number of wars, is a major factor. Becoming a refugee can happen to anyone and many never reach the final stage of the long way home. They remain stranded in a foreign land or die along the road.

In the west, contact with refugees is rare. A tiny proportion live in our cities, work alongside us, attend our schools. The other millions are just faces on our television. One in every 134 people on the planet have been forced to flee. They are not faceless people begging for food and sympathy. They are people just like us. Farmers, doctors, homemakers, shopkeepers, teachers and students, truck drivers and fishermen, mothers, fathers, grandparents and children. But they are in a desperate situation. They fear for their future. They struggle to survive. They dream of going home. Understanding their plight it is the first step towards helping them complete that journey home.