

2025

HART PRIZE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS



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MESSAGE FROM SAM MASON, HART CEO

Here are the long-awaited results for the 2025 HART Prize for Human Rights...

Huge congratulations to all of our winners, young people and students getting stuck in and shining a light on the causes close to your hearts. Thank you for bringing hope in forgotten conflicts.

Well done to everyone who took part in this year's competition. We are so encouraged and we are so inspired. We look forward to seeing what you come up with for next year's competition!

With renewed congratulations,

Sam Mason

CEO of Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART)



Creative Junior

HART Prize for Human Rights

CREATIVE JUNIOR



Aanya Jain

Awarded for poem titled 'You Call it Weather'. In Aanya's words, his piece "confronts climate injustice as a human rights' crisis, focusing on how environmental shifts disproportionately harm communities in the Global South - while the Global North romanticises the symptoms. The poem explores the violence of indifference, the privilege of forgetting, and the emotional toll of witnessing collapse in plain sight."



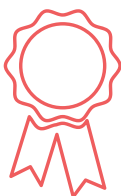
Henry, Leehurst Swan School

Awarded for board game titled 'Steps to School'. The game traces the non-linear journey to school, sensitively acknowledging the barriers that some children face in accessing quality education. The game touches on environmental challenges, as well as the devastating impact of conflict.



Saskia McDonald

Awarded for poem titled 'Forgotten'. In Saskia's words, "the poem is voiced by a young girl in Myanmar, caught amidst the chaos of civil war. She struggles to understand why the world seems to have forgotten her and her people. Through her voice the word "forgotten" becomes a way to explain the pain, loss and loneliness she experiences in a land torn apart."



Highly commended: Alice Ying

Awarded for artwork titled 'Same Boy, Different Opportunities.' In Alice's words, it "portrays the deep contrast between educational access for children in Nigeria and Australia," and the illustration of "the same boy" on either side of the steps is meant to demonstrate how "children in both countries should be entitled to the same [level] of education."

'You Call It Weather'

(on early blossoms & late consequences)

A poem by Aanya Jain

You say,
"The blossoms are early this year."
As if that's a miracle.
As if petals don't bloom
from imbalance.

You point,
you smile--
a photo, a caption:
"Signs of spring."
But I see collapse
in soft pink.

How do I tell you
that beauty arriving too soon
is also a wound?
That the same warmth
that coaxes flowers
kills crops,
starves rivers,
burns futures
you don't have to live in?

'You Call It Weather'

(on early blossoms & late consequences)

A poem by Aanya Jain

Fifteen years ago,
these trees waited.
I remember.
You don't.
And that forgetting -
that's the privilege.

You ask why I'm quiet.
I ask
if it's still theft
when you never turn around
to see what's missing.

Your comfort
is a barricade.
I throw truth -
it cracks,
but never lands.
I want you to feel it:
this quiet end,
this elegant unraveling
disguised as spring.

'You Call It Weather'

(on early blossoms & late consequences)

A poem by Aanya Jain

We are taught to forget.
We are told to admire.
They feed us silence
in the language of wonder.

Meanwhile,
a single fridge in the West
uses more power
than a family in Sudan,
or Myanmar,
or Nigeria-
names that vanish
when the Wi-Fi blinks.

You call it weather.
I call it warning.
You call it politics.
I call it home.
You call it opinion.
I choke.

So I stay silent.
And hate you
for not knowing.
And hate myself
for not making you.

STEPS TO SCHOOL

'Steps to School'

Henry, Leehurst Swan School



'Forgotten'

A poem by Saskia McDonald

My thoughts are monitored,
My words are censored,
My rights are ignored,
I am forgotten.

Those who try to be remembered are taken away,
Uncontactable. Forced to be forgotten.
I used to aspire to be like those people,
But now I realise the horrors they face.

Bombs fall on my home,
It seems they forgot we live there.
That makes sense,
Because we are forgotten.

Famine looms, ready to strike,
The food forgot to grow for us,
The forgotten people,
I wish I could forget my hunger.

Not only has our country forgotten us,
The world has too.
The media doesn't report on us,
We're no longer worth their time because we are too forgettable.

My once beautiful country is broken,
We could glue it back together.
But every time we try,
It breaks even more.

'Forgotten'

A poem by Saskia McDonald

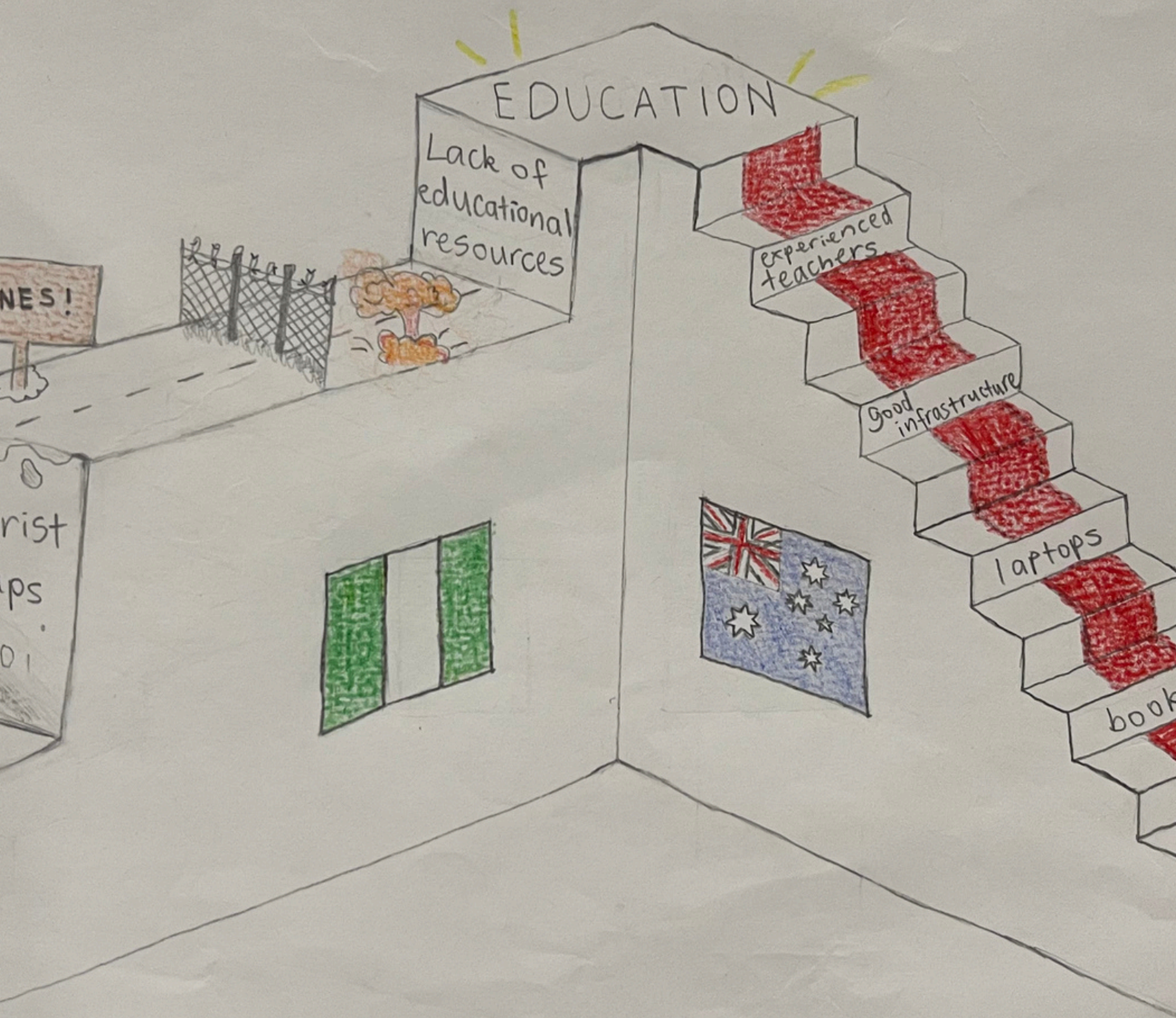
There are not many people left in my town,
Some are fighting, most are dead.
Their ghosts haunt me at night,
Maybe I should help but I have forgotten how.

If only we could remember how to live in peace,
Maybe then we, the forgotten people, will be remembered.

This poem is voiced by a young girl in Myanmar, caught amidst the chaos of civil war. She struggles to understand why the world seems to have forgotten her and her people. Through her voice, the word 'forgotten' becomes a way to explain the pain, loss and loneliness she experiences in a land torn apart.

'Same Boy, Different Opportunities'

Alice Ying



Creative Intermediate

HART Prize for Human Rights

CREATIVE INTERMEDIATE



Ariel Zhang

Awarded for poem titled 'the open field I inherited from my mother'. In Ariel's words, this piece reflects on "the aftermath of hunger and grief from war which runs in my family. A country might not remember the sacrifices made, but as individuals, memories will live through our hands and our words, and our bodies are a living memorial calling for the world to never forget."



Annabelle Nelson

Awarded for illustration titled 'The Night Before'. This piece evokes the feelings of fear, anticipation, grief, reflection, and desperation of an individual awaiting the death penalty.



Maile Agai

Awarded for poem titled "Oh, Country!" The piece is inspired by the role that Maile's country, the USA, plays in ongoing conflicts globally. In Maile's words, "I characterise my country as a person full of fear and distrust; a being who thinks only of self-preservation. My poem ends with both a treaty and a question: "if I teach you love,/will you lay down your arms?"



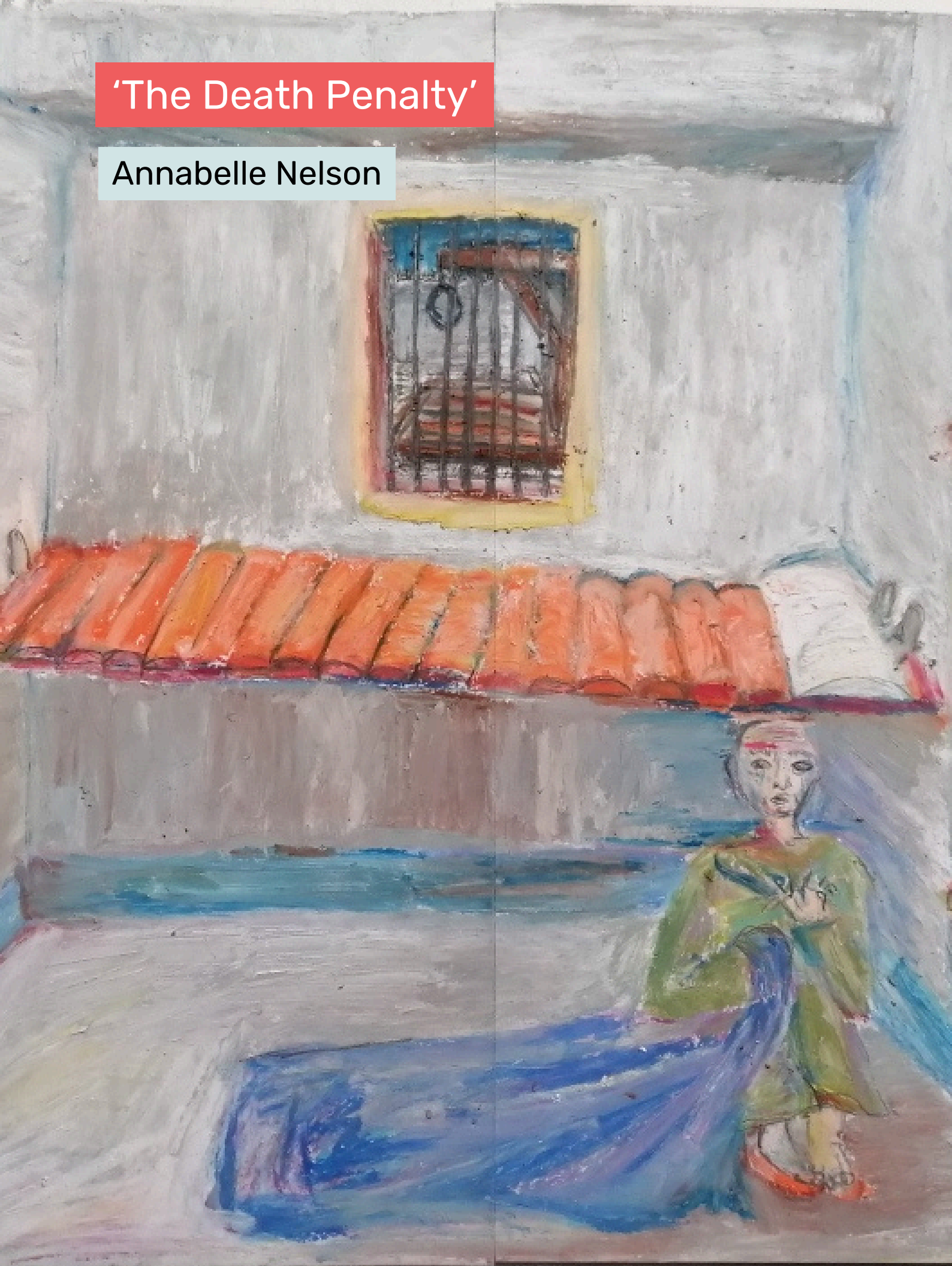
'the open field I inherited from my mother'

A poem by Ariel Zhang

in the sky kissed wheat fields, the girl remembers
her grandfather's eyes. he looks past her, to the fields
broadening into the horizon, set off to an infinite race
with the sparrows. his mouth opens and closes but there is
no sound, only hunger. her hand sculpts the air into his
features. his face translucent in these fields he sowed
himself, with the prayer that they will grow into something
to be remembered. this country: a country that he fought for
but would not fight for him. a country that, in the aftermath
of every war, built memorials, held moments of silence,
sent their "wishes and prayers." but a country that, the next
morning, let the history of the war wash into the drain
post-rain. a country he watched become a graveyard
and erase its own epitaphs with his shell-shocked eyes.
the wind blows his memory through her hair. she runs
her hands through it like the wild wheat, reaping its round
-belly kernels, wishing on the fluttering husks. years later,
she found her hand floating through something soft
again, running through my hair, braiding the ends like how
she wished her grandfather would for her. her body
a pasture she walked his grandfather through.
pointed to the wild, traversing plains of wheat. and said, "we remember."

'The Death Penalty'

Annabelle Nelson



'Oh, Country!'

A poem by Maile Agai

My country has a forehead
hatched with worry lines.

There is a great crevice between its brows,
deep
and filled with blood
instead of water.
My country doesn't see the difference.

My country knows violence.
My country turns a needle
on its head
and wields it like a sword.

Oh, my country
knows fear.
My country builds a cage around its heart
and names it Freedom.

My country tells me,
You won't lose
so long as your fist is closed.

Dear country,
if I teach you
the beauty of open palms,
the warmth of a hand
holding yours, the impossible sweetness -
dear country,
if I teach you love,
will you lay down your arms?

Creative Senior

HART Prize for Human Rights

CREATIVE SENIOR



Mariia Oganian

Awarded for artwork titled "Losses." In Mariia's words, "I remember vividly how at 3am on November 10, 2020, I was sitting alone in my room [...] when I suddenly read it. The news on the agreement which made Armenians give up most of the territories to Azerbaijan and made all the losses seem meaningless. I fell on the floor and started crying, unable to accept reality without my homeland, without Artsakh. This piece was made in memory of all the people that sacrificed their life for our freedom and our culture, and in remembrance of that unjust decision."



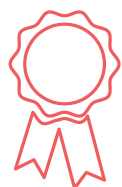
Halima Kasim

Awarded for poem titled "Can you hear it?" In Halima's words, "[...] the most dangerous thing of all is not something that's prominent and loud// Instead it's the silence, complete absence of sound."



Entry from Myanmar

The name of this entrant is not shared for safeguarding reasons. Awarded for their poem titled "Life of a Shan People," the student reflects on the cultural richness, beauty, and pain of the Shan people in Shan State, Myanmar.



Highly commended: Tracy Jamgbadi, Trinity Kankara, four entries from Myanmar (names not shared for security reasons)

'Losses'

Mariia Oganian



'Can you hear it?'

A poem by Halima Kasim

Silence. Complete absence of sound.

Like blood slowly dripping, quietly drenching the ground.

But if we listen a little closer, could you hear the fear?

The rumbles of the empty stomachs, heard by anyone who is near.

Listen to the heartbeats, the drums that could never find a beat,
and the absence of laughter, from the children playing on the street.

Heartstrings played like a worn-out harp being strung,
replacing oxygen with disdain, hateful words lining their lungs.

Can you hear it? The music of our cries.

Or is it stolen by the band, portraying a disguise.

Orchestrating a performance, hiding what goes on behind the scenes,
strangers dancing on our graves, while they censor what is on the big
screen.

Beating the drums with the bones of our fallen,
shushing whispers of hope, suppressing our calling.

And using an invisible rope choking the voices of anger inside.
As harmony weeps and melody goes to hide.

And we pack it up when the band is done,
using our blood as paint for posters, and bodies abandoned.

While the rest of the world sits, starry-eyed and distracted,
it seems as we scream our songs, no one has been impacted.

'Can you hear it?'

A poem by Halima Kasim

And all the music is deemed pointless when it does not compel.
How could they hear it if the discord suits them so well?

Which is why the most dangerous thing of all is not something that's
prominent and loud
Instead it's the silence, complete absence of sound.

'Life of a Shan People'

A poem by a student from Myanmar

The Shan - a noble race,
Dwelling along the river's grace,
Rooted deep in Asia's land,
Born beneath Aik Tai's stand.

First to build, first to grow,
A people strong, with hearts aglow.
But near Thai borders, fate turned grim
Our homeland seized on Burmese whim.

Chaos came with brutal might,
Those who stood were lost to night.
Our lands were stolen, homes undone,
Our daughters shamed beneath the gun.

We cried, we wept - what could be done?
If truth were told beneath the sun,
The Burmese acts were dark and cruel,
Their power made bloodshed the rule.

Watch the tale of Sao Kyaw Seng,
His life a thread in war's harsh string.
Jailed, then lost - no word, no trace,
Another soul time can't replace.

Today's harsh days still echo then,
Still we flee from war again.
Boys and girls, young and small,
Run from battles, dreams let fall.

'Life of a Shan People'

A poem by a student from Myanmar

No school, no chance to learn or play,
Childhood stolen day by day.
Even birds cannot sing loud,
The sky feels heavy, like a shroud.

Pressed for years, and still we bear,
From age to age, this deep despair.
Victims still, no place to stay,
Villages gone, wiped away.

Pity this life, so cruel, unfair -
Burned like flames that fill the air.

Shan, Shan, Shan...

We still stand.

Tracy Jamgbadi



Trinity Kankara



Kankara '24

Entry from Myanmar



'People of the Union of Myanmar'

A poem by a student in Myanmar

Peace has never been ours to keep
For countless years, we have only known pain.
Voices cry out, desperate to flee,
Yet we remain trapped
In a cage of suffering - both body and mind.

No sooner had we endured long hardship,
Than the world was struck by a deadly wave -
COVID-19 swept across the globe.
Then came the coup d'état.
Ethnic armed groups clashed,
And once again it was the people who paid the price.

There is no end in sight.
Each time conflict fades,
We dream of a new beginning -
A life of peace and joy.
But disaster follows:
Floods drown our hopes,
And still we ask - when will peace come?

Before answers arrived,
Another blow struck - a deadly earthquake.
Homes crumbled, buildings fell,
And lives were lost beneath the ruins.

From 2019 to 2025,
We have carried the weight of endless suffering.
For six long years,
We, the people of Myanmar,
Have never known what it means
To live in peace.

'Education in the Time of Resistance'

A poem by a student in Myanmar

While other nations rise and thrive,
We look around - and feel the ache of envy.
Always disrupted by the Burmese,
Our homes burned, fences torn,
Even schools reduced to ash.

Beaten with rifle butts, our people suffer.
No access to education under pressure,
Too afraid to resist, we teach in hiding.
In tiny hut schools, by dim candlelight,
While the stars and moon shine above.

Then came a heroine - Mother Khur Sen.
She reached the Shan-Thai border,
A leader with a vision,
She built the training ground.

The first to build, the first to teach.
She taught Shan literature with pride.
Through struggle, there was no retreat.
From dusk till dawn, through every trial,
We held firm,
Marching toward victory -
With the pen
For our freedom.

'Shan Land'

A poem by a student in Myanmar

Beautiful Shan Land -
Now turned to fire.
Nothing is left for the Shan.

Oppressed, abused,
Bodies left unburied.
What wrong have we done?
We can only cry -
Weep as tears fall.

With bare hands we built our lives,
Only to be robbed of everything.
They feel no shame for their cruelty.
They kill without mercy.

Our homes no longer warm -
Empty, turned to ash.
Even our palaces were destroyed,
Our history wiped away.

And now, after so long,
Great Shan Land
Remains under the control of the cruel.

Will peace and well-being
Ever return?
Will the Shan ever live free again?

Oh Shan Land, Shan Land, Shan Land - burning in flames.

Essay Junior

HART Prize for Human Rights

ESSAY JUNIOR



Kate Mak

Awarded for essay titled "Discussing Sudan with Keir Starmer." In Kate's words, "Because of this civil war, 13 million people have now been killed or have died in this conflict, and there is still no end to this war in sight. The people of Sudan are suffering, and they need humanitarian and food aid urgently."



Victoria Nguyen

Awarded for essay titled "Discussing Girls' Rights to Education in Conflict Zones with Keir Starmer." In Victoria's words, "every girl, no matter where she is or where she lives, should have the right to education, to go to school, to learn and to improve their lives. Not only is education about learning facts; it also gives the girls a chance to fight for their rights, and live a life that is safe and healthy."



Maddy York Hale

Awarded for essay titled "Discussing Homelessness in the UK with Keir Starmer." In Maddy's words, "homeless people have a right to shelter, health, safety, dignity, and access to services just like any other person with a home. [...] They should not be treated differently, but only with kindness and respect [...] With a positive change of the right policies, homelessness can be solved."



Essay Intermediate

HART Prize for Human Rights

ESSAY INTERMEDIATE



Shlok Sudame

Awarded for essay titled "Silent Suffering in a Forgotten Warzone: Assessing the Erosion of Human Rights in Nagorno-Karabakh." In Shlok's words, "the human rights crisis in Nagorno-Karabakh is a haunting story of suffering and survival. It is a tale where the innocent become casualties and history's ghosts refuse to rest [...] This nightmare can end if the world acts decisively, with humanity and justice at its core, and if organisations like HART continue to shed light in the darkest corners."



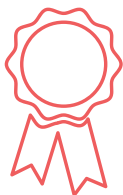
Sanjana Bathala

Awarded for essay titled "Proposed Actions against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) for governments and international NGOs." In Sanjana's words, "to eliminate FGM, action must be brave, collaborative, and relentless; also, international organisations, national governments and civil society must coordinate efforts beyond punitive laws and action into cultural change."



Oceane Ossomba

Awarded for essay titled "Voices Unheard No More: Social Media's Fight against Disability Discrimination in Nigeria." In Oceane's words, "social media has played a crucial role in bringing hidden injustices to light, challenging harmful norms, influencing legal reforms, and giving disabled individuals a voice."



Highly commended: Ethan Kapoor

Awarded for essay titled "Nigeria's Forgotten Children". In Ethan's words, "the solution begins with acknowledging that these children exist, that their experiences matter, and that their futures are worth investing in. [...] Their stolen futures can never be fully restored, but new paths forward can be built."

NEXT STEPS



We will be in touch with students who won prizes in *early August*. Electronic certificates will be sent out to all those who participated before the end of August.



Stay in the loop with HART news by following us on social media. You can find us on Instagram **@hart.uk** or on LinkedIn at **Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust**.



Continue raising your voices about the issues that matter most to you and continue to shine a light on forgotten conflicts. Help spread the word about the **HART Prize for Human Rights** with friends and family...

YOU'RE BRINGING **HOPE** TO
FORGOTTEN CONFLICTS.

