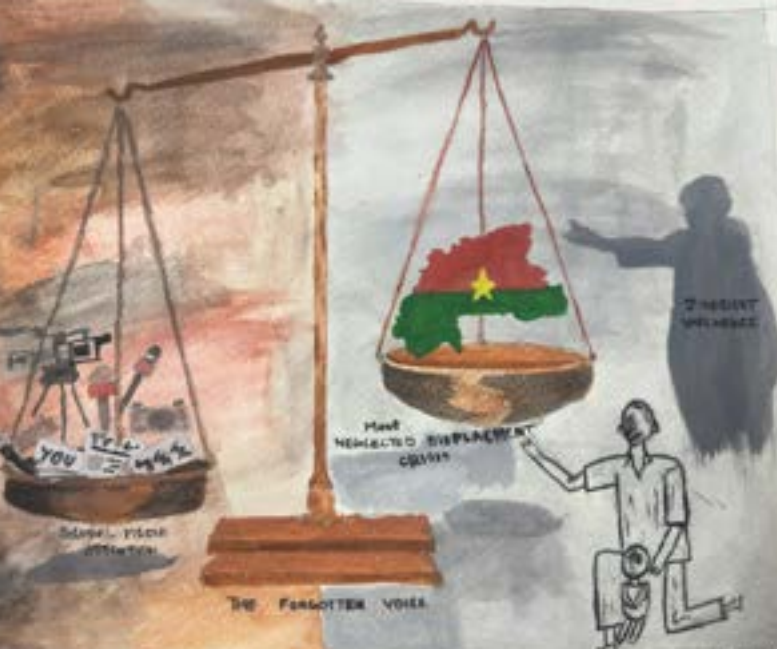




HART PRIZE 2026

YOUTH RESULTS



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YOUTH ADVOCACY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

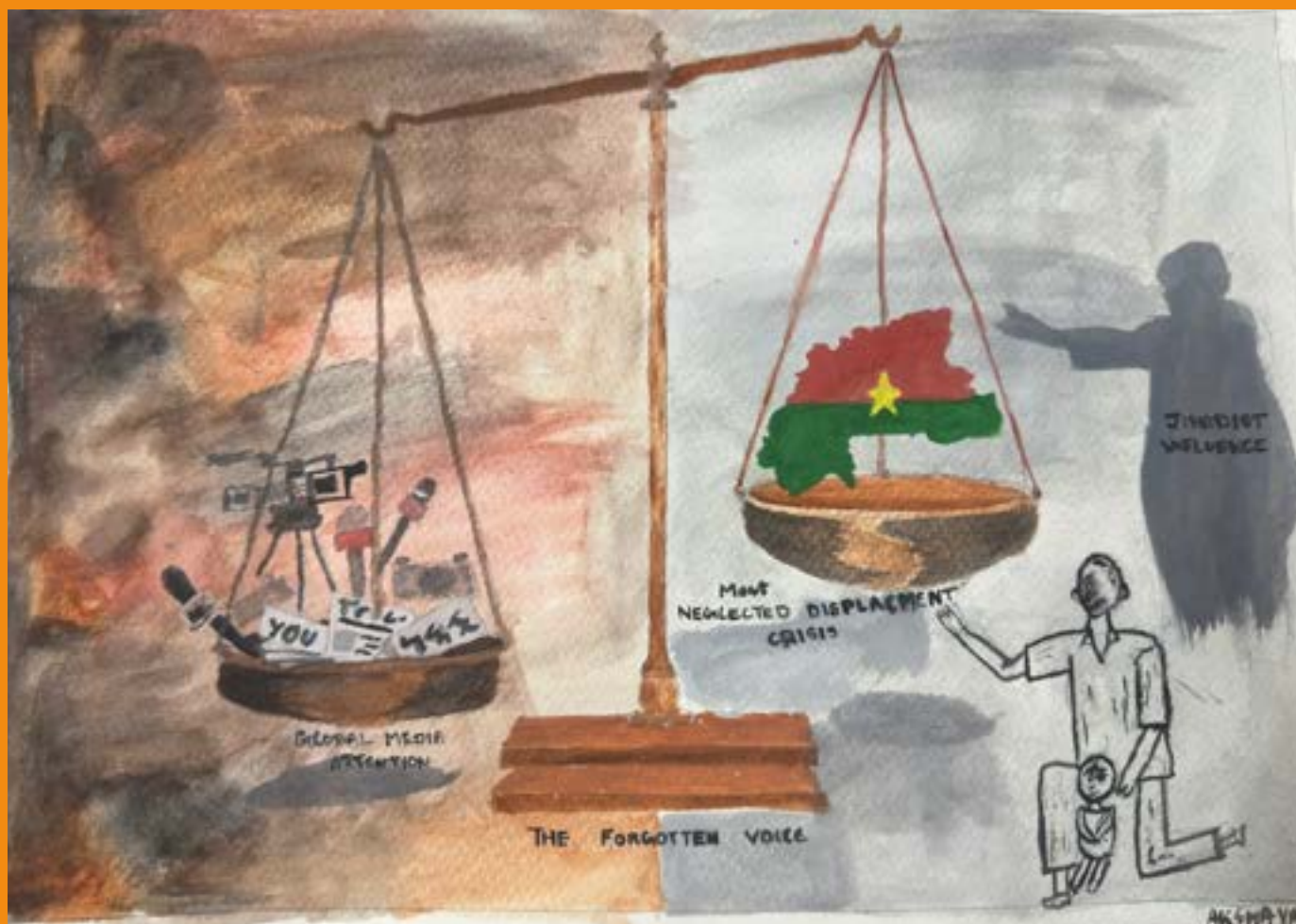
Congratulations to the winning and highly commended entries, and to all the participants of the HART Prize for Human Rights 2026.

This year we received entries from young people in 30+ countries. With sensitivity and creativity, they brought a wide range of forgotten conflicts and underreported human rights abuses into the light. These young advocates give HART and our local partners hope for a brighter future.

As observed by Dr. Vee Kativhu, a 2026 HART Prize Youth Judge:

"These [entries] are a powerful reminder that young people are not disengaged from the world's challenges. They are paying attention, asking difficult questions and using their voices to advocate for those who are often overlooked."

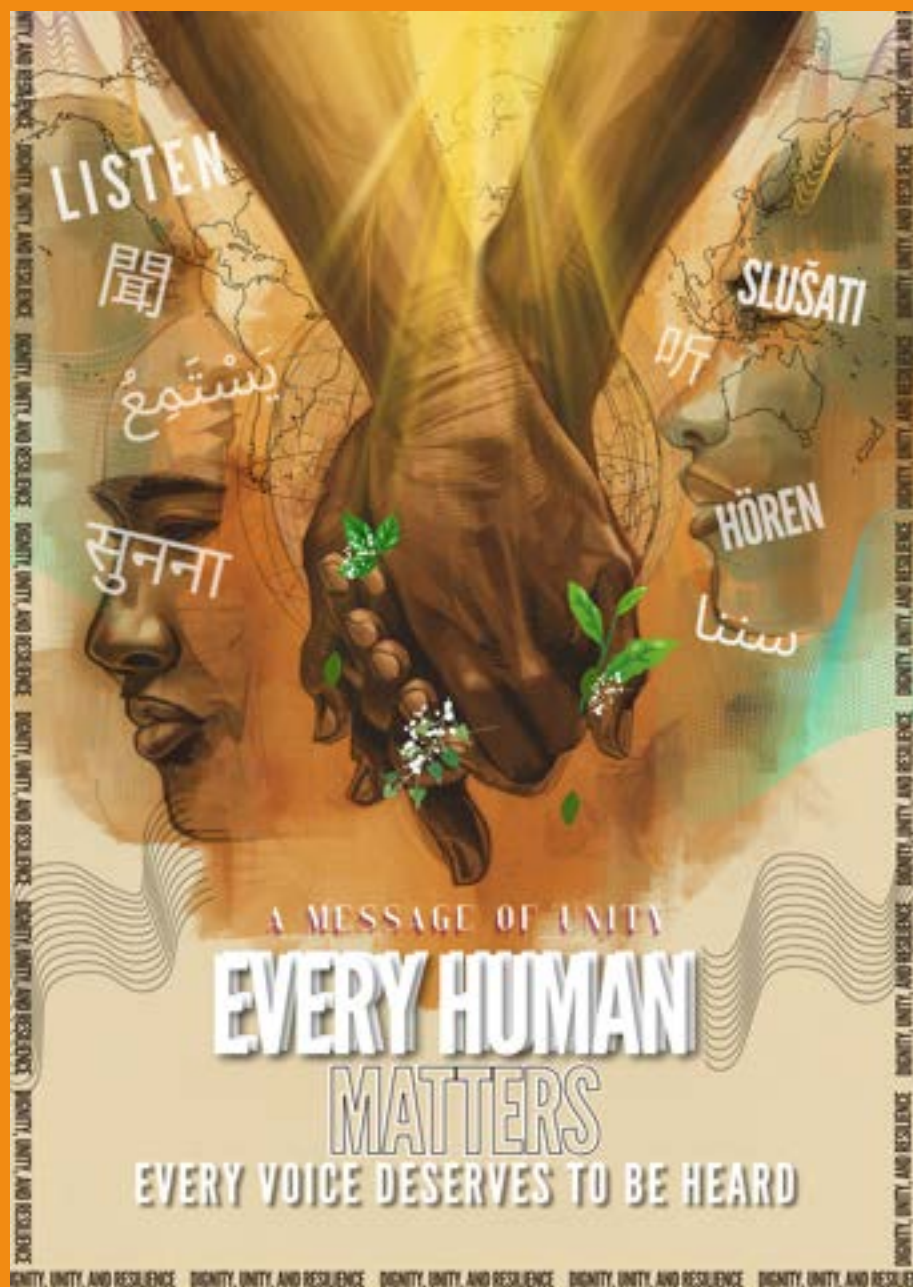
With special thanks to this year's Youth Judges, Dr. Vee Kativhu, Eltayeb Bashar, Frederick Dharshie Wissah, Lydia Yakubu and Eric Choji for their valuable time and insights.



AKSHAYA

WINNER, CREATIVE (11-12)

A reflection on the ongoing displacement crisis in Burkina Faso and the forgotten voices that are disregarded by global headlines



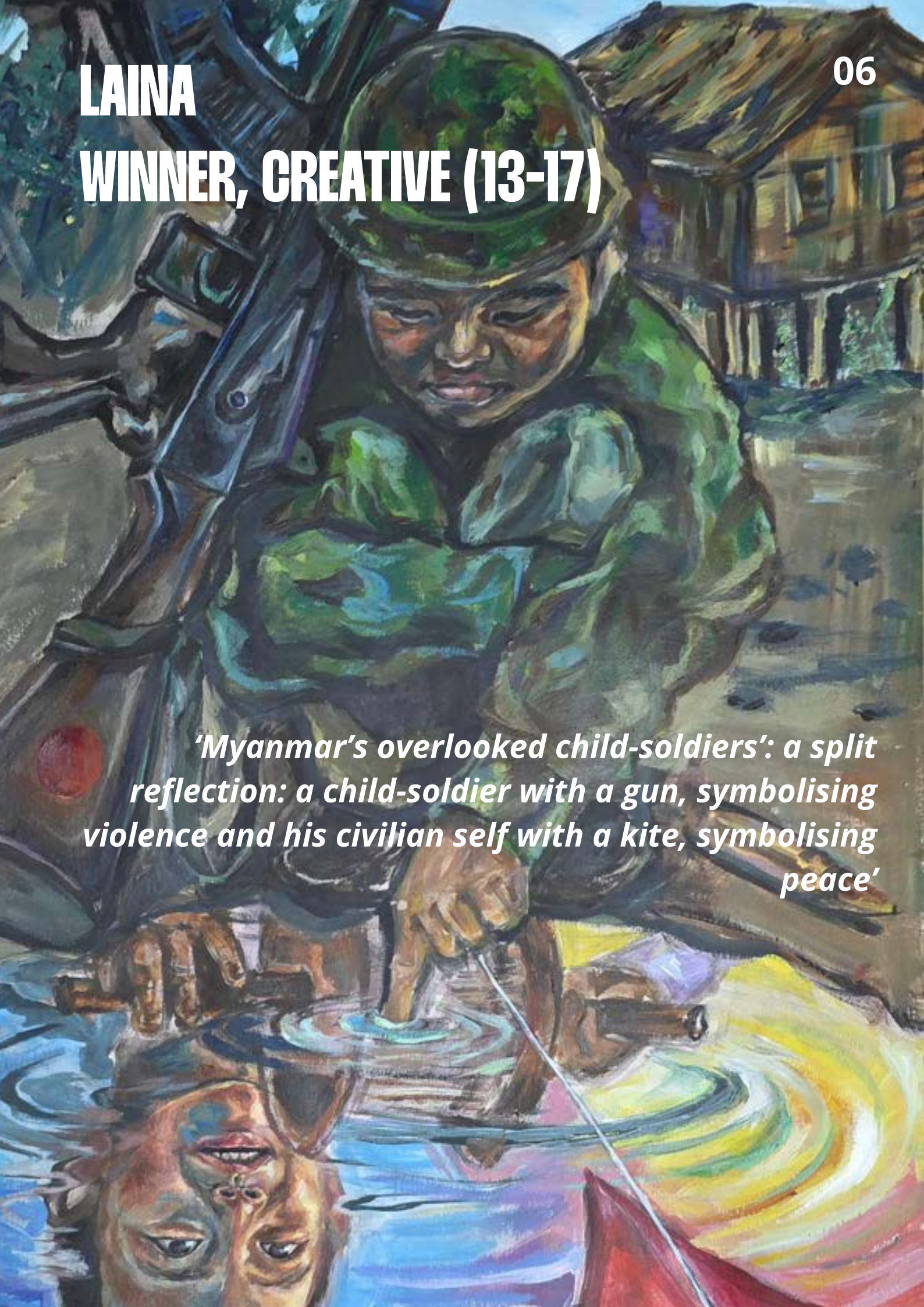
AMNA

HIGHLY COMMENDED, CREATIVE (11-12)

'A tapestry of time-worn hands, clasped together to represent our collective human journey'

LAINA**WINNER, CREATIVE (13-17)**

'Myanmar's overlooked child-soldiers': a split reflection: a child-soldier with a gun, symbolising violence and his civilian self with a kite, symbolising peace'



TAHMINA

SECOND PLACE, CREATIVE (13-17)

'The painful divide between freedom and silence'

'The contrast reflects the reality faced by millions of Afghan girls today - a generation once filled with ambition, now denied the basic human right to education'



THIRD PLACE, CREATIVE (13-17)

A retelling of a popular West Nigerian folktale on how the tortoise cracked its shell. It emphasises classism, resource exploitation, and propaganda by the elite. Here are some excerpts:

For centuries, the tortoise has been portrayed as cunning, devious and greedy. But today I will tell you his true story: a story of betrayal and injustice.

[...]

As the wind below him grew in strength, he only hoped his fall would end. He did not - no, he could not - face his people. He closed his eyes one more time and prayed for the tides to change. He prayed for the others to at least find somewhere where they could live, and not just survive.

[...]

“They have shown us their power. Their wrath. Forget about this land. It once carried our heritage, but now? A symbol of the chains around our necks.”

Her voice stiffened, and she looked around. “Leave. Leave and never look back.”



AMELIA

HIGHLY COMMENDED, CREATIVE (13-17)

Based on a photo taken by Amelia's uncle when he was a child in 1991 during the mass Kurdish exodus. The art piece features a number of family members who escaped to the mountains.

HIGHLY COMMENDED, CREATIVE (13-17)

A poem inspired by research into rare mining and displacement in Kachin State, Myanmar. It is an exploration of the hidden-cost of technology. The title, 'Buried Things', refers to the rare earth minerals buried in the hills and the communities gradually buried by them. Here are some excerpts:

In a remote town
swaddled by misty hills,
in Pangwa, Kachin State,
near the Myanmar-Chinese border,
a young boy was seen
squatting over a boiling pail of water.

[...]

For a moment,
he imagined
[the bubbles] had risen beyond Pangwa
to the paradise his family once called home.

before the men
who spoke in harsh tongues
invaded the iron monster
and clawed the earth apart;

[...]

WINNER, CREATIVE (18-25)

'The Milk is Copper' is a visceral examination of the "resource curse" in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, seen through the eyes of Masika, a 19-year-old in a makeshift clinic.

The narrative draws a haunting distinction between the modern technology that powers our world and the physical destruction of the women living atop the mines.

In the Kivu provinces, the war was never about a flag. It was about what lay beneath the earth. But the men didn't just mine the ground; they mined the people. They treated the female body like a trench to be dug, a resource to be exhausted, and then abandoned once the "value" had been extracted.

[...]

She looked at the women inside the clinic; they are the true archives of conflict. Their bones remembered the weight of boots long after the soldiers marched away. This was the social dynamic the world ignored: that peace was a luxury for those who carry the war inside their own muscles.

[...]

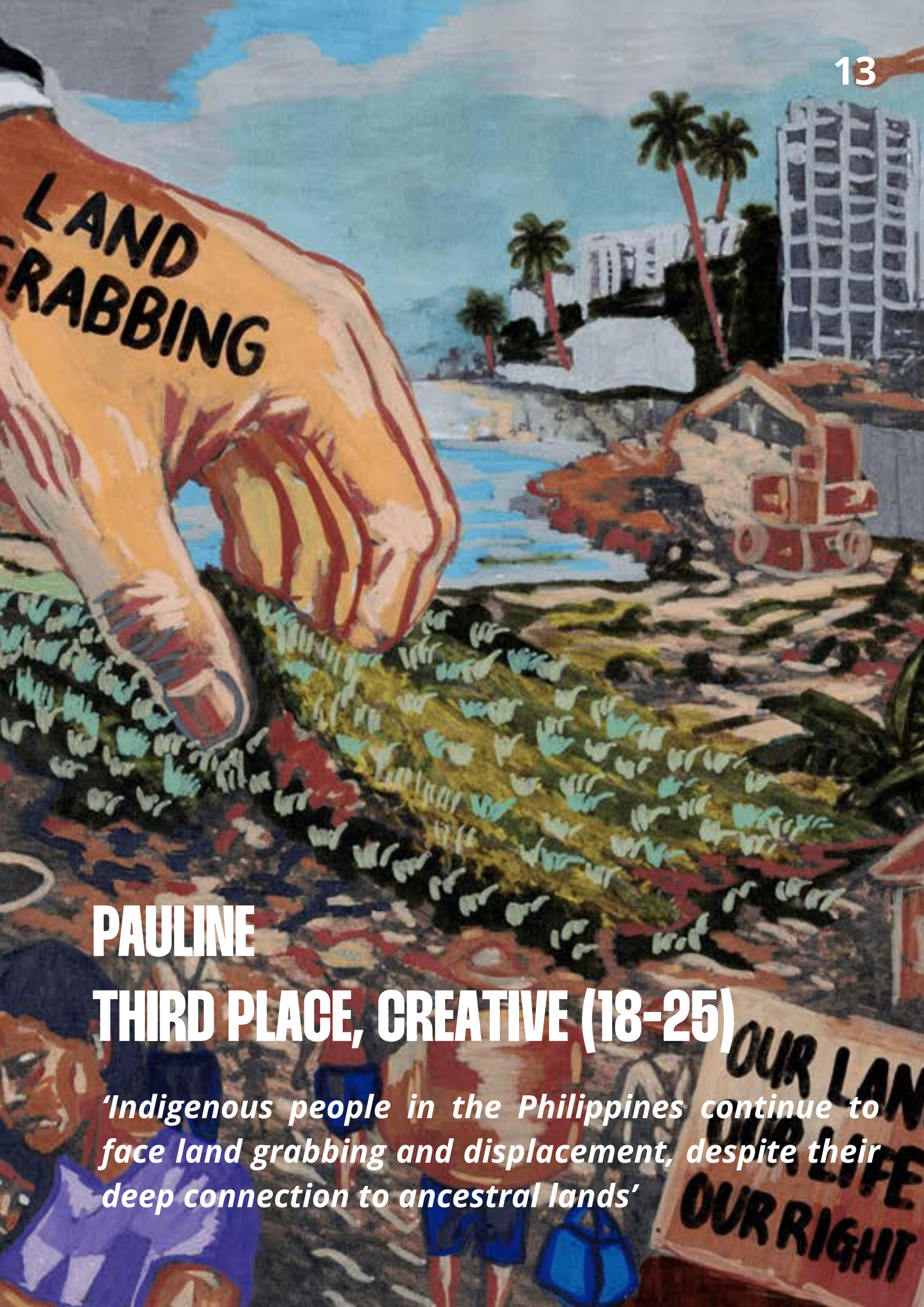
FAVOUR

SECOND PLACE, CREATIVE (18-25)

'That Woman They Called Witch' is told in the voice of a Ghanaian woman who has been accused of witchcraft. While she is handed her verdict, she realises that she is a grave victim of injustice and resists the narrative, reclaiming her voice and calling attention to the systems that enable such harm.

Before I decolonized,
I thought the soothsayer spoke truth
when he pointed his gnarled finger at me.
I thought the dreams of my nephew
were my confession.
I thought the death of a child
must need a witch
and if the chief said it was me,
then perhaps I had powers I did not know.

Before I deconstructed,
I thought my pain was personal.
I believed my brother when he sold my land
and called it purification.
I believed the crowd with bicycle chains
and burning sticks
when they said I was the reason.
the rains came late, the crops failed,
the fever took the baby.



PAULINE

THIRD PLACE, CREATIVE (18-25)

'Indigenous people in the Philippines continue to face land grabbing and displacement, despite their deep connection to ancestral lands'

**OUR LAND
OUR LIFE
OUR RIGHT**

HIGHLY COMMENDED, CREATIVE (18-25)

A diary entry written from the perspective of a Rohingya girl living in the Cox Bazaar in Bangladesh, reflecting the emotional and psychological experiences of growing up in an environment shaped by fear. Here is an excerpt:

It was different when Abbu was by my side.

He carried the dream of me leaving Cox Bazaar, one day. That I would return to Myanmar - not as someone chased out, not someone erased out, but someone who belonged.

As a CITIZEN.

He carved a future that we could still reach.

[...]

If this page is ever found,
will it become another reason
for silence?

So I will stop here, Abbu.

Not because my story ends -
but because I am afraid
it might.

AMRIN

HIGHLY COMMENDED, CREATIVE (18-25)

'The Soil That Remembers Our Name' explores the trauma of the 1947 Partition of India, inspired by the journey of Amrin's family from Pakistan to Indian Punjab and the trauma experienced by many families

They tell us the line was drawn to set us free,
But how do you define freedom
When it is written in the blood of millions?
History only records the 'Great Migration'
But forgets the names
Whose bodies became the battlefield of a new map.

[...]

They left with the dust of their birthplace in their shoes,
Walking towards an India that was supposed to be 'home',
All while looking back at a horizon that was no longer their
own.
They did not carry gold,
But the weight of the door they forgot to lock,
Thinking someday they would come back.

SOUTH AFRICA  **FORCED DISPLACEMENT**
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE  **HIV/AIDS**
HOPE  **ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE** 
 **DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO**
ACCESS TO EDUCATION  **DIGNITY & HOPE**
HARMFUL NARRATIVES  **AMPLIFY VOICES**
 **PAPUA NEW GUINEA** / **CLIMATE CHANGE**
NAGORNO-KARABAKH  **PAKISTAN**
WITCHCRAFT  **COX'S BAZAR** 
 **AFGHANISTAN**  **DIGNITY & HUMAN**
FORGOTTEN CONFLICTS  **YOUTH ADVOCACY**
GRASSROOTS ACTION  **INSECURITY**
PEACEBUILDING  **RECONCILIATION**
COURAGE / **REFUGEES** / **TESTIMONY**
 **STORYTELLING**  **SENSITIVITY** 

VLADIMIR

WINNER, ESSAY (13-17)

*'Calling It a Clash: How Language Forgets
Nigeria's Middle Belt'*

AKSHITA

SECOND PLACE, ESSAY (13-17)

*'Charged, But At What Cost?' The hidden cost of
modern technology in the Democratic Republic of
the Congo*

ETHAN

THIRD PLACE, ESSAY (13-17)

'Enforced Disappearances in Balochistan, Pakistan'

FARANGIZ

HIGHLY COMMENDED, ESSAY (13-17)

'The Silence Around Afghanistan's Girls'

SASKIA

HIGHLY COMMENDED, ESSAY (13-17)

'When Hospitals Become Targets: The Gap Between the Legal Prohibition of War Crimes and their Enforcement in Sudan'

NIA

WINNER, ESSAY (18-25)

'The Burden of Young Women in South Africa: Gender-based Violence, the HIV/AIDS epidemic and possible interventions for tackling both'

PARNA

SECOND PLACE, ESSAY (18-25)

'120,000 People Vanished in 24 Hours: The World Was Watching Something Else'

ZAKY

THIRD PLACE, ESSAY (18-25)

'When Home Becomes a Place You Cannot Return To: Papua and the Conflict the World Rarely Names'

MAUNG

HIGHLY COMMENDED, ESSAY (18-25)

'Nearly a Decade Without Home: Rohingya Survival Between Memory and Uncertainty'

**VOICES OF
TOMORROW
FOR HUMAN
RIGHTS
TODAY**

