

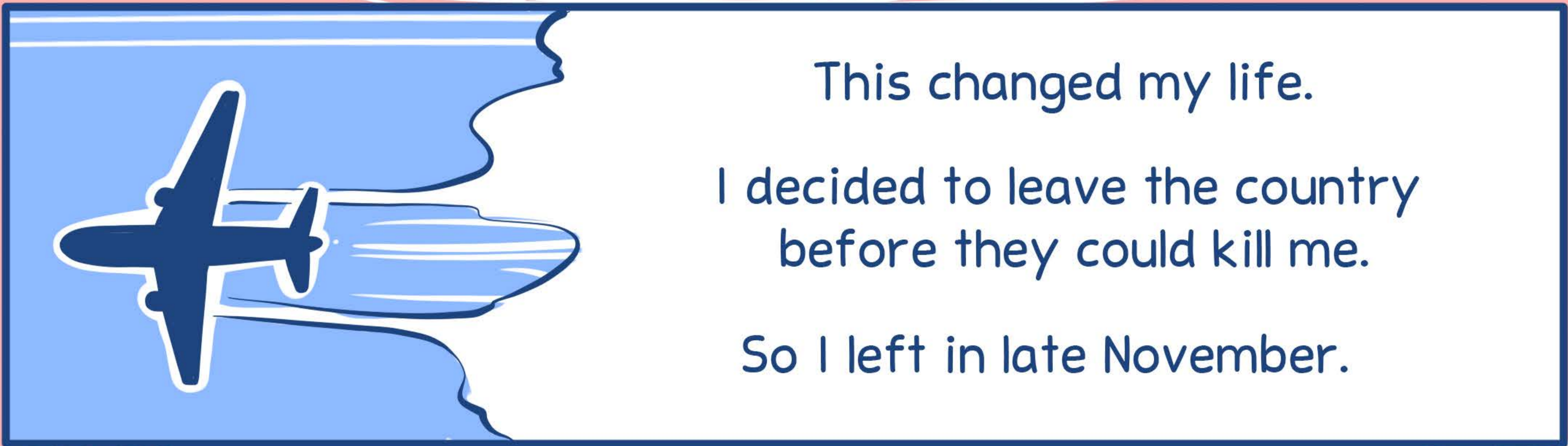


I was a journalist
in Afghanistan.

In October 2015,
when the Taliban
captured the
northern city of
Kunduz, we
covered their
attack on
a girls' dorm
and the rape of
some of the
students by the
insurgents.



The Taliban
strongly rejected
the report,
and officially
declared war on
our channel,
TOLONews.



This changed my life.

I decided to leave the country
before they could kill me.

So I left in late November.

A few weeks later,
the Taliban attacked.



Seven colleagues were killed
and 26 more were injured.



EU

VISTO/VISA
ITALIA/ITALIE/ITALY ITA



I was one of the few lucky ones to travel without the suffering that other immigrants experience. Thanks to my job, I got a visa to talk about journalism in a war-torn country at a workshop in Italy.

When I arrived, I stayed at my sister's place. This isn't usually what happens when fleeing a war zone. People travel for months at risk of being robbed, killed, starved, or hit by harsh weather.

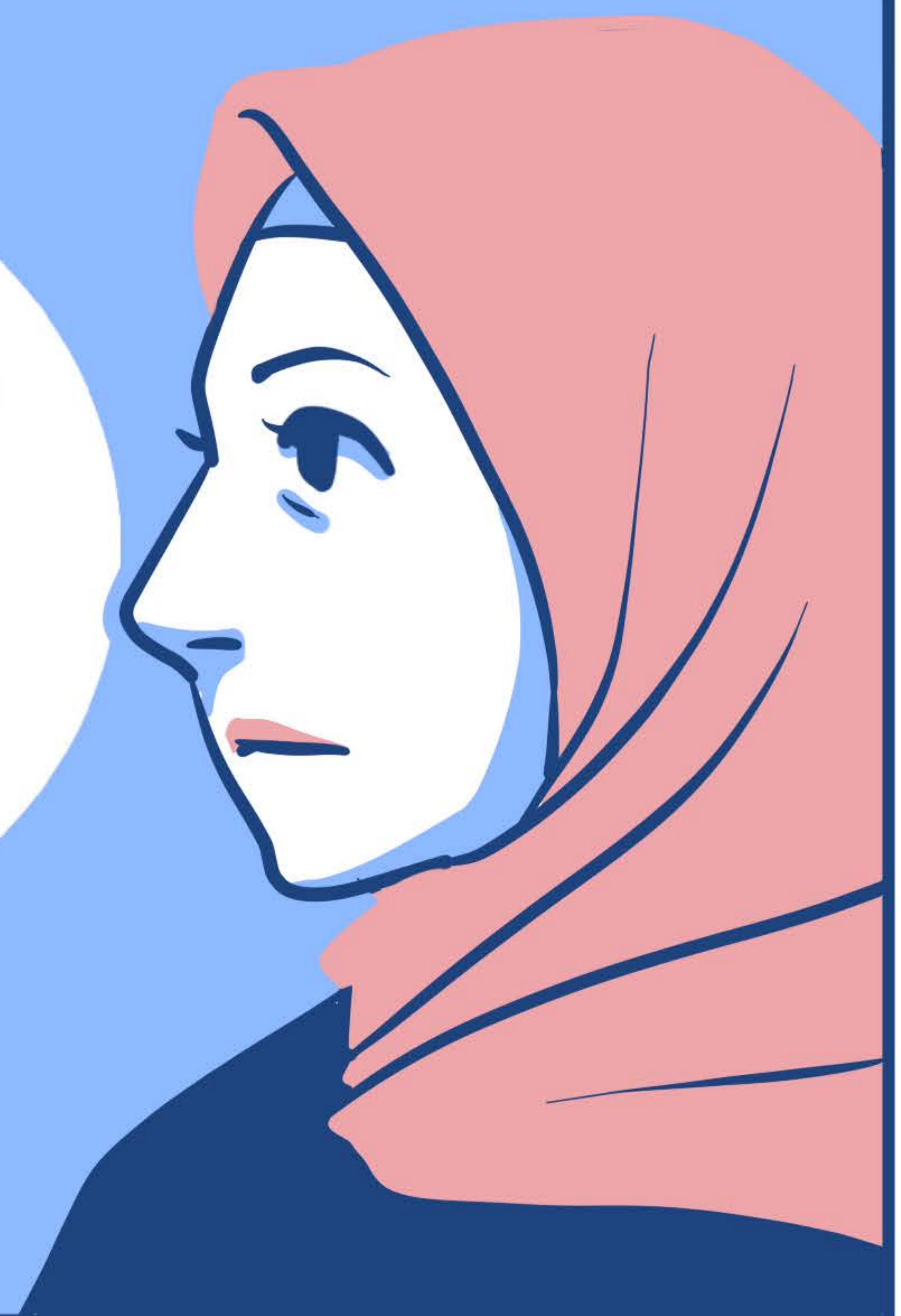


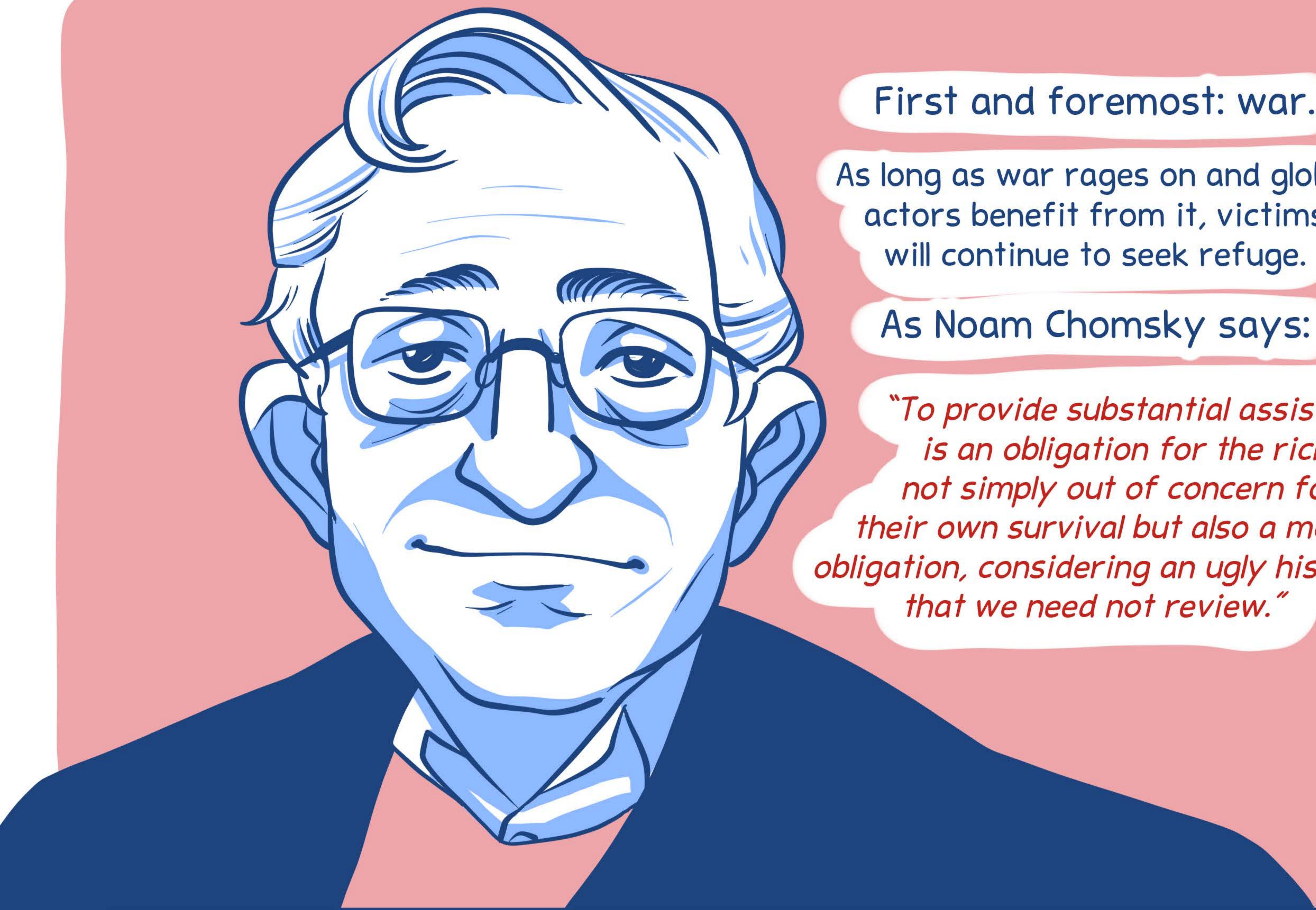
There are stereotypes of migrants being backward, uneducated, uncivilised, thieves.

Some stereotypes turn out to be true. When a country suffers from 40 years of war, people naturally end up illiterate, poor, and oriented towards violence.



Migration is inevitable for many reasons.





First and foremost: war.

As long as war rages on and global actors benefit from it, victims will continue to seek refuge.

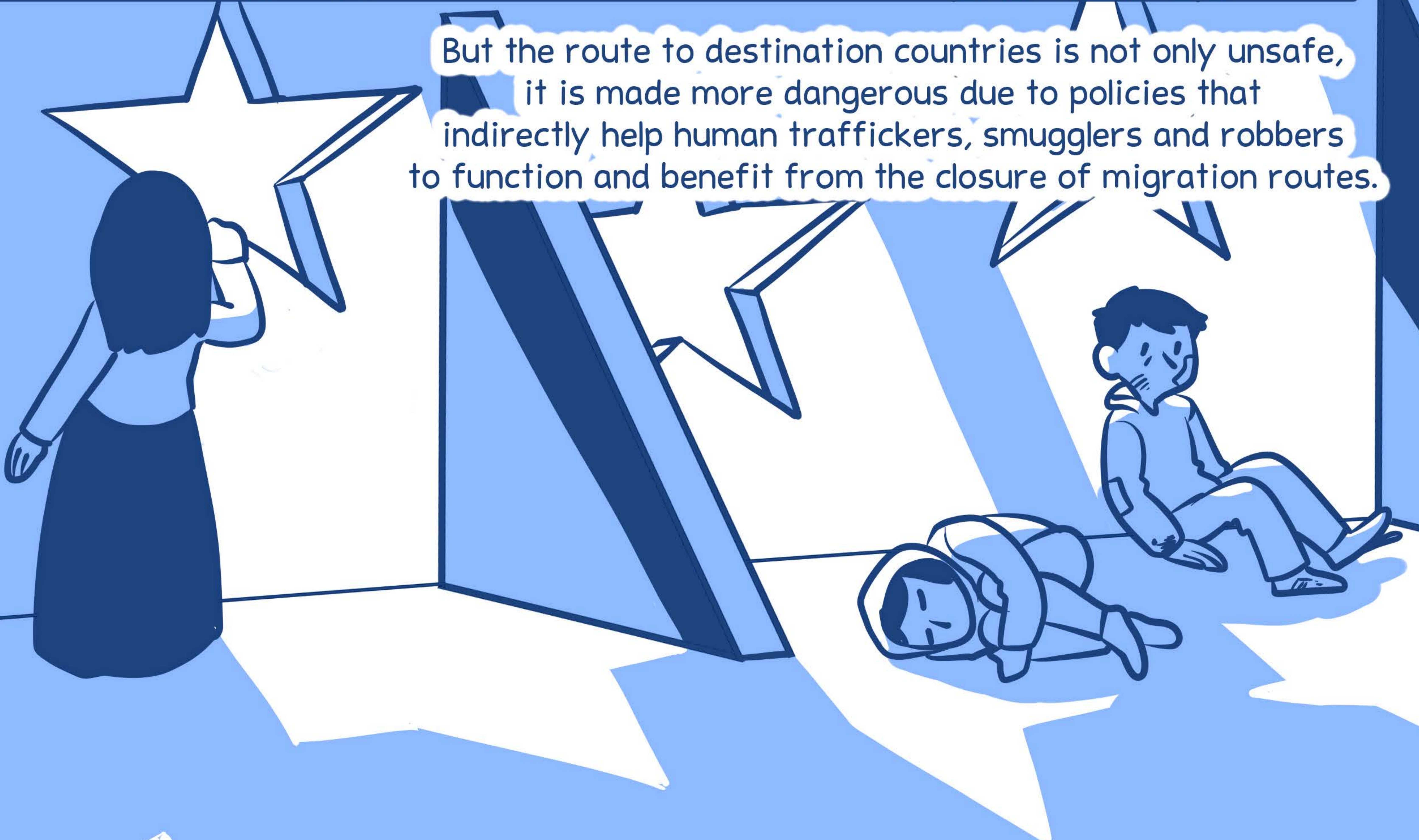
As Noam Chomsky says:

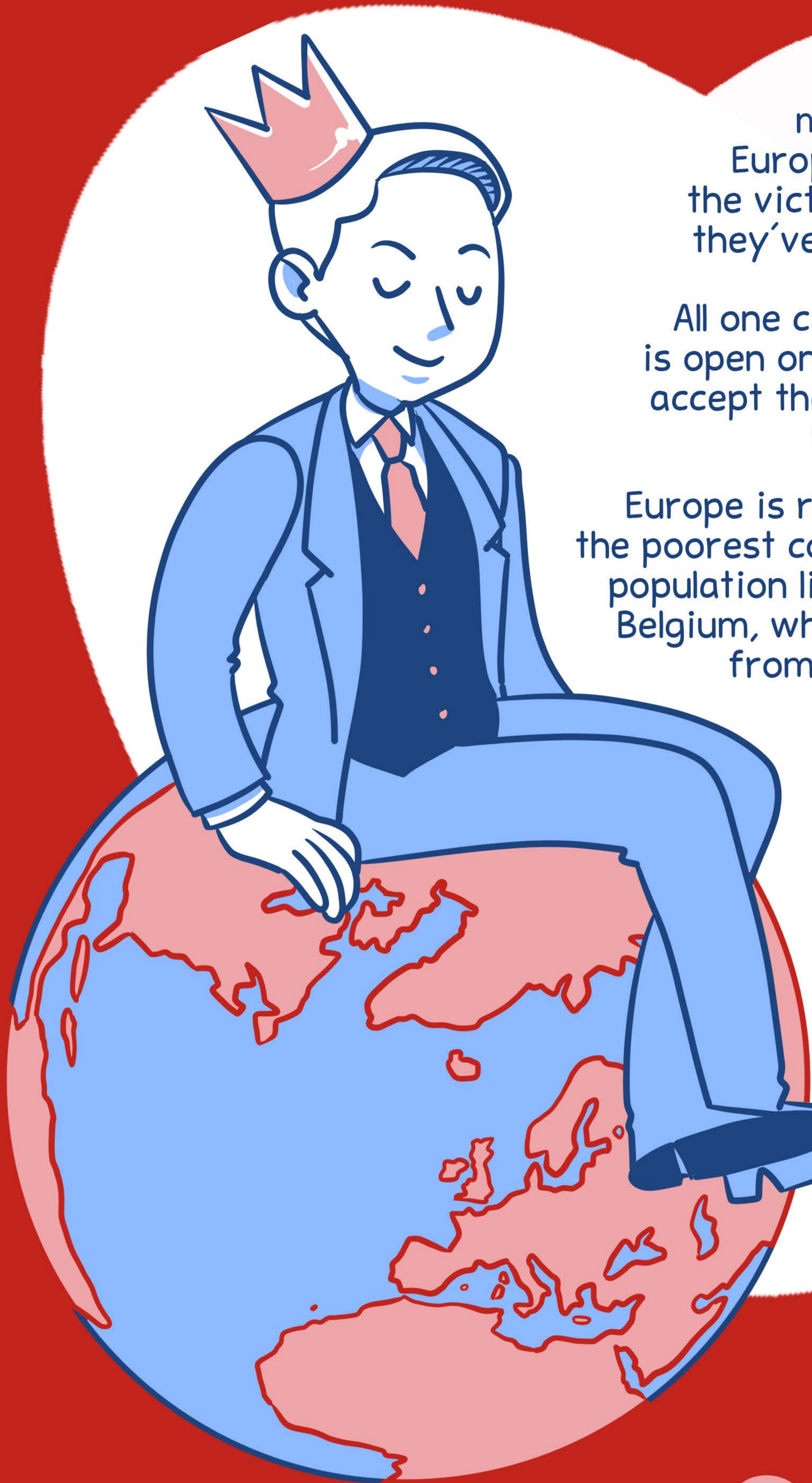
"To provide substantial assistance is an obligation for the rich, not simply out of concern for their own survival but also a moral obligation, considering an ugly history that we need not review."

The least European institutions could do is provide safe pathways and protection to the refugees.



But the route to destination countries is not only unsafe, it is made more dangerous due to policies that indirectly help human traffickers, smugglers and robbers to function and benefit from the closure of migration routes.





Instead of seeing migrants as a threat, Europeans could see them as the victims of a global power play they've paid for with their taxes.

All one can do, as some already are, is open one's arms, embrace them, and accept them as full human beings with fundamental rights.

Europe is rich. Afghanistan is among the poorest countries, where over half the population lives below the poverty line. Belgium, where I am now, is different from my native country in every way.



European society is advanced, be it in education, technology, health, human rights, services...

People here are different than in places like Afghanistan. Their tastes, lifestyles, ways of thinking, social norms, values, culture, and tradition are all different.

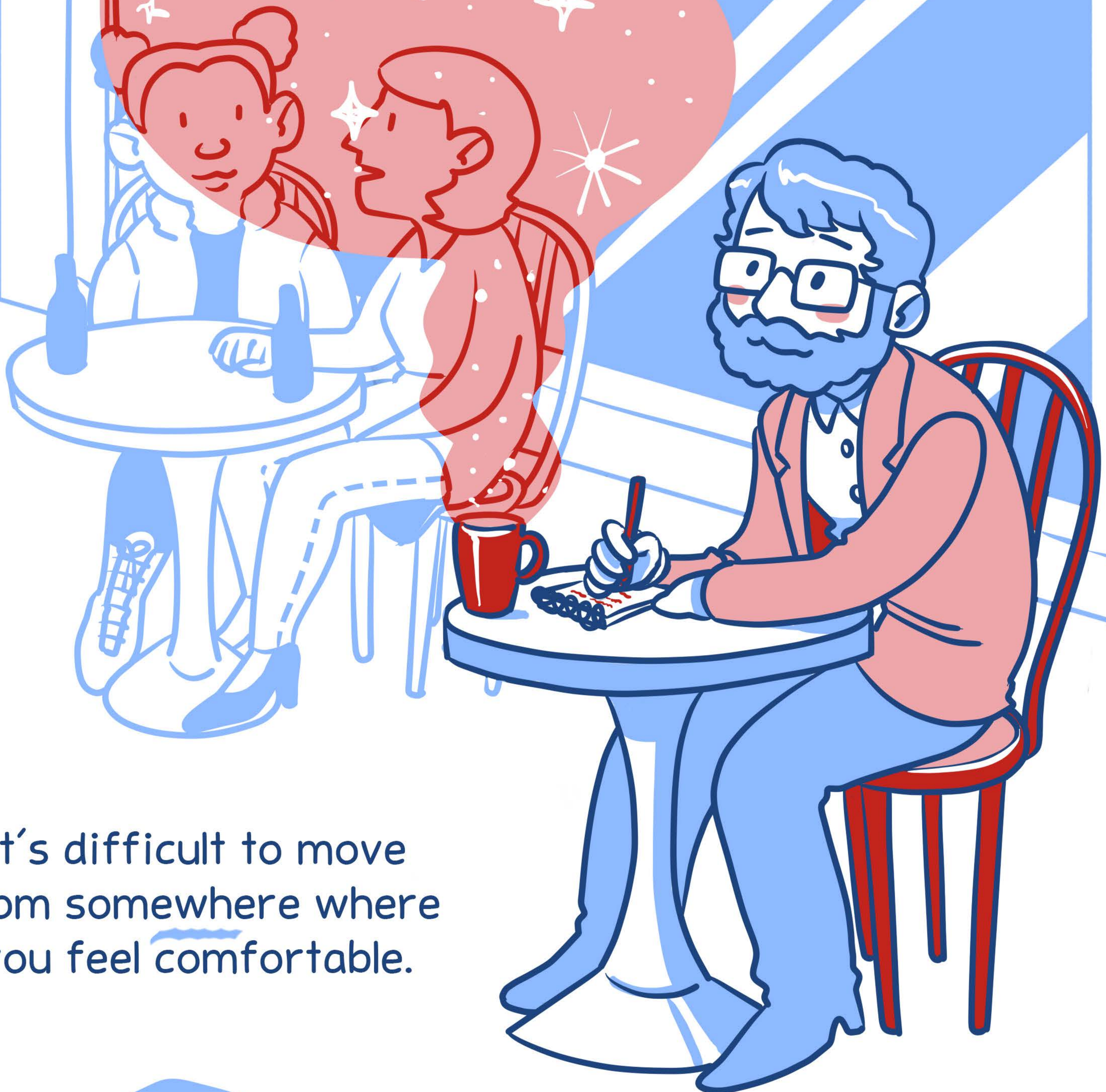
Every human's capacity to tolerate and face hardship and challenges differs due to the circumstances they experienced.

I find my strength in a strong confidence in my ability to face challenges, in hope, in God, and in my family and friends' prayers (positive vibes and energy).



I think I'm getting settled in Belgium.
I've made a new life here, and I'm liking it.

If there were peace in Afghanistan, I'd go back,
but I'm not sure I'd stay there forever, because,
somehow, I've become accustomed to
this new existence.



It's difficult to move
from somewhere where
you feel comfortable.