

# A FLOWERING COUNTRY

BOOK 2 - VERIDA'S TRUTH



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## Book 2 - Verida's Truth

Asia Justice and Rights

2022

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A Flowering Country

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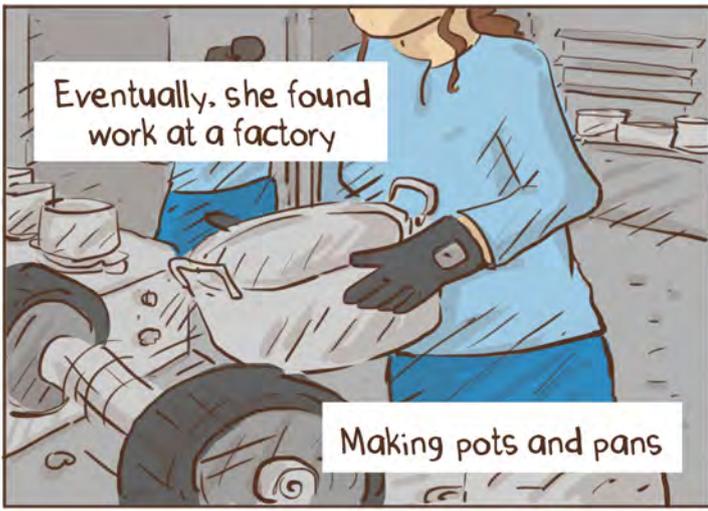
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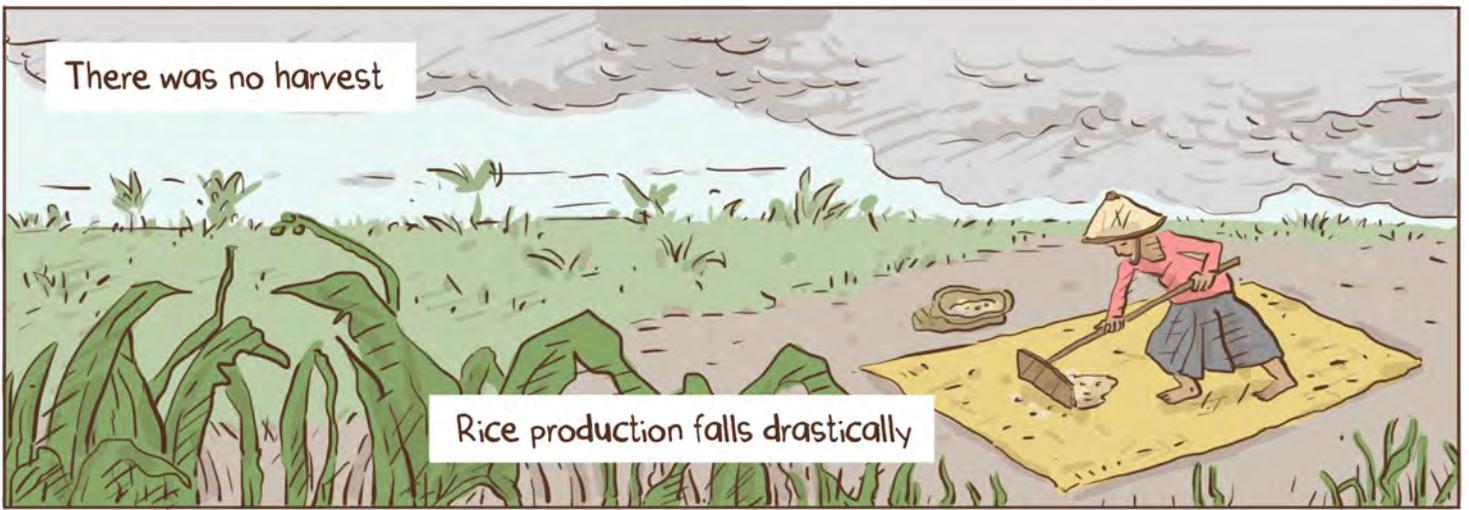
Verida



Age has nurtured  
her to maturity





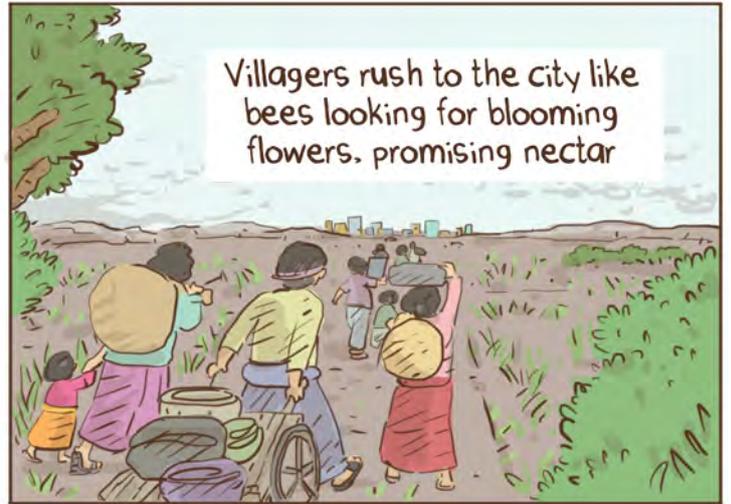


There was no harvest

Rice production falls drastically



Beggars sprouting like mushrooms in the city



Villagers rush to the city like bees looking for blooming flowers, promising nectar



Armed robbers



Thieves are everywhere



The news report that many people are crossing the border illegally

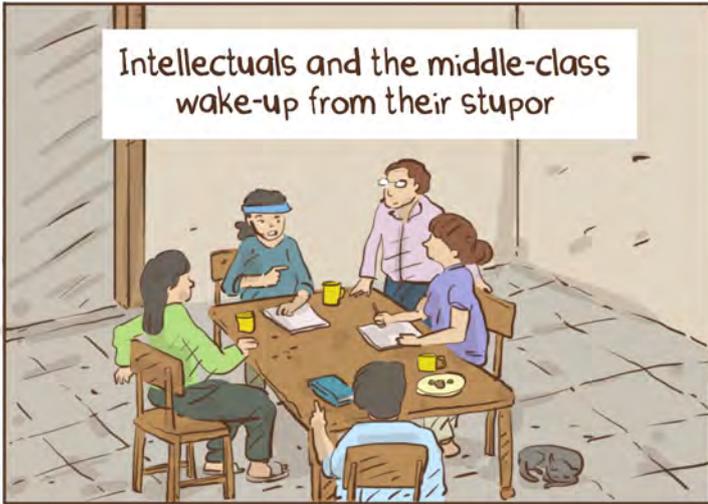
Crossing on boats, or walking through jungle



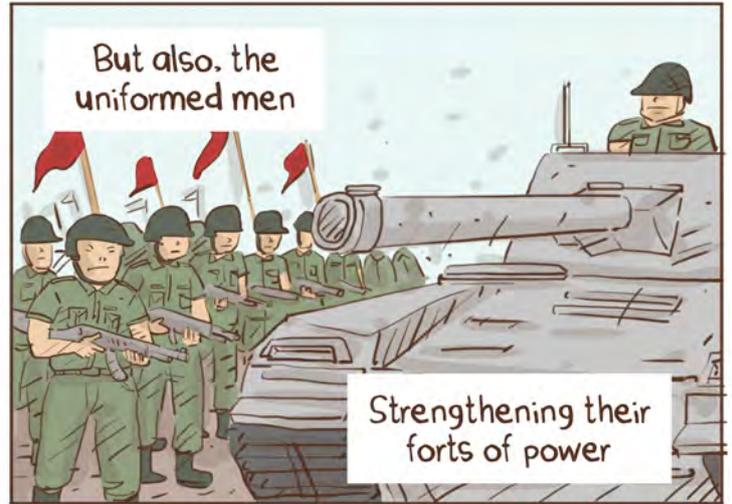
Many are detained in prison, some disappear in the middle of the night



Outside, the loudspeakers shout out words



Intellectuals and the middle-class wake-up from their stupor



But also, the uniformed men

Strengthening their forts of power



Over land, mines, and industry



Pencil and paper are never far from the hand of Verida



Books and all sorts of reading material always in her bag

Unlike food, so hard to come by



Verida never had a permanent home



Moving from place to place, staying at friends



She was always recognizable with her harried long hair



Trotting hurriedly from one place to another



Her head in the clouds, the winds blowing through her locks



Her soft voice laden with the truth that she begins to collect



Listening to those who speak with the quietest tones



Verida kept her diary with all the details of her daily interactions



Her friends liked to spend time with her

Sharing their burdens and hopes



Verida loved coming home to her books



Exploring her imagination by reading



Her all-time favorite, a book about the experience of survivors



Verida loved to daydream about collecting victims' stories and making a literary report



She devoured books, newspapers, magazines new and old, bought from the 2nd hand book sellers



One day ..

Verida read an article about a truth commission newly ..

.. established by civil society and some community leaders in a neighbouring district



The truth commission is working in an area where Verida had worked before



She knew about the issues that the people faced there



Verida had to see for herself what the truth



Verida lived in this area with the ethnic people who chose to stay in their homes despite the conflict



Many have fled to the neighboring country

Under threat by the  
uniformed armed group



The poor have  
become even poorer



Not enough food, clean  
water, basic needs



Everyday living in fear



I wonder if I can  
join them?



Knock .. knock!







Listening to their stories.  
Verida took many statements



She documented every count of  
violations experienced by victims



Initially ..

They were  
stigmatized as outsiders.  
not really citizens



And thus, they were treated  
differently from the real citizens



They were not allowed  
to go to school



Not allowed to work in  
government offices



Not allowed to own land



The government and the uniformed  
men took over their land

They said that the take-over was for the good of the country



Their land was loaned out to developers from the cities, and also from overseas



They received almost no compensation for the land that they lost



Categorizing them as a group deserving to be discriminated, they lost their homes



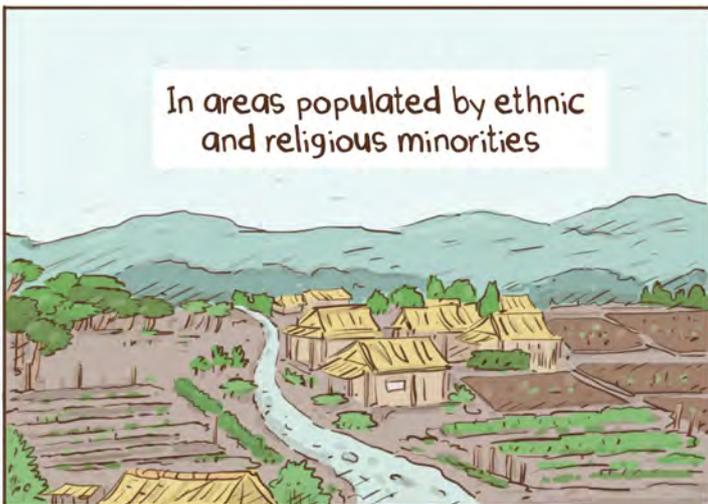
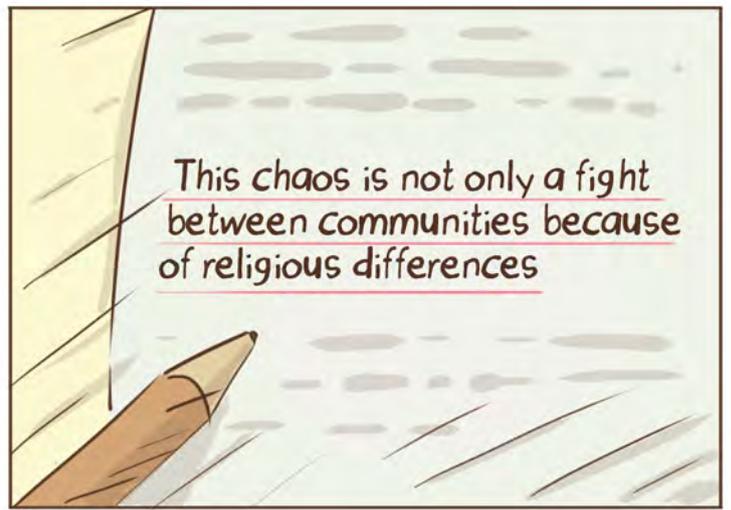
Moved to concentration camps ..

They became isolated, with no rights in their own land



Eventually, they became targets of attacks. Caught in a cycle of victimization

Their experience of discrimination and violence led to an ethnic cleansing



When this report is finished, they will share it with the world

So, everyone will know what has happened here



The truth commission held press conference in preparation for a public hearing

Today is an important day for our country ..

This is the culmination of years of work by survivors and activists

Two years ago ..

The UN's investigation commission recommended the establishment of a truth-seeking process ..

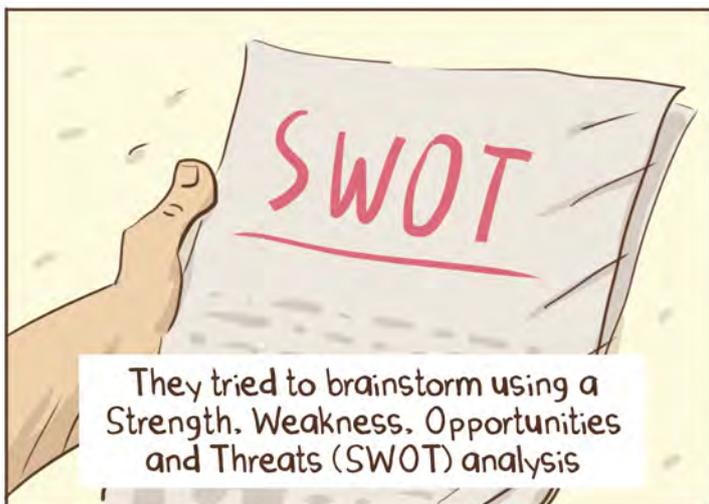
To understanding the root causes of conflict. Last year, our community leaders along with civil society established this truth commission

After taking thousands of statements, today we will hold a public hearing

A key element of our truth commission is to listen to the voices of victims. In consultation with survivors and civil society, we the commissioners, promise to listen to their stories in an impartial and independent way

We will hold our hearing in this former prison, a place that was used to torture thousands in the past













The government has weapons, money, allies

They have tools of power to legalize their actions



What do we have?

Looks like .. I need to rest



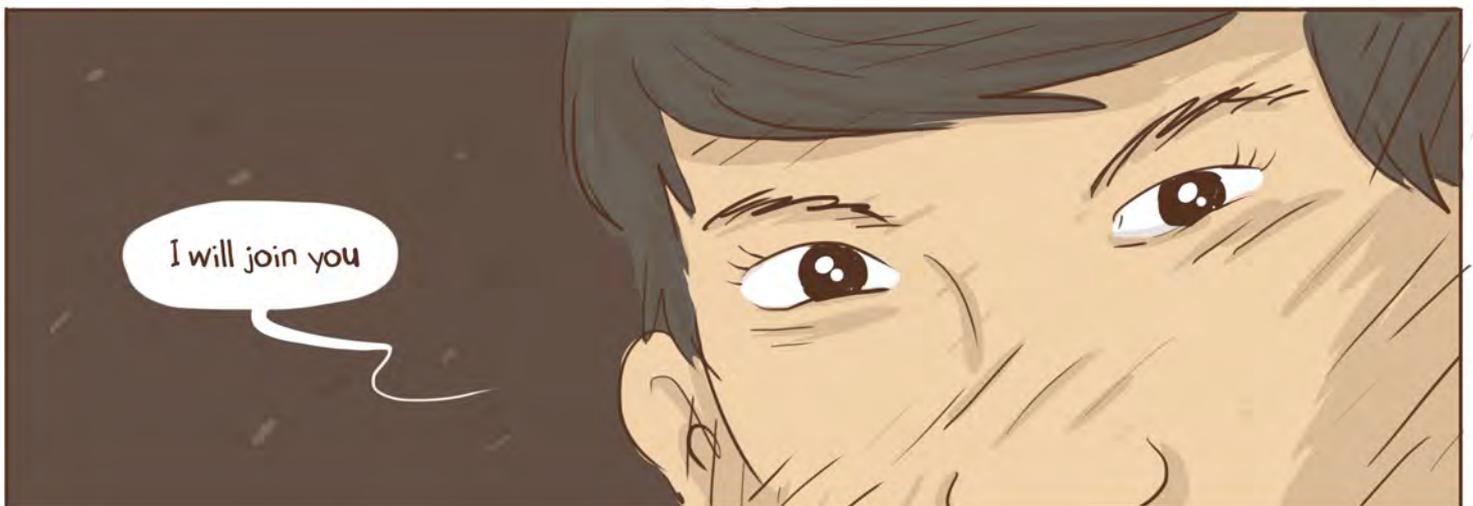
Hu hu hu!



...



There, there .. We will think of what is best, what we should do



I will join you

