She was born without legs, but she didn't stop trying

AFP | Serjilla, Syria

ight-year-old Maya Merhi back. had to struggle around a camp on artificial limbs made of dren. plastic tubing and tin cans.

But now the girl, who was her walking," says her born with no legs due to a confather Mohammed, genital condition, is walking on sitting in their new prosthetics after undergo- makeshift tent. ing treatment in Turkey.

Pictures of her plight in Syr- family and all our ia, were seen around the world loved ones were in June, and she was taken to so happy." Istanbul for the life-changing procedure.

Dressed in a pink sweater and same condimatching shoes, Maya on Saturtion as his day was able for the first daughter,

> time known as to congenital amputa-

the Serjilla camp after arriving without lower limbs.

Finally she joined in the games homemade prosthetics on which treatment at a specialised clinic. ■ Syrian displaced persons and dancing with the other chil-

she used to shuffle around the "I was so happy when I saw Originally from Aleppo region, the father and daughter had to move to rebel-held

Idlib province as fighting from Syria's civil war began "The whole to rage around their home. globe, the Turkish to Turkey. Mohammed Red Crescent intersuffers the

walk along the rutted roads of which means the person is born daughter were evacuated from Syria by the Turkish authori-He cobbled together the ties and brought to Istanbul for

Mohammed received prosthetic limbs as well, but admits that he isn't yet as steady on them as his daughter.

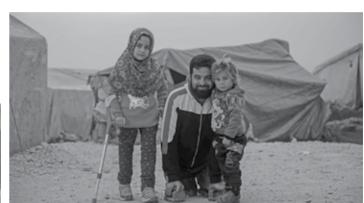
Sitting on a foam mattress, his daughter unwraps the artificial legs and attaches them.

"To begin with there were dif-After the pictures of Ma-ficulties getting used to them," ya's difficulties sparked says her uncle Hussein, who acattention across the companied his brother and niece

"All of a sudden she found herself up high on the new pros-The father and thetics."



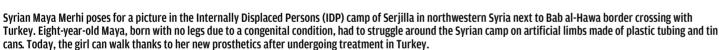
Mava Merhi removes her artificial legs inside a tent at the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp of Serjilla



Maya Merhi (L) poses for a picture with the support of crutches next to her brother and disabled father



Maya Merhi (C) stands among her friends in the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp of Serjilla in northwestern Syria, next to Bab al-Hawa border crossing



Siberian serial killer cop convicted of more murders

AFP | Moscow, Russia

A Siberian policeman who raped and killed women after offering them late-night rides was found guilty of dozens more murders yesterday, making him Russia's most prolific serial killer of recent times.

A court in the city of Irkutsk found Mikhail Popkov guilty of 56 murders between 1992 and 2007, sentencing him to a second life term. He was already in prison after being convicted of killing 22 women in 2015.

Popkov offered rides to women late at night, sometimes in his police car, while off-duty around his city of Angarsk near Irkutsk.

He killed them using weapons including a hammer and an axe, then dumped their bodies in the woods, at the side of the road and in a local cemetery.

He was also found guilty of raping 10 of the women.

Popkov described himself as a man. "cleaner" who was purging his between the ages of 16 and 40. television showed. He will be murderer being given a second Popkov as having "a pathologi-



Mikhail Popkov stands inside a defendants' cage during a court hearing in Irkutsk

The grey-haired 54-year-old nicknamed the "Black Dolphin." home city of prostitutes. All but appeared in court in prison unione of his victims were women form, his head bowed, Russian rare case in Russia of a convicted

His other victim was a police- sent to a prison that is exclusive- life sentence -- Popkov was also ly for convicts serving life terms,

As part of his sentence -- a

deprived of his police pension.

Covered his tracks

Prosecutors have described

Popkov was caught in 2012 after investigators re-examined the case and carried out DNA testing of residents, focusing on those who drove a make of car that matched tracks found at crime scenes

cal attraction to killing people" but he was ruled sane enough to stand trial. Investigators had suspected a policeman was behind the crime because of the

1998. In a 2017 interview with murders.

Russia's Meduza website, Popkov said he gave women lifts and targeted those who were drunk or living in a way he saw as immoral, saying that "any society condemns the behaviour of a debauched woman".

While already in jail, he confessed to 59 further murders but was convicted only of 56 on Monday because investigators had not managed to prove three of the crimes took place, *Interfax* news agency reported, citing the court's press service.

Investigators said they uncovered the remains of some of the victims' bodies based on Popkov's account, as well as finding murder weapons including axes, chisels and knives.

The number of killings for which he has been convicted exceeds the totals of several notorious murderers in Russia and the ex-Soviet Union.

"Chessboard Killer" Alexanway the killer covered his tracks. der Pichushkin was sentenced The murders took place while to life in prison in 2007 for 48 he was a serving police officer murders and Andrei Chikatilo and after he left the force in was convicted of 52 Soviet-era