

# THE Refugee

DADAAB - EDITION  
Issue No: 1, 2014



## MAN + ANIMALS

THE CULTURE OF GBV  
Dance to the Beat

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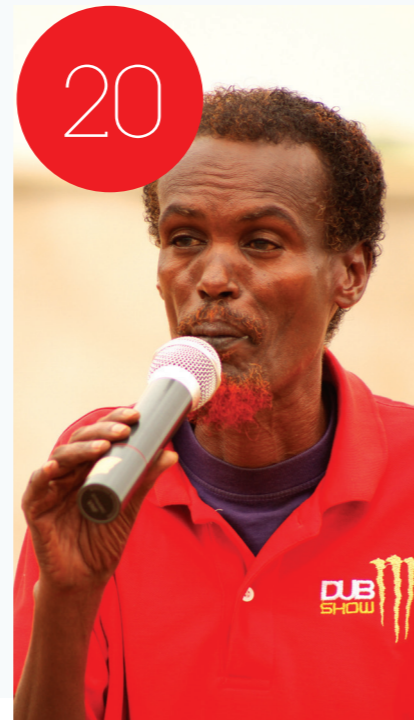
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## A New Dawn

Welcome to the first issue of 'The Refugee Magazine', a magazine that seeks to inform, entertain as well as give a voice to the voiceless. It is written by refugees living in the world's largest refugee camp and supported by FilmAid, BPRM and other partners. The Refugee was started back in 2009 by a group of Refugees from Ifo refugee camp who had a passion for journalism and wanted a newsletter that could give a voice to the voiceless since the camp at that time had none and even the national newspapers were not readily available. The group of 9 approached FilmAid International for assistance and FilmAid pledged its support. Since then, 10 editions (Over 40,000 copies) of 'The Refugee Newsletters' have been published and distributed free of charge among the three major camps. FilmAid has also been training more writers in journalism to aid in ensuring that only high quality and ethical articles make it to the publisher.

It is important to mention at this point that the support and feedback from our readers have been overwhelmingly positive. It is always a satisfying feeling to see people running to get their copies of the newsletter and even those who could not read English sitting calmly as their young ones translate for them. The colorful photographs in each page also told a lot.

Of course all this did not come without pitfalls and year in year out new challenges presented themselves. One of the major challenges faced was in the publication and some editions came out

later than planned when all the news in them had become stale, hence losing its meaning as a newsletter. It is with such challenges in mind that we saw it wise to produce a high-end magazine with features from the camps, which at the end will have a longer shelf life.

The Refugee Magazine is a bimonthly publication with stories and articles from the camps. New columns such as Culture, Gender, Business, New Ideas among others have been introduced while still trying as much as possible not to kill the what the mother newsletter intended when it came into being.

In our first issue, we highlight the repatriation issue and how it may affect the refugees especially in the education sector. We also take a look at some inspiring features, success stories that are sure to change your mind. Also read our New Ideas column and see how technology is slowly going to change the lives of people living in Dadaab. We also went ahead to highlight the major events that made the headlines in the year 2013.

We appreciate your support and feedback. Feel free to let us know what you think of our new magazine, what you think we missed, what you want to read on in our next issue, give us your opinion on issues that affect you and we will try as much as possible to bring your ideas and feelings to life. Also, interact with us through our social media sites below.

We wish you a prosperous year ahead, and remember your past should only serve as lessons to doing things better today. Enjoy your read!



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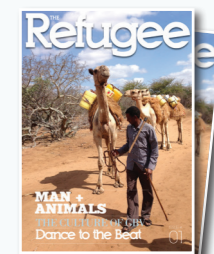
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#### ABOUT

The Refugee is a bi-monthly publication written by refugees living in Dadaab and for the refugees. These writers have been trained by FilmAid on basic journalism under FilmAid's journalism project. It is published by FilmAid and supported by BPRM, UNHCR, and other partner organizations.



#### COVER PHOTO

Man and animals makes the cover photo of our first issue of The Refugee.  
 Photo by Mohamed Bashir

# Celebrating our women's achievements

By Mohamed Bashir

Since the fall of Siyad Barre's regime in the 1990s, our women stood up for different responsibilities: from taking care of the family units to national and international duties. Our religion (Islam) respects women to the fullest. The Prophet Muhammad said-may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him: Your Heaven lies under the feet of your mother. And a mother is a Woman. And the girl of today is the woman of tomorrow. The Somali Culture is harsh on them. Some of the forms of cultural discrimination include; not participating in the decision making arenas, female genital mutilation (FGM), domestic violence, early and forced marriage, forced wife inheritance, honor killing and denial of education for girls or women among others. All these are rooted in the culture and norms that the Somali society practices. "It is the patriarchal nature of our Society set by our fathers and brothers" says Nimco, a long serving Women Affairs. According to UN Development Programme (UNDP) Report "in no society are women secure or treated equally to men, personal insecurity shadows them from the cradle to the grave. In the house hold, they are the last to eat. At school they are the last to be educated. At work they are the last to be hired and the first to be fired. And from childhood to adulthood they are abused because of their gender, psychological trauma as they are mostly a victim of sexual gender based violence" Yes! We are not alone in these discriminatory cultural sagas, as it's also a global problem. But also let's celebrate our few Somali Women and Girls who made us proud. It was August last year when H.E President Hassan Appointed Fauzia Yusuf Adan as Somalia's deputy prime minister, the first woman to hold that position,

coupled with foreign minister and again the first Somali woman to hold that post. She made several trips to the world, made decisions and shown her ability to lead Somali's Foreign Ministry - a docket ruled by men for centuries, under the current anarchical system in the country. And President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya made another gesture to the world that our women are up to the task, following the example of Somalia's Hassan, he appointed Ambassador Amina Mohamed as Secretary for Foreign Affairs, equivalent to Foreign Affairs minister. She is also Kenya's first Somali ethnic to lead that post since independence in 1964. And to break a record Amina will be Kenya's first ever female Foreign minister. So if, even in conservative and patriarchal Somalia, a woman can be appointed Foreign minister, we have to ask what it is about other countries which have Somali speaking people? And with that, will Ethiopia and Djibouti follow Suit to appreciate our girls? .....According to the nature of the dockets they hold, our two sisters will meet-discuss issues in a language best to them and can offer a better deal than previous ones. I see a light at the end of the tunnel. Another exemplary personality that needs also a special recognition is the celebrated Somali female journalist Amino Muse Wehliye; she served the Somali community at different capacities. She advocates for peace, unity and creates platform for the Somali people to share ideas..... She also deserves a vivid respect.

Hawa Aden is also another good example that our women can qualify for an international awards. She proudly won the Nansen Refugee Award- a

rare award given to those who went an extra-mile, and stand for those in disadvantage situations to regain their self dignity and add a value to the society. She too, I salute her. While many Non-governmental organizations run by men have been blacklisted for corruption and mismanagement of funds- Adeso's Fatuma Jibril have been expanding in size, role and regarded as the best managed NGO to serve the people of the region with relief services and developmental programs. And Farhia Sheik Hassan, the proud hero needs also to be crowned for her extraordinary services to the Dadaab refugee camps. She served the Youth in Dadaab for 4 years as Hagadera Youth Chair lady and was a flower out of the sunrise. Her talent and hard work was witness when the new arrivals came to Dadaab Refugee camps. She stood and started the Campaign of Helping hand for the new influx. She too can qualify for the Noble peace prize but Dadaab Refugee Community Seems forgotten people by the national and international community let alone the countries/ government we belong. Lastly, without forgetting the many other women who sacrificed their efforts and time to rebuild a country battered by decades of violence, conflict and Human rights abuses. I also acknowledge their patriotism and salute them all.

Finally, for the betterment of our women and girls let's eradicate the harmful cultural norms and practices that has no base in our beautiful religion (Islam). We should not see our women as beauty ornaments, but rather as a potential for development and forge a working formula together toward achieving a better and prosperous Somalia.



PHOTO: LEFT Kenyas foreign minister, Amina Ali, Amina Moghe Hersi, Somali business tycoon(middle), and Fowzia Yusuf Haji Aden, Somalia's Foreign Minister and business woman(right) at a business conference in Kampala, Uganda.

PHOTO downloaded from ethiopiannewsforum

## Rising against discrimination to become an inspiration to many

Abdirashid rises through discrimination based on his physical challenge to become a respected businessman in HAG

Mohamed Abdullahi Jimale

Have you ever been in a desperate situation and thought it was the end of the road for you? I met a man from the Hagadera community whose life I can only describe as headed to nothing less than greater heights. Abdirashid Hussein is a 35-year-old man who lives in Hagadera refugee camps block D. He is physically challenged and has to move around in a wheelchair. Stray bullets hit him during the civil war that broke out in Somalia making him lose both of his legs. Sadly, the bullets are still in his body. He has been living in Hagadera for more than 20 years having arrived in Hagadera in the year 1991. Most of the people in Hagadera were hostile to him and used to discriminate against him due to his physical challenges. People despised him, discriminated against him and even inflicted emotional and psychological torture to him through abuses like 'jeeri'(Somali for someone with a disabled leg) All these demoralized him and made him lose motivation for life. He felt like a lesser human being for a moment and wished life could be a little different. He lived in shame and self-pity for most of his early life.

After a long time of feeling sorry for himself, Abdirashid wanted to prove himself to the people that he was not different from them. He wanted to start a business. He dreamed of becoming a businessman but had no capital to help him achieve this so he approached his father for help. 'If real men were unable to do business, how can a disabled man who cannot even walk run one?' These words from his father tore through his heart and mind. He felt disappointed

to so and watched as his hopes and aspirations drain out of him. With the little hope and tears in his heart he approached his mother for help and his mother promised to talk to his father on his behalf. His father gave Ksh. 800 Abdirashid after his mother intervened to start his business.

With the money, he started selling candy in the streets of Hagadera. He would wake up very early and go to the market on his wheelchair. On the way he could meet other people walking in the same direction and they would help push him to the market along the sandy and dusty paths to the market. He made a profit of Ksh. 3000 in five months. His hard work was slowly paying off. He reinvested the profits back into his business buying a small display table and adding some goods to his business. He stopped hawking in the market and now had a semi permanent place where his customers would easily access his business. His business was beginning to pick.

In 2006 the unexpected happened. A raging fire broke out in the market wiping businesses and destroying properties worth millions of shillings. Abdirashid's business was also affected and he lost all his stock. 'I felt so sad and helped that day. It was the worse experience I had since I arrived at the camps. I sat helplessly in my house as people ran to the market to salvage their businesses. I only remained with Ksh. 2000 which I was to use as change for my business.'

Not letting his dreams burn down with his business, he started his business with the money he had been left with after the fire ordeal. He was not giving up without a fight and after some months he tripled his profits. Abdirashid felt the market was not working for him and so he decided to move his business from the market to his block. His block was where he lived and would be easily accessible to him and there would be much less competition as compared to the market. He was also not going to let fire in the market consume his business again.

He put up a small kiosk in his backyard and set up his business. This new place did not come without challenges, as children would run with candy from his shop knowing that he could not run after them. However, this did not make him give up on his business. The new business would earn him much higher profits, with his profits shooting up to 15 thousand a month. He then expanded



PHOTO: Abdirashid poses for a photo in Hagadera camp

his business with this profits into a much bigger shops and made deals with retailer in the market to supply him with goods for his business.

'I am now married with three children and also take care of my parents needs.' His success made his name spread quickly across the camp and made him a 'hero' to many. 'I now take part in major decision making in Hagadera and in my block, even my family respects me.'

Abdirashid never gave up, he was determined. He is now thinking of buying a car to help in his mobility and also to help in his business. 'I urge people living with disability not to give up and face life with courage.'

# Kenyatta University's Dadaab Students set to graduate this year

By Mohamed Mire

This year, Abdullahi Mire hopes he will graduate with a Diploma in Public Relations and Journalism from the first university, in the world, within a refugee camp. He is one of 25 students undertaking the same course. The first generation of Somali's refugees at Dadaab refugee camp, to graduate from Dadaab university, a branch of Kenyatta University in Kenya, set up to meet the needs of the 460,000 refugees residing at Dadaab refugees camp, the biggest camp in the world. Dr. Josephine Gitome, a lecturer at Kenyatta University and coordinator of the Dadaab university campus says the university education at the refugees is a door through which the refugees can walk through out of the restrictive camps life. But when Abdullahi Mire contemplates about furthering his education beyond the diploma, his becomes a worried student, "our status in Kenya is uncertain, we fear repatriation, its even killing the moral of student who wants to join the university next year. We fear going back to Somalia as that would mean discontinuing with our education. There is no formal learning in Somalia, just ongoing conflict and instability." Somali has been in protracted conflict since 1991 and majority of her population live as internally displaced person or as refugees in neighbouring countries. The repatriation fears have been with the Somali's refugees in Kenya for weeks now after the Kenya and Somalia governments including United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) signed a tripartite agreement. An agreement that among others proposes the repatriation of Somali's refugees in Kenya back to Somalia, voluntarily within the next three years. Since the Westgate Mall terror attack in Kenya on September 21st, 2013 that claimed at least 70 lives, chorus for Somali's refugees to return home have been building. Kenyan authorities says that some of the attackers who carried out the terror attack might have hailed or got trained within the camp, something the Somali refugees have denied. Among those who signed the tripartite agreement is Kenya's Deputy Vice President William Ruto who while signing the agreement noted, "Kenya has been stretched financially to secure the camps but criminals including

Al-shabaab have continued to take advantage of the refugee camps to destabilise our country. Elements of the refugee's population have also abated the proliferation of small arms and light weapons."

Mire came to Kenya as a refugee back in 1991 at the aged three-years with his parents and two other siblings fleeing civil war back in country. He started his education journey in 1995 at Juba primary school in Dagahaley refugee camp where for five-years the language of instruction was Somali and English, as well as the curriculum. With Somali descending into further anarchy and with refugees stay in Kenya appearing to take a semi-permanent status. The Kenya government and UNHCR decided to adopt the Kenyan education system as the curriculum of learning from those going beyond standard six. This also meant that Abdullahi Mire had to transfer form his previous school to Unity Primary within Dagahaley and also learn a new language in school, called Swahili, Kenya's second most spoken language.

On finishing his primary he joined Dagahaley secondary school in 2003 graduating in 2006. Without any available post-secondary institutions to enable him pursue further education within the camp, he started working as an interpreter within the refugee camps for the various humanitarian agencies. Abdullahi Mire so his work more that just a means to make a living but an undertaking "to break the communication barrier within his community and those seeking to help them." His passion for communication was to mutate into journalism during the 2011 drought that drew around 100,000 Somali's from Somalia into Kenya. The drought crisis triggered an international humanitarian response as well increased media attention. It was then that Abdullahi Mire started working as a fixer or stringer for the various international media institutions that sought to draw world attention to the crisis. In effort to package himself for his new but demanding undertaking, he sought to get a Certificate in Communication, from a local college, despite the misgivings of the quality of education at the collage.



PHOTO: Mire, one of the students set to graduate this year from K.U

When he was about to give up hope of furthering his education, news came that Kenyatta University in partnership with others would open a branch at the camp. Upon the opening of the campus branch, he applied and got admitted as well as a scholarship to study for his diploma. But due to insecurity within the camp that bared lecturers from Kenyatta University from coming to the camps, he had to wait until 2013 to start his classes.

Dadaab University opened its doors at the camp and received its first students in January 2013 and is welcoming members of the host community as well as refugees. The university says that one of its objectives is to empower refugees through tertiary education. It offers diploma, undergraduate and master's programs in academic fields such as Finance, Marketing, Project Management, Education, Public Administration, Community Mobilisation, Peace and Conflict Studies and many others. Without post-secondary education, most students at the refugee's camps faced a dead end as there are no tertiary institutions recognized by Kenyan Government at the camp. Unable to return to Somalia, secure meaningful work in Kenya, or continue their education, they sit idle in the camps, falling prey to anyone would be seeking to recruit them to engage in all sought of criminal activities.

## SCHOOL WRITERS CLUBS TURN TO SOCIAL MEDIA

What comes to mind when the word social media is mentioned? Is it facebook, twitter, linked-in, blog, nimbuzz, and or ebuddy? For many, these platforms have been providing users with an avenue to socialize with friends, keep them from boredom, and meet new people online while others use them to advertise their products and services.

Dadaab refugee camps have a lot of young talents especially in the field of journalism. The camp has two radio stations and agencies that provide avenues to nature these young talents. FilmAid International is a good example. It provides basic journalism training to youth as well as run some video training programmes. On the other hand, INTERNEWS is also on the ground dealing with radio broadcasting. The refugee team has been visiting secondary schools in a bid to strengthen the existing writers and arts clubs in Dadaab refugee schools, both primary and secondary schools. We came across different school writers clubs who have gone an extra mile in their quest to reach their goals of becoming journalists. The clubs are going online perhaps taking advantage of the Internet to run facebook pages where all members are free to post in new items and keep the rest of their teams and classmate updated on the happenings around the camps. While some of these groups are closed, most of them are open to the general public. This comes as many cyber cafes are being opened in the markets, and secondary schools receiving computers from a UNHCR and MICROSOFT project.

Going through these facebook groups, you realize that most of these groups have content but they are slowly becoming obsolete, as most of them are not being regularly updated. It is important to realize the value of social media as a platform for one to practice journalism and stay informed. Making informative posts and uploading good quality of photographs on this simple yet far-reaching media can be a good start to a career in journalism.

## Computerized Learning In Dadaab Refugee Schools

By Abdi Ibrahim Warabe

Finally, the long awaited dream is slowly being realized as more schools get computer labs in Dadaab refugee camps, thanks to the education partners and Microsoft. Although much is yet to be in place like the Internet in schools, the students, teachers as well as the parents are optimistic about the project. The question that many people outside the camps might ask themselves is, do the refugee community really need computers, and the Internet? Well, the world is a fast changing place and the systems that used to be sufficient years back are now fast fading away. Think of it this way, 10 years back there were only a handful users of mobile phones but today, the number of mobile users has risen with an approximated 4 million users in Kenya only. In the same way, technology is advancing and computers are becoming a need in developed and developing parts of the globe. We will not be refugees forever and if we are to build our own countries to fairly compete with the world then computer knowledge will be vital.

Dadaab refugee camp has seen the first inhabitants through the Kenyan 8-4-4 education system. Established in 1992 to provide refuge to people fleeing from war in the neighboring Somali, Dadaab refugee camp has provided homage for nearly half a million refugees providing them with the basic services including education. Tracing back to the period before the civil war broke out, most of us were farmers and business people. Most of our properties were left in Somali and others destroyed. Our animals killed by draught and our crops dried. Pirates took over the seas. We were introduced to formal education here in the camps and over the years the number of girls enrolling has greatly increased. At first, language was a barrier but with time the English language was fully adopted in schools. The agencies have worked so hard to build educational

PHOTO: An aerial view of Ifo refugee camp in Dadaab. Courtesy of UNHCR

facilities with each camp having at least 2 primary schools and two secondary schools. University programmes It has been a long road for refugees living in the camps and amidst all the challenges; some refugees have done remarkably in both primary and secondary national examination. This is a fact that cannot be left and only shows the great potential in academics that lies in the camps. The opening of computer labs in schools will introduce students to basic knowledge of computing. This, for many, would otherwise only be achieved through training in colleges, or private computer bureaus in the market. This translated to students encountering extra cost in terms of training fees. Early this year, Kenyatta University opened a campus in Dadaab bringing tertiary education closer to refugees. The introduction of computer education will enable more students to have an easier learning experience in Campus. Although the fruits of tis project will take time to be realized, both the community and students are optimistic about it.

It is anticipated that with the introduction of computers in schools, the world will become a smaller village by connecting the students to the outside world. Information will be at the fingertips of the students and hence make learning a much easier and fun experience once the computers are connected to the Internet. All these have been achieved with the will of God and we are very much grateful to God. Surely it is true to say, "Many hands make light work," or "Unity is strength," since all participated in the process. All in all, we shall have simplified work if all goes well Insha-Allah, and conclude my words that with every difficulty comes ease and God helps those who help themselves.

# Is it the right time for home?

BY MOHAMED BASHI MOHAMED

This is the question that has for months now been running through the unsettled minds of Refugees living in Dadaab camps in Fafi region, since the Government of Kenya, Federal Somali Government and the UNHCR signed a tripartite agreement to repatriate Somali refugees voluntarily in a span of three years. The move that was initiated by the Kenyan side, after terrorists believed to be linked to the terror group 'the al-shabaab' took control over a shopping mall in a siege that lasted for three days killing tens of Kenyans, after investigations revealed that the Westgate attackers had been planning and training for the attack months before it happened. Dadaab refugees may however feel that though the decision may have been reached with good intent, the timing however may not be right as there are still some basic structures lacking in Somalia. Such a move to move such a large number of people in a very short time to a place may result in a humanitarian catastrophe. The move may also be a catalyst to chaos and lack of order in the already unstable country. The move will have a devastating effect on the vast majority women and children. It will also to a great extent interfere with the basic education that majority of refugees are still taking part in. This may create a vacuum in the flow of information, render a good number of able people jobless and create a desperate situation where people who have been depending on aid for two decades suddenly stop receiving this important aid leaving the youth vulnerable to being lured into joining militia and terrorist groups and

organized crimes.

I took time and sat with members of all of the refugee community groups; elder women, youth, religious leaders and intellectuals, and the clear indication I got was that they do believe that any move towards this program's implementation at this time will be counter productive in all aspects.

On the other hand, United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) senior external relations officer in Dadaab, Mans Nyberg, underlined that forceful repatriation will never take place as its regarded as a direct violation of Geneva convention of refugee status which Kenya as the host country is one of the signatories, Mr. Mans Nyberg of UNHCR explained that repatriation is complicated and UNHCR planned to provide material support, transportation and WFP will help on none food items of which he calls support packages.

Mr. Nyberg, added that conditions in Somalia are not right and it's not realistic that Dadaab refugees go back in three years time, though they only support those who report and approach their offices and start on registering them on 1st January, 2014, he further clarified that UNHCR is not receiving any new arrivals though. He estimated that there have been 6,000 new arrivals in the last twelve months who are in very bad condition but the Government of Kenya restricted registrations of new arrival. The total population of Dadaab/Fafi camps stands at 400,500 of which 388,000 are Somali Nationals.

In this regard it is worth to mention that all of the parties

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Everyone would love to live in his/her own motherland but we still have problems in Somali.

”

400,500

The current population of refugees in Dadaab Refugee Camps

388,000

The current population of Somali Nationals

involved including the refugee community have their own concern that is of paramount importance. The truth remains to be that each party's interest in a collision course to the other and so, humane attention of the parties with power is the only way that weaker sides will be saved from the disastrous consequences that they afraid of.

It is a fact that the tripartite agreement by the Kenyan Government, the Somali government and the UNHCR on the repatriation of Somali refugees has left many refugees worried. Most notably are the schools going youths. The agreement came months after Kenyatta University opened up a campus in Dadaab town making Higher Education available to Refugees, Humanitarian workers and the local communities. The decision to voluntarily repatriate refugees has been welcomed by some but the majority of refugees are still uncertain about the whole process. It is reported that more than 60,000 refugees have already returned to Somalia after calm returned to their homeland following the defeat of the al-shabaab militia by the AMISOM and KDF troops early this year.

I spoke to Hassan, a form one student living in Hagadera refugee camp to find out his feelings towards repatriation. "I am not happy (sic)" he says. "My major plan of arrival in this camp was to migrate to either South Africa or Libya so that I enjoy my world but when I reached Dadaab, I realized the value of education," Hassan. His is a story that many can relate to. The question that still lingers in his mind is if he will be repatriated, will he complete his education or will he have to start again upon reaching his homeland.

Currently, only 57,000 children are enrolled in

schools. What will happen to their education after three years?

Education is not the only need that should be considered or put in place. Health, Shelter and food are some of the structure that many would wish to be put in place before being repatriated.

Mohamed Abdullahi Noor is the security committee chairman of Hagadera. He is unsure of what the future holds for them when they go back to Somali. 'We came to Kenya after running away from the al-shabaab militia. We have heard of the problems the same group is causing to Kenya as a country ever since the KDF and AMISOM crossed the borders.' He spoke softly. 'We want to be sure that we will have security, freedom of movement and peaceful stay without fear when we go back.' He added.

Most of the refugees are grateful to the Kenyan people for hosting them for all the years the camp has been in existence. 'We know that Kenya has shouldered a great responsibility since the early 90s. Everyone would love to live in his/her own motherland but we still have problems in Somali. Most of us had properties that were lost in the war and animals killed during famine and so life will be much harder when we go back. The repatriation idea is good but this might not be the right time,' says Mohamed Abe Shire- Chairman of Committee of Reconciliation.

It is clear that the repatriation process has started, but the question that will remain in our minds is if this is really the right time for home.



PHOTO: Refugees line up at the new arrival centre in Kambioos- Dadaab Refugee Camps

PHOTO By Kepha Kiragu



PHOTO: Meng Bul perform during the 2013 FilmAid Film Festival in Ifo camp

PHOTO by Kepha Kiragu

## Dance to the Beat

AN INTERVIEW WITH OGAL OKUMU, 'MENG-BUL' IFO GROUP'S CHAIR WITH AKUNE DANZA

the atmosphere is calm, the scorching sun burns our delicate dark skins as we walk though Ifo's section G. The friendly looks of the refugees are welcoming and 'anyuak' greetings 'detujot' (how are you) fill the air. We enter Ogal Okumu's compound to find him seated on a traditional seat while his wife was busy preparing lunch in her small kitchen. Ogal, dressed in a colorful yellow trouser, is the chairman of the 'mengbul'. We wanted to find out more about the group of dancers from the 'anyuak' community.

### Q. What is the meaning of 'mengbul'?

Mengbul is derived from two words, 'meng' which means to dance and 'bul', which is a drum.

### Q. When were the dances performed traditionally?

Songs and dances were performed during different events in the community and were very distinctive. There are war songs sung before and after war to motivate our warriors and give them

courage to face the enemies. We also have wedding songs which are sung by men in praise of their women, funeral songs which were worship songs and kids songs which are mainly used to pass good morals to the children.

### Q. Do you have names for the different dances?

Yes we do (smiling). The dances are differentiated by the moves and positions of the dancers. First, we have the 'Awawa'. Here, the female dances swing their hands with the sound of the drumbeats while their male counterparts jump around them while making music with the 'gare' tied around their legs.

We then have 'abongo' where male and female dancers stand in two lines facing each other and move with the flow of the music.

Thirdly, we have 'alenga' where the dancers form a circle, 'obeero' women kneel down and men dance round them, and finally we have the 'okama'. The 'okama' is almost like the 'abongo' but in this particular dance, the women on the other line must choose the man

they want to dance with (looks at his wife and smiles, the wife smiles back). (I look at the wife and smile). To the wife). **What do you look for when picking a man to dance with?**

A man is picked from the way he dances. Good dancers are always the first to be picked in the line. (Ogul interrupts her) Men must be very creative with words. You have to win the women over by praising them and making them feel like they are the only women on earth during the dance for you to be picked. Once selected, you will be sure to dance with her for the rest of the dance.

### Q. Are the young ones trained to dance?

Traditionally, these dances are passed from generation to generation through observation. Our young ones would watch and learn from the elders as they performed the dances. Those were the old days where the anyuak community would gather occasionally to dance. However, here in the camps, we have to train our dancers, as there are no much occasions where the young ones would

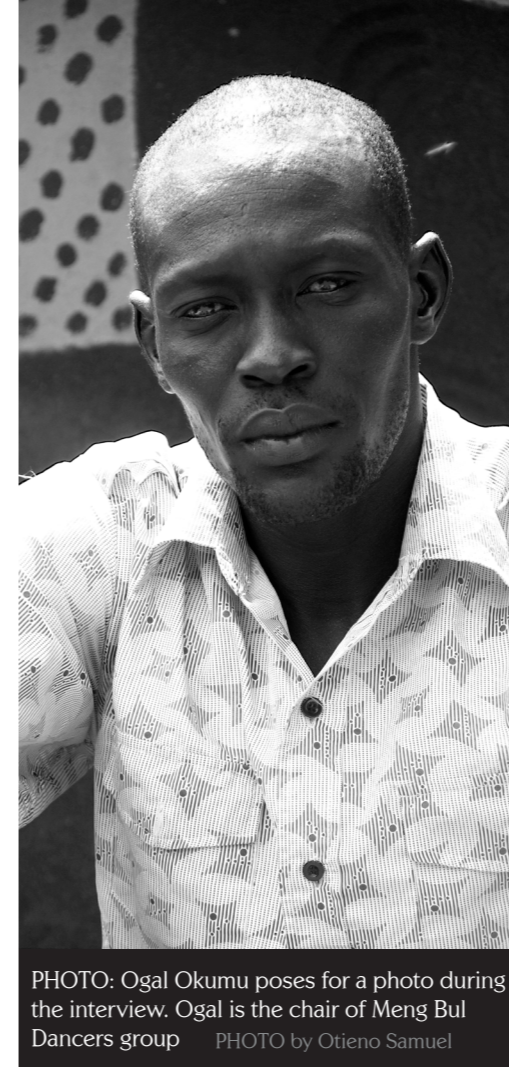


PHOTO: Ogal Okumu poses for a photo during the interview. Ogal is the chair of Meng Bul Dancers group

PHOTO by Otieno Samuel

learn some dance moves. We nowadays wait for the agencies to organize an event for us to dance.

### Q. What preparations do you make before performing a dance?

We have to train if there is a new song. We have to make sure that the dance is synchronized and that everyone can correctly sing the words of the new song. Our women will prepared bead works for the performances. Meanwhile the drumists prepare their drums.

Then we apply special colors to decorate our bodies. These decorations are made from ash, grounded charcoal and some special type of soil that is colored.

The drumists are the first to enter the floor and set up. Then a message will be sent to the drumists that the dancers are ready and they start beating the drums. The women dancers are the first one to enter the floor and stand in a semi circle in front of the drums. A male dancer, the leader, will then run across the floor to check if everything is ready before going back to bring his fellow male dancers into the floor.

### Q. How does it feel when the crowd cheers, especially the non-anyuak crowd?

It's the best thing. We feel motivated to know that even people who cannot understand the message in the song enjoy listening and watching us dance.

## The Gifted Hands Of The Anyuak Women

BY Sahal Hussein Ali

Most African communities value artistic decoration of women and sometimes men. The Anyuak community from Ethiopia is one of these communities where girls are decoratively lavished with necklaces, wristbands, waist beads and dancing costumes among others. However, bead work and bangle making is not only limited to tradition but is also been modernized into caps, hats, belts and neck ties which are produced out of African precious beads.

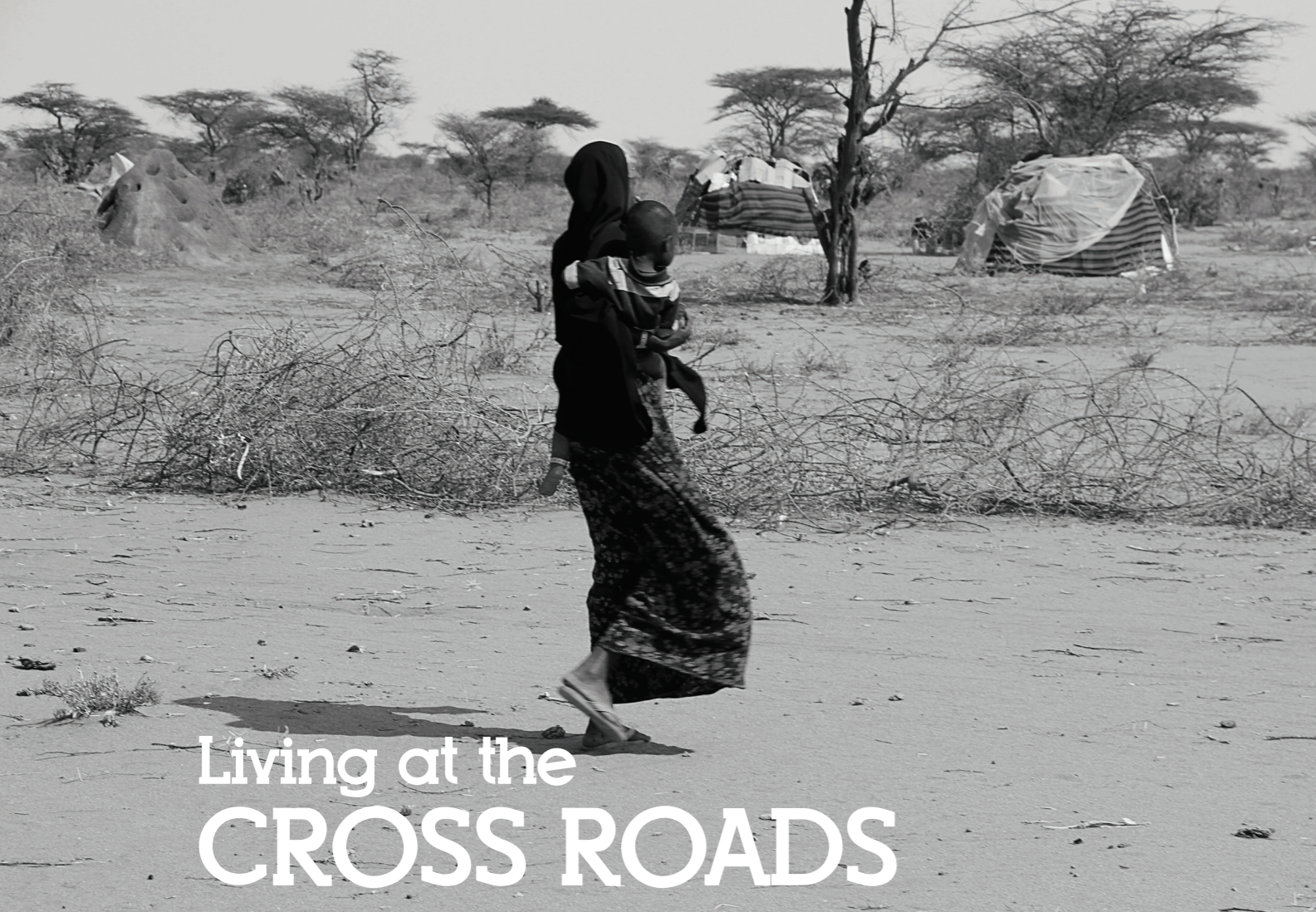
Madam Ariat is one of those who fled from Ethiopia after the 'Gambella' massacre orchestrated on Anyuak community on December 13th 2003 under late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. She arrived in IFO camp in early 2004 and settled in present section G where she composed herself after tragic moment, which forced her out of her mother country. She found her new life in Ifo camp and formed 'Apolle Mu Gambella' (which means women of Gambella) taking a leadership role as the group's chair. CARE, providing them with a regular supply of beads and other materials, supported the group. However, the quality of beads was relatively poor and unsuitable for many designs leading to a drop in production and ultimately sales because many local buyers loathed the quality of the products. This decrease in market led to some of the women in the group to lose interest in bead making and seek employment and other means to make ends meet. The group was well structured by then with a marketing manager and an active chair lady who ensured that their produce reached the intended market. This has however changed, as currently, individual bead-makers are responsible for finding markets for their individual works.

Most of the beads have to be sent in from Nairobi. Ariat and other women in the trade use mobile money transfer services to pay directly to their specific suppliers who later send them the beads via road. The major market for these products is Ifo's section G but Ariat hopes that some day her products will make it to the international market.

Madam Ariat, a 54 year-old woman and a mother of 6, is a strong woman who is determined to continue with bead work despite her age and the huge challenges she encounters. To her bead work is not only a way of making ends meet but also part of her lifestyle and a hobby. She is contended and happy with her bead work skills.

PHOTO by Kepha Kiragu





## Living at the CROSS ROADS

PHOTO: Woman carrying child walks past a home in Dadaab Refugee Camp

PHOTO by Kepha Kiragu

“  
He had changed from being the loving and caring husband into an animal. Her family in law (Ahmed’s family) also turned against her and treated her like a slave.”

BY FARHIO MOH’D MOHAMUD & OTIENO SAMUEL

It is a hurting story that happened to a young Somali girl. Ishwaf (NOT HER REAL NAME) was a girl born to a rich family that lived in Ifo block B12. The girl was brought up just like any other girl. She lived with her parents and younger siblings. Her family was a prosperous one and everyone was happy. Time ran fast and Ishwaf grew into a beautiful woman and at 20, people started showing interest in her hand for marriage. Ahmed was one of those who approached her, he was welcomed to Ishwaf’s family and in no time the two lovebirds were married. Two years into their marriage and things could not get any worse. Ahmed started showing his true colors. He had changed from being the loving and caring husband into an animal. Her family in law (Ahmed’s family) also turned against her and treated her like a slave. The only one person that she looked up to protect her had sided with the enemy, and for her the world seemed like it was ending. She could not take it anymore so she went back home and narrated the ordeal to her mother. With tears in her eyes, the mum advised her to go back to her husband’s home, take her belongings and come back to her father’s home.

The question that ran through her mind all this time was if she really deserved to be punished for even the little mistakes if none.

She hid her mother’s advice and ran back home to take her belongings. News spread fast and her in-laws heard that Ishwaf was planning to elope. This did not go down well with her mother-in-law and she decided to burn her alive. As Ishwaf was preparing herself to go back to her father’s house, she sensed the smell of burning gasoline. Her house was on fire. The doors were locked from outside and she could not get out. Her hands getting wet from sweat and her lungs weak from the smoke. She kept her will strong and tried to find her way out of the burning house. As she was moving in the house trying to find her way out a log of wood fell on her left side of the face burning her severely. She screamed for help but her voice fell to deaf ears.

Luckily, she found a weak window and broke it open and jumped out. Her life was saved. The neighbors who by now had been attracted by the smoke saw her and rushed her to the GIZ hospital. News quickly got to her parents and they made

their way to the hospital. The in-laws were found weeks after the incident in the neighboring Dagahaley camp where they were arrested and taken to the police station. The arrest could not make the wrong right as Ishwaf had already lost an eye and three fingers in the incident. In all this, she found a heart to forgive her husband and family in law. She believed that forgiveness was the best revenge.

This is a story that may sound one too familiar to women in the world and particularly women living in the world’s largest refugee camp, The Dadaab refugee camp in the North Eastern semi arid parts of Kenya. The camp

was started way back in 1992 after civil war broke out in Somalia as a safe haven for the thousands of Somali refugees who were fleeing from war that spread like bush fire to most parts of the country. The most affected lot is women and children.

Different communities around the world, have culturally accepted roles and positions that should be played by both genders with men taking up the superior roles. Women have over the centuries been looked down to with their rights as human beings being violated with every sunrise. They have been victims of GBV (gender based violence), FGM (female genital

mutilation), exploitation, battering among others.

The 2011 Gender Based Violence Assessment by The International Rescue Committee identifies the many forms of GBV in the camps to be rape, domestic abuse, early and forced marriage, forced divorce, female genital mutilation (FGM), socio-economic abuse and the denial of woman’s right to make choices on her sexual health. In most cases, these violations against women go unreported and this is greatly attributed to culture and the society as the survivors are usually victimized or blamed for the vices.

## Letdowns in the fight against GBV

The fight against GBV cannot be won unless we change the root causes. Anne Nasimiyu takes a closer look at why GBV won’t just go away

### Culture and Beliefs

In most African communities, women are looked down upon especially where women are least educated. The women from the Somali community, which forms more than 80% of the Dadaab population, are disregarded yet they comfortably claim that they cannot change what has been there for generations. Their way of life expects a woman to do whatever the man says especially if it’s their spouse. This explains why many of the women suffer in silence from emotional, psychological and economical abuses besides marital rape that goes unsaid most if not all of the time.

### Ignorance

Despite the various efforts by the humanitarian organizations to mobilize, sensitize and information sharing, majority of abused women watch as violence against them escalate from mild to severe with the hope that the man will change his abusive behavior. They fail to appreciate the fact that psychosocial support and counseling may help devise better ways of dealing with the perpetrator. The same happens when a rape survivor reports 2 months after the ordeal after realizing that they are pregnant, when they know that in such a case, it is important to report within 72 hours for specialized medical

attention and psychological support.

### Stigmatization

Many women choose not to report any incident of abuse that might have happened to them or their children in fear of what the community will think of them. Most will prefer NOT to report a rape incident than to be looked upon as ‘the woman who was infected with HIV.’ It is time that the community accept that this vices against women are wrong and unjustifiable. Men should take the forefront in the fight against GBV and the community should take it upon itself to give a shoulder to women and men who fall prey to GBV.

“  
We can not end violence against women as individuals but we need to unite as a community and go beyond the 16 days of activism...”

Anne Achieng- IRC Programme Director, Dadaab

### Poverty

Perpetrators have found a way of negotiating with the survivors after an assault. In the Dadaab Somali set up, they go to the extent of involving elders from both sides and agree on an amount to square the damage caused. What they forget is that the survivor will forever live with the trauma from the ordeal and feel used for making her mishap a business deal.

In an area where high rates of poverty are recorded, survival sex is a tact used by women whenever an opportune moment avails itself. They hope to get better shelter, security, food for their children and protection whenever they engage in sexual intercourse with the service providers or anyone who can pay. Such cases may go unmentioned, but they happen!

### Threats

The society takes a problem of their own, personally. If a case is reported and they realize there are chances of legal action being taken leading to a possible arrest, they intimidate and frustrate the family of the survivor hoping the case will be withdrawn. This affects the rest of the community because they will take it as a lesson; not to report giving perpetrators more room to engage in such vices knowing that at the end, they will walk scot free!



PHOTOS BY: Mohamed Bashi

COVER PHOTO: A herdsman with his camels in Dadaab refugee camps

# Man And Animals In Dadaab

By Hussein Maalim Ali & Halwo

Long before man discovered oil and minerals, he fully depended on rearing of animals and growing of crops. Most pastoralist lived in areas where crops could not do well. Man tamed animals to survive.

This is still the case in most parts of the world. Millions of people still depend on animals as a source of livelihood. In the world's largest refugee camp, the Dadaab refugee camps in the North Eastern parts of Kenya, Somali refugees depend on herding as a source of income. Most Somalis are herders, rearing cattle, goats, sheep and camels. Livestock provide an important source of protein and millions of families around the globe consume them in every minute. Dadaab refugee camps, in the North Eastern parts of Kenya are home to hundreds of thousands of refugees. Life in the camps has not been easy for the 20 years that the camp has been in existence. The camp, located in the semi-arid areas of Kenya, is home to nearly half a million refugees many of whom are from the neighbouring Somali.

The refugees fled their country as a result of civil war that broke out in Somali in the early 90s bringing with them their animals and some few belongings. Some arrived in the camps after fleeing from famine causing a massive influx of refugees in the camps.

The hard life in the camps and culture has made these people to be dependent on their livestock. The World Food Programme (WFP) has been providing food rations to the refugees since the inception of the camp. These food rations were sometimes seen as not enough to sustain the huge numbers of people and so one had to find other ways of earning a living.

It is estimated that most households in Dadaab refugee camps owns a domestic animal; goat, livestock, camel or a donkey. Families, which have few heads, unite with others to build a shed for the animals and then employ a herdsman to take care of the animals for them. However, the rich families with large herds graze their own animals.

In an area where the climate is harsh with no rainfall, large-scale or commercial growing of crops is nearly impossible making Dadaab residents to fully depend on animals for food. These animals are grazed sometimes kilometers away from the camps, as the pastoralist have to move from place to place in search of pasture.

Mohamed is a pastoralist living in Dadaab. He did not make it to bring his flocks with him to the camps but after making some savings he bought two goats and a calf which he kept well and multiplied to bring his heads to a total of 20. He like many other refugees can not afford to pay someone to graze his herd for him. He also understands the importance of education for his children so he will not sacrifice his

children's future.

'Many of us (refugees living in Dadaab) have less than 10 goats in a family and it sometimes proves hard to herd a few herds so we usually bring our flocks together and then find someone whom we pay monthly to take care of our animals for us,' said Mohamud.

The heads in such a flock can sometimes add to hundreds of heads. The herdsman/woman is responsible for taking care of the animals during the day. He or she knows where to find pasture and watering points for the animals. This job is hard considering the high

“ In the morning when our women wake up, they have to take the animals to a designated place where all the other residents of a block will meet to hand over their animals to the herdsman. ”



PHOTO: Goats feeding on green leaves from a cut tree



“

The women then sing a song while standing away from the flock and her heard will automatically separate from the flock and walk towards her. It is believed that the flock (goats) recognizes the owners voice and a particular song sang by the woman

”

temperatures and climatic conditions of the semi-arid northern parts of Kenya.

‘In the morning when our women wake up, they have to take the animals to a designated place where all the other residents of a block will meet to hand over their animals to the herdsman.’ Mohamud.

Animals as dowry

The animals are not only useful to man as food but also as a means of exchange and has cultural values. Before the introduction of money, man used animals as a means of exchange. Wealthy men could be told from the number of healthy herds that he owns. This was also evident when it came to wooing a girl for marriage. The man, like in many other African communities, who was able to provide a large number of animals to the girls family was preferred both by the girl and the girls parents. Having a large number of animals was a surety of your ability to take care of the girl at her new home. However this was not a guarantee and it created a line between the rich and the poor when it came to marriages. In Dadaab, the situation has not been different with girls preferring to be married of to resettled men who could afford to pay heftily for their hand in marriage either to bring their family from poverty or for show-off to the other girls.

Historically the roots of Somali peoples life was based on pastoralism in all aspects, as such, marriage could not be exceptional. Therefore, camels and cows in different regions of the Somali people, and Africa at large, become standard for reward iyaradī given by the family of the marrying man to his future in law family. Although the number of animals depended on many factors, it was always affordable except a number of isolated cases in which the reward (YARAD) is reported to have reached 100 heads of camels, horses or rifle, or both.

Nevertheless, Somali people started moving to the urban settlements after colonist powers created job opportunities there as a result. Slowly, another form of ēyaradī in monetary terms came into being. The



PHOTO By Mohamed Bashir (Afrika)



PHOTO by Kepha Kiragu

PHOTO: From left: Mohamed taking care of his herd, INSET: Milk and meat got from animals and used as food, Photo showing the host community homestead.

majorities however still use livestock as ēyaradī The urban population, and especially those who had looked for formal employment from pastoralism, found it convenient to pay dowry in the form of expensive gifts and dollars. The clear line between poverty and wealth showed its head in marriages. Consequent to the man made disaster created by the civil war back home resulted into waves of refugees influxes pouring in to the neighboring countries in the region.

Life in the camp has not been easy as most of the refugees lost their properties at home and had to start from zero with the help of humanitarian agencies. Life became desperate as search for marriage partners had to be redefined. Majority did not have enough to give as ēyaradī. The youth would come together and set to the forest to find materials needed to construct a house for the girls family and help them construct a house. This did not cost much. Marriage became a communal affair and everyone was happy to take part in helping the new weds start a life.

As time went by, weddings started getting more and more expensive. This was greatly contributed to by refugee resettlement into foreign countries. This had a negative effect on the social economic life of the refugees. Only a handful are resettled every year to countries such as Canada, the US, Australia and South Africa just to mention but a few. The lucky resettled few started trickling back into the camps to search for marriage partner and with their acquired status in the community and foreign currencies, slowly set a new and way too high a bar for marriage. They had expensive wedding ceremonies adorning their brides with a lot of golden gifts, cash, perfumes and a lot of money for the families. They also slaughtered a lot of animals during the wedding feast. Soon, every girl in the refugee community started

wishing for such wedding ceremonies, and the youth felt pressured since they could not afford the luxury of lavish weddings. Life itself wasn't a bed of roses. Ladies threatened not to get married if their demands were not met. This raised concerns to the community leaders and the young and soon to marry youths. The elders, community leaders and youths met to discuss the trend, setting guidelines to govern weddings that seemed to be falling out of hands. They set the maximum number of animals that could be given as dowry or 'yarad.'

In the evening when the herdsman/woman returns with the animals from herding, the women again go to collect their animals and bring them home. The women have learned a unique way of separating their animals from the flocks, which sometimes could be up to one thousand in numbers. This unique way has been passed down from generation to generation. The women then sing a song while standing away from the flock and her heard will automatically separate from the flock and walk towards her.

It is believed that the flock (goats) recognizes the owners voice and a particular song sang by the woman. Unbelievable? Believe it!

#### Dadaab Milk Factory

The host community living in Dadaab in the late last year opened the first milk processing plant in the North Eastern parts of Kenya through Danish Refugee Council (DRC) livelihood programme. The Safi women group in Dadaab town started the Safi Factory. The factory, which mainly produces fresh, mala milk, and yogurt was opened and handed over to the community after an intensive training on its use by DRC. ‘ We came up with an idea after realizing that people in this area do not have a regular supply of fresh milk as the milk that we consumed had to come from Nairobi, hundreds of kilometers away yet we have hundreds of milk producing animals in this area.’ Says Mama Maryan, the chair of the women group. The factory gets its milk from the nearby markets but hopes to get a steady supply through encouraging suppliers to form groups. The milk

supply to Dadaab camps before the project was initiated was not sufficient enough to meet the market needs and most families depended on unprocessed milk from herders in the bush.

‘DRC is currently running a Livelihood Programme that seeks to empower organized groups in the community with the goal of improving their lives.’ Habiba Osman Abdi, livelihood coordinator DRC.

This is just an example of the resources we have in our animal that if well taped into can be used to generate income and change lives. However, all this does not present itself without challenges. Dadaab is a semi arid area and so it experiences dry spells and scarcity of water for both man and animals. This if not well managed can lead to conflict between the refugees and the host community as they scramble for the limited grazing areas and watering points for their animals. There is need to build a dam and more bore holes in future so as to ensure that these precious animals are preserved.



PHOTO by Otieno Samuel

# Reaching the youth through music

Obang Girma is a 27-year-old refugee living in Dadaab refugee camps. His long journey from Ethiopia to Kenya through Lokichogio changed his life. He has released his first gospel album in his 'anyuak' language.

Obang arrived in Kenya in the year 2005 after he and thousands others were forced to flee from the place they once called home for generations of their people after hundreds of his people were massacred. The painful memories still fresh in his mind, his color was the basis for him leaving his ancestors land. This experience however, changed his life.

In 2006, Obang started singing gospel music with the aim of passing the gospel to his people. 'I saw the hand of God. When we left our country Ethiopia through South Sudan into Kenya. We crossed a very dangerous dessert on our way to Kenya with very many dangerous things like wild animals, bandits and militias and us making it here shows the hand of God was in control...'

The now father of one, Romo a 2 year old girl, started recording some of his compositions on radio cassettes using a drum he had borrowed from a local church in Dadaab's Ifo refugee camp. His music was well received by people from his community and this motivated him to take his game to the next level. He approached a pastor in Dadaab town and asked him for a piano. With the piano, Obang made more gospel music and each audio attracted more audience.

All these efforts started bearing fruits as he was accorded more responsibilities in the local churches back in Ifo. He led the choir, among other leadership roles.

Obang, being an incentive worker at an agency in Dadaab started saving for his first album. It took him several months to make a reasonable sum of money and with the help of some local businessmen and friends, he finally got enough sum to take him to Nairobi to record his first album 'Gumdeel'.

'I am the first musician from my family tree. The main challenge I faced was financial strains but am glad my first album is out.'

Obang hopes that his music will finally get to his homeland and make a hit. He hopes that his parents back at home will one day get to hear him sing for the first time but for him to achieve this he needs your support.

Obang describes his music as one containing a message of hope and strength. He hopes to do a second album this year and his biggest dream is to do a collabo with his role model, a Kenyan gospel artiste Emmy Kosgei.

'The youth should know that there is hope and drugs does not solve your problems, it blurs your vision and blinds you to your problems. Only God can help you solve your problems.' Says Obang as we wind up our interview with him while my colleague turns up the volume to dance to his song.

Support Obang by buying his new music video at only Ksh. 500

## IN A SECOND

### IFO CAMP ELDERS IN A FOOTBALL MATCH FOR PEACE

Ifo camp elders from the minority and majority, the Anyuak and the Somali communities respectively, took part in a symbolic football match during a peace event in Ifo refugee camp. The event which was organized by FilmAid International saw hundreds of men, women and children attend. The symbolic football match was to symbolize a peaceful coexistence among the two communities. The match was followed by another symbolic football match for the youths and a volleyball match for the women.



PHOTO Minority elder in red counters majority leader in blue in a football friendly at Ifo

### GIRLS CAMP IN DMO

Over 100 girl guides camped at Dadaab's DMO for two nights and two days in early January. The camp that was organized by NCKK in partnership with FilmAid saw the girls from different primary schools in form all the camps camp for a weekend at the Dadaab Main Offices. The girls had an interactive evening screening session with FAI where they watched films such as Growing healthy and some on abstinence. Madam Purity, one of the organizers from NCKK termed the event as successful and that the guides had learnt a lot from the camping experience.

## HAGADERA IRC MARATHON

### Running for a worthy cause

The International Rescue Committee in Hagadera, Dadaab Refugee Camp, organized the first ever marathon in Dadaab. The event took place in Hagadera camp and saw hundreds of participants and fans participate both from the local and refugee community. The marathon was held as part of IRC's 16 days of activism against Sexual Gender Based Violence activities for the year 2013. The international theme for the 16 days was 'From Peace in the Home to Peace in the World: Let's Challenge Militarism and End Violence Against Women!' While the adopted theme for Dadaab refugee camp by UNHCR and implementing agencies with GBV related programmes was 'Kick GBV out of the Camps'. This was the first ever marathon to be held by Refugees in Dadaab, and it brought together humanitarian workers and refugees with the winners taking home some prizes. The event started at NCKK compound in Hagadera and was flagged off by IRC program manager Ms. Anne Achieng.

IRC is a health NGO that runs a free medical center for refugees in Hagadera refugee Camp. The agency provides health care for GBV survivors, women health care and maternity facilities.

The participants, young and old, men and women, came out in one voice, 'Kick out GBV from Dadaab refugee camps. The over 100 participants, wearing purple and white T-shirts, the symbolic color of the 16 days of activism, embraced the morning sun and soaring temperatures to run for a worthy course. The 10km race took slightly more than 30 minutes. The race saw the participation and attendance of other agencies like FilmAid, UNHCR, NRC among others, and the Government of Kenya.



## Kambioos Peace Debate



PHOTO: Master of ceremony presiding over the Kambioos Peace Debate at the community center

For many, life in the camps would seem hopeless, but in Kambioos, the new addition to the Dadaab camps, brings out a different image of what life really is - That of intelligent young kids who given a chance will change the world.

The refugee Consortium of Kenya (RCK) has been working closely with Refugees living in Dadaab and Kakuma Refugee camps for years providing them with legal and professional counseling services. In November last year, the RCK brought together children from Furaha and Hilal primary school in Kambioos to debate on Education for peace. The debate which took place in the camps social hall saw tens of people attend as the children battled for superiority with each side sending out a clear message that they would carry the day. The pink and green uniforms sited on the opposite sides with a panel of three separating the two, and jovial faces of people from different agencies characterized the setting.

Dadaab refugee camp was started way back in 1992 with only a handful of refugees after civil war broke out at the horn of Africa. Since then the camps has become home to thousands of refugees. The camp has had to be expanded into more than four to accommodate the influx of refugees with the highest number of new arrivals to be ever recorded being in the year 2011.

The education sector has also improved tremendously with more than 6 secondary schools and around

10 primary school providing basic education to the refugee community. The debate, facilitated by Chris from RCK, came at a time when the Kenyan government was considering repatriating all Somali refugees back to their hometown. The government accused the camps of harboring terrorist from the Al-shabaab terror group weeks after the Westgate siege in Nairobi City. According to Chris, the programme targeted Somali youths as repatriation was for the Somalis only. The two sides battled it out, each side impressing the humanitarian workers and organizers with their eloquence and knowledge of international political arenas.

The project for enhancing trauma and advocacy for peace is only found in Kambioos camp and is run by RCK, targeting the new arrivals. It recognizes the need for peaceful coexistence in order for development both economical and social to take place. The peace debate was organized with the help of other humanitarian agencies such as the UNHCR, LWF, TDH, FAI, Internews, Star and Dadaab FM.

Furaha primary school emerged winners with 58 points score against the opposers from Hilal primary school. They were awarded a trophy and some other goodies from the organizers.

'The youth should take to the forefront to promote peace as it is the youth who will build Somalia by making it a better place through peace and understanding.' Chris RCK.

# My inner call to become a journalist

HASHIM, TAWAKAL SECONDARY SCHOOL (DAGAHALEY) WRITERS CLUB CHAIR SHARES HIS LIFE JOURNEY WITH US AND TELLS US WHY HE WANTS TO BECOME A JOURNALIST IN FUTURE.

There is a famous saying among my peers that exams are the most unequal competition ever held in life. I do not believe in this, but believe that they open windows to other factors that cause ones failure or success in life. It is a well appreciative tip that directly applies to my life's system and status. To employ a few examples detailing how the present systems in my life differs from the previous; There are various systems which bring out the differences about my rivalry and competing systems of life in my present and past.

Academically I was performing excellent and all my well wishers dreamt that I will be a leader in future. I was goal-oriented man, fit for any challenges and the boy who I would say life loved the most. I never allowed anyone to raise for me the flag. Actually, it was not as a miracle but a result of hard work, concentration and many trials. Sometimes gossips in the air would fall into my ears saying 'he is a miracle'

My life was a marathon race and I never had time to get influenced by

the prevailing menace of peer groups and the antisocial habits. From this, I was an isolated hill with dormant and unrecognizable eruptions. I always had an internal motivation, which kept on assuring me that I would pass my national exams KCPE. Oh! To block your conscience from believing and thinking that I was an isolist for my touch with pride,

I have to tell you that I formed drug anonymous for the purpose of preventing the youth that have of society. Everything with start has to have an ending of some sort. The long and awaited day came; It had previously seemed so far, November 2010. I sat for my KCPE exams with confidence and scored 316marks out of the possible 500. This was an achievement and a sign that my life would never be the same. I later joined Tawakal Secondary School in Dagahaley. Being a 'mono' was a joy and a rare opportunity that I cannot describe.

Aha! Not forgetting that I was a leader and a flag holder back in my primary experience and was determined to make it the same

in my new school. I know you are probably wondering with all great achievements and good tales where stress comes in my life. The truth is, my elder brother was shot dead by police.

It was June 2011 when chaos and confusion erupted in Dagahaley camp. The community wanted to expand their mosque located in Dagahaley market. The planned expansion would however extend to the road that leads to the food distribution point where huge lorries ferrying food would pass. The police came in to stop the expansion but the community resisted and riots broke out. Unfortunately my brother

Abrahim Burrow was hit by a stray bullet and died. Other people were also injured during the incidence. He left emptiness in my life and whenever I think of him my life slows down a bit.

However, this is my main motivation to become a journalist, to be the voice of the community and air out issues that affect us.



PHOTO: Hashim poses for a photo at Tawakal Sec. Sch. in Dagahaley PHOTO by Otieno Samuel

“ I know you are probably wondering with all these great achievements and good tales, where stress comes in my life... ”

# Refugee in a minute

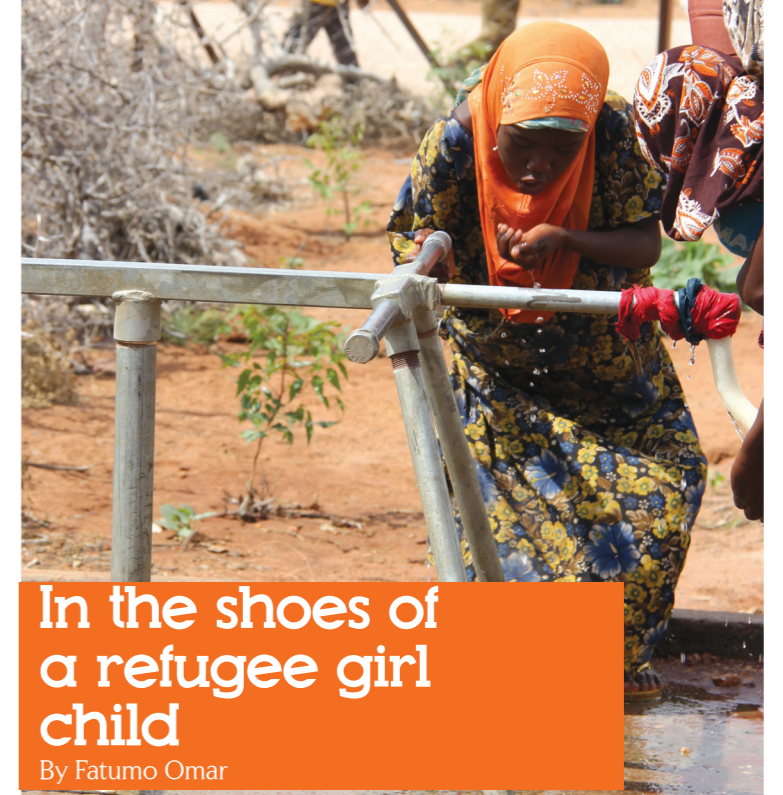
By Abdihakim Hirsi Gurase, Towfiq Sec school

Dadaab refugee is the largest refugee camp in the world. The camp was initiated or started when the civil war broke out in Somalia in 1992. Thousands of people flee their country because of war, famine, draught or other natural calamities. On the way, they are exposed to other dangers such as rape, harsh weather and long distances, harassment, and wildlife attacks. A lot of people do not make it to the refugee camps and those who make it can only thank God. When they arrive at the camps, they are screened and registered. Then, the humanitarian agencies try and join then to their family for those who already have relatives in the camps, and for those who don't, the agencies help them start a new life in the camps by providing them with shelter, food, and the basic services needed by any human being.

Dadaab refugee camp is now home to close to half a million people of different nationalities like Uganda, Congo, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Rwanda, Sudan and Somalia. The highest population of refugee come from Somalia due to political instabilities. The UNHCR had started the process of resettlement of refugees to countries such as Australia, Canada and the United States of America. The process is usually limited to a handful of people and mainly the less fortunate, people with special needs and those whom their lives are considered in danger make it through. Despite all the hardship that we face in the camps, we are hopeful of a better tomorrow.



PHOTO: New arrival settlement in Kambioos, the newest camp in Dadaab/ By Kepha Kiragu



## In the shoes of a refugee girl child

By Fatumo Omar

PHOTO: Girl drinks clean water in Kambioos, Dadaab Camps/ By Kepha Kiragu

Not long ago, most girls used to drop school while still in primary by either getting married or for any other reason. Fortunately, that trend is changing rapidly. The Somali community in the refugee camps is realizing the importance of girl-child education as a result, more girls are being enrolled in primary schools' previously boys dominated schools and competed for the top positions. Currently girls compete with the boys and most likely beat in the run, no wonder the two leading students in both high schools in Hagadera are girls. Within the last three years, the number of girls who are being admitted to national and provincial schools has increased. This has encouraged many primary student girls to work hard and pass their KCPE examination so that even if they don't make to national or provincial schools they proceed to high school in the camp.

In high school, girls really work hard and compete fairly with the boys. This reflected in the increased number of girls who are qualified to apply for the WUSC (World Universities Service Canada) scholarship. For instance, in the year 2012, two girls qualified to apply while in 2013 five girls qualified to apply. Generally, boys still have the upper hand in the field of education though the current trend is promising. This can be contributed by the several changes girls face. First and foremost, besides the studies, girls have to do house chores and attend to family matters. As a result, they don't sufficient time to study. Secondly, most girls do not think of continuing their education until tertiary level. As a result, they don't put much effort in their studies when they reach high school. This contributes to their grades in KSCE exam. Thirdly, the stereotype that Somali girls should get married while young still exists.

Consequently, most high school girls start thinking of marriage and hence start dating. This diverts their minds from their studies and their performance drops. However, the girls can overcome most of this challenges it's just a matter of getting their priorities right. As we know, education is the key to success in life. As girls and later as women, are vulnerable to many things. We can use education as a weapon to safeguard ourselves from abuses as we will be independent. Here is a piece of advice for my fellow girls in schools in the camp. You should have a good measure of self believe.

We are girls, that is our big secret. We should acknowledge who we are and do what we are best at. You can score an "A" if you out your mind into it and work towards it. Stand up straight and don't slump forward in your posture. If you do so, you give an opportunity to another person to climb your back and ride on you.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

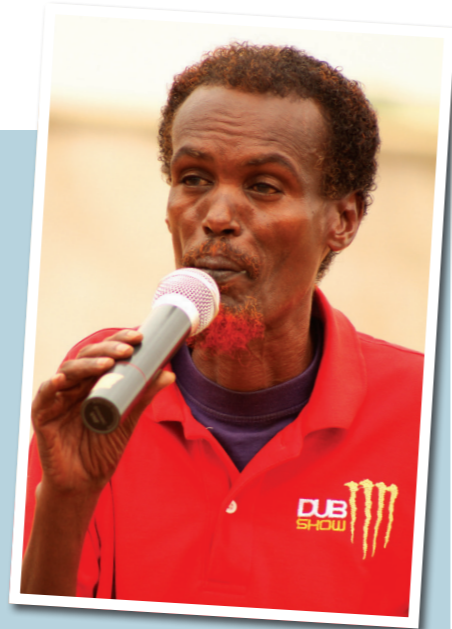


PHOTO: Writers club members pose for a photo at Waberi Secondary School

**WABERI WRITERS CLUB (HAGADERA CAMP)**

Waberi Secondary School is one of the best performing schools in Dadaab refugee camp. It has several clubs for the students with the most notable being the schools writers club. The close to 30 members pride themselves in their role of informing their fellow students on happenings around the camp and the world at large. The

members under their able patron Mr. Peter Muema, present news during the schools assembly. On Fridays, they present in Swahili language, a language less spoken in Dadaab. Their dream is to become renown journalists in future. The club is also determined to ensure that more ladies join the journalistic world.



**KHALIF MUSE SAMATAR**  
45 YEARS  
ACTOR/COMEDIAN

Khalif Muse was born in 1969 in Somali. He came to Dadaab in the early 90s. Khalif, popularly known as 'Sayare' is an actor and a comedian. He has officiated many events in the camps that are organized by the humanitarian agencies. He is not married and spends most of his time training others in theatre. Sayare has also been involved in Film directing and Acting. His acting career dates back to 1982 and he has made a name for himself since then.

**RAHMO GANI**  
DISABILITY WOMEN GROUP CHAIR



RAHMO was born in Mogadishu as the second child of four children in the year 1993. She lived together with her siblings in her city of birth. At the age of 10, she lost her ability to walk following a fatal road accident. In 2005 her family was forced to flee from Somalia into Kenya illegally through the already closed Kenyan boarder. The grueling journey from the Kenyan boarder to Dadaab refugee camps wore her out and had to be carried on a donkey cart all through.

It took them two years to be registered as refugees by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). Despite the difficulty and desperate situation that her family faced upon arrival, Rahmo managed to continue with her primary school education from where she had reached back at home. However, she quit upon reaching standard 6. She could not take the stigma any more and her condition made it even worse. Nevertheless, all those hardships and discouraging circumstances that seemed to surround her life in the camp did not push her into desolation; instead it became her motivation to strive to improve her life and that of her family. She organized a group of women in 2008 in her bid to form an income generating activity through her group of women and attract funding from humanitarian agencies and well-wishers.

Although, it is a fact that a failure at the first trail on a thing by someone like Rahmo could have an irrecoverable disappointment which could deter her from any further trails in the future, her unique strength and good personal qualities

enabled her to try again and form a new group that it's members comprised of disabled women/ girls and Mother's of disabled children with name "Disability Women Group" in the year 2009.

Using her experience in the previous failed group, she succeeded through changing how she approached the new women. She convinced the members of the new group to make a contribution of Ksh. 200 after each food distribution cycle to raise an amount of money that the group will use to start a business with before seeking help from anywhere else. When the savings reached at 10,000 Kshs, the group set up small business of their own "selling vegetables" which proved to be profitable from the beginning, to an extent that local business people realized that potential the group had and volunteered to give them loans of up to Ksh. 30,000. The group, through Rahma's leadership managed to pay off all the loans and expand their business as well.

The group then approached the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) for funding through their Livelihood Programme. The group was successfully granted Ksh. 100,000 for their business and trained in accounting by the humanitarian agency. Rahmo, the group's chair is proud of her groups achievement and is optimistic that the group still has immense potential for growth. Rahmo Gani Ali has earned her place as the refugee of the month for her noble efforts to improve her community's, fellow physically challenged persons, and women living in the camp lives.

**Did you KNOW**

Dadaab has three primary school that have a one storey building each in Ifo, Hagadera and Dagahaley.



Dadaab refugee camp is made up of 6 sub-camps that host slightly over 460,000 refugees. These are Ifo, 1 & 2, Dagahaley, Hagadera, Kambioos, and Alinjgur.

Dadaab has 2 radio stations broadcasting in Somali language, Dadaab FM and Star FM.



People living in Dadaab, a semi arid area in Northern Kenya, have been supplied with clean water from bore holes for over 20 years. The bore holes are strategically dug in all the

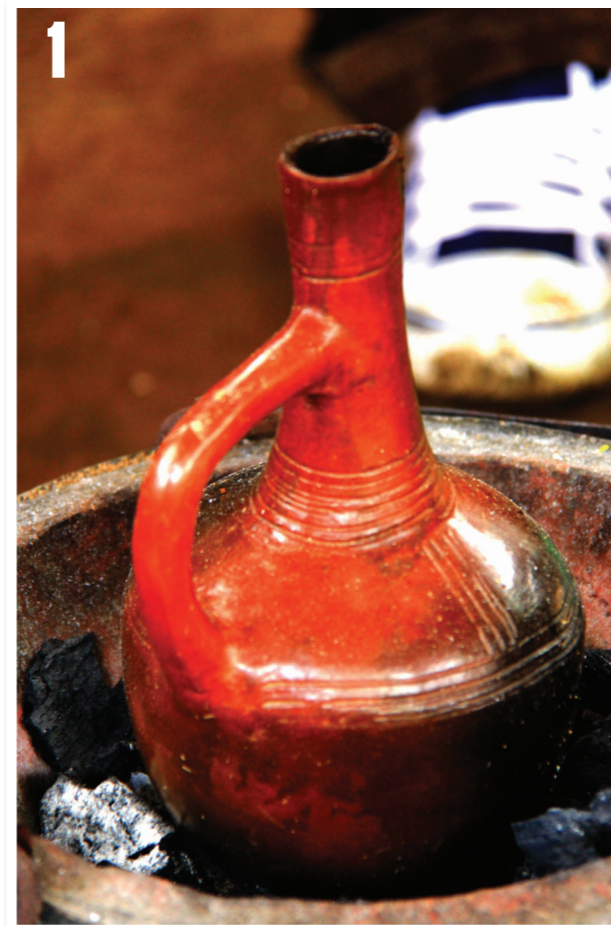


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**REFUGEE PHOTOS**



1. An Eritrean Traditional coffee maker at the Eritrean section of Dagahaley Camp

2. Men pitching a tent at Kambioos camp, during FilmAid's mini event

3. Refugees sit to watch informational films in Dadaab Camps. This service is offered by FilmAid

4. Man blows traditional Somali horn at Kambioos Camp during Daanto's performance in Kambioos' FilmAid's mini event.

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**YOUR** **ARTICLE**  
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**NEXT** **PUBLICATION**

Send your **articles, opinions, or suggestions** to [therefugee.news@yahoo.com](mailto:therefugee.news@yahoo.com) or drop them in our FilmAid field offices in **Dagahaley, Hagadera, and or Ifo.**



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