

THE REFUGEE

This newsletter has been written and published by refugee youth under FilmAid's Participatory Video Project in Dadaab Refugee Camp.

The Refugee newsletter gives a voice to refugee stories to empower and inform the community.

"One refugee without hope is one too many"
World Refugee Day 2011



A Girl Guide reciting a poem during World Refugee Day Celebrations at Dagahaley

A performance during world refugee day

By Liban Rashid

As the sun plummets down the horizon, the joyous people of the village depart company after the Gelbis to prepare for the more interesting part of the ceremony and the festivities continue through the night. Demonstrative of the happy times they are having, everyone in the village as well as the neighbouring settlements congregate at the hut of the Somali cultural wedding newly-weds. An unrestrained enthusiasm sweeps across the surroundings and the sounds of ululating women travels several kilometres upon the open fields. Come nightfall and the Gaaf begins. With a mixture of several forms of poetry, songs and riddles, the Gaaf is perhaps the most entertaining part of the entire wed-

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A Group Founded by GGF use theatrical facilitation as a tool to communicate, express, transform and heal.

A Chance to Grow

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Ismail Abdi is a refugee and former resident of Dadaab. He has now been resettled in the USA and he shares his story with The Refugee.

DADAAB CELEBRATES WORLD REFUGEE DAY

By Moulid Iftin Hujale

In commemoration of this year's World Refugee Day, many Dadaab refugees in north eastern Kenya have marked the anniversary of their 21st year of away from home. This year also marks the beginning of their third decade of being refugees.

Dadaab celebrated with enthusiasm. However, their mood is very ironical. Although they are among the millions of refugees turning out for this big day, they feel that they are the most disadvantaged living in the world's biggest refugee settlement.

World Refugee Day is an annual event held every June 20th. It helps increase public awareness of refugee issues to channel interest and attitudes along more positive and constructive lines.

However many refugees in Dadaab have a question to ask the world. "Are we going be refugees forever?" despite the colorful presentation they put forward in which many



of them describe as a "joyful cry" for help rather than a normal celebration.

They attribute their despair to the never ending conflict in their home country and poor living conditions in the camps which lie in a hot and dusty environment. More so, **Continued in pg. 6**

EDITORIAL

...real stories affecting the community.

Welcome to the fourth edition of the refugee newsletter. Through virtue, moral excellence and commitment, This newsletter, with the help of the refugee volunteers, makes the best choices in the worst times to write and report real stories surrounding the Dadaab sophisticated ethnic background.

It is really essential to mention that the newsletter has received two female reporters who are showing a durable dedication and commitment to the refugee community. I am also overwhelmingly glad to announce that the refugee team has launched The Refugee Weekly Bulletin which provides updates on weekly news stories, new case studies, guidance, interviews and features.

As part of our transparent and diligent mission The newsletter provides comprehensive information and quality news analyses on local and global events with the help of the local refugee staff and our international reporters who contribute inspiring stories.

Join us on our facebook page and send us your suggestions and comments. Our friends abroad sharpen their curiosity about the events unfolding in Dadaab through our official blog for daily updates as well as accessing electronic copies of The newsletter editions.

Although The Refugee team is dedicated to serve and promote the welfare and the good-will of the Dadaab communities; the team lives through the constraints of greater challenges by lacking the funds to facilitate the process of achieving this noble goal. We are appealing to UNHCR and any other well wishers to aid this project for the youth to have a common platform to share and exchange aspirations, experiences and advocate for the entire refugees in Dadaab.

Finally I would like to appreciate all those who contributed to this edition and special thanks go to FilmAid for being our mentor and partner that we rely on for most of our activities.

Abdi Abdullahi,
Editor in Chief,
The Refugee Newsletter,
Dadaab, Kenya.



“The refugee team has launched The Refugee Weekly Bulletin newspaper that provides updates on weekly news stories, new case studies, guidance, interview and feature.”

Dadaab at a Glance

The population of Dadaab is growing faster than ever before. 20,000 new refugees have made their way across the border in just two weeks. A serious backlog has emerged in processing these new arrivals and there are growing concerns about health, nutrition and hygiene in the camp’s outskirts.

On June 20th World Refugee Day was celebrated in Dadaab and around the world. This was an important day of advocacy for the rights of refugees and displaced people. Global numbers have reached 43million - the highest figure in 15 years.

FilmAid held the first ever cultural showcase in Dadaab on Friday the 17th of June as a buildup activities for World Refugee Day. This event highlighted the cultural practices of the many different communities which make up Dadaab.



PVP Team Shooting a Film at IFO II

THE TEAM

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Dhibaatooyinka ay dumarka

Soomaaliyeed la kulmeen.

BY Ebla Abdullahi Aden

Waxaa dumarka Soomaaliyeed qab satay dhibaato isugu jirta qax carar kufsi iyo waliba dil arxan daro'ah waxay la kulmeen wax aan ku wanag sanayn in lagu sameeyo qof biri ka maalin magac ahaan loogu yeeraayo HOOYO.

Waxaa kufsi loo gaystay hooyo haysta caruur waxaa mustaqbalka looga ciyaaray gabar ugub'ah oo mustaqbal doon ah.

Waxaa gabar yar oo aan dan laga lahayn lagu fara xumeeyo wadooyinka dhexdooda waxaa laga dhigay hooyo dhashay ilmo aan aabe lahayn.

Waa lajir dilay ayaga oo laleeyahay kama ay san dhalan reer muruq wayn oo waliba kufsi iyo boob loogu daray ayaga oo laleeyahay malahan meel ay garab

sadaan.

Dumarka soomaaliyeed waxaa ay dhabarka u dhigteen in ay ayaga oo cago cad maraan wado cidlo ah iyo meel aan luugu tala galin in hooyo lugta dhigto.

dhibaatooyinka dumarka somaliyeed

Waxay dhabarka ku qaaday inta xumanta ugay satay ayaga waxay caloosha 9-aal biloowd ku waday midka hooyo kale fara xumeeyay.

Waxaa gabdho badan lagu khasbay in ay noqdaan mooryaan xaaskood hadii kale waxaa loo sheegay in la dilaayo.

Waxaa wadada laga dhumiyay dumar badan oo lahaa hanwayn iyo xarago ku dherer san noloshooda.

Waxay hooy u noqdeen in ay dhibato aan dhaman la kulmaan oo ay noloshooda ku tiirsan oo aan jirin cid ka arxamaysa.

Waxay afka saareen wado uu ka balbalaayo dab aad moodo in ayaga looshiday oo marba mar kiisa kale lasii hurinaayo oo ay san jirin cid isku dayday

in ay damiso.

Dumarka soomaaliyeed waxay la mid noqdeen wax aan loo bahnayn oo lagu tuuray meel cidlo'ah oo aan cidno rajo kala hayn balse xaalku sidasi ma ahan mana noqon karo.

Waxaa carur badani oo dhibaataay san ay way day qof naas nuujiya iyo qof ay dhahaan marka ay hadal bartaan hooyo balse ma dhicin oo waxaa hor istagaay dad aan dan iyo meel ay u socdan ay san jirin.

Waxaa lagubay kor kooda ayaga oo aan wax cilad ah loo hayn waxaa baxay jirkooda sidii xaabo ad moodo in hilib geel lagu karinaayo.

Intasi oo dhan iyo waliba in ka murugo iyo xanun badan oo aan ku banaa nayn in lagu sameeyo qof magac yahay HOOYO waxay ahaayeen dhibatooyinka haystay hadana jira dumarka Soomaaliyeed.

Murti soomaaliyeed waxay horay uteri "LAX DHUKANI COL IYO ABAARBA MOOG" halatay,wad dhashay, wad guursatay wad la dhalatay"

DADKA DHIMIRKA LOOGA JIRO OO KUSOO BADANAYA XERYAHA DADAAB

Dadka dhimirka looga jiro yaa ku soo badanayo xeryaha aadka u buux dhaafay ee dadaab

Hayada Caafimaadka ee IRC ee xerada hagardeher yaa sheegtay in gudaha xerada ay ku soo badanayaan dadka dhimirka la'a kuwaasi oo ay tilmaameen in lagu arkayo wadooyinka waaweyn ee xeradaas

Tan iyo intii la aas aasay xerada ayaa waxaa batay dadka ka xanuunsanaya dhimirka ama Maskaxda, waxaana xerada hagardehere oo kutaala dhinaca bari ee dadaab ay sheegayaan saraakiisha Caafimaadku in ay si aad ah u dareemeen dadka qaba xanuunka dhimirka.

Caruur, haween iyo dad da'doodu ay yartahay oo dhimirka looga jiro ayaa lagu arkayaa gudaha xerada iyo wadooyinka Magaalada, waxaana caruurta dhimirka la'a intooda badan ay yihiin sida la sheegay caruur lagala soo cararay dagaalada Somalia kuwaasi oo maskaxdooda ay u adkeysan waayeen sunta hubka la isku weydaarsanayo dagaalada Somalia

ururka dhalinyarada ayaa iyana dhankooda ii sheegen inay haatan ku mashquulsanyihiin tira koobka dadka cudurkaasi qaba ee kusugan xerada.

xeryaha dadaab yaa waxaa aysan laheyn isbitaalo lagu daryeelo dadka dhimirka la'a, waxaana qaar ka mid ah dadka xerada ay ku baaqeen in gudaha xerada laga hirgaliyo xarun lagu daryeelo dadka dhimirka looga jiro.

Demostration in Favour of Somalia's TFG Prime Minister

By Liban Rashid

Thousands of Somali refugees in the Dadaab camps demonstrated in favor of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia. They join the Somali community who have protested against the possible resignation of the prime Minister, Mohammed Abdullahi Mohammed, world wide.

The Prime Minister resigned as part of an agreement between Somalia's feuding leaders, President Sharif Shiekh Ahmed and parliament speaker, Sharif Hassan following the recent conference held in Uganda's capital Kampala.

"We believe that our prime minister is the only hope we have so far. We are counting on him and we shall never allow the Two Shariffs (President Sheikh Sharif and parliament speaker, Sharif Hassan) to destroy our future" says one protester from IFO camp"

This was the first time Somali refugees in Dadaab demonstrated against or in

favor of the transitional government of Somalia since they left their country more than two decades ago.

The UN Security Council, convening in Nairobi in May, voiced anger at Somali leaders' recurrent political rows, and sent them a strong message either to end the squabbling or face sanctions. The two leaders made no progress and another meeting was held in Kampala by Somalia Contact Group, a body that was formed in 2006 comprising of nations from the EU,



"We believe that our prime minister is the only hope we have so far, we are counting on him."

USA, UN and The Republic Tanzania. Somali refugees in Dadaab always keep abreast of what is happening in their country. They hear of the deadly killings that erupt throughout the country and receive thousands of desperate new arrivals to Dadaab who narrate dreadful events, but never protested against all that was happening since they left their country.

Dadaab was just one among the hundreds of locations where Somali citizens demonstrated, from Nairobi to the central regions of Somalia, expressing anger not only to the Somali government, but also to the United Nation's envoy, Augustine Mahiga. "This is our country, Mahiga", they chanted.

Mohamed Abdullahi, a Somali-American, was appointed as a Prime Minister, after his predecessor, Omar Abdirashid Sharmarke resigned under the same circumstance in September of last year. His government's recent gains over Alshabaab in Mogadishu with the help of the AU Peacekeeping forces gained him public admiration.

It is not yet clear what the situation will be, but many believe that the resignation of the Prime Minister will be a setback for the TFG and the international community.



A Chance to Grow

By Ismail Abdi

The serene, tranquil environment was suddenly pierced by the deafening sound of gunfire. Mortar shelling rent the air as hell broke loose in the sleepy village of Seyla on the outskirts of the city of Badade in South West Somalia. A grenade exploded a few yards away from our house sending a cloud of thick black smoke into the sky. Fire caught our neighbor's house and as I took shelter, I saw people fleeing in all directions. I heard the screams of children and the wailing of mothers as the militia ran amok.

The flames were still burning the following day when the few remnants of the once populous village gathered at my father's barn to figure out how to make it to the Kenyan border. After two weeks of pure hell where we played cat and mouse with the militia, we made it to the Kenyan border where the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) welcomed us with a hot meal and clean water. The image of UN workers and volunteers dressed in blue overalls working long hours to save the lives of the elderly, the injured, the sick and the children suffering from malnutrition left a mark on me.

A few days after the UNHCR settled us in the middle of the Kenyan desert, Dad enrolled me in a school. It was far cry from the beautiful school I attended while in Somalia. Unlike my previous school, I sat on the dusty floor and had no book to write on. I drew the English letters on the floor and read to the teacher who "corrected" my work with his long white cane. Twelve years later, I successfully graduated from the school and started doing voluntary work with the refugee youth committee. With the help of

the community & operating agencies, we worked on creating awareness on the risks of female genital mutilation, early marriage and HIV/AIDS among others. One of our key goals was to improve female participation in decision-making and I achieved that by starting the female leadership program. The program was aimed at empowering girls to be more proactive in the community.

More community-based voluntary work followed before my passion for children lured me to take up a position with Save the Children, UK. On the day I got my first job as a community service personnel, the memory of that hot day in 1991 lingered in my mind longer than any other thought or recollection. On the dusty and dangerous blocks of Dadaab, I became a child protection worker. In a place where the law was vague and easily buyable, protecting unaccompanied minors was no means feat.

When the US government decided to resettle long protracted refugees in Dadaab I was considered, for it presented an opportunity for growth; not just personal growth but also a growth in the goals and ambitions I long harbored. Life in Chicago proved very hard. When it snowed, I called home and told Dad that America is a land full of miracles. I moved to Colorado where friends from Dadaab lived but little did I know that they had a worse winter. When it got too cold to bear, I asked dad for advice. The response, "Son, do you really believe someone in Dadaab can give you advice on how to handle cold weather?" Oh that was foolish of me, wasn't it?

Relatives in Arizona called to say

"Son, do you really believe someone in Dadaab can give you advice on how to handle cold weather?"

that if I moved there, it will be a chance for me to reunite with the desert. The desert was the bait that I swallowed. A week later, I found myself buckling under the heat of Tucson. I was into my early morning habit of fixing myself a cup of hot, sugary Somali tea when I was interrupted by a feeble knock on the door. When I opened it, I found myself staring at an old friend of mine from Dadaab. The long, exaggerated Somali hug and niceties followed and before I knew my kitchen was engulfed in light-blue

smoke. Apparently my friend wanted help with his "papers" and since I spoke the "mouth" of the western people, I would be helpful or so he thought and led me to the International Rescue Committee office. He needed help with immigration stuff and I volunteered to translate for him. When I got into the IRC office, I felt at home. Two African-looking men spoke in a language I was familiar with while a lady who sat by my friend cursed her daughter in Amharic. Folks spoke the "humanitarian" language and the tone of their voices proved to me that I was at 'home'.

I spoke with some of the staff and before long I got to accept the fact that there was no turning point and working for refugees was the best dream I could have ever thought. This was the place and I had to get into . The inevitable call came and I can't believe it's been years since then. If anything, I have grown in leaps and bounds. More educated, more enlightened, more experienced, and yes much taller.

MY EXPERIENCE IN CHINA

By **ABDULAFATAH HASSAN (JAAJAAF)**

We were among the first families to arrive at the Dadaab refugee camp after the civil war broke out in Somalia in 1991. I completed my primary school in IFO and did my High school in Garissa before moving to Nairobi to sit for my KCSE exams. In Early 2008, I applied for a scholarship to study in Shanghai, China, which I won. In September the same year I left Kenya to study TV and Film production in Shanghai University.

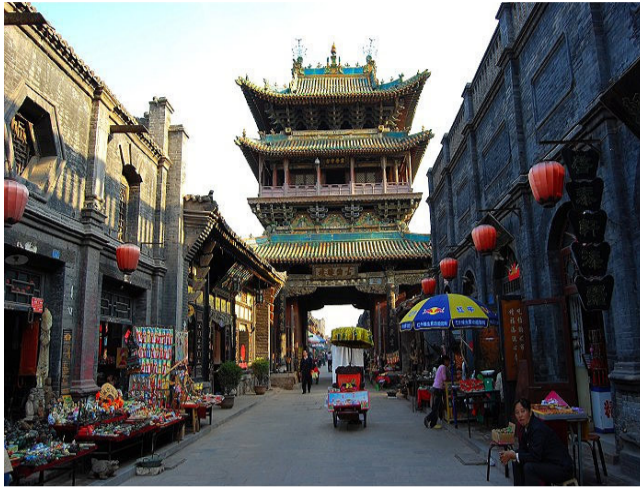
My first year in China was the most difficult part of my life. I once decided to abandon my studies and go back to Nairobi but then, with the help of friends, things got better. I have so many stories to tell, many more experiences to share. I just feel like writing down all the memories in me but I can't. Every morning the day breaks hoping for something different, just something different from yesterday.

I have adapted to living in China and made many friends who keep me going. I would like to be a professional film producer and use the power of film to promote my community. There is nothing more important than having a good friend. They made me like china and I keep enjoying my own way of living, despite the challenges.

Studying in China is different from western countries,. Being a student can be fun but in this part of the world you don't get knowledge so easily. You have to study hard and struggle everyday to write Chinese characters (the Chinese alphabet).

When I first arrived here I was very worried about how I will communicate with the Chinese since I have never studied their language. It was one of the most

difficult moments of my life; I remember staying in my room for a week without stepping outside. The only time I went down the building for a few seconds was when I wanted to get my food from McDonalds as they were the only food chain I knew whose staff spoke English. On the other hand you may end up



A street view from China.

eating pork or unknown species, so I prefer being a vegetarian on most occasions.

Most of the people here don't speak English and the few ones who understand it don't speak because they will feel ashamed should they make a mistake. They prefer communicating in Chinese though there have been a lot of improvements about that - more and more Chinese want to speak English these days. One thing I like about the Chinese people is that they are very social and caring. Though I long for the day when I go back to my home country to educate my people. I always hear the situation in Somalia is worsening but that doesn't effect my desire to go back. I never stop dreaming, regardless of the grim hope that unfolds. I know that my future is bright and

Celebrating the Gaaf with Liban Rashid

Continued from pg. 1

ding ceremony. The villagers look forward to the Gaaf with anticipation.

The hut is decorated to the best of their means but in the camps it is not a hut but a tin-roofed house, with all sorts of elegant decorative utensils and Nomadic handicrafts at display. The bride, in her wedding apparel, is covered with brilliant patterns of henna, the women in their Subeeciyyad and the man in his best clothes, each according to his means.

The Gaaf is simply a congregation at the house of the newly-weds for seven nights, where singing, poetry and riddles are preserved through the nights, and it too, like the Keedho, has some strict rules to be observed:

* As soon as you enter the hut, it is customary that you first shake hands with the groom, the bride, the best-man (malxiis), the best-woman (Malxiisad) – and in that precise order also. After that one is permitted to greet any other attendees of their acquaintance or liking.

* Once the entertainment starts, the groom is appointed his two male helpers. One of these helpers acts as the 'court' (Maxkamad) and the other as the 'public prosecutor' or a 'policeman' (Askari). The Askari with his baton walks around the room and initiates the ceremony by either singing or reciting a poem first. Then he points his stick to someone in

the gathering and that person must stand in front of the 'court' to be sentenced. .

Though the customs of the Gaaf have somewhat diminished and its tradition is not fully observed within much of the Somali community and is extinct in the western world.

“Their Simple ways of living and care-free life had appealed”

The Nomads practice it and for them it is a great occasion. They take great pride in their ceremonies. Utmost care is ensured so that everything is in its due place and the hut, adorned in a variety of woven mats and decorative material, looks as ornamental as their skilful hands can make it.

What makes the Gaaf interesting is not the decoration of the hut or the number of people attending; it is the words recited by the performers and the wisdom behind them that lightens up the gathering and the more versed a person is in poetry the more esteemed they are in those circles.

Observing these nomads has strengthened my aforementioned predilection for a residence among them. Their simple ways of living and care-free life had appealed to me for a very long time. As for the exchange of poems during the nights of Gaaf, I will post a few examples in my next post.

VOICE OF A GIRL CHILD
BY Kouthar Asan Warsame



Ssshssh...! Listen
Do you hear that?
That is the voice of a girl child
A child who is a future teacher
A future doctor and a future pilot
If only my dreams are not shattered

I think of myself as a star
With my own passion of light
I can shine if given the opportunity
Opportunity to follow my brothers to school
Opportunity to grow up and learn more from the teachers
If only my dreams are not shattered

I think of myself as a giraffe
My sight set high
Big vision on big things
You don't have to marry me off to an old man
Just because you think school is not the right place for a girl
I need to go to school and pursue my goals

I think of myself as a live engine
Always going never slowing
Time is elapsing
Let my education not be a hot spot
The old man is waiting for my hand in marriage
The old woman is waiting with a knife
I need to go to school and pursue my goals

I think of myself as a lion
To roar loud and be heard
You don't have to take me as your wife
Just because I am a beautiful girl
Instead teach me a mathematical formula
So that my dreams are not shattered

I think of myself as a star
I think of myself as a live engine
I think of myself as a giraffe
I think of myself as a lion
Dear teacher, parents and guardians
Give me the rights I am entitled to.

Dadaab THEATRE GROUP

The Dadaab Theater Project was created by The Great Globe Foundation in partnership with FilmAid. There were two main goals we were striving to attain. First, to create a self-sustaining arts education curriculum within the Dadaab refugee camps. Using theatrical facilitation as a tool for communication, expression, transformation, and healing, as well as to inspire and guide the refugee youth in creating their own opportunities and platforms for positive personal and community change.

Secondly, to create platforms for the exchange of art and culture between students in the United States and the refugee youth. These theatrical engagements and collaborations are expected to connect the voices of the different African cultures within the camps. Our work in this regard culminated into bringing university theater students from the United States to train with the refugee youth and together create an original piece to be performed as part of the UNHCR's World Refugee Day festivities in Nairobi. This is unique and first annual collaboration that will take place during a retreat in Naivasha, Kenya, from June 16-19 leading up to World Refugee Day on the 20th.

The Dadaab Theater Project was founded on a desire to learn and recognize our own humanity in

the face of others, especially voices from different perspectives in the global community. We believe deeply in the ritual of theater, that with generosity and curiosity, we can engage in a basic fundamental need to connect with the notion of what it means to be human. As artists, we believe in the power of art to unite people and to heal even the most broken spirits.

One of the unique features about our work in Dadaab, is that we strongly believe in the power of the individual voice and are utilizing personal stories, original poetry and songs, as well as traditional art to form the foundation of our theatrical work. We are interested in the question of Identity and how each of us can bring forth an authentic representation of ourselves and our culture; in a piece of theater that can be shared and experienced within the community and audiences outside of Dadaab.

We have been working in Dadaab for the last four months and have learnt many things and made many friendships that will last a lifetime. We have discovered that life is harsh here in Dadaab, and people carry within them such deep and harrowing stories of suffering, torment and pain never heard before. But, what we quickly discovered is that within every person who has escaped death, fled genocide, lost their families and have endured unimaginable

hardships, there is something that exists, that rises up and clutches onto life; it is the ultimate will and strength of the human spirit. We have learnt that love is the strongest power on this planet and that hope is the essence of life, stronger than steel, stronger than death. We are inspired every day to be stronger human beings, and persons of integrity and love.

Above all, we have discovered that there are many stories here that deserve to be told. As artists and citizens of this planet earth, we are dedicating our lives to the telling of these stories. Thank you, to the inspiring voices that have touched and changed us; the people who have opened their hearts to us and let us into their lives, we will never be the same. And thank you to our partners, FilmAid and UNHCR. Without your generous support, none of this would have been possible.

Our hope is that this project continues to grow and develop within the Dadaab Refugee Camps. That we can continue to use the power of theater to let the individual voice be heard.

Julianna Bloodgood and Michael Littig
The Dadaab Theater Project, The Great Globe Foundation and FilmAid Initiative.

IFTIN BOOKSHOP



IFTIN BOOKSHOP WAA TUUKANKI BUGAAGTA EE UGU HOREYE EE LAGA FURO XERYAHA QAXOOTIGA EE DADAAB.

WUXU KU YAALA XERADA IFO, WADADA MASAAJIDKA WEEN EE IBNU MASCUUD. WAXAAD KAHELEYSAA BUUGAG NOOCA AAD U BAAHATID. GAAR AHAAN WAXAA KU BADAN BUUGAAGTA AKHRISKA EE MANHAJKA KENYA. KUWASOO KALA AH DUGSIYADA SARE IYO KUWO HOOSE.

IFTIN BOOKSHOP WUXUU XIRIIR DHEER LA LEEYAHAY BOOK SHOPYADA UGU SAREEYA EE CAASIMADA NAIROBI KUWASOO IYANA LA XIRIIRA WASAARADA WAX BARASHADA EE KENYA. TAAS AYA U SUURO GALISAY IN EY KU DIYAARIYAAN BUUGAGTA NOOCYADA UGU DAMBEEYE EE LAGU SOO HIRGALIYAY DOWLADA. SIDOO KALE WAXAAD KA HELESAA BUUGAGTA AKHRISKA IYO QAAMUSYO LUQADO KALA DUWAN KUQORAN IYO BUUGAAGTA SHEEKYOYINKA IYO KUWO KU QORAN LUQADA SOOMALIYA.

WAXA KALOO KA HELEYSAA: PHOTOCOPYING MACHINE, LAMINATING AND ALL TYPES OF STATIONERIES.

ARDAYDA KU XIRAN BADAANAA IFTIN BOOKSHOP AYAA WAXEY SOO SHEEGAAN INEY KU GUULEESTEEEN DHAMAAN IMTIXANKOODI.

FADLAN YUUSAN KUDHAAFIN NUXURKA KUDUUGAN IFTIIN BOOKSHOP HADII AAD U BAAHANTAHAY FAFAAHIN DHERAD AH FADLAN KALASOO XIRIIR CIWANK HOOS KUXUSAN:

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WORLD REFUGEE DAY WITH A 'JOYFUL CRY' FOR HELP

Continued from page 1

the Somali communities who make up the largest population in Dadaab sound hopeless. The transitional federal Government of Somalia (TFG) from whom we expected to think of our situation is grumbling over power as they are called for meetings to be mediated by foreigners!" says an elder from IFO camp.



This World Refugee Day comes at a time when the transitional government of Somalia is struggling with the enormous political crisis that caused unprecedented riots in the capital Mogadishu. This unrest was prompted by the outcome of the recent conference held in Uganda which stated the resignation of the Prime Minister, Farmajo as part of an agreement between Somalia's conflicting leaders, President Sharif Sheikh and parliament speaker, Sharif Hassan.

Somali refugees in Dadaab have also demonstrated against the resignation of the Prime Minister whom they said is the only hope for the war torn country. "We never protested in favor of anything about the TFG of Somalia but today we clearly express our feelings towards the prime Minister for his indisputable work in Mogadishu" says one of the community leaders in Dadaab.

On the other hand, many youth in Dadaab refugee camps blame the international community for not being fair in handling the issue of Somalia; they say that, it is the Somali civilians alone who can bring change in their country. "We put the blame on the unhealthy foreign interven-

tions that confuse our nation in the pretext of helping us" says a youth leader from IFO camp.

Dadaab is currently facing a crisis, with extreme congestion due to the endless stream of new refugees who arrive daily from Somalia. Within the last two weeks 20,000 new arrivals have made their way to the camp. Dadaab is currently housing over 370,000 refugees which is almost four times more than its initial capacity. This puts the camps in a period of emergency more like that of the 1991 when the civil war broke in Somalia that resulted to the establishment of Dadaab camps.

REFUGEE OF THE MONTH

MY OPINION, MY SAY

“Life in the camps has been difficult and unbearable but that did not stop her from going to school.”



Youth leader with a vision for being a role model in her community.

EBLA'S STORY:

Ebla Abdullahi Aden is just 23, but she has achieved a lot in her short life - she is determined to achieve even more. She works for FilmAid as a facilitator, is a youth leader, and she writes for The Refugee Newsletter.

Ebla Abdullahi Aden is a 23 year old Somali girl living in the Dadaab refugee camps. She came to the camps in 1992 following a civil war unrest in her home country, Somalia.

Life in the camp has been difficult and unbearable but that did not stop her from going to school. She started her elementary class in 1994 and completed her primary education in 2001.

Chances of joining secondary school was very limited, but due to her hard work and perseverance Ebla was one of the handful girls who got the opportunity to be enrolled in secondary education where she completed her high school studies in 2005.

There have been many forces and challenges for Ebla, ranging from socio-cultural factors, like early marriage, and stigma that were subjected to her likes among the Somali community. Ebla resisted these difficulties and managed to be a role model and an agent of change in her community. Apart from these challenges there was the problem of poor living standards in the camps, coupled with harsh and dusty environment against which Ebla has struggled to maintain her status quo.

In 2007, she was awarded a scholarship that won her a diploma in Nairobi where she did a course in Business Administration and completed in 2009.

The first job Ebla engaged with the Aid agencies operating in Dadaab camps was as a community development worker with CARE International - gender and community development sector.

She is currently working with FilmAid in the Dadaab field office as a facilitator. Apart from her involvement in the aid agencies in Dadaab, Ebla served as a chairlady for IFO refugee youth consortium - a voluntary youth organization.

She has attended many important and high profile meetings, including the recent visit of the US ambassador to Kenya and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees where she spoke on behalf of Dadaab refugee youth. Her courage and effective communication skills make her a key person to be counted on during all regional youth meetings where she represents Dadaab refugee youth in matters regarding gender and women's empowerment.

She is currently serving as vice chairlady for the United Girls, a female dominated youth group that manage IFO's ICT centre. Ebla also reports for The Refugee bi-monthly newsletter published by refugee youth in Dadaab camps.

Her vision is to be a role model for women in the world and eliminate the primitive harmful cultures that took deep root in her community.

By Aden Hassan Tarah

I should not stop praying until my dreams come true, a dream that makes me a Muslim scholar and a president of a nation. A nation that is invisible by name but visible in my vision. Although I am from a poor family but I hold a descendant of a politician ancestor.

Since I was born in the name of Islam, brought up in a Muslim neighborhood, I am confident that I can attain what I need from God, the almighty since he said “Beg me and I am there to accept”

But conditions do not arise through begging; you have to fulfill all his commands for your prayers to be accepted. You have to live in harmony with all his creatures regardless of their religion, race, culture, gender, or ethnic background.

I am a B.A degree holder in accounting and an employee of a local radio broadcasting station. Although I am not a journalist by profession, but circumstances force me to do all that comes my way to the reality of my dream.

I studied in Addis Ababa, the ancient city of Ethiopia. I was sponsored by well wishers who could not believe that education ends at high school in Dadaab camps.

Life in Addis was not easy for I had to cater for all my living including shelter and food.

I tried many alternatives to make life better but all turned to a struggle of exhaustion with no tangible outcome. One principal that I am happy about is that I never give up. I am now willing to continue in the fight of a better life.

I am the eldest son among six children, with an innocent mother who also dreams to see her 24 year old son filling her handbag with dollars or pounds, while people calling her this is the president's mother.

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THE REFUGEE

“I am worried for my children; their father was killed in Somalia. And I am weak and getting older. I can't even fetch water leave alone working for them.”

ONCE A COUNTRY

Flood of New Arrivals

By Aden Hassan Tarah



Hundreds of Somali refugees arrive at the Dadaab refugee camps daily, after days and sometimes months of long, tedious and horrible journey from Somalia – which is 90km from Dadaab in North Eastern Kenya. The UNHCR registration center is their first stop, where they are identified by Department of `refugee Affairs and their refugee status determined through being registered.

After having been registered they are left to join the hundreds of thousands of existing residents in the congested camps, only to share the inadequate resources available. The major challenge they face is lack of shelter. The minimum international humanitarian standards are not met. There is inadequate supply of water, food and shelter. There are no enough latrines, making open defecation the only option, hence increasing the spread of diseases. Health agencies warn of the worsening situation due to the spontaneous settlement of refugees outside the camps, especially during heavy rains where their makeshift shelters and food supplies are destroyed.

“I am worried for my children; their father was killed in Somalia. And I am weak and getting older. I can't even fetch water leave alone work for them” says Rukia, a mother of 6 children in Dagahaley camp. Generally, refugees in Dadaab consume an average of 17 litres of water per person per day which is 3 litres less than the international humanitarian standard. But the figure is literally lower than even 15 litres per person in the site of the new arrivals where there is no proper network of water supply.

Despite the many humanitarian aid agencies operating in the camps, the situation is deteriorating with the growing new influx that flocks to the already congested camps.

Authorities say the major cause of these problems is overcrowding. However less than 10km away, The IFO-2 extension camp lies empty. After negotiations with the government of Kenya, UNHCR was granted land and given permission to establish a forth camp to help the more than 1,300 refugees who are now arriving each day. But the new camp has not opened.

There have been serious concerns raised by the local community over fear of depletion of resources by refugees hence causing environmental degradation. These arguments halted the constructions of houses and many times dismantled plans of relocation of refugees from the congested camps. Instead of finding the assistance and protections they need, refugees are caught in the middle of these negotiations and therefore are being left to live in undignified and unacceptable conditions outside the camps

Life on the other hand is relatively better for those who came to Dadaab in the 1990s. There have been some developments over the years - like power supply of electricity, computer institutions, cyber cafes, vehicles that move people from one camp to another and taxis that operate within the camps. Also attracted into this booming business are big Kenyan network companies like Safaricom and Airtel which are currently operating in the Dadaab district. All these changes were made possible by the international money remittances that connect Dadaab refugees to the Diaspora. Almost ten international money remittance services and banks like Dahabshiil operate in dadaab, through which money flows from relatives, friends and family members who have been resettled to third countries like the United States of America where the highest amount of money comes from.

Discontent and disillusion from its own people
 The highest man frowned and unreasonably reacted.

Next was deceased and dire disaster.
 Pick up for others of tomorrow who will come

Streets swept clean with blood
 Man slaughtering man become the business
 Minority men met massacre minus cause
 Pick up for others of tomorrow who will come

The highest man hurriedly took off
 Hurriedly out of hands departed the order
 For too long he laid topmost acting single handedly

All took arms with their unconditioned palms
 Pick up for others of tomorrow who will come

Social amenities spared not
 Sacred neither satanic survived destruction
 Shall I survive to tell Dream of all
 Pick up for others of tomorrow who will come

Better before than now
 Armed against armed was not fair any.
 But assaulting elites
 Pick up for others of tomorrow who will come

Better before than now
 Religion focalized for fouls
 Sectarian war imminent to wage
 Pick up for others of tomorrow who will come

The road to peace prolongs on daily basis
 Violence perpetrators rest no single second
 Gatherings geared for reconciliation prompts fist exchange
 Pick up for others of tomorrow who will come

Death is from sunset
 Failures of comprehending are its' own handmaiden
 Deadly victimized are the common men
 Pick up for others of tomorrow who will come

Frustrated are the efforts
 Fortune yet to befall on my land
 When out known to God
 Pick up for others of tomorrow who will come



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