

Lorans Oujit Loval

Age: 26

Region: Aweel

When I was 9 years old, a militia group from the West invaded my village, killed my father and took me with them. My family was hiding in the bush. I was captured because they wanted to use me as a free laborer. I was beaten severely and still have scars. I was held by the militia for 4 years to tend their sheep and cows.

A Christian group from the Western world and Egypt raised money and paid for my release and took me to North Sudan. I was sent to a Catholic school in the capital of Khartoum. I missed my family terribly. There was little food and my education was minimum. I lived in the school for 7 years until a clash occurred between the students and government.

One of the Italian priests took me to Egypt where I lived for 3 years. During this time, I learned my family had escaped and lived in Khartoum safely. They still live in Khartoum, but I've never seen them again. I struggle in Egypt to find work and enough to live on. When I was 22, I rented an apartment in Egypt.

I arrived in the United States on September 4, 2004. I was a little afraid of the airplane ride and the large people who spoke a different language when I landed. I was scared of getting lost. I was excited to be in a new country and a little overwhelmed with learning so many new things.

One of the difficult things about living here is understanding the laws. I'm not sure what my restrictions are and I'm afraid of deportation. I like being able to walk freely in the street without a fight. Here, you are left alone. I like the strong economy, the scenery and landscape. I'm taking English classes and would love to speak fluently with full understanding. I'm working in security and want to learn to be light a light industry mechanic.

I talk to my family on the telephone, but my dream is to bring them here.