

Moses Matet

Age: 25

Region: Upper Nile

In 1985, I was five years old and playing in my neighborhood when the bombs hit our houses. War had broken out. I started running with other people and that is how I came to be separated from my family. We walked to Ethiopia where I lived for 4-5 years. I lived in a refugee camp with 30-40,000 people. The war was still going on when I went back to Sudan.

The United Nations took us to Kakuma in Kenya where I lived for another 5-9 years. There were many other refugees from Rwanda, Sudan and Brudi living in the camp. We had very little food and it was dangerous because bad people killed others for their food and supplies. The U.N. gave us materials to build our own shelters. They gave me an empty gallon container to cut up and thread my house together. Now there are other people living in the house I made.

One good thing about the camp was the school where I studied high school classes before I went through the resettlement process to enter the U.S. I arrived in the United States on September 28, 2001 just after 9/11. I had some fears because I didn't know the culture, how to cook food or what work I would do.

The U.S. is a very different culture from Sudan. I was shaken to learn a car can hit and kill you. In Sudan, you can't disrespect your elders. I like being able to go to school and live in a different culture. I would like to be a chemist and work with drug companies to make medicines to help people. I would also like to be a doctor.

After arriving in the U.S. and 20 years after being lost from my family, I learned my father, brother, and sister are alive and living in Sudan. Someday I will see them again, but not now.