

“Sudanese Find Safety but Feel Loss of Identity”
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By Chuck Haga

They have made a new home in Minnesota, but some refugees from Sudan still grieve for the life they left and the family they have lost. In a white robe, a Muslim kufi on his head, Saif Harun watches his girls play in his peaceful Shoreview home. He smiles as his children play, but he does not seem relaxed.

“Sometimes I feel that something is missing, he says. “I feel sometimes that I am losing my identity. I’m OK here, but I feel ... I feel I’m missing something.”

It has been nine years since he fled Sudan’s civil wars, and four years since he came with his wife , Intisar, and daughter, Dua, to the United States. Dua is almost 9 now. She has only heard about Sudan, about the land and the people and the war.

“I miss my grandparents, she says softly in easy English that lacks her father’s accent but not his sadness. “I miss everybody else in my family. And I feel sad for all the people who are getting killed.”

The 2000 Census reported 695 Sudanese living in Minnesota, but refugees continue to arrive, and Sudanese leaders say there are between 2,000 and 4,000 here.

For Saif Harun, the stay in Minnesota is hopefully a temporary one. “I still have a role to play there,” he says, “My family would like to stay here. They like it here. We have a nice home, and they like the people.” But, still, home is home. “When Secretary of State Colin Powell went to Sudan [last month], we were very happy. That gave our people a big boost.”

Vocabulary

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|--------------------|---|
| 1. refugee _____ | a. the sound of a non-native speaker talking |
| 2. grieve _____ | b. not angry or excited |
| 3. relaxed _____ | c. who a person is |
| 4. identity _____ | d. a person who has to leave their home because of problems |
| 5. accent _____ | e. feel sad about someone who has died or is lost |
| 6. Census _____ | f. number of people living in the USA |
| 7. temporary _____ | g. to give someone help |
| 8. boost _____ | h. only for a short time |

True/False

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| 1. Mr. Harun is happy in the United States. | T | F |
| 2. The Harun family lives in a peaceful home in Shoreview. | T | F |
| 3. There is a civil war in Sudan. | T | F |
| 4. The Harun family has lived in Minnesota for 9 years. | T | F |
| 5. There are between 5,000 and 10,000 people from Sudan living in Minnesota. | T | F |
| 6. Mr. Harun wants to go back to live in Sudan. | T | F |
| 7. Mr. Harun's family wants to go back to live in Sudan. | T | F |
| 8. The Harun family are refugees. | T | F |

What do you think?

1. Does Saif Harun miss living in Sudan? Why?

2. If you were Mr. Harun, would you return to Sudan or stay in Minnesota? Why?

3. Are the children happy living in Minnesota or sad?

4. Would you like to move back to your home country someday? Why or why not?
