



**Testimony of Moses A.  
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My name is Moses A. I was born in a small village called Mayen Adhot in what is now known as South Sudan. I had two sisters and a younger brother and my father was the chief of our village. We lived a simple life. There was no electricity or running water and my family lived in a hut that was largely made out of grass. But, I was surrounded by aunts, uncles and cousins who lived all around me.

As a very young child I would take our cattle to pasture with other children, while my father farmed the land. I have wonderful memories of playing with my other friends in the tall grass, while the cattle grazed. When I was four or five years old, all this changed. Arab raiders, who were called Mourallen or “the nomads,” began attacking villages like ours across the region. Sometimes they would swoop into a town and capture children and young women and then sell them into slavery. We seldom ever heard from these people again. As a result, for fear that I might also get caught; my father no longer let me go into the fields to play.

One day a large group of Mourallen came on horse and camel to my village. We were told to run into the fields and hide in the tall grass. From there I could see them collecting our goats and cattle and looting our fields. They stayed for a week and before leaving burnt our village to the ground. There was nothing we could do. They had AK47s. We only had spears.

We rebuilt the village, but with our livestock gone many young men left to join the South Sudanese Liberation Army. I became fascinated with guns. I saw their power and hoped that one day I would also be able join the army. That day finally came when a large group of South Sudanese men and boys showed up at our village. They were walking to Ethiopia to get training so they could join the army and fight our oppressors. An uncle of mine decided to join the group and my father sent me with him. I was still a small boy, but I was excited because I imagined that I would soon return to protect our village. This never happened.

Every day we would walk to another village. At first, we were with people from our tribe. They would feed us and more people would join our group. But, as we moved further south, the people and the spoken language began to change and we no longer were so welcome. There was now less food and the hungrier we were the more difficult our daily walks became. We finally were reduced to a spoonful of sesame paste a day.

It took three months, to arrive at a refugee camp in Ethiopia that was run by our army. Many people had died along the way and conditions at the camp were very bad. After some time, the men were taken away for training and we children were assigned to groups where we were also taught to become fighters. We did everything the grown-ups did, except actually shooting guns. In the wet season, we would stop our training and they would try to give us some schooling.

One day we were told to gather our things and leave our camp. We began walking back to South Sudan. Along the way our group was attacked by the Ethiopian Army. Finally we arrived at a village controlled by the Liberation Army. The local militia launched daily attacks against us, but our real enemy was hunger. There were too many of us to feed and sometimes I went three days without eating. After a month the Red Cross began to airdrop supplies. This saved our lives.

We stayed 6 months and then were again told to leave and walk back to Kenya. We settled in a small town where there were homes and a school, but the town was captured by the Sudanese Army and we had to flee again. This time we ended up in Kakuma, a sprawling refugee camp in Kenya. There were thousands of people there. It was a hot barren place, but there was food. We built huts from whatever we could find and went to school where I learned English.

It had been seven or eight years since I left my family. I did not know if they were still alive or if my village still existed. I wrote to them and the Red Cross delivered my letter to my village. To my relief, I received a reply. My father, uncle and many relatives were no longer alive, but my mother, 2 sisters and a younger brother had survived.

After several years at Kakuma, a reporter arrived from the Boston Globe. This led to an effort to bring some of us to Boston. They called us the Lost Boys and on June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2001 I was flown here. I had never been on a plane. I was entering into a new world and a new life. Within 3 months I had a job and the next year I began undergraduate studies. Eventually, I joined the Air Force and served in Iraq and Afghanistan. I went on to get an MBA, began working as an accountant, got married and today have two wonderful children.

One day I hope to return to South Sudan, so I can see my mother, my sisters and my brother, but America is now my home. Here my family is safe. I have had wonderful opportunity. And I am free.

This has been my journey to freedom.