

We Kissed the Ground

Carrada Ayaan Dhunkannay

*A migrant's journey from Somaliland
to the Mediterranean*

*Waa socdaalkii tahriibka ee Somaliland
ilaa badda Medhitereeniyanaka*



MOHAMED HUSSEIN GEELDOON
MAXAMED XUSEEN GEELDOON

RIFT VALLEY INSTITUTE | RIFT VALLEY FORUM

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A migrant's journey from Somaliland to the Mediterranean

By Mohamed Hussein Geeldoon

MACHADKA DOOXADA RIFT | MADASHA DOOXADA RIFT

.....

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Waa socdaalkii tahriibka ee Somaliland ilaa badda

Medhitereeniyanka

Sheekadii: Maxamed Xuseen Geeldoon



Map. Mohamed Hussein Geeldoon's tahrriib route



Khariidada Jidkii tahrriibka ee Maxamed Xuseen Geeldoon



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Mohamed Hussein Geeldoon was born in Erigavo in 1987. After several failed attempts to migrate to Europe as a teenager, he returned home to Somaliland, where he attends university and advises young people against migrating.

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QORAAGA

Maxamed Xuseen Geeldoon waxa uu ku dhashay Ceerigaabo sannadkii 1987. Isaga oo da' yar waxa uu muddo sannaddo ah isku dayayay in uu u tahriibo Yurub. Hase ahaatee kadib dhawr iskuday oo uu ku guul darraystay waxa uu kusoo guryo-hoyday Somaliland halkaas oo u ka dhigto jaamacad kana waaniyo da'yarta tahriibka.



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Dedicated to Said Mohamed Dahir

Hibayn: Saciid Maxamed Daahir

Preface

This narrative is a first-hand account of the experiences of a young man from Somaliland who went on tahriib. Tahriib is an Arabic word referring to a form of unregulated emigration which involves a large number of young Somali men and women who leave for Europe via Ethiopia, Sudan and Libya, and thence across the Mediterranean Sea.

The Somali people have a long history of migration. Historically, to go on migration has been a family livelihood strategy. It is one of the ways that Somali men from a pastoralist background have helped their families to survive during times of severe hardship such as famine. Since the late 1980s, hundreds of thousands have fled war and famines in the Somali territories. Even as conflict subsides large numbers of Somalis, particularly young men, continue to leave the country to seek a better life abroad.

Since the Civil War in Libya in 2011 and the subsequent security vacuum there, the number of asylum seekers and migrants crossing or seeking to cross the Mediterranean from Libya has dramatically increased, with many seeing the Libyan coast as the gateway to Europe.¹ In June 2013, the press in Somaliland estimated

¹ Franziska Brantner and Mattia Toaldo, 'The Libyan context of the migration crisis', European Council on Foreign Relations, 22 May 2015.

Araar

Sheekadani waa waraysigii ugu horreeyay ee ku saabsan waayo aragnimadii wiil dhallinyaro ah oo reer Somaliland oo taahriibay. Tahriib, waa eray af-carbeed ah oo macnihiisu u taaganyahay hab cusub oo soo badanaya oo socdaal aan sharci ahayn ah oo ay galaan tiro badan oo dhallinyaro Soomaali ah oo rag iyo dumarka leh oo u socdaalaya Yurub iyaga oo sii dhex maraya Itoobiya, Suudaan, iyo Liibiya kamadanbaytana ka tallaabaya badda Midhatareninaynka.

Dadka Soomaalidu waxa ay leeyihiin taariikh dheer oo dhanka socdaalka ah. Barigii hore in la socdaalaa waxa ay ahayd tab lagula soo baxo nolol maalmeedka reerka. Socdaalku waxa uu ka mid yahay hababka ragga Soomaaliyeed oo leh sooyaal reer-guuraanim ay kaga taageeraan qoyskoodu in ay ku samatobaxaan xilliyada ay jiraan dhibaatooyinku sida abaaraha oo kale. Ilaa dhammaadkii 1980-kii, boqolaal kun ayaa ka cararay dagaal iyo abaaro ka dhacay gayiga Soomaalida. Iyada oo xasaraduhu hoos u dhaceen ayaa tiro badan oo Soomaali ahi, gaar ahaan ragga dhallinta ahi, sii wadaan in ay ka baxaan dalka iyaga oo raacdo ugu jira nolol wanaagsan oo ay ka helaan qurbaha.

Tani iyo markii uu dagaalka sokeeye ka bilawday dalka Liibiya sannaddii 2011 iyo amnidarradii xigtay, tirada dadka maganglayo-doonka ah iyo dadka sida sharcidarrada ah u socdaalaya oo dhexmaraya Liibiya ama raba in ay ka tallaabaan badda Medhiteraaniyanka, si aad ah ayay u korodhay. In badan oo dadkan ka mid ahina waxa ay ahay Liibiya u arkaan irridka laga galayo Yurub.¹ Bishii Juun ee

¹ Franziska Brantner and Mattia Toaldo, 'The Libyan context of the migration crisis', European Council on Foreign Relations, 22 May 2015.

that 150 people per month were heading to Libya from Somaliland.² The numbers of migrants using the central Mediterranean crossing have increased dramatically since then. In 2015, an estimated 154,000 migrants entered Europe via this route—an increase of more than 1,000 per cent from 2012. Most were from the Horn of Africa.³ In 2015 The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) estimates that there were 2,860 deaths at sea between January and October on the central route.⁴ Somalis, most of them young men, were among the top five nationalities crossing the Mediterranean during the first six months of 2015.⁵

Although much has been written about the rise in migration to Europe and migrant deaths at sea, little is written about the journey migrants take prior to attempting the crossing. Mohamed Geeldoon's life story was collected in the course of an RVI research programme on the impact of war on Somali men and youths, conducted in 2013 and 2014. It was one of 44 life stories of men collected from across the Somali regions.⁶ The interview on which this narrative is based took place on 8 January 2014. It was originally conducted and transcribed in Somali and later translated into English. The narrative has been abridged and adapted with the permission

2 'Somaliland: President Silanyo Appoints Committee on Illegal Immigration and Unemployment', *Somaliland Sun*, 25 June 2013, accessed 24 October 2015.

3 Sahan, 'Human Trafficking and Smuggling on the Horn of Africa—Central Mediterranean Route', IGAD: Addis Ababa, February 2016: 5.

4 Sahan, 'Human Trafficking and Smuggling', 13.

5 UNHCR, 'The Sea Route to Europe: The Mediterranean Passage in the Age of Refugees', UNHCR: The UN Refugee Agency, July 2015.

6 The inception study report, 'The Impact of War on Somali Men', is available from the LOGiCA website (http://www.logica-wb.org/PDFs/LOGICA_The_Impact_of_War_on_Somali_Men.pdf).

2013, jaaraa'idka ka soo baxa Somaliland waxa uu ku qiyaasay in ay bil walba dad tiradoodu tahay 150 qof ka tagayeen Somaliland una socdaalayeen Liibiya.² Muddadan waxii ka danbeeyay waxa si aad ah kor ugu kacay tirada dadka ee ka gudbaya badda Medhit-eraanianyanka. Sannaddii 2015 dad tahriibayaal ah oo lagu qiyaasay 154,000 ayaa marinkan ka soo galay qaaradda Yurub tiradan oo kun- jeer- laab ku ah tiradii 2012. Dadkan intooda badani waxa ay ka yimaaddeen Geeska Afrika.³ Haya'dda Socdaalka Caalamiga ah ee (IOM) waxa ay ku qiyaastay in sannadkii 2015 ay jireen 2,860 dhimasho oo ka dhacay marin badeedkan bilihii u dhaxeeyay Jeenawari iyo Oktoobar.⁴ Dad Soomaali ah oo u badan dhallinyaro, ayaa ka mid ahaa shanta qoomiyadood ee ugu badan ee ka gudbay badda Medhiteraanianyanka lixdii bilood ee hore ee sannadkii 2015.⁵ Inkasta oo wax laga qoray korodhka ku yimid socdaalka lagu tago Yurub iya sidoo kale dhimashada tahriibayaasha ee ay badda ku dhintaan, haddana waxyar ayaa laga qoray safarka tahriibka ee ka horreeya isku-dayga ka gudbidda badda Medhitereenianyanka.

Inkasta oo waxbadan laga qoray kor u kaca ku yimid socdaalka Yurub lagu tegayo iyo dhimashada dadkani ee badda ka dhacda, wax yar ayaa laga qoraa socdaalka ay galaan ka hor inta aanay ka tallaabin badda. Taariikh nololeedka Maxamed Xuseen Geeldoon waxa la ururshay intii uu socday barnaamij cilmi-baadhis ah oo la sameeyay intii u dhaxaysay 2013 iyo 2014 oo ay fulisay hayadda RVI oo ku saabsanaa saamaynta dagaaladu ku yeesheen ragga iyo dhallinta Soomaalida. Tanina waxa ay qayb ka ahayd 44

2 'Somaliland: Madaxwaynaha oo magacaabay guddi ka tala bixisa socdaalka sharci-darrada ah iyo shaqo-la'aanta', *Somaliland Sun*, 25 June 2013, accessed 24 October 2015.

3 Sahan, 'Human Trafficking and Smuggling on the Horn of Africa—Central Mediterranean Route', IGAD: Addis Ababa, February 2016: 5.

4 Sahan, 'Human Trafficking and Smuggling', 13.

5 UNHCR, 'The Sea Route to Europe: The Mediterranean Passage in the Age of Refugees', UNHCR: The UN Refugee Agency, July 2015.

of the author. Other identifying references have been removed to preserve anonymity, with the exception of place names.⁷

Geeldon first began his journey in 1989. Due to the harrowing nature of this journey, as well as the time elapsed, some details are vague. But his experiences echo what the study heard from men of all ages on the impact of war, including multiple, forced displacements, loss of social and economic status, loss of security and sex-selective massacres, growing up with an absent father and periods of mental collapse. Geeldoon's story offers the most extensive available account of tahriib and the brutal world of people trafficking.

Many die in their attempts to reach the West, but Geeldoon lived to tell the tale of his tahriib. Since his safe return to Somaliland, he has set up a local organization to warn others of the dangers of tahriib and encourage young people to build their futures at home instead.

⁷ Bracketed text indicates clarifications that have been inserted by the editors. Headings and sub-headings have also been inserted by the editors.

taariikh–nololeed oo ay leeyihiin rag la waraystay oo ku filiqsan degaanada Soomaalida.⁶

Waraysiga sheekadani ku salaysantahay waxa lagu qaaday Somaliland 8dii Jeenawari 2014. Waraysiga markii hore waxa lagu qoray af-Soomaali haddana waxa lagu tarjamay af-Ingiriisi. Sheekadani waa daabacad lasoo gaabshay oo la dhalanrogay oo ah sheekadii hore ogalaanshana looga helay qofka sheekadu ku saabsantahay. Sheekada waxa laga saaray dhammaan tixraacyada marka laga reebo magacyada meelaha. Magacyada meelaha waxa loo daayay si loo dareemo baaxadda socdaalka. Ujeedada sheekadu waa in la fahmo tahriibka, faham wanaagsan loo yeesho sababaha dadku u socdaalaan iyo dhibaatooyinka ay la kulmaan inta ay jidka ku jiraan.⁷

Qofka sheekadan ka sheekeeyay waxa uu markii u horraysay bilaabay socdaalkiisa 1989, kama danbayntina waxa u soo guryo-noqday laba sano kadib. Maadaama socdaalkani ahaa mid silic badan, oo muddana ka soo wareegtay, xogta ku jirta sheekada qaybo ka mid ah mugdi ayaa ku jira.

Hayeeshee waayo aragnimada Geeldoon waxa ay iftiiminaysaa waxa daraasaddu ka maqashay rag da' walba leh oo ku saabsan saamaynta dagaalka oo ay ka mid tahay tiro barakac xoog ah, waayidda heerkii bulsho iyo dhaqaale, amni darrro iyo xasuuq jinsi ku salaysan, korriin abbahii oo maqan iyo xilliyo ay jirto niyadjab. Sheekada Geeldoon waxa ay inna siinaysaa qisada kaliya ee la hayo ee ugu faahfaahsan ee ku saabsan tabriibka iyo duruufaha cadawtinimo ee ku gadaaman tahriibinta dadka.

Geeldoon noloshu ayaa ku sintay in uu ka sheekeeyo qisadiisa tahriibka. In badani waxa ay ku dhintaan isku dayga ay ugu jiraan

⁶ Warbixinta Daraasadda Gogolxaadhka ah ee, 'The Impact of War on Somali Men', waxa laga heli karaa warbixintan barta intarnatka ee LOGiCA (http://www.logica-wb.org/PDFs/LOGICA_The_Impact_of_War_on_Somali_Men.pdf).

⁷ Qoraalada ku jira qawiska waa kuwo ay ay sheekada ku dareen tifaftiyaraashu. Cinwaanada waawayn iyo kuwan yararna waxa sheekada u sameeyay Tifaftirayaasha.

in ay tu tagaan waddammada Reer Galbeedka, sida uu sheegay. Sidi u badqab ugu soo noqday Somaliland, qorshayaashiisa ugu horreeya waxa ka mid ahaa in uu sameeyo urur maxalli ah oo dhallinyarta ka waaniya khatarta tahriibka kuna dhiirri galiya in ay mustaqbalkooda ku dhistaan dhulkooda hooyo halkii ay ka tahriibi layaaheen.

Meeting Geeldoon

By Said Mohamed Dahir

I first met Geeldoon during a training course I conducted for youth in Erigavo. He was one of the trainees and he briefly talked to me about his experiences. That was in 2012. In January 2014 when I went to Erigavo to research the impact of war on men, I met him again. Knowing that he had undertaken a long journey, I sought him out. We sat down and I asked him to tell me about his background and the story of his *tahriib*. I remember he spoke so readily that I only needed to ask a few questions, I did not need to ask more. The story just flowed smoothly.

It was a story that captured my complete attention. I was completely submerged in it as though I was watching the actual scenes he was describing to me. I remember he was so coherent, so comfortable at the beginning, though as his story went on his emotions changed.

It was very cold in Erigavo at the time. So, each day we had to cut the story short as we could not sit in the same place for very long. The cold was okay for him but it was difficult for me because I am from a warmer part of the country. We met at the same time for three days. Each day, he reminded me where he had stopped the day before. He had a very good memory. This helped me trust him

Lakulankii Geeldoon

Waxa qoray: Saciid Maxamed Daahir

Markii u horraysay waxa aan Geeldoon kula kulmay tababar aan u qabtay dhaliyaro ku nool magaalada Ceerigaabo. Waxa uu ka mid ahaa tabobartayaasha si koobanna waxa uu iiga sheekayay waayo-aragnimadiisa. Sannadku waxa uu ahaa 2012. Haddana waxa aan mar kale la kulmay bishii Jaanaweri 2014 mar aan Ceerigaabo u tagay cilmibaadhis kusaabsan saamaynta dagaalladu ku yeesheen ragga. Aniga oo og in uu galay socdaal dheer, waan raacdo tagay. Waa annu wada fadhiisannay waxa aanan waydiistay in uu iiga sheekeeyo sooyaalkiisa iyo sheekada tahriibkiisii. Waan xasuustaa, waxa uu sheekaynayay isaga oo faraxsan arrintaasi oo keentay in aan su'aale dhawr ah kaliya waydiiyo. Uma aan baahan in aan waydiiyo su'aalo badan. Sheekadu si aan kala go'lahayn ayay u socotay.

Waxay ahayd sheeko aad ii soo jiidatay. Dhammaantay waxa aan dhexgalay sheekadii iyada oo aad mooddo in aan si dhab ah u fiirsanayo muuqallada dhabta ah ee uu sharraxayo. Waan xasuustaa oo hadalkiisu wuu is haystay raaxana badnaa bilawgii inkasta oo markii uu hore u socday ay shucuurtiisu is baddashay.

Xilligan Ceerigaabo aad ayay u qaboobayd. Sidaa awgeed, waxa aan ku qasbanayn in aan maalinwalba dhexda ku jarro waraysiga maadaama oo aannaan hal meel muddo dheer fadhiyi karayn. Isaga qabaw uma ahayn, aniga se way igu adkayd maxaa yeelay waxa aan ka imid dalka qaybtiisa diirran. Waqti isku mid ah ayaan la kulmay muddo saddex cisho ah. Maalin walba waxa uu i xasuusin jiray halkii uu maalinta hore sheekada ku joojay. Xasuustiisu aad ayay u ficnayd. Arrintani waxa ay iga taageertay in aan ku sii kalsoonaado

and believe the story even more. As I listened, I felt I was capturing a unique and special account.

I so enjoyed listening to him that I did not want his story to end. When it did end finally, it felt as if we had visited another world. But there we were in Erigavo. He was happy that he was back home. He was looking ahead and was once more very ambitious but, this time, to establish his life in his home country. He had already started a small business in Erigavo.

This was one of the most powerful and engrossing stories I heard during my research.

Said Mohamed Dahir was born in Hargeysa. His childhood, like many others of his generation, was marked by civil war, forcing his family to flee their home in 1988 to Ethiopia. After the war, Said was able to resume his studies to become one of the first graduates of the newly founded Amoud University, where he also taught. Before joining RVI, Said worked as a researcher with several international organizations and scholars. The present publication is one of the outcomes of an RVI study of the impact of war on Somali men, a study that Said joined in 2013. In 2015 he led a team of researchers on a study of land in Somaliland, and in January 2016 he was appointed RVI's Research Manager for the Somali Regions. Said Mohamed Dahir collapsed and died unexpectedly on 5 March 2016. He is missed by family, friends and colleagues alike.

oo aan aad u rumaytso sheekadiisa. Intii aan dhagaysanayay, waxa aan dareemay in aan qabanayo sheeko wax la mid ahi aanay jirin.

Aad ayaan ugu raaxaystay dhagaysigiisa oo ma aan rabin in sheekadu dhammaato. Markii sheekadii dhammaatay, waxa ay ila ahayd sidii qof caalam kale booqday. Laakin wali waxa aan joognay Ceerigaabo. Waxa uu ku faraxsanaa in uu dalka ku soo noqday. Rajo ayuu qabay waxa aanu ku hanwaynaa in markan uu ku noolaado dalkiisa hooyo. Isla markiiba waxa uu Ceerigaabo ka furtay meherad.

Sheekadani waxa ay ahayd mid ka mid ah sheekooyinka ugu saamaynta iyo raadka way ee aan maqaly intii aan darasadda ku jiray.

Siciid Maxamed Daahir waxa uu ku dhashay Hargaysa. Iyada oo uu kala midyahay in badan oo faciisa ah, carruurnimadiisa waxa ku suntan dagaalo sokeeye oo reerkooda ku qasbay in ay u barakacaan Itoobiya sannadkii 1988. Dagaalkii ka dib, Saciid waxa u suuro gashay in uu sii amboqaado waxbarashadiisii aanu noqdo mid kamid ah qalijabiyaay-ishii Jaamacaddii wakhtiyadaa la aasaasay ee Cammuud, halkaas oo uu sidoo kale wax ka dhigay. Ka hor intii aanu ku soo biirin RVI, Saciid waxa uu cilmibaadhe aahaan kula shaqeeyay urruro iyo aqoonyahanno caalami ah. Khibraddan ayaa keentay in sannaddii 2013 uu ka biiro RVI isaga oo cilmibaadho sare ka noqday diraasaad ku saabsan saamaynta dagaaladu ku yeeshen ragga soomaalida oo ah halka ay sheekadani ka soo ifbaxday. Ka dib markii uu hogaamiyay koox cilmibaadhayaal Soomaali ah oo ka hawlgalaysay diraaasad ku saabsan dhulka oo RVI ka wadday Somaliland, Saciid waxa loo magacaabay Maareeyaha Diraasada ee Deegaanada Soomaalida bishii Jeenawari 2016. Saciid Maxamed Dahir waxa uu (AHN) si lama filaan ah u geeriyooday 5tii Maarso 2016. Si isku mid ah waxa u tabi doona qaraabadii, saaxiibadii iyo dadkii ay wada shaqaynayeen.

PART ONE

Early life

My name is Mohamed Hussein Geeldoon.⁸ I am a young man born in Erigavo in 1987.⁹ My family moved to Mogadishu in 1989 to escape fighting in the north.¹⁰ We arrived in Mogadishu just as the war against the Siyad Barre regime, a regime that had many opponents, reached the city. Our family was affected because some of my relatives were supporting or employed by the regime. As the regime fell, these relatives were targeted and attacked.

I remember we lived in a big walled-in house that was attacked and fired on by armed militia. The young men in the house resisted and fired back. One, a cousin of mine, was killed. This was the start of the fleeing and the suffering.

We fled Mogadishu in a big truck. There was my mother, my two younger brothers, my older sister, my remaining cousin and me. In the lorry, not realizing I was underneath them, people stacked foodstuff on top of me and other people then sat on it. Luckily my mother saw my head poking out from a tiny space. She shouted for me to be rescued and I was pulled out.

We left behind a house full of everything, a calm life and security.

8 In Somali, 'Geeldoon' means 'someone who searches for or wants camels'.

9 Erigavo is in north-west Somalia, in what is now called Somaliland.

10 The civil war began in the early 1980s. Until 1989–1990, it had been largely confined to the north-west of the country.

QAYBTA KOOWAAD

Bilawgii Hore ee Nolosh

Magacaygu waa Maxamed Xuseen Geeldoon. Waxa aan ahay inan dhallinyaro ah oo reer Ceerigaabo ah. Waxa aan ku dhashay magaalada Ceerigaabo sannadkii 1987. Waxa aan tagtay Muqdisho sannadii 1989. Muddo yar ka dib, waxa dalka ka bilaabmay rabshadihii lagaga soo horjeeday dawladdii Maxamed Siyaad Barre oo ay waqtigaa dad badan ku kacsanaayeen. Arrintani waxa ay nagu yeelatay, gaar ahaan qoyskayaga, saamayn aad u badan, waayo waxa jiray qoyskayaga qayb ka mid ah oo dawladda taabacsanayd ama u shaqaynaysay.

Runtii markii ay dawladdaasi burburtay oo ay meesha ka baxday, waxa la soo weeraray lana dhibay nimankii aan isku qoyska ahayn ee gurigayaga joogay. Markii weerarkaa nalagu soo qaaday, waan xusuustaa, guri ayaan deganayn leh dayr weyn. Ciidamo hubaysan oo jabhad ah ayaa guriyaga soo weeraray kadib markii dawladdu baxday dabadeedna xabad ku harqiyay.

Inamadii markaa joogay oo ka bixi waayay magaalada ayaa difaac galay. Wiil aannu ilmaabti ahayn ayaa meesha lagu dilay. Ka dib waxa bilaabantay in aannu ka qaxno magaalada Muqdisho oo aannu u firxanno dhanka dalka Kiiniya.

Gaadhi weyn oo xamuul ah ayaa nala saaray. Waxa aannu ahayn labadayada yar yar, gabadh walaashay ah oo naga wayn, wiil aannu ilmaadeer nahay iyo aniga.

Markii gaadhiga la i saaray raashin ayaa dusha la iga saaray inta la i illaaway illayn ilmo yar baan ahaaye. Raashinkii ayaa dusha lagaga sii fadhiistay. Nasiib wanaag, Islaantii hooyaday ahayd ayaa i aragtay

Within a few days life had turned desperate—full of suffering, misery, killing and fear. Fear of death and the illegal check points where, before you could pass through, you had to identify your clan. Members of some clans were targeted and massacred, especially the men. Women were spared on the basis that they were not able to retaliate. But men were targeted and killed.

We arrived at Kismayo town where we stayed for several days.¹¹ While we were there, the war reached Kismayo. Our neighbours' houses were hit by shells. Some of them died under the rubble. And so we fled again, to the Kenyan border, to a place called Hoosingow. Here we had some relatives who had fled there during Sayyid Mohamed Abdille Hassan's time.¹² They received us and gave us shelter.

I was a young child with a good capacity to remember things. I remember in Hoosingow there was an old man who had a shop where we bought things. Whenever I went to his shop he would ask me about my clan lineage. When I recited my genealogy name by name, he would be astonished. Then he would ask the other young boys the same question in order to compare us. When they failed to be able to name beyond their first grandfather, he would give me money.

One day, when I was still in Hoosingow receiving money for reciting my complete lineage, the town came under attack. The

11 Kismayo is a port city approximately 500 km south of Mogadishu, in the direction of the Kenyan border.

12 Born in the Sool region in what is now an area disputed by Somaliland and Puntland, Sayyid Mohamed Abdille Hassan (1856-1920) was a religious leader who established the Dervish state and fought a 20-year campaign against British, Italian and Ethiopian armies. He was referred to by the British as 'the Mad Mullah'.

aniga oo meel in yar madaxa uun i muuqdo, markaasay qayliday "Waar, ilmaha meesha iiga soo saara". Dabadeedna waa la iga soo saaray.

Dhabtii, qax iyo dhib ayaa noo bilaabmay. Guri buuxa oo camiran oo wax waliba yaalaan iyo nolol qabow oo amni oo wax walba leh ayaanu ku noolayn. Maalmo ka dib noloshii waxa ay isku baddashay nolol rafaad, dayac iyo waa la dilayaa hebel ama hebelba la dilay, adigana waa lagu dilayaa iyo in isbaarooyin jidka naloo dhigtay nalagu waydiiyo qabiilkayaga. Waxay gaadhay in qabiilada qaar in la xasuuqo oo hortayada lagu gumaado, gaar ahaan ragga. Dumarka waxa laga yaabaa in la daynayay oo la lahaa waa dumar oo hadday soo kacaan hadhaw cidna waxba ma yeelayaan laakiin ragga aad loo raadinayay loona laaynayay.

Waxa aannu u gudubnay markaa magaalada Kismaayo oo aannu maalmo joognay. Maalmihii aanu joognay, ayaa uu haddana Kismaayo dagaalkii xoog uga sii bilaabmay. Guryo nagu xigay ayay madaafiici qabsatay oo qoysas aanu jaaar ahayn guryihii ku dumeen, qaar badana halkii ku baaba'een. Ka dib, waanu ka sii qaxnay, waxa aannu u sii qaxnay xuduudda Kiiniya anaga oo tagnay meel la yidhaahdo Hoosingow.

Hoosingow waxa ku noolaa qoysas aanu qaraabo nahay, oo ah dadkii ka soo qaxay dalka Soomaaliya waagii Sayid Maxamed Cabdille Xasan. Qoysaskaas ayaa na soo dhaweeyay anaga oo rafaadsan, na gacan qabtay, hoyna na siiyay.

Muddo ayaan Hoosingaw joognay. Waxa aan xasuustaa ilmo yar baan ahaa, waliba dadka xasoostoodu aadka u badan tahay ayaan waqtigaa ahaa. Oday aayaa tukaan haystay laga adeegan jiray. Odaygaa ayaan u tagi jiray, markaasu igu odhan jiray, 'Ina ayaad tahay?' Markaas ayaan ina ayadayda u akhrin jiray bilaw ilaa dhammaad. Wuu iga yaabi jiray markaan ina ayadayda sheego. Dabadeedna, wiilasha kale ayuu ku odhan jiray "adna ina ayaad tahay?". Markaasi ayay ina hebel hebel dhaafin waayan. Kadibna lacag buu i siin jiray.

attackers killed many people and abducted many others. During the attack a militia man came and grabbed me by the hand. He thought about killing me, thinking that if I survived the attack one day I would come for my revenge.¹³ He asked me who I was. I told him my father's name. He asked me to tell him my complete lineage but I refused to, telling him that he would kill me if I did. Then he swore to God that he would not and so I told him. By chance it turned out we were from the same clan.

All around us was chaos, with militias killing both strangers and acquaintances, and massacring civilians. In this chaos, the militia man brought me back to my house. As I arrived home with him, my mother ran towards me, shouting. 'That young child has led an enemy to us and told him his lineage!' Then she ran back in and started to hide the other children. When she came back out she said to him, 'Look, my son is a liar.' She was trying to make him believe that I had lied to him about my lineage. He responded by saying, 'My aunt, it is not what you are thinking. I am a relative of this young man. Calm down.' Men who had come with him tried to give us some of the food they were carrying. But my mother was a religious woman and rejected their offers, saying, 'I am not feeding my children with unlawful food stuff. Please go away with it.'¹⁴

The man then told us that he would take us to Kenya because Hoosingow was going to be attacked [by men from another clan

13 The author is referring to *anno*, or the Somali tradition of revenge killing, whereby when one man kills another man, members of his clan are duty bound to exact revenge by seeking out and killing a man from the attacker's clan, regardless of how much time has passed.

14 In this instance, unlawful foodstuff refers to looted food.

Ka dib aniga oo halkii jooga oo lacag ku qaata ina ayadayda aan sheegayo, ayaa maalin maalmaha ka mid ah magaalada waxa soo weeraray ciidan. Ciidankaasi dad badan ayay laayeen dad kale oo badanna way qafaasheen. Ka dib anoo meeshaa jooga, ayaa ninkii ciidanka watay gacanta iqabtay oo uu yidhi "Tolow, ilmaha yar ee meesha maraya armuu nagu soo kacaa barrito, armuu reer hebel yahay, tolow ma dilaa?". Dabadeed waxa uu yidhi "waryaa ina ayaad tahay? Markaas ayaan ina ayadayda u sheegay. Markaas ayuu yidhi "dhammaystir, akhri waad garanaysaaye". Markaas ayaan ku idhi "ina ayadayda kuu sheegi maayowaayo haddaan kuu sheego waad i dilaysaa". Dabadeed waxa uu yidhi, "waa nin caqli badan". Markaas ayuu yidhi "wallaanan ku dilayne adeer ii sheeg". Markaas ayaan ina ayadaydii u akhriyay. Ninkii waxa uu noqday mid aanu isku reer nahay. Ka dib wuxu yidhi, "ninkani waa nin wanaagsan oo isku reer baan nahay." Waanu isoo kaxeeyay.

Runtii, meesha waxa ka socday waxa uu ahaa in mid aan ku garanayn iyo mid ku garanaya labadaba, dadku ay ahaayeen jabhado qabiil isku dilaya oo shacabkiina xasuuqaya.

Ka dib ninkii gurigayagii ayaa uu yimid. Hooyaday ayaa soo oroday oo tiri "Waar, kii yaraa maanta waxa uu noo soo kaxeeyay cadaw oo qabiilkiisiina u sheeg, oo hadda nala laynayaa". Kuwii kale iyo carruurtii ayay qarisyay, debeday u soo baxday, markaas ayay tiri "wiilkan yar wuu been badan yahay". Waxay is leedahay yaanu ninku rumaysan wuxuu u soo sheegay. Markaas ayuu ninkii ugu jawaabay "Eeddo, sidaad moodday ma aha, ninka kan isku reer baan noqonnee shaydaanka iska naar". Ka dib nimankii waxay is yidhaahdeen siiya xoolo iyo waxay siteen oo ay soo dhaceen.

Hooyo oo ahayd qof diinta aad u jecel baa tiri "carruurtayda xaaraan siinmaaayo waxa kan carruurtayda ii dhaafiya."

Waxa dhacday in uu ninkii yidhaahdo meesha tan waan idinka kaxaynayaa oo waxa aan idiin gudbinaya Kiiniya, meesha tan ciidamo ayaa soo galay oo waa la isku dilayaa. Ka dib hooyo waa ay

militia]. My mother refused on the grounds that he was a murderer killing Somali people and therefore not related to her.

After a few days, Hoosingow was attacked [again] and [more] fighting began. And so we fled to the Kenyan border. However, before crossing to Liboi in Kenya we were intercepted by soldiers. They were killing selectively. They were killing men and boys in order to exterminate particular clans. I remember that to protect us from being killed, young boys, including me, were dressed up in veils and skirts. In this way, we crossed the enemy line.

After a short stay in Liboi, we moved to the Kenyan capital where we were received by relatives. There we started a stable and secure life. We were taken to Qur'anic school and resumed our learning. Family life also returned.

All this time, however, my father was not with us. He was away working in the Emirates. He used to send money. Then one day he decided to come to Kenya to see the family. He was a religious man, a sheikh.

He arrived in Liboi but as soon as he arrived he was detained [because of travel document problems]. According to a friend of my father's, when he was detained my father wanted to pray but he was prevented by the airport authorities. My father addressed the other Somalis who were in the jail, saying, 'Are you not Muslims? We must pray.' They told him, 'They will kill us.' He said, 'If they kill you while praying or beat you, those who survive will pray tomorrow without harassment.' He then said, 'I will lead the prayer.' And he started praying. He prayed while he was being beaten. The others prayed too, modelling him. In this way, he showed them the

diidday, waxayna tiri "nin ummad Soomaali ah gumaadaya, waxba iskuma nihine hore ii dhaaf".

Maalmo ka dib baa haddana magaaladii Hoosingow la soo weeraray oo dagaal ka bilaabmay. Waxa aan markaa u sii qaxnay xadka Kiiniya. Libooye Kiiniya intii aannaan galin, waxa dhacday in jidka ay naga helaan niman ciidamo ah oo dadka laynaya. Dadka si kala soocasho ah ayay u dilayeen. Waxa ay beegsanayeen ragga iyo inamada yaryar ee ka soo jeeda beelaha qaar si ay u dabar jaraan. Ka dib waxa naloo xidhay jilbaabo yar yar iyo toobab si naloo dhaafiyo cadawga.

Ka dib muddo yar oo aanu joognay Libooye, waxaanu u sii gudu-bnay caasimadda dalka Kiiniya ee Nayroobi 1992. Halkaas waxa nagu soo dhaweyay qolyo aanu qaraabo nahay. Runtii halkaas-aan nolol caadi ah oo dagan oo amni ay nooga bilaabantay. Waxa aan bilawnay sidii aan u dhiganlahayn Qur'aanka una bilaabi lahayn noloshii qoyska.

Muddadaa, marwalba iyo meelkasta oo aan joogno aabahayo nalama socon. Waxa uu ku maqnaa Imaaraadka oo uu ka shaqayn jiray. Hayeeshee, waxa uu noo soo diri jiray biil. Ka dib aabbe ayaa damcay in uu Kiiniya yimaaddo. Aabbe waxa uu ahaa dadka aadka ehlu diinka u ah ee shuyuukhda lagu tilmaamo.

Wuxu yimi magaalada Libooye Kiiniya oo markii uu ka soo dagay la xidhay. Salaaddii buu is yidhi tuko hayeeshee niman-kii Kiiniyitaga ahaa baa la dagaalamay oo u diiday. Ka dib dadkii kale ee dhallinyarta aha ee islaamka ee jeelka ku xidhnaa ayuu u yeedhay oo wuxuu yidhi "maydaan muslin ahayn? Ha la tukado." Ka dib waxay ku yidhaahdeen "waxa na dilaya askarta." Wuxu yidhi "markaa haddii ay maanta idin laayaan, oo idinka oo salaaddiinna ku jira aad dhimataan ama wax idinla dhacaan, waxa laga yaabaa in berrito intiina idinka soo hadhaa caadi u tukadaan. Markaa salaaddiina iska tukada, anaana idiin bilaabayee". Salaadii ayuu galay waanu tukanayay isagoo jeedal lala dhacayo. Isla markaa waxa ay dadkii kale bilaabeen inay ku daydaan oo salaaddii tukadaan. Sidaas

path. My father was released after spending 13 days in jail. They released him because they could not support their case against him.

I started primary school while we were in Nairobi. Soon after, my family was granted Norwegian refugee sponsorship through my mother's brother. However, my father, a religious man, said if we went he would divorce my mother and that would be the end of our relationship with him. He also said, 'My children will convert to non-believers if you take them to a non-believers' land.' Instead, he insisted that we all go back to Somalia.

So it was in 1994, after he rejected the sponsorship, that we were forced to travel back home to Somalia.¹⁵ I resumed primary school but eventually left our hometown because of the poor quality of education compared to Kenya. I was taken to Hargeysa, the capital of Somaliland, where I lived with a brother and aunt, eventually finishing my intermediate classes and then beginning secondary school.

In pursuit of a good education

When I finished high school in 2006, I thought about going to college. I had cousins in the US and one of them was at university there. He encouraged me to go to university, too. But Somali universities were of low quality. Hargeysa did not have the kind of universities then that it has these days.

For this reason, I decided to go to India to do my bachelor's degree. I left Hargeysa and got an Ethiopian ID and other documents

¹⁵ The family returned to what was now called Somaliland, whose independence from Somalia was declared in May 1991.

ayuu jid u furay oo ay salaaddoodii ku tukadeen. Jeelka waxa uu ku xidhnaa muddo 13 cisho ah, ka dibna markii waxba lagu waayay waa la iska soo daayay.

Waxa aan ka bilaabay dugsigii hoose, Nayroobi. Muddo gaaban ka dib waxa reerkayaga u soo baxay is-xanbaar dalka Norway ah oo uu soo saaray oday abtigay ah oo ay hooyaday walaalo yihiin. Ka dibaabbe oo ahaa dadka diinta aadka ugu dhaggan ayaa yidhi, 'carruurtaaydu way iga gaaloobaysaa haddii waddan gaaleed la iga geeyo islaantana waannu kala tagaynaa haddii aad carruurtaayda iga dhoofiso, inaguna isma sheegano. Carruurtaayda ha la ii daayo dalkaygana ha laiiigu celiyo.'

Waxay ahayd sannadii 1994 markii aabbe diidaday isboonsarka naguna qasbay in aan u soo guurno dalka Soomaaliya.

Waxa aan halkii ka sii amba qaaday waxabarashadii dugsiga hoose inkasta oo aan markii danbe aan ka tagay magaaladaydii maadaama waxbarasho tayo leh aan ka waayay marka loo eego Kiiniya. Wax la ii wareejay magaalada Hargaysa, halkaasi oo aan kula noolaa inaadeerkay iyo eddaday. Ka dib halkaa waxaan ka dhammeeyay dugsigaygii dhexe, uguna gudbay dugsiga sare.

Raacdadii Aqoon Tayoleh

Markii aan dugsigii sare dhamaystirtay sannadii 2006 waxa aan hindisay in aan jaamacad aado. Ka dib waxa aan u soo bandhigay wiil jaamacad Maraykanka ka dhigta oo aan ilmo-adeer nahay, isagaa markaa wuxuu igu qalqaaliyay oo igu sii dhiirigaliyay in aan jaamacadda aado. Wakhtigan Soomaliland ma lahayn jaamacado tayo leh, Hargaysina malahayn jaamacadaha hada ku yaal.

Sidaa awgeed waxa aan go'aansaday in aan Hindiya aado si aan uga barto shahaadada koobaad. Hargaysa ayaa aan ka baxay waxa aanan qaatay taysaro iyo dukumentiyoy kale si aan u codsado baas-aboorka Itoobiya.

Addis Ababa waxa aan kula kulmay dad badan oo Soomaali qaxooti ah. Dadka qaybi Maraykanka ayay u socotaa, qaybina

necessary to apply for an Ethiopian passport.¹⁶ I eventually arrived in Addis Ababa where I met many [Somali] refugees. Some of them were travelling to the US, others to the UK and others elsewhere. In Addis Ababa, people used to ask me where I was going. I used to tell them I was going to India for a university education.

I was in Addis for two weeks while my passport was being processed. During this time, I was contacted by a cousin of mine [who lived in the US]. She told me that she had a refugee sponsorship for three people—two boys and one girl. She told me that she wanted me to come to the US and attend college there because I was young and hardworking. She also told me that I would get a good life, a nice job and support from my family there.

I was really attracted by the idea of getting a job and an education in the US. It seemed a very good plan. So at this point I changed my mind about going to India.

US sponsorship

I made the arrangements to go through the US sponsorship process. I was told it would take about three months and then I would travel to the US. My cousin advised me to see my family in the meantime so as to inform them I had abandoned the idea of going to India and to seek their endorsement for the sponsorship plan instead.

I came back home. I arrived in Hargeysa where some of my family members were staying to inform them that I had sponsorship for America. They were impressed and welcomed the idea.

¹⁶ Somaliland's independence is not recognized internationally. Somalis from there often obtain Ethiopian passports to facilitate international travel.

Ingiriiska, qaybiba meel. Marka ay i waydiiyaan xagga aan u socdo, waxa aan u sheegi jiray in aan Hindiya waxbarasho u aadayo.

Markii aan muddo labo todobaad ah joogay oo aan marayo nidaamkii aan ku heli lahaa baasaboorkii itoobiyaanka aha, ayaa waxa ila soo hadashay gabadh aanu ilmo-abti nahay oo ku nool dalka Maraykanka. Dabadeedna, waxay ii soo bandhigtay in ay hayso is-xanbaar saddex qof ah, wiil iyo labo gabdhood oo maraykanka ah. Wax ay igu tidhi “Maxamed, maadaama aad tahay inan dhal-linyar ah oo dadaalaya oo waxbartay, waxaan jeclahay inaad jaamacadda ka gashid Maraykanka, halkaana aad ka shaqaysid oo aad qoyska u shaqaysid kadibna aad nolol, shaqo iyo waxbarasho ka heshid.” Runtii arrinkaasi wuu i qanciay waxa aanan ka istaagay in aan Hindiya jaamacad u aado.

Is-xanbaarkii Maraykanka

Waxa aan qalqaaliyay sidii aan is-xanbaarka aan ku mari lahaa. Waxay ii sheegtay in is-xanbaarku saddex bilood ka dib uu soo baxayo oo aan u dhoofayno dalka Maraykanka. Markaa waxay igula talisay maadaama oo aan jaamacadii aan iska daayay oo aan barnaamijkeedii qaatay, in aan qoyska kalena u sheego kuna soo qanciyo qorshaha dhoofka.

Waxaan ku soo noqday dalkii. Waxa aan soo gaadhay Hargaysa oo ay qaraabadayda badhkood jooheen si aan ugu bishaareeyo in aan helay is-xanbaar dalka Maraykanka ah. Iyaga naftoodu aad ayay u xiisaynaayeen wayna soo dhaweeyeen. Sidaas oo kale dad badan oo aanu saaxiibbo ahayn markaan u sheego in aan Maraykanka tagayo, soo dhawayntii ay ii hayeen iyo saaxiibtinimadoodii way sii kordhaysay.

Waxa aan u socdaalay Ceerigaabo oo aan ugu imid hooyo iyo walaalahayga yar-yar oo qaybi dhalatay intii aan dugsiga sare Hargaysa kaga jiray. Runtii iyagana waan u bishaareeyay barnaamijka aan waday ee ahaa in aan Maraykanka tagayo. Way soo dhaweeyeen

Many friends of mine liked me more and changed their attitude towards me when I told them that I was going to the US.

I travelled to my hometown to see my mother and younger siblings, some of whom had been born when I was at secondary school in Hargeysa. I informed them about my plan to go to the US and they welcomed the idea. My mother supported me. She thought that her son would go abroad and work to help her.

My father was not around when I was making up my mind about the sponsorship. He was in the Emirates. [In theory,] the decision was mine to make because I was old enough. In reality, it was difficult to make because my father opposed the idea. He never wanted me to travel abroad. He resisted it even when I was young. That is why he brought us back to Somalia. Even today he does not like the idea, despite the fact that I am grown up and have completed secondary education. But I was really keen.

The relatives who were processing the sponsorship tried to convince my father to support the plan by assuring him that I would find employment and education abroad. In response he told my mother and these relatives that he did not approve of the idea but if they wanted me, a young man, to go abroad, then I had to get married first. And the person he wanted me to marry was a very close cousin of mine, whom I regarded as a sister. Marriage between close cousins belongs to Arab culture. I personally did not like the idea. So I refused. And many people supported my position. As a result, the relationship between my father and me deteriorated further. He stopped talking to me. But because he was not living at home he had no means to force his idea on me.

dhammaan, hooyana way igu taageertay. Waxa ay is lahayd wiil-kaagi wuu dhoofayaa shaqana tagayaa si uu kuu soo caawiyo.

Aabbo ma joogin waddanka markaan qalqaalsanayey is-xanbaarka. Waxa uu joogay waddanka Isutagga Imaaraadka Carabta. Aragti ahaan go'aankaas anaa iska lahaa maadaama aan isu arkayey nin mudakar ah. Dhab ahaan way adkayd in aan aabbo u sheego arrinkan sabobta oo ah wuu ka soo hor-jeeday waana sabobtii uu noo keenay Soomaaliya. Hadda iyo maanta aabbe ma jecla fikradda socdaalka inkasta oo aan waynaaday oo aan dugsigii sarena dhammeeyay. Aniga xagayga aad ayaan arrintaas ugu heellanaa.

Qaarabadii ayaa aabo ku qancisay inuu qaato qorshahaa dhoofka. Sidaa darteed aabbe waxa uu igula taliyay in aan guursado inta aanan tagin, wuxuuna yidhi, "haddi uu ninkaasi tagayo oo aad idinku u ogalaateen, anigu waan ka soo horjeedee laakiin waa inuu guursadaa." Aabbe runtii waxa uu jeclaa in aan guursado gabadh aan markaa ilmo-adeer aan nahay oo aan aad iskugu dhawnahay oo aan walaashay u haystay. Fikirka uu watay waxa uu ahaa fikir carbeed oo carabta dhaqankooda ayaa waajib ka dhiga in ay is guursadaan ilmo-adeerta rumaad. Ma aanan jeclaysan fikraddaas waa aanan ka soo horjeestay. Run ahaantii dad badan ayaa fikirkiisii igu raacay. Tani waxay ay keentay in aan aabbe sii kala durugno. Aabbe hadalkii ayuu iga xidhay, taleefannadi ama xidhiidhkayagiina sidiisii hore wuu ahaan waayay. Haseyeeshee mar haddii aanu dalka joogin wax uu igu qasbi karaa waqtigaa ma jirin.

Dhawr bilood ka dib, dadkii iyo dhulkii waa an wada macasalaameeyay, kadibna waxa aan ku noqday dalkii Itoobiya wax yar ka hor sannaddii 2007.

Qorshaayaashii Dhicisoobay

Laba bilood ayaan joogay Itoobiya markii ay gabadhii ii soo sheegtay in isxanbaarkii la joojay oo la yidhi laguuma ogolaan karo waqtiga kan waayo shaqada aad haysid ayaa aan ku fillaan karin in aad dad keensatid dalka kan, sidaas darteed marka aad shaqo

After several months at home I had to say goodbye to everybody to go back to Ethiopia. It was approaching 2007.

Thwarted plans

I had been back in Ethiopia for two months when I was informed that the sponsorship had been cancelled because my cousin was not able to support anyone on her income. She was told that she would only be able to be a sponsor after she got a well-paid job. I was really devastated to hear this because I had loved that sponsorship plan and had come to believe that I was going to be living abroad for a long time.

I told some of my family what had happened. By now, going to university was out of my thoughts. I was only thinking about achieving my plan of travelling abroad. One of those I talked with was an aunt who was a very active woman. She contacted many family members to ask them about sponsorship possibilities. She also sometimes sponsored people. As it happened, a close relative of mine had been approved to sponsor seven people and he said that I could be one of them. He said the sponsorship would be processed in Nairobi, Kenya.

So I started making arrangements to travel from Ethiopia to Kenya. I did a lot of research on how to travel to Kenya legally and found that at that time it was necessary to go via Uganda, which was issuing Somalis with visas on arrival. Kenya did not issue visas on arrival for Somali passport holders. I left Ethiopia for Somaliland and arrived in Hargeysa, where I applied for a Ugandan visa. I then flew with Ethiopian Airlines and was issued the visa on arrival.

It was January 2007. After spending one night in Uganda, I crossed

wanagsan heshid ayaa dadka lagu soo qaadayaa.

Runtii arintii markii ay ii sheegtay naxdin bay igu noqotay waayo waxa aan ahaa qof xiisaynaya inuu dhoofa aaminayna in uu dhoo-fayo muddo yar ka dib.

Ka dib waxa aan la xidhiidhay qaar qoyskayaga ka mid ah waxa aanan u sheegay waxa dhacay. Markan waa uu iga baxay qorshihii jaamacadda oo waxa iga guuxayay in aan ka midho dhaliyo qorshahakan ah dhoofkii aan galay.

Qoyskii aan laxidhiidhay waxa ka mid ahayd islaan eeddaday ah oo runtii aad u firfircoon. Waxa ay la xidhiidhay dad badan oo qoyska ka mida iyada oo waydiinaysa cid is-xanbaar u soo baxay. Eeddaday waxa ay samayn jirtay marka uu Isboonsor u soo baxo, dad kale ayay qaadi jirtay. Ka dib wiil aan qaraabo nahay, ayaa loo oggolaaday in uu qaado toddobo qof. Toddobadii qof ayuu igu daray. Waxa uu ii sheegay in is-xanbaarkii ii soo baxay waraysigiisa laga marayo magaalada Nay-roobi ee dalka Kiiniya.' Markan waxa aan joogaa Itoobiya oo waxay ay noqotay in aan qalqaashado sidaan u tagi lahaa Kiiniya.

Sidaa darteed waxa aan sameeyay xidhiidh badan oo la xidhiidha qaabka loo tagi karo Nayroobi. Waqtigaa baasaboorka Soomaaliga waxa lagu tagi jiray fiiso la'aan Yugaandha, ka dib baa Yugaandha Nayroobi laga soo tagi jiray waayo Kiiniya ma ogolayn baasaboorka Soomaaligaa in si toosa lagu tago. Waxa aan markaa ka soo baxay dalka Itoobiya soona galay dalka Soomaalilaand. Wax aan imidday Hargaysa. Ka dib waxa aan dalbaday fiisaha Yugaandha. Waxa aan raacay Ethiopian Airlines. Waxa aan tagay markaa Yugaandha oo markii aan ka degay dalku-gal la i siiyay

Taariikhdu waa bishii koowaad ee 2007. Waxa aan ku nagaaday hal habeen kadinba waxa aan uga sii gudbay dalka Kiiniya caasimaddiisa Nayroobi. Halkaas waxa iiga horreeyay qayb ka mid ah qoyska oo igu soo dhaweeyay. Ka dib waxa aan galay qorshihii ahaa in aan doono dadkii aan wada maraynay waraysiga is-xanbaarka. Toddobadii qof ayaanu isla doonay. Ka dib waxa aan hellay xogtii

to Kenya. Some of my family members were already in Nairobi and I was well received. I made contact with the others who were being sponsored and the seven of us met. Once we got the sponsorship information and interview dates we started to meet regularly to prepare for the interviews.

My group sponsorship process started in June 2007. On the first day, we went to the American embassy and were interviewed. We all passed this group interview, had our photos taken and then had the second interview. We were just waiting for the health check and then the flight details when a new procedure was introduced. DNA matching between the sponsor and all those being sponsored.

Until now they had only required blood tests for the health check and DNA was never analysed. As a result [of this new procedure], thousands of Somalis had their sponsorship plans cancelled.

I remember how confident I had been that I would be going to go to the US and that I would get work there. It was heart-breaking and shocking to hear that our plan had failed. Some of us went into comas and were sick for three to four days. Others were hospitalized, while others, I think, went mad because of their strong desire and conviction for travelling abroad.

At this time there were many Somalis in Kenya, all waiting to travel abroad. You could see that many of them were clearly depressed and talking to themselves. Others had already gone insane. If you asked about them, people would tell you that they had a condition called *buufis*, meaning too much longing to travel abroad. And on further enquiry about the type of *buufis* he or she had, they would say his or her travel or flight was cancelled or his

iyo xilliga waraysiga la galayo. Waxa annu samayn jirnay kulamo aanu isukugu diyaarinayno waraysiyada.

Qorshahii isboonsarku waxa uu bilawday bishii Juun 2007. Maalintii u horaysay waxa aan tagnay safaaradda Maraykanka oo waraysi nalagula yeeshay. Waxa aan ku guulaysanay in sawirkii u horeeyay nalaga qaado, anaga oo sidoo kale ku guulaysanay waraysi-wadareedkii nalala yeeshay.

Muddo ka dib isaga oo barnaamijkayagii meel fiican uu marayo oo aan waraysigii labaad marnay oo aan sugayno in caafimaadkii la hubiyo iyo in aan hello xogtii duulimaadka, ayaa waxa la soo kordhiyay tallaabbo cusub oo ah in DNA -da dadka dhoofaya iyo kuwa dhoofinaya la isku eego.

Hadda ka hor caafimaadka waa la baadhi jiray hayeeshee DNA lama shaybaadhi jirin. Sidaa ayay kumannan qof oo Soomaali ah qorshahoodi is-qaadistu ku burburtay.

Waan xasuustaa maalintii naloo soo sheegay, anigu waxaan aaminsanaa in aan maalmo ka dib aan dhoofayno oo aan Maraykanka ka dagi doono oo aan ka shaqaysan doono. Markii naloo soo sheegay waxa ay nagu noqotay arrin niyad jab ah oo aad nooga nixisay. Dadka qaybtood way suuxeen saddex ilaa afar cishana way xanuunsanayeen, dadka qaybtii runtii wayba xanuunsatay oo cisbitaalada ayaa la geeyay, qaybna waxaa aan u malaynayay in ayba waalatay dhoof jacayl iyo sida ay iskaga dhaadhiciyeen in ay qurbaha tagaan darteed.

Runtii, markaa waxa Kiiniya ku sugnaa Soomaali aad u fara badan oo waqtigaa dhoof wada sugaysa. Waxaad arkaysaa dad badan oo isla -hadlaya oo qaybtood waasheen, deedna markaad waydiiso dadka ee aad tiraahdo, 'dadka kan maxaa ku dhacay waxa ay ku leeyihiin dadka kan buufis baa ku dhacay. Oo buufiska ku dhacay waa maxay? Buufiska ku dhacay wax kale maahee dhoof ayaa uu sugayay oo ama isaga oo duulimaad sugaya ayaa dhoofkii laga joojay ama waxaba ka dhacay barnaamijkii ka dib qofkii

or her programme expired. *Buufis* was the only topic of discussion when I arrived in Nairobi.¹⁷

Coming to myself, our thwarted plan affected me, though to a lesser degree than the others because I had already failed before and was used to it.

From this point, I started planning again, to go somewhere else. People were planning [their travel routes] all the time. Some were pursuing false Kenyan passports to go to Brazil. Some had money in their bank accounts and were buying sponsorships and passports. Some had money in remittance companies, like USD 10,000. For all these people it was easy to go because they could pay USD 6,000 or USD 7,000 to the immigration officials and proceed to wherever they wanted. However, I was broke and it was not easy for me.

But I had always been certain that I had to migrate because I believed that my life would change as soon as I got there. So I decided to pay USD 10,000 to go to Brazil.

To help me realize this plan I contacted some people, among them my elderly uncle and aunt who lived in America. They urged me to revive my former plan of going to India for my university studies, a plan that I had abandoned more than a year ago. I rejected their suggestion. It was impossible for me to go back to a plan that I had already abandoned.

I told them they had ruined my education plan by proposing to me that I could go abroad [to the US]. I told them instead I wanted to pursue the travel plan and that I had to pursue my idea until I

¹⁷ *Buufis* is a slang term linked to migration and *tahriib*. It has different meanings ranging from someone having a strong urge to leave and have already taken the decision to leave, or awaiting resettlement in a refugee camp, as well as the the psychological stress associated with this.

waanayo. Markaa buufiskaa ama dhoofka waxa aan ahayn dadku kama sheekaynayn markii aan Nayroobi soo galay.

Runtii, qorshahii dhicisoobay saamayn ayuu igu yeeshay oo waan ka naxay barnaamijkaas. Laakiin dadka qaybtii sidii uu saamayn ugu yeeshay iiguma yeelan, waayo tabo-bar hore ayaan qabay maadaama mar hore qorshe kale iga qabyoobay.

Halkaa waxa aan ka galay qorshihii aan meel kale ku aadi lahaa. Dadku qorshayaashii ay meelo kale ku aadi lahaayeen ayay samaysteen. Qaytood ayaa qaadanaysay baasaboorkii Kiiniya ka dibna ku tagaysay Baraasiil. Qayb kale oo ay lacaghooda u yaalleen bangiyada is-xanbaar iyo baasabooro ayay ku iibsanaysay. Waxa jiray dad lacag u taallay xawaaladaha ilaa 10,000 oo doolar ah. Dadkaas oo kale way u fududayn in ay markaaba tagaan oo 6,000 ilaa 7,000 kun oo doolar ay siiyaan madaxda laanta-socdaalka, ka dibna sidaa ay ku gudbaan. Laakiin aniga marka lacag la'aan ayaan ahay oo hawshani iima fududayn.

Marwalba waxa iga go'nayd in aan dhoofa maaddaama aan rumaysnaa in noloshaydu si dhakhso ah isku baddali doonto. Sidaa darteed waxa aan go'aan ku gaadhay in aan baxsho 10,000 oo doolar si aan Baraasiil u tago.

Si qorshahani igu hirgalo waxa aan la xidhiidhay dad ay ka mid ahaayeen oday adeerkay ah iyo islaan eeddaday ah oo Maraykan jooga. Ka dib waxa ay ii soo bandhigeen in aan qorshahii jaamacadayda aan ka maqnaa sannadka in aan dib u bilaabo oo aan Hindiya iyo qorsheheedii soo celiyo.

Runtii, aniga way igu adkayd maaddaama qorshahaa aan ka gudbay oo qorshihii kale ee dhoofka ahaa wali igu qufulanyahay. Sidaa darteed waa aan ka diiday qorshahoogii.

Waxa aan u sheegay in ay iyagu burburiyeen qorshahaygii hore ee waxbarashada iina soo bandhigeen dhoofkii Maraykanka. Waxa aan ku wargaliyay in aan dabasocdo qorshe dhoof oo aanan ka hadhayn inta aan ka midho –keenayo. Way isku kay qaban waayeen labada qorshe ee ah dhoofka iyo waxbarashadu.

succeeded. For me, the two decisions [to study or to travel] became incompatible.

Consequently, our relations became strained—with everyone sticking to their own points of view. I started ignoring their calls and forgetting about them since they opposed my plan to find USD 10,000 to travel to Brazil. I started declining the money this aunt and my father used to send me, ceasing all communication with them. Instead I made a decision to help myself and began thinking of a way to earn my own living.

Eastleigh

From that time, managing my life became difficult. I was still in Nairobi. It was just after the failure of the sponsorship plan. I had been a well-to-do young man who could buy clothing, everything, and had money in all pockets. Now I started asking where to get food or money to pay the rent. Over the next two months life became intolerable.

I started looking for a job, especially in Eastleigh.¹⁸ I asked my relatives but they said they did not have any vacant positions. So I started helping their employees in selling and registering shop transactions. My relatives came to see that I had good writing skills. People liked me for it and paid me. One relative offered me an accountancy job to register business transactions. They paid me USD 12 every night for registering several million US dollars in transactions. In this way I earned my living and relieved my relatives of some work.

¹⁸ Eastleigh is a district in Nairobi, where the single largest community is Somali.

Sidaa darteed, khilaaf ayaa na dhex yimid. Midkasta waxa uu ku adkaystay go'aankiisii. Ka dib waxay noqotay in aan teleefonadii iska xidho go'aanna qaato oo aan idhaahdo dadkani ma xiisaynayaan inay wax kula qabtaan ee aduu bal noloshaada meel saar. Runtii, go'aankani waxa uu igu kaliftay in aan xidhiidhkii u jaro, iska joojiyo biilkii la ii soo diri jiray aanan wax aan cuni lahaa raadsado.

Noloshii Islii (Eastleigh)

Intaa ka dib, waxa igu adkaatay in aan maareeyo noloshii. Wali waxa aan ku suganahay Nayroobi. Hadda ka hor biil baan heli jiray, waxa aan iska ahaa inan yar oo iska dharagsan, labiskiisa iyo waxkasta oo u baahdo hela, jeebkastana lacag ugu jirto. Waxaa bilaabantay marka aan guriga ku noqdo aan is waydiiyo xaggee ayaad cunto ka doonataa, gurigan aad seexanaysid sideed kiradiisa u bixisaa. Labadii bilood ee xigay waxa aan ku noolaa nolol aan loo adkaysan karin

Ka dib, waxaan bilaabay inaan shaqo raadiyo gaar ahaan xaafadda Islii. Qolyo ganacsato ah oo aan qaraabo nahay ayaan shaqo waydiiistay, way ii waayeen oo waxay ii sheegeen in shaqadu buuxdo. Dabadeedna waxa aan bilaabay in aan shaqaalhooda ka caawiyo iibinta alaabada iyo diiwangalinta dhaqdhaqaaqyada waxkala iibsiga. Arrintani waxa ay keentay in qolyihii aanu qaraabada ahayn yidhaahdaan ninkani qoraalkiisu wuu wanaagsan yahay. Dadkii waxa ay igu jeclaadeen qoraalka oo ay lacag igu siin jireen. Mid ka mid ah oo aan qaraabo ahayn ayaa yidhi annaga noo joog xafiiska qoraalkaana noo sameey lacagta baxda iyo lacagta soo gasha iyo ganacsiga kala soconaya. Ka dibna qoraalkaas ayaan u samayn jiray. Habeenkii waxa la i siin jiray lacag yar oo gaadhaysa 12 doolar waayo qoraalka maanta aan samaynayo baa wuxuu yahay qoraal gaadhaya lacag malaayiin doolar ah. Markaa runtii waxay ninkii u noqotay hawl fudaydin anaa waxa ay ii noqotay shaqo.

Markiii aan la shaqaynayay muddo saddex bilood ah ee ay ii

After working three months, I had saved USD 170 and was just thinking about travelling back home because life had turned difficult again. Thinking I would save money and go back home, I approached a relative of mine who ran a business and asked for a high-paying position. He told me he would think about it. Then one day he called me and told me that he would establish a small business for me. He said that I would sell clothes, give him the capital back and retain the profit. I was really excited. He established that small business in front of his main business and from there I started selling. In two months I earned USD 1,300 because I had good returns.

First encounter with *tahriib*

Sometime around then I came to learn about *tahriib*, where people would migrate to Sudan, cross to Libya, then enter Italy and after a few days be in Norway or Holland. This meant ending up in the same countries for which people had pursued sponsorships but with less cost. People talked of it as an easy way of migrating. Some of my friends who used the internet a lot told me that some of them went to Norway, Sweden and the UK through Libya after failing to get visas to America through the legal sponsorship process for refugees.

After hearing about that plan and uploading their beautiful photos depicting high rise buildings, better life conditions and smarter clothing, I thought about saving some more money and travelling the same path. I thought of this because my relationship with my family was not good, the sponsorship plan had failed, I

dhigantay lacag 170 doolar ah waxa igu dhalatay dalkii ku noqo maadaama noloshu igu adkaatay. Aniga oo markaa raba in aan lacag fiican urursado dalkiina kula noqdo ayaan ninkii u tagay oo waxaan aan ku idhi mushaharka in la ii kordhiyo ayaan rabaa. Runtii wuxu igi yidhi waan ka soo fikiraynaa. Maalin ka dib ayuu ii yeedhay, wuxuna yidhi, ‘waxaan kuu hayaa shaqo tan ka duwan oo ganacsi yar oo dhar ah baan kuu furayaa, dabadeedna alaabtaas ayaad iib-inaysaa. Lacagta lafteeda uun baad ii soo celinaysaa faa’iidadana adaa qaadanaya’. Dhabtii, waan ku farxay. Ka dib meheraddii uu haystay horteeda ayuu meherad yar iiga sameeyay. Muddo laba bilood gudohood ah waxa i soo gashay lacag dhan 1300 doolar waayo si wanaagsan ayaan u faa’iday.

Bilawgii Tahriibka

Muddo ka dib waxaa soo baxay *tahriib* wax la yidhaado, oo ah in dadkii tahriibaan oo ay maraan Suudaan oo ay u sii gudbaan Liibiya. Kadib halkaa ay ka sii galaan Talyaaniga. Talyaaniga muddo joogaan oo ay Noorway, Hoolaan iyo dhulkii is-xanbaarka lagu tagi jiray ka soo hadlaan, iyada oo ay kharashkii hore mid ka yar uu ku baxayo. Runtii markii aay dadku kaaga sheekaynayaan way kuu fududaynayaan. Qaar ka mid ah asxaabtayda ayaa ila soo xidhiidhay oo internet-ka aad u isticmaala waxayna ii sheegeen in ay qaybtood joogaan Noorway, qaybna Hoolan, qaarna Ingiriiska oo ay wadada Liibiyana ay mareen, markii ay ku guul daraysteen fiisayaashii iyo is-xanbaarkii Maraykanka iyo dhoofkii sharciga ahaa ee markaa dadka qoxootiga ahaa lagu qaadi jiray.

Markay barnaamijkaa iiga sheekeeyeen oo waliba sawirro qurux badan iyaga oo ku jira ii soo direen iyaga oo daaro dhaadheer isku soo sawiray oo ku jira noloshii nolol ka duwan, xidhan labiskii labis ka duwan, waxaan ku fikiray inaan lacagta in yar korodhsodo, ka dibna aan waddadaa maro maadaama oo aan reerkayagii xidhiidh fiican lahayn, dhoofkiina aan ku guul daraystay, waxabarashadiina waqtigii iga lumay aadna aanan u xiisaynayn in aan sii wado

had not secured an education, I had wasted my time and I was not interested in continuing my studies.

After working and saving around USD 1,700, I looked for anyone going to Libya. Eventually, I found a friend of mine who was a young man born in Kismayo and brought up in Kenya. This young man told me he was migrating to Europe through that path. He asked me about my plans. My reply was that I had the same idea and that life was difficult for me.

I remembered I had only the university admissions and a Somali Passport. I then packed my luggage, secretly took my money and set out with my friend.¹⁹ It was late 2008. President Obama had just been elected.

Markii aan shaqeeyay ee lacagtii aan urursaday ay marayso 1,700\$ meelaha waxa aan raadiyay cid xaggaa iyo Liibiya tagaysa oo tahriibta galaysa.

Kama danbayn, waxa aan helay wiil dhallinyara ah oo aan saaxiibbo ahayn oo u dhashay Kismaayo oo Kiiniyana ku koray. Waxa uu igu yidhi “waddadaas ayaan marayaa saaxiib dhoofkiina halkan buu ka fududaaday, dee maxaad arin haysaa?” Anna waxaan ugu jawaabay “saaxiib aniguba barnaamijkan in badan ayaan ku fikirayay inaan aado, noloshii kale oo dhan hadda way igu soo adkaatay markaa waxaan rabaa in aan waddadaa maro.”

Waxaan aan xasuustay in aan haysto oggolaanshaha jaamacadda iyo baasaboor Soomaali ah. Guntintaydii iyo lacagtaydii yaraydna waan soo qaatay, cid aan u sheegay oo aan u bandhigay qoyskayaga ma jirin inaan meel aadayo. Ka dibna inankii baanu isa soo raacnay waanan soo ambabaxnay. Wexay ahayd dabayaaqadii 2008. Madaxweyne Obama ayaa la dortay.

19 Although *tahriib* reflects elements of earlier Somali emigration flows, it has several distinct features. Not only is it a journey that is almost exclusively undertaken by young people—mostly young men—it is largely an individual decision, as opposed to one involving the family. That is, those leaving tend not to inform their families but instead depart in secrecy. Nimo-ilhan Ali, ‘Going on Tahriib’, London: Rift Valley Institute, 2016.

PART TWO

Tahriib

My plan of going to the US shifted instead to migrating to Libya [and then to Europe]. I made this decision because, although I already had the plan in mind when I had met my friend, his ambition reinforced my own. From this point on, we planned the first leg of our journey which was to Uganda. We bought our bus tickets believing that this first journey was our way to Europe, or to the countries we dreamt of, and that within a short period of time we would be there.

Having said goodbye to Nairobi, we set out late in the afternoon, around 5 p.m. After travelling more than ten hours, we came across the first checkpoint. We realized then that since Uganda was another country we were supposed to have official papers to enter. Wondering what to do, we were advised by some young men who had official papers to hide under the seats of the bus. The security men came on board, searching the bus. Fortunately they could not see us. We were afraid if they saw us they would arrest us, thinking we were al-Shabaab members.²⁰ They did not find anything and got out of the bus.

²⁰ *Harakat al-Shabaab al-Muja'eddin* (Mujahideen Youth Movement) is a militant group in Somalia which is active across East Africa. Its name is commonly abbreviated to al-Shabaab.

QAYBTA LABAAD

Tahriib

Qorshahaygii socdaalka Maraykanku waxa uu isku baddalay in aan galo waddada dheer ee tahriibta Liibiya [kadibna Yurub]. Waddadan dheer waxa igu dhaliyay inan aannu saaxiibo nahay, oo iyada oo fikirkaasi igu jiro igu sii xoojiyay. Ka dib waxa aannu qabanqaabsannay safarkayagii aan ugu bixi lahayn Yugaandha oo ah meesha ugu horraysa ee loo anbabaxayo. Waxa aannu soo goosannay tigidhada basaska waawayn ee u baxa Uganda. Annaga oo aaminsanayn in safarkii aannu ku tagayna Yurub, ama dalalkii aannu intabadan hindisaynay soo dhawaaday oo aannuu muddo yar oo kooban ku tagayno.

Waxa aan macasalamaynay Nayroobi, baskii ayaannu raacnay oo waddada nala qabsaday abbaara shantii galabnimo. Waxa aannu soconnay muddo toban saacadood ah markii aannu gaadhay isbaaraddii ugu horraysay oo ahayd tii laga galayay dalka Yugaandha. Markii ugu horraysayba waxa nagu soo dhacday” hadda Yugaandha ayaad galaysaan waana waddan kale, waxaa la idin waydiinayaa sharci. Sharcina ma sidataan haddaba sideed uga baxaysaan.” Markaa niman dhallinyaro ah oo nala socday oo sharci sitay ayaa waxay nagula taliyeen in aannu dhuumanno oo kuraasta hoosteeda gallo. Ka dibna askartii gawaadhida baadhaysay aya soo gashay gaadhigii. Nasiib wanaag nama ay arag. “Tolow armay askartani idin qabataa oo idin mooddaa nimanka laga baqo ee Alshabaab”. Nasiib wanaag gaadhigii waxba kama ay helin waa ayna ka dageen.

Rakaabkii ayaa soo fuulay muddo yar ka dibna waxa aannu dhaxjoognay Yugaandha. Huteel ayaannu ku dagnay anagoo

The passengers boarded again and after a short time we were inside Uganda. In Uganda, we booked a hotel to plan for the next step of the journey to Sudan. Sudan was not divided then. Inquiring about the journey to Sudan, we were told that there were two ways of going. One of them was to travel with oil lorries pretending to be the garage boy.²¹ The other was paying USD 700 to smugglers who would take us to Sudan. Their price was high because they knew that Somalis were always in a hurry because they were illegal immigrants.

We went back to our hotel and discussed what to do. We worked out that all the money we had would not take us beyond Khartoum. Some other young men who were in the same hotel advised us that to avoid the costly option [of paying smugglers] we should get official papers testifying that we were business people. So this is what we did and in this way we left for Sudan at 8 a.m. one morning, on board a bus with our official papers and not as illegal migrants.

To Juba and Khartoum

After travelling for several hours, the bus stopped near a farming community for the passengers to stretch or go to the toilet. Most of the Ugandans on the bus did not get out. But the Somalis did, including us and four other young men from Xamar.²² As we were standing about chatting and just ready to re-board the bus, we were intercepted by seven men armed with machetes. We were stunned

21 A garage boy is a boy or young man who assists the driver by collecting fares, keeping the vehicle topped up with fuel, oil and water, and doing most work in the event of mechanical problems, e.g. changing tyres, walking to find oil or fuel or spares.

22 Xamar is a local colloquial name for Mogadishu, derived either from the Somali word for the tamarind tree or Mogadishu's red soils.

qabanqaabsanayna safarkaannu ugu gudbi lahayn Suudaan oo wakhtigaa aan u kala go'in laba dal. Waraysi ka dib waxa naloo sheegay in gawaadhida la raaca ay tahay booyadaha shidaalka oo la isku ekaysiiyo kirishbooyga ama in lacag dhan 700 oo doolar la siiyo mukhalasiin dadka geeya Suudaan. Lacagta ay qaadanayeen wa ay badnayd maxaa yeelay waxa ay ogaayeen in Soomaalidu markasta degdegsantahay maaddaama ay tahriibayaal sharci darro ah ahaayeen.

Huteelkii aannu ku degnay ayaannu kusoo noqonnay oo aannu iska waraysannay waxa aannu yeeli lahayn. Waxa noo soo baxday in lacag waxa aannu haysanaa naga dhammaanayso annaga oo aan xataa Khartuum gaadhin. Ka dib innamadii huteelka degganaa ayaa aan la tashannay waxayna nagula taliyeen in aannu soo goosanno waraaqo yar yar oo caddaynnaya in aannu nahay ganacsato. Intaa ka dib waxa aannu u ambabaxnay Suudaan sidii dad sharci haysta. Waxa aannu baxnay abaara siddeeddii aroornimo.

Socdaalkii Jubba iyo Khartuum

Baskii markii uu nala socday ilaa dhawr saacadood, ayaa la istaajiyay meel beeralay ah si dadku halkaa ugu nastaan, xajooyinkoodana ugu gutaan. Dadka Yuugaandhiiska ahi ma dugin. Laakiin Soomaalidu oo ay ku jiraan annaga iyo afar kale oo reer Xamar ah waan degnay.

Markii aannu is nidhi baska fuula oo aannu iskaga sheekaysanayno baska hortii siina wax yar u soo jirno ayaa waxa na soo hor istaagay toddobo nin oo seefo sita. Layaab ayay nagu noqotay runtii. Ka dib “wewe wewe”²⁸ ayay nagu yidhaahdeen. Hadalkooda ma aannaan fahmin. Deedna waa aannu is dajinnay. Dadka qayb ayaa is tidhi carara. Iyada oo xaaladdu halkaa marayso ayaa mid Ingiriisiga yaqaannaa soo booday oo uu yidhi “is dajiya” waxa aanu ku daray “meesha tan aad u kaadi tagteen waa dhul beero ah. Dhulkiinnii maaha. Soomaalidu waa dad dhaqan xun oo dhulkooda dhul

8 Erayga wewe waa eray af-Sawaaxili ah oo macnaahiisu yahay (Adiga)

and couldn't believe our eyes. They started saying *wewe*,²³ a word we did not understand. However, we did not need to know what they were saying to know that they meant business.

For our part, we tried to stay calm. Some of us thought of running away, while others tried to calm us down. We were in this situation when one of the seven men said in English, 'Calm down, guys.' He continued, saying, 'Where you just peed is a farming area. It is not your country. You Somalis are badly disciplined. Because of this, you should...' He then produced a letter, reading to us that everyone should pay the Ugandan money equivalent of USD 30 as a fine for encroaching on the land of others and peeing on it. We were still shocked but hearing the amount we had to pay we were relieved a bit. We knew then that they had not come to fight.

We told them that our need was urgent and that we did not have that much money. We were quarrelling about the payment when some of them started to get angry. The English-speaking man calmed them down. We then paid them a total of USD 40 and so they left us.

All this time, the bus driver and his assistant were watching what was happening. We suspected they knew all about this set-up and that was the reason they did not intervene. At this point, I came to realize that when you leave your country you become an easy target to be killed, robbed and exploited by anyone—even by idiots.

When we approached the Sudanese border, the other four Somalis got out of the bus to by-pass the checkpoint because they did not have any papers. As we set off again, the four men who had left the bus met up with us and climbed back on board.

23 The word *wewe* (you) is Kiswahili, which is widely spoken in Uganda.

aan ahayn ayay iskaga degayaan. Waxa la idinka rabaa markaa..." Markaa waraaq ay ugu talo galeen oo ay Soomaalida awalba ku baadhan jireen bay la soo baxeen. Waraaqda waxa ku qoran "Qofkastaa waxa laga rabaa lacag Yugaandhiis ah oo u dhiganta ilaa 30 doolar, maaddaama uu ku dagay dhul aanu lahayn oo ku soo kaadshay". Runtii layaab ayay nagu noqotay iyo argaggax. Haddana lacagtii markii ay noo sheegeen waanu yara nafisnay maxa yeelay in ay nala dagaalamayaan ayaannu nimanka marka hore moodaynay.

Waxa aan u sheegnay in ay degdeg tahay lacag intaa le'egnay aannaan haysan. Markii aan cabbaar la yara doodnay, ayaa qaybtood dagaal nagu soo qaadday. Kii Ingiriisida garanayay ee u dillaalka aha baa naga celiyay. Kadib lacag 40 doolar ah ayaannu siinnay waanay naga tageen.

Intaasoo dhan dirawalka baska iyo shaqaalihisu way daawanayeen waxa dhacaya oo waa wax ay iska ogaayeen in qoladani dadka baadhaan. Halkaa waxa iiga muuqatay in dalkaaga markaad ka tagtid, in aanad waxba ahayn, si fudud lagu dili karo, si fudud lagu dhici karo oo qofkastaana kugu cashuuri karo dalkiisa xataa isaga oon waxba ahayn.

Runtii waxa aan u sii ambobaxnay xaggaa iyo xuduudda Suudaan. Waxaa naga hor yimid kastamkii ugu horreeyay ee dalka Suudaanta koonfureed. Ka dib Soomaalidii kale may sidan waraaqo, gaadhigina way ka dageen waa ayna soo lugeeyeen. Markii gaadhigii dhaqaaqay ayay dhexda nagasoo raaceen.

Waxa aannu soo gallyay magaalada Jubba oo ah caasimadda Koonfurta Suudaan oo Soomaali badani ku nooshahay. Waxa aannu bilawnay qorshaha safarkii aannu ugu gudbi lahayn Khartuum, caasimadda Suudaan. Waxa aan ogaannay in niman mukhalasiin ahi dadka ka qaataan 700 boqol oo doollar geeyaanna meel la yidhaahdo Warwar⁹ oo ah meel dadka lagu sii hayo inta aan loo gudbin Khartuum. Qorshahaasi se nama soo jiidan.

9 Warwar waa suuq ku yaal waqooyiga Baxral-qasaal ee u dhaw xadka Suudaan.

We arrived in Juba, now the capital of South Sudan, where a lot of Somalis lived. We planned how we would travel to Khartoum. In our search for information, we discovered that smugglers charged USD 700 to take people to a place called Warawar,²⁴ where they keep them for a while before taking them to Khartoum. This wasn't an attractive option. In the end, we chose to take a bus to Khartoum since we had papers indicating we were businessmen. We bought tickets and set out in the morning, travelling with other Somalis.

Later that afternoon we arrived at a checkpoint. We were asked to get out of the bus. We showed our papers. The other Somalis who had no papers were detained. We continued our journey and again stopped at a checkpoint in the town of Warawar. On the bus, I had chatted with a young Sudanese man who spoke English. He had told me that there were Somalis who were held here. Money was demanded from the men and the women were held for sex.

Customs men interrogated us. The other guy I was with resembled a Sudanese and he was not asked to get out of the bus like me. Me, I am thin and brown, a typical Somali, which is the reason they asked me to get out of the bus, interrogated me and asked me for my papers. When I showed the business papers, they told me that Somalis did not do any business in Khartoum and that my papers were valid only for Juba. I then produced my university documents telling them that I had a business and also wanted to complete my education there. I said that I was peaceful and had no other intentions.

They refused to let me go.

²⁴ Warawar is a market in Northern Bahr el-Gazal, close to the border with Sudan.

Waxa aan ku adkaysannay in aan sharcigii ganacsatada ku raacno baska. Baskii ayaanuu tigidhkii u soo goosannay aroornimadiina halkii ayaan ka sii anbobaxnay waxana nala socday dhallinyaro kale oo Soomaali ah.

Wax aannu soconaba goor makhribnimo ah ayaan meel kastam ah oo gawaadhida lagu baadho dadkana sharciyadooda lagu waydiiyo soo gaadhay. Gaadhigii ayaa nalaga wada dajay waxa aanan tusnay waraqayahayagii. Soomaalidii kale maadaama aanay waraaqo sidan halkii ayaa lagu reebay. Kadibna gaadhigii markii aannu soo fuullay ee aannu dib isugu soo noqonnay ayaa waxa aan la sheekaystay wiil Suudaani ah oo af-Ingiriiska yaqaanay waxa uu ii sheegay in Soomaali badan halkan lagu reebto, waxii dumarana askartu kaxaystaan, raggana lacag badan laga qaado.

Safarkayagii ayaan sii wadanay waxa waraysi nala yeeshay nimankii kastamka magaalada Warwar ee xadka ku taalla. Waxa iigu la yaab badnayd inanka kale ee aannu wada soconnay waxa uu u ekaa Suudaani, anigu se nin dhuuban oo yara maariin ah oo Soomaali asal ah ayaan ahaa. Dabadeed inta ishaa sidaa naloo mariyay ayaa la yidhi adigu "Soomaali, soo deg". Halkii ayaa waraysi la igula yeeshay sharcigaygiina igu waydiiyeen. Markii aan tusay waraaqdi ganacsiga, Soomaalidu halkan kama ganacsato ayaa la yidhi. Soomaalidu Jubbay ka ganacsadaan. Waxaan ku idhi waxaan rabaa in aan waxbarasho halkan ka dhammaystirto ganacsina aan ka sameeyo. Ma ahi nin laga shakiyi karo oo waxa aan ahay nin nabadeed.

Kuma sii dayn karro ayay yidhaahdeen.

Muddo markii aan halkii murmaynay, gaadhigiina uu wali taag-anythingay, waxaa noo yimi nin sarkaal ah oo ciidanka haystay. Ka dib waxa uu igu yidhi maxaad ahayd. Waxa aan ku idhi Soomaali ayaan ahay oo Soomaaliduna way burbursantahay, sharci iyo baasaboorro fiisaysan ma sidanno. Laakiin waxa aan u soconnaa inaa aannu waxbarasho iyo dhaqaale raadinno. Markaa nolol iyo ganacsi ayaannu raadinaynaa. Wax aan rabnaa in aad na caawisid. "May may" buu

We were still quarrelling and the bus was still waiting for me when the officer in charge of the checkpoint came. He asked me what my problem was. I told him that I was a Somali, from a devastated country, had no passport and visa, and that we came looking for education and money. I told him to help me. However, he refused and told me that he couldn't help because I had no papers. He added that he would send me back [to Uganda] on a bus. This possibility was really difficult for me to accept.

At this point, I remembered the similarities between South Sudan and Somalia—prolonged civil war, lawlessness and migration. Taking advantage of this, I reminded him how his people suffered the same things that we were going through. How they suffered in Ethiopia and Kenya. I added that my intention was to study so I would be able to help my country. I asked him to help me by allowing me to proceed to Khartoum. In the end, he said he would let me go but first he told me that Somalis were no good. He said that some Somali pirates had hijacked a ship that was carrying arms for South Sudan. He then gave me an official letter to go to Khartoum.

Khartoum

We arrived in Khartoum, the capital city of Sudan. As soon as we arrived we were met by young [Somali] men, working for the smugglers and on the lookout for new arrivals wanting to go to Libya. They took us to a house where other young Somalis were staying.

The house we were accommodated in was owned by a smuggler by the name of Ahmed, who was also working in the Somali embassy. A young woman who had arrived before us told me she

qidhi. “Qofku haddii aanuu sharci haysan anuu wax aan u samayn karaa ma jiro. Markaa wan ku celinayaa waxaan kugu celinayaa meeshii aad ka timi. Intaa ayaan wanaag kuu samayn karaa. Gaadhigan ayaan ku sii saarayaa sii socda.” Runtii arrintaasi way igu adkaatay.

Ka dib waxa igu soo dhacday in sida Soomaalidu u burbursantahay oo bilaa nidaamka isaga tahay iyo bilaa sharciga u tahay, in ay qolyahan naftoodu muddo dheer ay la dagaalamayeen Suudaan. Dabeed waxa aan ku idhi “maad ilawsantahay idinka laftiinu inaad burburkan oo kale aad soo marteen oo dadkiinnu meelo badan ku dayacnaayeen Itoobiya iyo Kiiniya, in aad labaan sano bilaa dawlad ahaydeen, markaa tii oo kale ayaa anaga na haysata. Dadka wax idiin soo bartay wa dadka dalka wax ka badalay annaguna waxa aan rabnaa in aan dalka wax u soo baranno. Intaa igu caawi oo asxaan ii samee. Bani’aadnimo igu caawi, dhibka aad nala soo aragteen dartii igu caawi”.

Markaa ayuu yidhi “runtii si wanagsanbaad u hadashay waanan ku caawinaya. Laakiin Soomaalidu dad wanaagsan maaha. Waayo dhawaan waxa ay qabsadeen maraakiib annaga hub noo sidday”. Ka dib waxa uu i siiyay waraaq sharci ah oo aan Khartuum ku tago.

Khartuum

Intaa ka dib, waxa aan tagnay Khartuum oo ah caasimadda Suudaan. Haddaan magaaladii galnay waxa aan la kulmay wiilal dhallinyaro ah oo u shaqeeya tahriibiyayaasha oo u soo ogaada dadka raba in ay tagaan Liibiya. Dabadeedna way na soo kaxeeyeen. Nin ayay noo geeyeen mukhalas ah. Waxaan halkii ugu tagnay dhallinyar kale oo Soomaali ah. Guriga waxaa lahaa nin mukhalas ah oo la yidhaa Axmed oo ka shaqaynayey safaaradda Soomaalida. Gabadh yar oo hortaaayo la keenay meesha ayaa igu tidhi “annagaba muddo dhawr bilood ka hor ah ayaa sidan oo kale naloo soo dhaweeyay. Ilaa haddana guri ayaannu ku xeraysanahay oo magaaladii waa nalaga ilaaliyay, si aannaan magaalada u fahmin. Waxa la rabaa in haddii

had been met at the bus in the same way several months ago. Since then, she had been kept inside and not allowed to go out. She explained that the smugglers did not want them to become familiar with the area. This way, if the mission failed, the migrants would not be able to locate where they had stayed.

From here, we started to plan for the desert journey. A different journey in which papers and conning people never worked. A journey where the smugglers and the driver of the vehicle you are in determined everything.

We stayed in that house in Khartoum for two months, waiting for more people to join us so that the smuggler's middlemen would have enough people to start the journey. Their intention was to get around 90 people, who then would be packed onto a vehicle meant to accommodate only 20. They charged USD 500 per person to smuggle them to the Libyan border.

The smuggler Ahmed liked our manners—me and my friend—and asked us to find more people for the journey so that we could set out soon. So we went out into Khartoum, using either clan or regional affiliation as a means to attract new recruits. We even got a discount because of our efforts. We were charged USD 350 each, me and my friend, instead of USD 500.

When we finally had the required number of people, we were gathered together in a big house at night. Small vans then took us to another old house that had no water and was outside the town. We spent the night in that house, feeling cold. Then early in the morning, at 5 a.m., we were collected by three pickups. Each could normally carry 20 persons. We were packed on top of each other because there were many of us and nothing to hold on to. The

tahriibta aan ku fashilano aynaan garan meesha aan joognay”.

Hadda waxa aan tabaabulshaheeda gallay safarkii dhabta ahaa oo ah kii Saxaraha. Waa safar sharci iyo waraaqo iyo khiyaamo aanay shaqaynayn. Nimanka ku maamulaya iyo gawaadhida lagu saarayo ayuunbaa kaa masuul ah.

Waxa ay nagu qaadatay in aan gurigii joogno muddo labo bilood ah, iyada oo dadka la isku ururinayo si gawaadhi waawayn loogu guro. Gawaadhidaas waxa la saaraa 90 qof, waxa se loogu talo gallay inuu qaado 20 qof. Markaa sagaashankaa qof waa in la isla helaa si kharashbadan looga urursado. Qofkii 500 oo doolaar ayaa laga qaadaa si loo gudbiyo loona gaadhsiyo xadka Liibiya.

Muddadii la isla sugayay dadka, Axmedkii mukhalaska ahaa ee meesha joogay wax qabadkayagii inta uu ka helay ayuu yidhi aniga iyo saaxiibkay “idinku dad soo ururiya si safarku idiinku fududaado”. Waxa aan dhexgallay Khartuum, oo dadkii qayb qabiil ayaan ugu marmarsiyoonaay, qaybna degaan si aan u soo jiidanno. Dad badan ayaan u soo ururrinay. Markaa lacagtii ayuu wax naga dhimay. Dadka 5 boqol oo dollar ayuu ka qaadayay, annaga se 350.

Kama danbayntii tiradii loo baahnaa ayaan gaadhay. Guri wayn ayaa nalagu ururshay goor habeennimo ah. Dabadeed, basas yaryar oo caasi ah ayaa nala saaray oo na geeyay guri kharaabad ah oo magaalada dhinaceeda ah oo aan lahayn biyo. Habeenkii hore dhaxan iyo wax aannaan ku talo galin ayaan ku seexannay. Ka dib markii aan habeenkii meeshii u hoyanay ayaa aroortii hore shantii haddana nala saaray saddex gawaadhi oo yaryar oo Cabdibile ah oo midkiiba qaadayo 20 qof. Safarkii ayaa bilawday oo dadkii waa la isa saarsaaray. Waxa aad la yaabaysaa gaadhiga maadaama loogu talo galay in uu qaado dad tiro yar, dadkii inay dusha isaga baxayaan. Gaadhigu dhigo ma laha, meel kale oo la qabsadana ma laha. Dadku waxa ay ku qasbanyihiin midba in uu mid kale qabsado. Gaadhiga nimanka wadaa u nixi maayaan. Way eryayaan dabadeedna nin kastaa naftiisa sida uu u badbaadin lahaa isagay jirtaa. Waa is giiji, kakale qabso oo dadku way isku wada dhaganyihiin. Midkood

drivers drove fast and recklessly. Everyone had to save themselves, so people clung to each other. They would cling to someone who was holding on to a pole. Sometimes the car would suddenly go up in the air and fall forcefully to the ground. As a result, people were flung about and fell on top of each other.

Through the Sudanese desert

We had been moving for a day and a night when we stopped and were off-loaded into the middle of the desert. The three pickups left. After a while, three more pickups arrived, carrying 90 Sudanese people, who were also illegally migrating to Libya—for employment. At that time, Sudanese were strictly prevented from crossing the border to Libya. The 90 Somalis and the 90 Sudanese settled down in separate places. We were asked to wait until the big lorries came to take us to Libya.

It was cold. According to the information we had been given, the plan was to cross the desert in five days. Therefore my friend and I had only travelled with a half bag of dates, some powdered drinks and drinking water.

We spent three days in that place and consumed half of our supplies but we were happy and not worried because we thought we had enough food for the journey. Men and women were taking the journey together. Some of the young men would seduce, joke, stroll and laugh with the women. People were interested in each other. There was friendship because we were travel mates together. We would laugh, chat and talk about what had happened during our various journeys.

Then after three days the big lorries arrived. They could carry

ayaa bir haysta, dadkuna kanay kuwada dhagsanyihiin. Gaadhigu hal mar ayuu sida u socdo hawadaa u boodayaa dhulkuu ku soo dhacayaa, markaas ayaa dadku inta ay hawada u boodaan ku soo dul daadanayaan.

Saxarihii Suudan

Markii ay gawaadhidii ay nala socdeen muddo maalin iyo habeen ah ayay meel na dajiyeen saxaraha dhexdiisa ah oo nagaga tageen. Waxyar dabeedna waxa noo yimid saddex Cabdibile oo sida sagaashan Suudaaniyiin ah oo si sharci darro ah u tagaya Liibiya si ay shaqo u helaan. Meel gooni ah ayay Suudaantii degtay. Soomaliidiina meel gooni ah bay degtay. Ka dib waxa la yidhi waxa idiin imanaya gawaadhidii waawaynayd ee idiin qaadi lahayd xaggaa iyo Liibiya

Meesha aan degnay aad ayay u qaboobayd. Run ahaantii markii hore ku tala galkayagu waxa uu ahaa in aannu soconayno shan cisho iyo wax la mid ah oo dad naga horreeyay noogu sheekeeyeen. Aniga iyo saaxiibkay waxa aan sidanay kiish badhkii oo ay ku jiraan waxooga timir ah, sharaabka la qaso iyo caagado biyo ah.

Halkaa waxa aannu degganayn saddex cisho oo aan isticmaalay kalabadh sahaydii aan sidannay. Haddana dadku ma walwalsana maxaa yeelay waxa ay filayeen in sahayda hadhay safarka ku filantahay. Rag iyo dumar ayaa safarka ku wada jira. Wiilasha qaybtood ayaa la haasawaya, la kaftamaya oo tamashlaynaya oo la qoslaya gabdhaha. Dadku markaa way is xiisaynayaan, way is jecelyihiin oo waa dad safar u wada socda. Waa la wada qoslayaa, waa la wada sheekaysanayaa, qofkastaa qofka kale ayaa uu ka waraysanayaa waxa dhib soo gaadhay.

Ka dib saddexdii cisho waxa noo yimidday gawaadhi waawayn. Gawadhida marka aan qiyaasay waxa ay qaadi karaan oo loogu talo galay 40 ilaa 50 inta u dhaxaysa. Kadib waxa ay yidhaahdeen Soomaalida intii is raaci karta waxa la rabaa in aad noqotaan laba kooxood oo 40 iyo 50 kala ah. Intii is fahmaysaysaa way is raacday.

around 40 and 50 passengers each. We were instructed to divide into two groups of 40 and 50 people based on how people knew each other. The Sudanese group likewise. I was in a 40-person group with others from Mogadishu and some from the north [Somaliland]. After this, they combined us into two larger groups—one group was comprised of 40 Somalis and 50 Sudanese. The other consisted of 40 Sudanese and 50 Somalis. They made this type of grouping in case there were any problems and to reassure the drivers. They were afraid of putting all the Somalis together on one lorry.

We boarded and set off. It was so cramped that everyone was standing and holding his or her luggage. Because 90 persons were packed into a truck meant to accommodate a maximum of 50, people were squashed on top of each other. In spite of all this, people did not complain, thinking that now the journey had begun our destination was close and we just needed to be patient and resilient.

We set off in the morning and were driven all day and all night, still crammed on top of each other. The drivers seemed ruthless because of the drugs they were taking. During the night, one of the wheels of the lorry I was travelling in went into a deep hole. The lorry suddenly fell over and all of us were flung to one side. The driver was thrown through the windscreen and was hurt the most. The garage boy's satellite telephone broke into pieces and he was thrown in a different direction. I remember a friend of mine had his hand pierced by metal and was bleeding. Thus our journey came to an abrupt halt.

Fortunately, I was safe and, after recovering from the initial shock, started gathering people and helping them. Most of them

Gooni baanu isku raacnay. Suudaantiina sidoo kale. Waxa aan ku biiray koox 40 qof ah oo reer Koonfureed iyo reer Waqooyi isugu jirta. Dabeedna waxa la sameeyay dadkani si aanay khilaaf u keenin 40kii Soomaalida ahayd 50 Suudaan ah ayaa lagu daray. Kontonkii kale ee Soomaalida ahaana waxa lagu daray Afartan Suudaan ah.

Sidaa ayaan ku anboqaadnay safarkii. Waxa ay noqotay qofkastaa in uu kiishkiisii kor u qabsado oo alaabtiisii hayo waayo dadku way taaganyihiin meel gaadhiga laga fuulaa ma jirto. Gaadhi loogu talo galay konton qof ayaa waxa la saaray sagaashan qof waana la is dul saaran yahay. Waxa jiray cidhiidhi dhib badan, hase ahaatee dadku is leeyihiin safarkiinii ayaa idiin bilaabmay meeshii ayaa soo dhaw ku sabra oo u adkaysta cidhiidhiga kan.

Maalintii iyo habeenkii oo dhan ayaa aannu sii soconnay. Nimanka gaadhiga wadaa niman naxaya ma aha. Waa niman maandooriye isticmaalaya. Habeenimadii sidii aannu u soconnay ayaa uu gaadhigii meel god ah lug kula dhacay. Gaadhigii ayaa dhinac u dhacay. Gabigayagiina dhinac ayaa aannu iskugu daadannay oo qofba meel ku dhacay. Dareewalkii muraayaddii hore ayuu ka dhexbaxay isaga ayaana ugu dhaawac waynaa. Ninkii kale oo isaguna kirishbeyga ahaa, Turayahii uu isticmaalayay ayaa ka kala jabay, isna meel ayuu ka dhacay. Dadkii kale ku yar oo aan garanayo oo aan saaxiibbo nahay bir ayaa gacanta dillaacisay oo dhiig ayaa socday. Safarkayagii halkaa ayaa uu ku joogsaday.

Ka dib dadkii wax gaadheen caawimaddoodii iyo wax u qabashadoodii ayaannu bilawnay. Dhaawacu fudayd ayaa uu u badnaa dhimashana ma dhicin. Meesha la marayo geed iyo guri toona kuma yaal oo waa saxare. Saxarihii dhabta ahaa ee ciidda ahaa ayaa bilaabmay. Buuro ciid ah oo habeenkii guuraya ayaad arkaysaa oo meel aad xalay ku ogayd buur oo aroortii bannaan ah. Saxare aad u dhib badan ayuu ahaa. Qoladayadii Soomaalida ahayd waxa aan degnay meel yar oo buur hoosteed ah. Qoladii kale ee Suudaantiina gooni ayay u dageen. Dabadeedna dadkii dhaawaca ahaa halkii ayaa

had sustained light injuries and no one was dead. We were in the middle of the desert where there were no trees or houses. You could see the sand dunes moving. A place where you thought there was a mountain the previous night would look flat in the morning. We settled near a sand dune. The Sudanese rested together in a separate place. Then people started to help the injured, among them the lorry driver. The garage boy was going round and calming people down, telling them that it was OK and that a rescue was coming.

We ended up staying in that place for three days. Our food supplies ran short. We started to wonder what was going on. Was this as far as we would go? We were in a barren desert where there was no water. We were still in Sudan. And suffering from the cold which we couldn't bear. Actually, we were lucky it was the cold season. If it had been the hot season, we would have died from thirst by then.

The garage boy had walked to find an oasis and on the fourth day he returned with men who had satellite phones and a lorry. We were then evacuated to a small valley that was part of the oasis. We stayed there for two more days by which time we had run out of food and had begun thinking of going back to Khartoum on foot. Khartoum was far away.

We were still discussing the issue of going back when men came from the village, armed with G3 guns and riding donkeys and camels. An old man who was with them said that we were Somalis and that where we stayed was not our land, so we had to pay them money. He said we had to pay the equivalent of USD 50 for each person. They wanted a total of USD 2,000 for the 40 of us. They could make this demand because they had guns. We wondered who

lagu dhayay oo uu ku jiro dirawalkii gaadhigu. Yarkii kirishbayga ahaa dadka ayuu dajinayay oo uu sheegayay in gargaar imanayo.

Muddo saddex cisho ah ayaan sii joognay oo cunnadii yarayd naga sii gabaabsi noqotay. Waxa aan bilawnay in aan is waydiinno sida wax u socdaan. Habeenkii waxa soo dhacaysay dhaxan qabaw oo aannaan tamar u hayn. Nasiib wanaag waxa aan ku beegannay wakhtigii qabawga oo haddii ay ahaan lahayd xilligii kulaylka dadku maba noolaadeen harraad baa dhammayn lahaa.

Iyada oo sidaas xaalku yahay ayaa kiriishbaygii tagay meel yar oo dooxo ah. Waxa uu ka soo helay gaadhi markaa joogay iyo niman Turayayaal haysta. Halkii ayaa nalaga daad gureeyay oo nala geeyay meeshi yarayd ee dooxada ahayd. Halkii ayaa haddana aan sii joognay laba maalmood oo kale. Kadib dadkii waxa ka dhammaaday cunnadii. Waxa ay iska warsadeen waxa ay samaylahaayeen. Waxa ay ka fikireen in ay dib ugu lugeeyaan Khartuum inkasta oo ay fogayd.

Iyada oo wali aan hindisihii hadal haynno, ayaa waxa noo yimid nimankii tuulada yar deggannaa oo ah reer miyi. Waxa ay sitaan dhawr qori oo G3 ah waxa aanay saaranyihiin dhawr dameer iyo dhowr awr. Dabadeed odaygii u waynaa ayaa yidhi "Soomaaliyeey wax ma idiin sheegnaa meeshani dhulkiina ma aha, Soomaali ayaad tihiin, lacagayaa aad sidataan, waxa aannu u baahana-hay lacag". Calaa qof waxa ay sheegeen in ay ka rabaan lacag u dhiganta \$50 oo marka la isku geeyo noqonaysa 2000 oo dollar afar-tankayaga qof. Qori ayuu sitaa odaygu, ciidankiisana wuu wataa. Dabadeedna waxay noqotay in la is waydiiyo waar jabhaddani yar maxay ahayd. Markii aan murannay cabbuur ayuu odaygii yidhi: "Adeer haddaad leedihiin lacag bixin mayno, ciidda tan aad saaran tihiin waa Suudaan, aniga ayaana deggan. Guryahaygii ayaad iigu timaadeen, hadda ma garanaysaan? Lugaha ka qaada oo hawada istaaga. Hawada haddaad istaagtaan, waan idiin oggolaanayaa in aad meesha joogtaan. Laakiin haddii aad rabtaan in aad meesha

those armed men were. After quarrelling for some time with the old man, he said, ‘If you don’t want to pay money, remember you are on Sudanese soil. It is our country. You came to our land. Take your legs off the ground and stand in the air. But if you want to stay on the ground, pay the money. If you are able to stand in the air, we’ll let you do it. But if you want to stand on the ground, pay us.’

Really, it was hard to accept what was happening to us. We thought about what to do. We knew we had a food shortage. We were suffering. And on top of that, they wanted money. We wished we had a functional government [so that we would be less vulnerable to this kind of extortion]. Some proposed that we should go on foot [back to Khartoum] before our energy ran out. Others said we had come too far to go back. At this point, we had travelled only 1,000 km, with 3,000 km left to go.

We reached a deadlock. So we sent one of our men to the Sudanese group we were travelling with to ask them to talk to the armed men—to tell them to leave us alone and to warn them that we were ready to fight if not. However, our fellow travellers said that because we had encroached on their land we had to meet the terms of the old man and his militia.

One of our group thought the gang were in cahoots with the drivers, who had purposely kept us for them. He said that we had to go on foot to show them that we were not at their mercy but can decide our fate [for ourselves]. He added that we had to go back to Khartoum to fight for a refund of the money we had paid to the smugglers.

We agreed to go back to Khartoum on foot.

We took our luggage and started to walk. We had walked some

lugaha ku haysaan oo aad taagnaataan, waa ciiddaydii ee lacagtaa bixiya.”

Arrini way adkaatay oo dadkii way isku noqdeen waxa ayna yidhaahdeen “maxaan samaynaa? Cunnadii waa ay innaga dhammaatay oo waa an dayacannahay. Haddana lacag ayaa la ina sii waydiinayaa. Yaa Ilaahayoow dawlad na siiya? Waxa aan ku tashannay in inta aan tamartu naga dhammaan aan Khartuum u lugayno. Qolo kale ayaa tidhi lugayn mayno oo meeshii waqti badan ayaynu ka soo soconnay. 1000 km meelahaas ayaa an ku dhawnahay waxana noo hadhay waa 3000 km.

Xaaladdii markii ay adkaatay, qoladii Suudaanta ahayd ayaa aan nin u dirnay oo ku yidhi “annagu Soomaali ayaan nahay, dalkayagiina ma joogno. Idinkaa dalkiini jooga, nimankan kale ee Suudaaniyiinta ah ee hubka sita ee raba in ay wax na waydiiyaan la hadla. Hadday dagaal noqotana waan la dagaalamaynaa. Nagala hadla idinka ayaa dalkiinnii jooga e.” Waxa ay yidhaahdeen “nimankan dhulkoodii weeye oo iyaga ayaa leh. Iyaga ayaa ka masuul ah. Waxay idin weydiyaan bixiya”. Mid naga mid ah ayaa yidhi nimankan budhcadda ah waxa ay wada shaqaysanayaan dareewaliinta, ee aynu isku dayno in aynu lugayn karno oo aynu go’aan qaadan karno waayo inaggu lacag ayaynu bixinnay oo magaaladii haddaynu ku noqonno lacagtii ayaa aan wadyiisanaynaa mukhalaskii in uu inoo celiyo.

Waxa aanu isku raacnay in aan u lugayno Khartuum.

Alaabtii ayaa aan qaadannay lugna bilawnay. Cabbaar markii aannu soconnay ayaa Suudaantii hadda na lahayd Soomaali ayaad tihiin ee waxaad doontaan iska bixiya soo yaacday iyaga oo leh “walaalayaal ha naga tagina. Safarka ha inaga kala daadinina. Jooga”. Waa aannu is yara adkaynay ilaa ay noo ballan qaadeen in tahriibiyayaashii ay imanayaan. Sidaa awgeed waa an ka noqonay go’aankayagii waa aannan joognay. Waxa naloo soo diray gaadhi sida cunto sida makarooni. Cuntadii ayaan karsannay qaybsannayna maaddaama cuntadu ay gabaabsi naga ahayd.

way when the Sudanese—the same one who had a short while ago said we had to pay the old man—came running and begged us not to ruin the journey. They were afraid that without us their journey would be cut short. We resisted his pleas until we were assured they [the smugglers] were coming. For this reason, we changed our minds and stayed. Afterwards, a car came with some food, like macaroni. We cooked it and, because of the food shortage, distributed it, too.

Later, three pickups came because the big lorry was wrecked. Thirty people were loaded into each vehicle, tied together, like animals, so they wouldn't fall. They did this because the pickups were supposed to go without stopping for long periods of time.

Libyan smugglers

We were on board, tied up together. We had been moving all day and night. The next day, we stopped in a mountainous area. Somalis and Sudanese were grouped separately and each group cooked with whatever firewood they had.

This was the exchange point, inside the Sudan border, where the Sudanese smugglers handed over the illegal migrants to the Libyan smugglers.

The following day a fight broke out because the Sudanese wanted to keep the water for themselves. There were 50 of them and they outnumbered us. The journey was getting harder on us. The Somalis demanded their share of the water and the two groups started hitting each other with pieces of wood and metal rods that they had found on the pickups. Women could not find stones to throw. Instead, they threw handfuls of sand, crying out to the men

Muddo ka dib waxa naloo soo diray saddex Cabdi Bile maaddaama gaadhigii waynaa burburay. Soddon qof ayaa la saarayay gaadhi kasta. Gaadhiga marka aad fuusho, ee qofku dabada sidaa ula soo galo, xadhigbaa lagugu wareejinayaa waayo gawaadhidan niman maaandooriye qaata ayaa wada lama joojiyo haddaad ka dhacdo iyo haddii kale. Sidii xoolihii oo kale ayaa dadkii la iskugu xidhxidhay.

Ma-gafayaashii Liibiya

Gaadhigii ayaa aan fuullay anaga oo xidhxidhan. Ka dib markii aan soconnay maalin iyo habeen, waxa maalintii xigtay ay na keeneen meel buuralay ah. Soomaalidii iyo Suudaantii waa la isku keenay. Koox kastaa gaarkeeda ayay waxii ay cunto haysatay xaabo ku karsatay.

Halkan aan joognaa waa goobta dadka la isku dhaafsado oo ku taal Suudaan xadkeeda. Waa halka magafayaasha Suudaanta ahi ay tahriibayaasha sharcidarrada ah ugu wareejaan magafayaasha Liibiyiinta.

Maalintii danbe ayaa waxa dhacday in biyo yar oo dadka ka dhexeeyay gawaadhida saaraa oo qolodaa Carabtu noo keeneen, in ay Suudaaniintii tidhaa kaligayo ayaa an qaadanaynaa. Iyagu waa konton oo way naga badan yihiin, safarkiina wuu adkaaday oo biyihii ayaa yaraaday. Dabadeedna waxay noqotay in Soomaalidii biyihii ku dhagto oo dagaal meeshii ka bilaabmo. Waxa ay noqotay in xaabadii iyo biro yaryar oo laga helay gawaadhida dabada la isku qabto Soomaalidii iyo Suudaantii. Dagaalkii ayaa bilawday. Dumarku dhagax ay tuuraan ma haysan oo meeshu waa saxare. Ciid inta ay saydhiyaan ayay qaylo [ku darayeen] “Ba’ nay nimanka iska celiyaay. Galaay.” Sababta loo dagaallamay waxa ay ahayd in la is difaaco oo biyaha qoladii adkaataa qaadato.

Dagaalkii ayaa six un u bilaabmay oo waa la is dhex galay, dhawr iyaga ka mid ahna waa la dhaawacay. Soomaalida dhaawaceedu wuu yaraa waayo Soomaalidu way mitidayeen inkasta oo ay naga

to fight. The reason to fight was to protect oneself and get water because whoever won would get the water.

The fighting continued fiercely and resulted in injuries. Our damage was less because the Somalis were fighting to the death even though we were outnumbered. As the fight continued, three religious Sudanese men and other Somalis who were not in the fight started waving white robes and cloths, shouting to stop the fight. When the fight subsided, these men started to moralize, saying, ‘We are all migrants in hardship, lacking everything and dying. Don’t commit the sin of killing each other. Calm down.’

Four men from each group were selected to negotiate. They started by discussing the concerns of each group, the causes of the fight, the water shortage and the casualties from each side. Then it was agreed that we would compensate the injured by giving them water. We had nothing else. We counted the injured—three Sudanese and one Somali—and the remaining bottles of water. We had a total of 100 bottles of water left. Each group took half, minus two bottles for every injured person. Somalis gave six water bottles to the three injured Sudanese and the Sudanese gave two bottles of water to the injured Somali. People shook hands and in this way ended the conflict.

We left that place in Libyan pickups. From here onwards the Libyans were in charge of our journey. They were white just like Italians, different from the Sudanese, who were similar to Somalis. The Libyans were bad-mouthed and spoke with a strange accent. They were mafia-like and aggressive, smoking hashish and carrying swords and metal rods.

We were split up and distributed between the pickups. Thus

tiro badnaayeen. Dagaalku markii uu cabbaar socday ayaa niman wadaaddo ah oo Soomaali iyo Suudaan ah oo aan dagaalka ku jirin inta ay maryo cad iyo go’yaal cad oo ay wateen luleen iyag oo leh “dagaalka hala joojo”.

Dagaalkii markii la joojiyay ayaa nimankii dadkii dhexgalay oo qolo kasta dhankeedii u wacdiyeen oo yidhaahdeen “waxa aynu nahay musaafiriin, waxay aynu ku suganahay xaalad adag, wax ma haysanno, waynu dayacanahay oo waynu dhimanaynaa, markaa yaynaan inagu danbi shaqaysan oo dad dhiigooda dusha iska saarin. Ilaahay ayaa og in aan noolaanayno iyo in aan dhimanayno. Shay-daanka ha la iska naaro.” Wacdigi markii uu soo dhammaaday waxa lagu heshiiyay in la gar-naqsado. Xaggooda waxa ka soo tagay afar nin, xagayagana afar. Wareysi ayaa qolo walba [lala yeeshay ku saabsan] waxa ay tabanayso, dagaalku waxa uu ku yimid, biyihii iyo inta dad dhib qabta. Dabadeed waxa la yidhi maaddaama oo hadda aynaan xoolo haysan oo aan biyo kaliya haysanno, biyaha ha la kala qaybiyo. Caagadaha biyuhu waxa ay ahaayeen ilaa boqol midh. Laba qaybood ayaa loo kala qaybshay. Qof kasta oo dhaawacan, waxaa la siiyay laba xabbo oo magdhow ah oo looga jaray qoladii wax gaadh-siisay. Sidaa darteed kontonkoodii xabbo labo xabbo waxa looga soo jaray ninkii Soomaaliga ahaa ee dhaawacmay. Qoladii kalena waxa intii Soomaalida looga saaray lix xabbo oo saddexdii qof ee dhaawicii ee Suudaanta ahaa la siiyay. Dabadeedna waa la is gacan qaaday halkiina waa lagu heshiiyay.

Halkii waxa nalagaga qaaday Cabdibalayaashii Liibiyaanka. Hadda iyo waxa ka danbeeyay waxa maamulayay safarkayaga niman Liibiyaan ah. Liibiyaanku waa niman cadcad oo Talyaani u eg oo ka duwan Suudaantii Soomaalida u ekayd. Waa niman diinta wada caayaya oo waxay ka hadlayaan aanad garanayn, maafiya ah, xashiishad aad u cabbaya, oo seefo iyo biro sita.

Qolo kasta gaadhi ayaa la saaray. Annagu soddon baanu gaadhi ku raacnay. Soddonkaa waxa dumar ahaa sagaal, kow iyo labaatanna waa rag. Gaadhiga naguma fillayn. Gaadhiga marka dhinacyada

the solidarity, togetherness, conflict and even the companionship between us ended. I was with a group of 30 [Somalis]: 22 men and 8 women. I remember the pickup was so small that when one person boarded it this caused another to fall out. For this reason, people were again tied up together and also because of the fact that they were weak from a nine-day journey with only very little food to eat.

After a one-day journey, we were dropped in another area. They did this because the pickup was going back to get others, to bring them to where we were, then go back again and do the same for others. Many people were moved this way [with the pickups shuttling back and forth].

Walking through the Sahara

Our journey turned into misery. We were intermittently moving and stopping. After travelling for 17 or 18 days, the pickup was wrecked and the battery of the satellite phone died, too. The Libyans showed us a road and told us to follow it on foot. They said it would take us to a place with barrels and after one day we would be picked up.

We thought that the place we were walking to was not far. We took water and some remaining dates with us. The other food supplies had already finished. We started to walk early in the evening, using small torches they had given us to follow the road. Walking all night, people could not keep up and stay together. Some were left behind, especially the weak, women and old men. I was one of the strong and active young people, as was my friend. We had been walking all night when we decided to wait for the rest. We slept in the desert at a place near the road. People were arriving in

laga koro ee qof fuulo qofkii marka hore fuulay ayaa ka dhacayay waayo ma wada qaadayn dadka. Si aanay u kala daadan dadkii xadhig ayaa lagu xidhay maadaama ay tabcaameen safarkii badnaa iyo cunta la'aantii iyo sagaal cisho oo safar ah.

Markii aannu soconnay maalin kale ayaa meel nalagu yara hakiyay. Kadib waxa aannu dareennay in gaadhiga kani marba qolo qaadayo, soo dhaweynayo, haddana tagayo oo qolo kale oo saddexaad soo dhaweynayo.

Socodkii Saxaraha dhexdiisa

Safarkii wuxa uu noqday safar rafaad badan. Marba meel ayaa aan ku hakanaynay. Markii aan safarkii ku jirno 17 ama 18 cisho gaadhigii na waday wuu xumaaday, Turayihiina baytarigii ayaa ka dhacay. Waxa ay nagu yidhaahdeen halkan ka lugeeya, oo waddadan qaada waxa ay idin gaynasaa meel foostooyin ay yaallaan maalin kadibna halkaas ayaan idinka qaadaynaa.

Waxa aan u haysannay meel dhaw in aan tagayno. Alaabtii iyo raashinkii iyo wixii aan sidannay way dhammaadeen. Biyo-biyo yarbaan sidannaa iyo waxoogaa timir ah oo soo hadhay. Lugbaa bilaabantay. Intii hore gaadhi ayaa nala saaray oo nalagu geeyay. Waxa aannu lug bilawnay goor maqrib ah. Tooshash yaryar oo waddada lagu ilaashanayo ayaa ay na siiyeen. Habeenkii oo dhan markii aan lugtii wadnay ayaa dadkii kala tageen. Waxa dib u hadhay dadkii tabarta darraa, dumarkii iyo kuwii da'da ahaa.

Waxaan ka mid ahaa dhallinyarada firfircoon oo xagga hore ku jirtay aniga iyo ninkii aan saaxiibada ahayn. Markii aan habeenkii oo dhan soconnay ayaa aannu is nidhi ha la isa sugo. Markii uu waagu soo dhawaa ayaa meel waddada ku dhaw aan iska jiif-jiif-sannay. Dadkii marba qaybi sidii ay noo soo gaadhaysay habqankii waxay na soo wada gaadheen ilaa toddobadii aroornimo. Dadka waxa ka muuqday daal badan iyo diif.

Haddana mar labaad ii aroornimo ayaa lugtii bilaabantay. Maalintii oo dhammaystiran ayaa aannu lugaynaynay. Marba sidii la

groups until seven in the morning. They were tired and exhausted and therefore had to rest a while.

We began walking again at around 11 a.m. We walked all morning, that night and the following day. We would leave behind those who couldn't walk and then stop and wait for them to catch up. At the end of three days, after walking just a short distance, we stopped because people were very weak. We stayed put for a night and a day.

There was almost nothing to eat. And when the food finished people started to fight but they didn't fight for long because they were so weak. A man who had migrated many times and knew many tricks had secretly told me to collect the seeds of the dates and put them in my pocket. He had also told me that he had some onions. Indeed, when the dates were finished, we put the seeds in our mouths and sucked them.

We then started to walk again. We had been walking for two days when the old man died. I remember he walked very feebly and people would wait for him. They too were walking slowly and some of them were resting. Suddenly he stooped down and fell to the ground. We stood around him wondering what had happened to him. We checked and found him dead.

He was the first among us to die. Everyone was aghast. Some cried and others thought that we would all die there. We then began burying him. Four of us, though weak, managed to dig the desert, place his body there, cover him and say prayers over him. I don't know. People were shocked, weak and suffering.

We were walking again when everyone started to complain

isku sugayay, habeenkii kale ayaa aan lugaynaynay iyo maalintii ku xigtay kuwa socon kari waaya waa aannu ka tagaynay, haddana ku sugaynay si ay noo soo gaadhaan. Saddex cisho ka dib, markii aan waxyar soconnay waa aan joogsannay maxaa yeelay dadkii aad ayay u daaleen. Habeen iyo maalin ayaan socodkii hakinnay.

Wax la cuno waa la waayay. Dadkii markii cunnadii dhammaatay dagaal ayay isku wada bilaabeen inkasta oo ay tabar darro awgeed aanay muddo yar dagaal wadi karayn. Nin ayaa aniga ila faqay tahriibta galijiray oo wuxuu yidhi “waar heedhe, waxaad samaysaa timirta aynu cunayno lafaheeda jeebka inoogu shub. Anna basal ayaan inoo hayaa oo aynu cunaynaa.” Timirtii markii ay dhammaatay waxa bilaabantay in aan lafihii muudmuudsanno oo iyada cunno ka dhiganno.

Kadib haddana lug ayaa bilaabantay. Lugtii markii aan laba cisho oo kale ku jiray, ayaa oday naga dhintay. Waan xasuustaa dirqi ayuu ku socday marwalbana waa la sugayay. Dadka laftoodu qunyar ayay socdeen badhkoodna kolba wuu nasanayay. Si lama filaan ah ayuu odaygii tug-tug-tug inta uu yidhi hal mar dhacay. Waa an dul tagnay. Waa lagu soo ururay. “Waar maxaa odayga ku dhacay? Waannu eegnay. Mise nafiba kuma jirto.

Waxa uu ahaa qofkii ugu horreeyay ee naga dhintay. Dadkii waa ay wada naxeen oo argaggax ayaa ku dhacay. Qayb ayaa oday, qaybina waxay tidhi halkan ayaan ku wada dhimanaynaa. Kadib waxa bilaabantay isaga sidii loo aasi lahaa in hawsheeda la galo. Dhawr nin ayaannu iskugu nimid oo aan itaalba ku jirin. Ciiddii sax-araha ayaa aannu u kala xaaqay, ku ridnay, ku rognay, oo salaadna ku tukannay. Ma garanayo. Dadka naxdin, awood darro iyo dhibaato badan ayaa heshay.

Kadib markii aan cabbaar soconnay ayaa dadkii qofkastaa leeyahay “indhaha ayaa i madoobaanaya, malaha waan sii socdaa. Waan wareerayaa. Waan dhacayaa. Alla waar bal ha iga tagina”. Dumarkii qayb ayaa lugayn kari waayay oo aan ka tagnay. Qofkasta oo lugayn

about feeling dizzy and requesting help. Some of the women couldn't carry on walking and were left behind.

We left those who just couldn't continue. And we tried to help others to keep walking. For example, one woman who came with us was too weak so we had to assist her to walk.

And after a short while another woman fell. She was from Xamar. She asked us to come close and as we stood by her, she said, 'I am not afraid of death. I am sure all of us will die. Maybe one or two will survive. Those men lied to us about the distance. For me, I can't walk beyond this. I know I am dying. My husband left me and our four children looking for employment. He came through this same way but I was told he died walking somewhere in the desert, where I am now. My husband died here at the same place I was driven to die, too.'

She then removed a letter and some money from her waistband, saying, 'This is all I had for the journey and ... my children's telephone number is written here. Please tell them where their mother died and try to wire the money to them by any means but you are free to use it if need be.'

Although she was not the first to die, we were filled with fear. And people were divided. Some said we had to help her while others said there was no way to help her. Sadly, that woman was left there. After walking five hours, some of those we left behind caught up and told us that the woman was dead. We continued stumbling along until we had left two young women and two young men behind.

It was around the twenty-fifth day.

As soon as we started walking again a friend of mine fell down.

kari waayay waa laga tagay. Qayb waan jiidaynay, gabadh anaga nala socotay marba waa an jiidnaa oo waan kicinnaa aniga iyo inan kale.

Haddana markii aan cabbaar soconnay ayaa haddana gabadh reer Xamar ahi dhacday. Dabadeed waxa ay tidhi "bal ii kaalaya" Waan dul tagnay. Waxay tidhi "kollayba hadda geeri ka nixi mayno oo waynu wada dhimanaynaa. Waxa laga yaabaa in qof ama laba inaga hadho. Nimankuna been ayay inoo sheegayaan oo meel fog ayay inoo tilmaameen. Aniga lugtii way iga dhamaatay oo muddoba waan is dhibayay. Waan ogaa oo waan dhimanayaa. Ninkaygii ayaa iga soo tagay ani iyo afar carruur ah oo aan dhalnay si uu noogu soo shaqeeyo. Dabadeedna tahriibtan ayuu soo galay oo waddadaas dheer ayuu soo maray. Waxa la ii sheegay in meel la lugeeyo marmarka qaarkood oo saxaraha ku taalla in uu ku dhintay. Meeshiina waan joogaa. Ninkaygii halkan ayay naftu kaga baxday, anna halkan ayaan ogahay in aan ku dhimanayo oo la ii soo waday." Kadib, warqad yar iyo lacag yar oo ay ku sidatay guntiga ayay tidhi "lacag intaas ayaan wataa oo aan rabay in aan waddada ku maro. Waraaqdanna carruurtaydii teleefankoodii ayaa ku qoran. U sheega in ay hooyadood halkaa ay ku dhimatay. Lacagta tanna sidaan ugu gudbin kartaan ugu gudbiya. Haddii ay idinku baxdana waan idiin xalaaleeyay. Markaa dardaaranka walaalooyaal ii fuliya".

Runtii waa aannu argagaxnay inskasta oo qofkii labaad ee naga dhinta ay ahayd. Markaa dadka qayb ayaa tidhi aynu ku khasabno gabadha tan oo aan jiidno oo yaanay sidan ku dhiman. Qaybna naxariistii way ka tagtay oo waxay leeyihiin waar niyohow gabadha tan waxba uma tari karno ee innaga mariya. Halkii ayay nagaga hadhay gabadhii.

Markii aannu muddo shan saacadood oo kale ah soconnay ayaa qolyo naga danbeeyay oo aayar soo socday gabadhii soo dul mareen iyada oo naf baxday. Waxa aan sii daalaadhacnaba haddana gabdho kale oo laba ah ayaa iyagana halkii aan tabar la'aan uga tagnay.

Waa maalintii shan iyo labaatanaad.

Muddo yar ayaan soconnay markii saaxiibkay isna sidii aan u

Then we all started to have blurred vision, including me. Consequently, we couldn't continue and all of us fell to the ground.

We were still walking to our destination. It was the only hope we had because we thought we only had a short distance left to go. I remember one of us who was carrying a plastic bottle would sometimes break away and drink from it. We wondered how he stayed active and strong. To our surprise, he later told a woman he was with that he was drinking his urine. I think there were others who did the same. Along with three others, I was eating onions. The man who advised us to keep the date seeds was carrying a lot of onions. He told us that onions were good for travelling. He would give us all a small piece. We were four close friends, though one died at that time.

We continued walking for two more days. After this, when someone fell, no one even tried to help them. They were left, without showing any pity. You would be shocked to hear a young boy from Borama [in north-west Somaliland] calling out, 'Brothers don't leave me here alone. We are almost there. I can't walk. I travelled to support my family.' Really, there was no pity because eight of us had already died. They died one after the other and no one cared about them. Sympathy was long gone.

After a short walk [from where we had left the boy], we all stopped. None of us were able to see any more. We rested near a hill to protect us from the cold. During the night, everyone started to dig holes because it was too cold to bear. We wrapped robes around our heads and buried our bodies up to the shoulder, deep inside the sand. We covered our bodies with the sand just to stay warm.

soconnay uu dhacay. Haddana waxa bilaabantay in dhammaantayo indhuhu na madoobaadaan dabadeedna aan wada daadanno.

Wadadii ayaa annu wali haynay oo wax rajo oo kaleba ma lihin. Waxa nagu qufulnaa haddii aad socotaan wax yar ayaa idiin hadhay. Mid ka mid ah dhalinyarta oo waxa aan xasuustaa caagad yar oo uu sitay hadba la leexda. Ninkaasi firfircoonidiisa iyo socodkiisa ayaa aan ka yaabnay. Mar danbe ayaa waxa uu u sheegay gabadh ay wada socdeen in uu kaadiiisa cabbayo. Kuwa kale in ay ku daydeenna waan u malaynayaa. Annagu markaa basal ayaan cunaynaa, ani iyo niman kale oo saddex ah. Nin oday ah oo ah kii ii sheegay in aan lafaha timirta haysto ayaa wuxuu sitaa basal badan. Basashaas ayuu qof walba falidh yar siiyaa. Afar nin oo saaxiibbo ah oo isku dhaw baanu ahayn oo mid naga dhintay.

Labaa cisho oo danbe ayaan soconnay. Dhibtii ayaa badatay. Qofka dhacana cidii ma gargaarayn, ka hadha ee socon kari waayana halkiisa ayaa lagaga tagayay. Wax naxariis ahina ma ay jirin. Yar reer Boorama ah ayaa aan aad uga naxnay. Waxa uu lahaa "waar meeshu waxba inooma jirtee i jiidaa walaalayaaloo, anigu socon kari waayaye. Waar ha iga tagine. Walaalayaal ha iga tagina. Walaal reer ayaan kaligay u socdaa oo aan u tahriibayaa. Walaalayaaloo cidla ha igaga tagine". Dhabtii la iskuma naxayn oo naxariisi way dhammaatay ilaa hadda siddeed ayaa naga dhimatay oo aan halkii kaga tagtay oo marba qof dhimanay oo aan dan laga lahayn. Waxaasi hawl dadka u taalaba ma ahayn.

Markii aan in yar soo dhaafnay halkii aan wiilka yar kaga tagtay, dhammaantayo socodkii ayaa naga dhammaaday. Indhihii ayaa na madoobaaday. Meel buur ah ayaan degnay si aan u dugsanno. Habeenimo ayay noqotay. Dabadeedna waxa aan ku qasbaanay in aan dhulka qodano oo madaxana si aan ciiddu nooga galin go'yaal iskaga duubno. Gacmaha ayaan la soo baxnay. Si uu qabawga nooga celiyo faraha badan ee dhacaya dhulka ayaan isku aasnay wixii garabka ka hooseeya. Dabadeedna ciiddii ayaan isku

In the morning we felt more energetic. Because of that energy, we walked a short distance, after which we unwillingly stopped. We all lay down. Everyone fell at a distance from the others. Then we crawled towards one another until we were all in one place. We put our heads together to listen to one another speak. We started to ask ourselves what to do.

A young man started by saying, 'I have no idea. I am shocked because we have no hope of surviving. I will leave no children who will keep my name alive.' Then another spoke and said, 'Oh cousins, pray for me. Before we set out I had just got married. I left her pregnant. Please pray for me that she delivers a boy who will maintain my name.' And still another spoke and said, 'I am shocked that we are going to die without worshipping God. We set out not for the sake of Him but for other purposes. Let us pray to Him to have mercy on us.' Everyone said something. I was worried about how I set out for this journey having strained relations with my parents. I was afraid because if I died my parents would never know I regretted upsetting them. We had been taking turns when the oldest of us said he was not feeling well. He said he was dying and requested us to recite the Qur'an to him to remind him that there is no God but Allah. Indeed we did recite the Qur'an to him.

A captive in the desert

Everyone had despaired when suddenly we heard the roaring of a car. The sound approached us as it came nearer. Then all I remember was those white Libyan men, running around. Each of them carried a bottle of milk. They poured the milk in glasses and made us drink it to revive us. You saw everyone drinking milk. They

soo rognay sidii qof is xabaalaya oo kale. Waxa aan isku aasaynay bal in aan diirrimaad helno.

Aroortii waxoogaa tamar ah ayaa na gashay. Sidaa awgeed waa an lugaynay cabbaar kadibna socodkii ayaan kari waynay. Meel ayaannu iska jiiifiisannay. Dadkii qofba meel ayuu ku dhacay. Markaa waxa ay noqotay in markii aan isku soo lugayn kari waynay aannu isku soo gurguuranno oo madaxa isa saarno si aan hadalka isku maqashiin karno una wada sheekaysan karno. Talo ayaa an is waydiinnay. Wiil yar ayaa yidhi "waar anigu talo garan maayee waxa aan ka naxsanahay halka aynu ku suganahay oo wax rajo ah aynaan nolosha ka qabin iyo aniga oo waliba aan ifka wax carruura ah kaga tagayn. Taas ayaa an anigu ka naxsanahay waayo haddaan carruur kaga tago ifka magacayga ayaa sii jiraya". Ku kale ayaa isna yidhi "waar ilma-adeerayaal waxaad iigu ducaysaan, in gabadhii aan soo mehersaday, markii aan soo tagayay uur ay lahayd in Ilaahay wiil ka dhigo si magacaygu muddo u sii jiro." Mid saddexaad ayaa yidhi "waar waxa aan ka naxsanahay dhimashadeennan maanta iyo cibaado la'aanta, dad iska soo haajiray oo aan diin u socon, oo wax kale u socon oo dhimanaya. Markaa Ilaahay bal in uu inoo sahlo aynu ka barino". Runtii qofba meel ayuu ku dhuftay. Anigu waxa aan aad uga xumaa waalidkii oo aan kala yar fognahay, waalidkii oo iga xun, waddadaa aan soo maray oo aanay ogayn maanta haddii aan dhinto, anigii oo aan waxba u qaban karin. Markii aan in door ah wax is weyweydiinnay oo mid ka mid ah nimankii dhallinyarta ahaa, kii ugu weynaa uu leeyahay "nabar ayaa i haya. Waxaan u malaynayaa inay iga baxayso ee bal ashahaada ii qabta oo aan quraan akhriinayno ayaa...

Qafaalashadii Saxaraha Dhexdiisa

...hal mar gaadhi ordaya oo xiimaya ayaan guuxiisa maqalnay. Guuxii ayaa soo dhawaaday oo agtayada yimid. Waan awoodi waynay in aan u kacno gaadhiga waayo tamartii ayaa dhammaatay. Niman yaacaya ayaan wajigooda xasuustaa. Nimankii Liibiyaanka

helped everyone to sit up. Then they asked us if there were still others. We told them to go along the road. Then everyone had one lemon and one fish slice to eat. After eating and drinking, people gathered some energy. We were fed all day and we spent that night there.

The following morning they collected us and took us away. They told us they were just there to help us, that they had been informed about us and just wanted to take us to where we would later be collected. We were still in the desert. We were then taken to somewhere where we got water. We had all become skinny, our eyes deep in their sockets and we looked like walking skeletons—as though we had not eaten for 20 years.

We stayed there four more days, eating and drinking. Although 30 of us started out together, they only collected 22 because many of us had died, including a friend of mine, some old men and three women. Yet people were not thinking about those who had died because they had lost hope. We thought there was no place to go. We were desperate.

After a while vehicles came to take us. We had been travelling two consecutive nights when we were eventually dropped off and told that we would wait in this place for three more days. The food they gave us was poor quality.

Yet again on this miserable 40-day journey, some men turned up with vehicles. They said that we needed to walk 100 km. We would then reach a town where we would go to a destroyed house. They said we should go to that house, which was outside the town, and later on vehicles would pick us up.

We resumed walking because we had energy and carried some

ahaa ee cadcaddaa. Mid kastaa waxa uu sidaa caag ay caano ku jiraan. Caanihii ayaa qof walba inta sufur loogu shubo afka looga shubayay si bal naftu u soo noqoto. Waa nala garbo-galayay si naloo soo fadhiisiyo. Waxa ay na waydiiyeen in dad kale jiraan. “Way jiraan” ayaan nidhi “ee bal waddada hore u socda”. Qof kasta waxa loo keenay xabbad liin macaan ah, iyo waslad kaluun ah. Markii aannu intii yara cunnay ee qayb kalana caanaha lagu qulaamiyay, ayay dadkii soo niyaayireen oo naf soo wada gashay. Maalintii oo dhan halkii ayaa kolba wax yar nala siinayay. Habeenkiina halkii ayaa aannu u hoyonnay.

Aroortii danbe ayaa dadkii ay isku soo ururiyeen raggii oo ay dabadeed yidhaahdeen “annagu ma ihin nimankii idin kaxaynayay. Waxa aannu nahay niman idin caawinaya oo waxaan idin gaynanaa meesha la idinka qaadayo”. Wali saxarihii ayaan ku jirnaa waana na la sii qaaday oo waxa nala geeyay meel biyo leh. Dadka dayac ayaa ka muuqda. Qalfoof ayay noqdeen hilibkii ka dhammaaday. Indhihu way na goteen. Waxa aad na mooddaa dad aan labaan sano waxba cunin.

Halkii waxa aan joognay afar cisho oo aan wax cunaynay waxna cabbaynay. Inkasta oo tirada aannu markii hore gaadhiga ku saarnayn soddon meelahaah ahayd, nimankii waxa ay iskuu soo ururshaan kaliya 22 qof maxaa yeelay waxa dhintay dhallinyaro badan oo aannu saaxiibbo ahayn. Waxa dhintay odayaal nala socday oo ah odaygii ugu weynaa iyo oday kale. Waxa dhintay gabdhihii saddex ka mid ah. Dadku haddana waxaas wali dan kama laha waayo waan rajo dhignay. Waxa aan aaminay in aannaan meel tagayn oo noloshii waan ka quusannay.

Muddo yar ka dib gawaadhi kale ayaa noo timidday oo na qaaday. Markii aan Labo habeen oo kale safar ku sii jirnay ayaa la yidhi halkan ayaad joogaysaan labo ama saddex cisho oo danbe. Waxa nala siiyay cunto tayo xun.

Safarkayagii afartan cisho markii uu marayo, oo aan dayac iyo iskaga jirno safar adag, ayaa waxa maalintii danbe noo yimi rag

food with us. Suddenly we saw a house with a fence made from branches. As we approached, some of us wanted to just walk past but others insisted we stop in case we found food. Seven of us were tasked to go to the house. The rest continued to walk.

We entered the yard and found it empty. We called out, ‘Is anybody there?’ A young Arabic-speaking man asked, ‘*Min mawjuud?*’ [Who’s there?] and then we went inside. To our surprise, we heard a movement and the voice of a woman speaking Somali, saying, ‘Oh brothers, come in!’ There we saw a woman in an unimaginable condition. She was chained to the ground.

She cried and said, ‘Brothers! Sit down. You are Somalis. I have not seen Somalis for two years.’ We sat down and she explained, ‘I set out to migrate and went through many hardships. I was abducted by an Arab man near Ajdabiya.²⁵ I was too weak to walk. He took me in his car, fed me and chained me down. He comes at night, feeds me, sexually abuses me and chains me again. Don’t leave me.’

Though we heard what she said, we were not moved by it—except a young man who had lost his girlfriend in the desert. We were afraid of what would happen if we tried to help her. The young man told us that as he was walking in the desert his girlfriend couldn’t walk any more. He said he had tried to assist her to continue. She eventually stopped altogether and died there. In his shock, he had not been able to leave her. He said that others helped him bury her. For this reason, the young man did not want to leave this woman behind and insisted that we help her.

And so we asked her when the man usually arrived home. She

25 Ajdabiya is a Libyan town approximately 150 km from Benghazi.

gawaadhi wata oo sheegay in magaaladii noo jirto 100 km oo aan u lugaynayno. Waxay yidhaahdeen “waxaad tagaysaan guri kharaabad ah. Gurigaas ayaa gawaadhidu idiinku imanaysaa oo aad ka raacaysaan”.

Socodkii ayaan dib u bilawnay maadaama aannu tamar yeelanay cuntana sidanay. Sidii aannu isku dabajiitamaynay ayaa waxa naga hor yimid guri ood weyni ku wareegsan tahay. Markii aan gurigii inyar u soo jirnay ayay qaybtayo tidhi ina dhaafsha. Qaybna waxa ay tidhi maya e aynu eegno waa intaas oo aynu cunno ka hellaa e. Toddoba naga mid ah ayaa gurigii loo diray intii kale socodkii ayay iska si wateen.

Gurigii ayaan ku soo leexannay. Mise gurigu waa cidla. “Miin mawjuud (Yaa jooga)?” ayuu ku dhawaaqay wiil nala socday oo af-Carbeedka garanayay. Markii nalala hadli waayay ayaan hore u soconnay. Dabadeedna sanqadh ayaannu maqalnay guriga dhexdiisa. Waannu soo soconnay. Mise waaba cod dumar oo af-Soomaali ku leh “Walaalayaalooow soo socda”. Hore ayaan u soo soconnay. Mise gabadh ayaa joogta dayac ka muuqdo oo silsiladaysan. Dabadeedna way oyday markii ay na aragtaay oo waxay tidhi “Walaalayaalooow soo fadhiista. Dad Soomaaliyeed baad tihiiin. Muddo laba sano ah Soomaali maan arag. Waxa aan ahaa gabadh Soomaaliyeed oo tahriib soo gashay. Dayac badan ayaan soo maray. Markii aan Ajdaabiya¹⁰ marayay ayaa nin Carab ahi i helay oo gaadhi yar wata. Kadib wuu i soo qaatay oo cunto ayuu u siiyay. Kadibna lugta ayuu iga xidhay, waxa aanu ii isticmaalaa sidii naagtiisa. Walaalayaalow cidlada ha igaga tagina”.

Badankayaga arxan naguma jiro marka laga reebo inan naga mid ah oo gabadh ay aad isku jeclaayeen saxaraha nagaga dhimatay. Intayadii kale waxa aan nidhi waar gabadha tan yayna bad ina galin. Inankii ayaa noo sheegay in markii naftu ka baxday gabadhii ay is jeclaayeen in qolo ka danbaysay u timiday oo ay la aastay. Sidaas

10 Ajdaabiya waa magaalo ku taal Liibiya oo qiyaastii 150 km u jirta Banqaasi.

told us he came back in the evening. We agreed to free her by hitting him when he started raping her because she said he unchained her for this. In addition, she told us that he was very careful, he had a gun and he might even look for footprints. We asked her to keep quiet and sit tight. We then went outside. One of us wiped away our footprints. We then took up positions. Some climbed on the roof, others hid under the bed, others hid elsewhere. All of us carried sticks or metal rods.

After an hour and a half at the house, we heard a car. It was a small one. The man parked the car. I could see him through a small hole. He got out of the car with a big plastic bag. He was very handsome and looked respectable. After he entered the house, he started to kiss the woman.

We had already positioned the strongest of us near the woman to strike the man first. The strongest one started to move slyly towards the man and caught him by the neck unaware. The man fought back. Then all seven of us started to hit him until he fell on the ground. He was still alive when the young Arabic-speaking man asked him for the key to the lock to unchain the woman. She then took USD 2,000 from where she knew he kept his important belongings. Us, we took some jackets and ran, still shocked.

We caught up with the rest of the group. They had arrived at the destroyed house, where we slept that night. We told the rest of the group about the story of the woman we had rescued. She was very happy, kissing everyone and acknowledging what we did for her.

The following evening, the men who would smuggle us to town came for us. They drove two small pickups. They asked us to get on board. They had sticks and metal rods and seemed aggressive.

darteed wuu diiday in gabadha tan laga tago waxana u nagaga adkaystay in wax la taro.

Goorma ayuu ninku yimaaddaa ayaannu waydiinay. Waxa ay noo sheegtay in uu habeenkii yimaaddo. Waxa aannu go'aansanny in aannu gabadha badbaadinno isagana garaacno waayo marka uu faraxumaynayo silsilladda ayuu ka furaa. Waxa kale oo ay noo sheegtay in uu yahay nin aad u taxadar badan, qori haysta oo laga yaabo in uu xataa raadka eego. Ka dib waxa aannu ku nidhi halkaaga iska fadhi. Gudahaannu galaynay, mid naga mid ahna waxa aan ku nidhi raadkii soo eeg-eeg oo tirtir. Qofba meel ayuu galay. Qaar ayaa u baxay gurada aqalka, qaybna sariirta ayay hoosteeda gashay, halka qayba meelo kale u gashay. Ulo yaryar iyo budhadh ayaan diyaarsannay.

Saacad iyo badh ka dib, waxa aannu maqalnay guux gaadhi. Gaadhi yar ayuu ahaa. Gaadhigii ayuu soo dhigtay. Waxa aan ka eegayay meel daloosha. Waxa uu soo dagay isaga oo bac weyn sita. Quruxda ka muuqata marka aad aragto nin weyn oo masuul ah ayaad moodaysaa. Isla markii uu gudaha soo galayba dhunkasho ayuu gabadhii ku bilaabay.

Hore waxa aannu ugu balannay in kan noogu xoogga wayn gabadha agteeda u galo gacanta ugu horraysana isagu ku dhufto. Kii ayaa soo talaabsaday oo cunaha qabtay. Ninkii ayaa iska tuuray. Todobadii aannu ahaynba waanu ku ururnay sidii aannu u garaacaynayna dhulka ayaannu ugu ridnay. Wali isaga oo naftu ku jirto, ayaa uu kii af-carbeedka yaqaannay waydiiyay furahii silsilladda. Silsiladii ayaannu ka furnay. Markii aannu silsiladdi ka furnay ayaa ay tidhi i suga inyar. Illayn waxa ay kala baratay dhulkii uu lacagta dhigan jiray. Waxa ay soo qaadatay lacag ilaa 2,000 oo dollar ah. Annaga ayay noqotay, waxa aannu qaadannay jaakado, annaga oo argagaxanna meeshii iskaga yaacnay.

Qoladii kale ayaa aannu soo gaadhay. Waxa ay nooga soo horreeyeen gurigii nalagu ballamiyay ee kharaabadda ahaa oo aan habeenkii u hoyannay. Qoladii kale ayaa aannu uga warranay

Because the space was so small, we were stacked on top of each other and lay on our chests. They stepped on our heads to make us fit. They then covered us tightly with a plastic sheet so that the police couldn't see us.

As soon as they drove off, everyone started to suffocate and one of the women fainted. Women started to claw at others and were almost dead from lack of air. I then produced a tin of fish I had in my pocket, opened it and used the lid to make an opening in the plastic sheet. I made a hole that fitted my mouth and nose and started taking air from it. The man next to me saw this, pushed me away and took my position. People started taking turns and enlarging the hole until we had all emerged from the sheet.

They had used the plastic sheet so that the police would not see us. Then it happened that we were going through the town exposed. Everyone could see black Africans in the back of a pickup roaring by. Three police vehicles saw us and chased the two small pickups. Realizing that the mission had failed, the smugglers drove faster. A car chase began.

Then we saw the police cars alongside the pickup. Our driver suddenly engaged the handbrake and swung the pickup around. The police cars drove by us fast. I saw what I used to see in the movies. Four people on board the pickup were thrown out because of the spinning movement of the car. The rest clung to the edge of the pickup. Our driver sped up, not caring about those who fell out or about the car because he was afraid of being caught. The car then zigzagged through some blocks. The driver phoned someone. The pickup then went through an open gate into a fenced area. From there, we were taken to a house. As soon as we were inside,

gabadha aan soo badbaadinnay. Gabadhu halkan ayay ku faraxsan-tahay. Qof walba waa ay dhunkanaysaa oo ay leedahay “Alla walaal abaal ayaad ii gasheen”.

Goortii la gaadhay habeenkii labaad ayaa ay noo yimaaddeen nimankii Liibiyaanka ahaa ee magaalada nagayn lahaa. Waxa ay wataan laba xaajiyadood oo yaryar. Xaajiyadihii ayay xagga danbe na saareen. Gaadhiga dushiisa ayay na jiifsheen, iskaaya dul saareen oo madaxa nagaga istaageen si ay noo leekaysiiyaan meesha. Markii aannu is dul jiiifiisannay, shiraac ayay nagu gijjiyeen si aan bilaysku noo arag.

Markii ay gaadhiga dhaqaanjeenba, naqaskii ayaa dadka ku dhagay. Gabadhna waabay suuxday. Dumarkii waxa ay bilaabeen in ay dadkii kale cidiyaha ku rifaan maadaama naftu hayso. Anigu waxa aan haystay daasad yar oo kalluun ah. Waxa aan ka fujiyey furkii sare. Shiraacii ayaan dalooshaday in yar oo sankayga iyo afkayga leeg. Halkii aniga oo hawo ka qaadanaaya, ayaa kii ugu xigay meeshii iga riixday oo ku dhagay. Sidii dillaacii la isugu dhaaf-dhaafayay wuu waynaaday, mise bannaan ayaa an u soo baxnay dhammaantayo.

Dadkan waxa shiraaca loo saaray oo la isku dul saarsaaray si aanu bilaysku u arag. Haddana waaba annaga oo magaalada bilaa shiraac iska marayna.

Qof kastaa wuu arkayay dadkan Afrikaanka ah ee madmadow ee gaadhiga socda dusha ka saaran. Saddex gaadhi oo bilays ah ayaa na arkay oo caydhsaday labadayadii xaajiyadood. Nimankii nawaday waxa ay garawsadeen in qorshahii fashilmay gaadhigiina xoog ayay u kaxeeyeen. Waxa bilaabmay isbaacsi gawaadhi.

Waaba haddana gawaadhii booliska oo nagu dhinac jira. Markaa ayuu dirawalkii gaadhigayagu hal mar haanbiriigga jiiday, biriigana qabtay. Ka dib hal mar ayuu gaadhigii sida wadhafka isku wareejay. Gawaadhii bilayskuna way na dhaafeen. Waxii aan fili-maanta ka daawan jiray wax la mid ah ayaan meesha ku arakay. Afar ka mid ah dadkii halkii ayay ku daateen wareeggi gaadhiga dartii.

men came and beat us with sticks, accusing us of wrecking the car. We were put in a small dark room.

Hostage in Ajdabiya

In the morning, we were transferred in a small van to another house. There were other Somalis at this house. We were taken to a separate room and given food. The house was guarded by men and there was no way to escape. It also had a big fence. At this point, we realized that we had been abducted by smugglers.

A man entered and said, ‘Look, you Somalis! You made us lose a lot of money. We picked you up from the desert. We saved your lives. You are troublemakers. We hid you in the car. You nearly caused our imprisonment. You made us lose four people [four migrants] who would have paid us. As a result, you will be charged USD 1,400 each, instead of USD 1,000.’ The man who addressed us looked like a good man and was well dressed. He was accompanied by a Somali interpreter.

Really, it was impossible to pay because all we had had was gone. Only a very few of us had even small amounts of money left. By now we were around 20 people. When the two men left, [the *magafe*²⁶ and his interpreter] we began to discuss if we could pay the money. For different reasons, everyone said he or she could not. We therefore agreed to tell them that we refused to pay—whatever the consequences might be.

After a short while, the two men came back. I told them that we wouldn’t and weren’t able to pay them. Thereupon came eight

²⁶ *Magafe* is a Somali word that means ‘the one who never misses’. It is used by Somalis to describe someone who makes business out of kidnapping migrants heading to Europe via the Sahara Desert.

Intayadii kale gaadhiiga ayaan jambiga qabsannay. Dirawalkii xoog ayuu haddana u kaxeeyay. Waxba kama galin cidda dhacday iyo gaadhiga midna maxaa yeelay waxa uu ka cabsanayay in bilaysku qabto. Dhawr sakadood ayuu ka wareegay, cid ayuu la hadlay, waxa aanu galay meel oodan oo albaab wayn leh. Guri ayaan nala geeyay. Haddaan sidaa u gallay gurigii, rag ulo wata ayaa garaac nagu bilaabay iyaga oo nagu haysta dhaawaca gaadhiga soo gaadhay. Ka dib qol yar oo mugdi ah aya nalagu xereeyay.

La-haystahii Ajdaabiya

Aroortii markii ay tahay, bas yar ayaa nala soo saaray. Guri kale ayaa nala geeyay oo Soomaali kale joogto. Qol gooni ah ayaa nala geeyay cunnana waa nala siiyay. Guriga niman ayaa ilaalinaya oo meesha lagama baxsan karo. Intaa waxa dheer dayr wayn ayaa uu gurigu leeyahay. Waxa aan dareennay in nimankii magafayaasha la odhan jiray in aanu u soo galnay.

Wax yar ka dib waxa noo yimid nin waxa uuna yidhi “Soomaal-iyee waxa aad naga soo khasaariseen lacag badan. Saxaraha ayaannu idinka soo qaadnay. Naftiinna ayaa aan badbaadinnay. Dad dhib badan ayaad tihiin haddaad tihiin Soomaali. Shiraac baa la idinku xidhay. Anaga waad na xidhi gaadheen. Dadkii lacagta annu rabnay in annu ka qaadno, oo afar qof ah ayaad khasaariseen oo meeshii ka maqan. Qof kasta markii hore waxa laga qaadi lahaa 1000 doolar, laakiin hadda qof kasta waxa laga qaadayaa 1400 oo doolar.” Ninbka nala hadlayay waxa uu ahaa nin si wanaagsan u labisan oo uu la socdo tarjumaan Soomaali ahi.

Runtii way nagu adkaatay waayo kharash waxii annu haysannay wuu naga soo dhammaaday marka laga reebo dad tiro ah oo lacago yaryar haystay. Hadda tiradayadu waa 20 qof. Markii nimankii naga baxeen waxa annu iswaydiinay lacag in la heli karo. Sababo kala duwan awgeed dhammaan dadkii waxa ay yidhaahdeen ma bixin karno. Sidaa awgeed waxa aan isku raacnay in aan diidno oo ku nidhaa lacag ma haysanno waxii ka yimaadana dusha u ridano.

intoxicated men with whips, swords and sticks, protesting about our refusal to pay them and accusing us of making them lose money. They carried bottles of alcohol and insulted religion and God. They hit us around our heads with the bottles. Hit us with the sticks and beat us with whips. At one point, they wanted to kick a pregnant woman in the belly but she turned, so that they kicked her in the back instead. Although we were beaten badly, we insisted we could not pay them because we did not have the amount they demanded.

After that they said, 'Relax, relax. Really, you don't know where you are. Here is called Libya. Libya belongs to us because we are Libyans. We are non-believers. We worship money and we need it. We will give you one demonstration [of what will happen if you don't pay]. If that has no effect ... We will only ask you once ... By the second day the money should be wired. If you refuse it will be too late. We will bring others in your place. There are many people waiting for us to bring them. We know you and we will show you that you are animals.'

After that they instructed us to sit. They hit some of us. They kept saying, 'We will show you that you are animals not human beings, as you might think you are.' They added, 'We will show you an example of what happens to someone who can't pay us. We will show you an example using someone from the group that came before you and couldn't pay us.'

Then they took a young handsome Somali man from another room and laid him down on a big table. Four strong men held him by his four limbs and hit him on the knees. He was beaten until he surrendered. After that, they brought nails and a hammer and nailed his palms to the table, one palm at a time. He was screaming.

Wax yar ka dib, labadii nin ayaa noo yimid. Waxaan u sheegnay in aannaan haysan lacag bixinna doonin. Isla markii waxaa noo soo galay 8 nin oo qaybi jeedallo sitaan, qaybi seefo sitaan, qaybina budhadh sitaan oo cirka maraya oo sakhraansan. Waxa ay ka cadhaysnaayeen lacagta aan diidnay in aan bixinno iyo khasaarahii aan u gaysanay. Nimankani intaa diinta iyo Ilaahay ayay caayayaan. Dhalooyin khamri ah ayay sitaan. Dhalooyinka ayay madaxa nagaga garaacayaan. Budh iyo jeedalna way noogu dareen. Gabadh uur lahayd ayay damceen in ay uurka ka laadaan markaasay dhabarka iskaga dhigtay. Inkasta oo ay si bilaa naxariis ah noo garaaceen haddana waan diidnay in aan lacagtii ay codsadeen bixinnno waayo ma aannan haysan. Ka dib waxa ay yidhaahdeen, "u kaadiya u kaadiya, runtii meesha tan aad joogtaan garan maysaan! Liibiya ayaa la yidhaa. Liibiyana anagaa adeer leh. Reer Liibiya ayaannu nahay. Diinna ma lihin. Ilaahna ma naqaan. Waxa aannu naqaanno ma jiraan. Lacag baannu annagu caabudnaa. Lacag baannu u baahannahay. Tusaale ayaannu idin siinaynaa. Tusaalahaasi hadduu idin anfici waayana, annagu maalin wax ka badan lacag dadka ma waydiinno. Maalinta labaadna waa inta la soo xawilayo. Sidaasi ayuu dadka wakhtigu kaga dhacaa. Waqti ayaa nagu socda. Dad kale ayaannu keensanaynaa oo na sugaya. Idinkana anagaa idin naqaan. Inaydaan waxba ahayn oo aad adhi tihiin ayaannu idin tusaynaa".

Ka dib way na fadhiisiyeen. Qaybtayo markay garaaceen, ayaa waxa ay yidhaahdeen, "dadka lacagta bixin waayey ee idinka soo horeeyay, ayaa aan kuwa aan lacagta ka filayno tusaale ku siinnaa".

Wiil dhalinyar ah oo Soomaali ah oo quruxda ka muuqata aad yaabaysid ayay qol kale ka soo kaxeeyeen oo miis wayn dushiisa jiiyiyeen. Afar nin oo xoog badan ayaa labada lugood iyo labada gacmood qabatay ruuggaga iyo gamcahana ka garaacday ilaa uu dabcaay. Kadib waxa la soo qaaday dubbe iyo masaabiir oo calaalaha iyo la isku musbaaray miiskii. Waad yaabaysay qaylada ka yeedhaysay iyo oohinta. Dadkii gabi way miyir badalmeen. Waxa aan u qaban karnaa ma jirin. Qofkii is yidhaahda dhaqaaq, seef baa

Every one of us was horrified. There was nothing we could do. Even if you tried to move, there was a sword on your neck. We were powerless while that young man was bleeding and screaming. Then they took the young man—still nailed down to the table. We never knew where he was taken and whether he was murdered or not.

They grabbed some of us and threatened, ‘We will do the same to these ones if you don’t pay us by this time tomorrow. We will also nail down that pregnant woman, together with her baby. We will nail them down. The rest will then pay an extra USD 100. If you don’t pay by tomorrow, then you will have to pay USD 2,000.’

We were terrified and we did not know what to do.

They brought us phones to call Somalia and people lined up to make calls. Everyone had to contact whoever they could to get money. Some called abroad, others home. One of the most amazing things was hearing the desperate attempt by one old man from Xamar who was with us. He asked his family for money, saying, ‘Do you recognize me? I am abducted. I was abducted for a ransom of USD 1,500. Please sell that plot of land I had. Also go and take the few animals we have. Please! Is it possible to send the money by tomorrow?’ He was really crying.

Everyone called either a mother or father. Some even requested relatives to sell their goats. It was shocking. Others had no one to call and resigned themselves to be used as servants or as an example to others—by having their limbs nailed to the table.

There was a young boy from Xamar with us who contacted the first smuggler [Ahmed, the Somali in Khartoum]. He told him that we were being held hostage in Ajdabiya and that we had been

qoorta kor taal. Wiilkii oo miiskii ku musbaaran ayay dabadeed isku qaateen. Ma ogin meel ay la aadeen iyo inay qawraceen toona. Haddana qayb naga mid ah inta ay qabteen ayay ugu hanjabeen, “kuwan sidaas ayaan u galaynaa berrito waqtigan lacagta haddi la idinka waayo. Taas uurka lehna, iyada iyo ilmaheeda waanu isku musbaaraynaa intiina kalena boqol doolar baad ku daraysaan lacagta. Haddii aad berrito bixin waydaan oo ay sahandambe u dhacdana, laba kun oo doolar ayaad bixinaysaan”.

Argagax ayaa noo dhammaday wax aannu samaynona waannu garan waynay.

Waxa ay noo keeneen taleefan aan Soomaaliya kula soo hadalno oo saf ayaan u gallay. Qof kasta waxa ay noqotay in meeshii uu lacag ka helayay uu la hadlo. Qof dibad ku xidhan oo cidi u joogto iyo qof dalka loo joogaba. Waxa iigu layaabka badnayd waxa kamid ahaa oday wayn oo isaguna nala joogay oo reer Xamar ahaa ayaa waxa uu rabay in uu waydiisto xaafaddiisii lacag markaa ayaa waxa u leeyahay isaga oo wiil uu dhalay la hadlaya “aabbo, ma i maqa-shaa? Aabow adowgaa saw garan maysid? Aaboow waa la i haystaa. Madax furasho ayaa la ii haystaa. 1500 doolar oo lacag ah baa la ii haystaa. Jagadii halkaa ku taalay iyo afartii neef ee reer hebel inoo hayeen, intaba doon. Aaboow berrito see uga gaadhsiin kartaa?”. Oohinta odaygaa ka dhacaysay waad yaabaysaa.

Dadka qof walba, hooyo noqotayaa, aabbe noqotayaa, adhigii ii soo iibsha yidhiyaa, cid ayuu la hadlay. Runtii waad naxaysaa. Dadka qaybtood maba lahayn cid ay la hadlaan oo waxa ay isku qoondeeyeen in ay noqdaan adeegayaal ama kuwa tusaalaha laga dhigayo ee masaabiirta lala dhacayo. Waxaa nagu jiray wiil reer Xamar ahaa waxa uu la hadlay odaygii na soo diray ee mukhalaska ahaa ee Khartuum joogay (Axmed ee Soomaaliga ahaa) wuxuuna ku yidhi “waxa lanagu haystaa Ajdabiya. Tusaale ayaa nala siiyay sida laga yeelayo cidda bixin wayda lacagta. Ragga midka mid ah waxa la yidhaa Cali baaba. Arxan Soomaalida nagama dhaxayso ayuu yidhi. Markaa arrintaa side ayaad wax uga qaban kartaa?”

shown an example of what would happen to us if we didn't pay. He asked him to help us. He also told him that one of the Libyan smugglers, called Abdul, did not like Somalis.

Ahmed replied that he was the one who sent people to Libya and he had a cooperation agreement with them to send people. He said he would tell them to reduce the charge to USD 1,000 otherwise he would divert people to Kufra [another town in Libya]. He asked us to hand the phone to Abdul to negotiate with him. After a short while, Abdul rang him. Ahmed told him he would divert people [to a different route] if they didn't treat us well. He added that some of the people they had abducted were his relatives. He threatened again that he would send all Somalis back to Somalia if they did not lower their charge to USD 1,000 or exempt those who could not pay.

Although I was estranged from my family, I called them. They said they would send me money. I had some hope but wished to be one of those who would be exempted.

Fortunately, the woman we had rescued from captivity rewarded us by paying the charges for three of us, including me. As a result of the negotiations, we paid the amount of money Ahmed had proposed. Those who were able to pay it and those who were not, did not.

There was a young man in our group who spoke Arabic very well. At the beginning, when we started the negotiations, the abductors asked us if there was anyone who spoke Arabic. At the time, we denied that we had anyone who spoke it. We did this because we realized that they were kept in a separate room and used to interpret for them.

Axmed waxa uu ugu jawaabay in uu isagu dadka u soo diro Liibiya aanay isaga iyo Liibyaanka ka dhaxayso wada shaqayn. Waxa uu kale uu yidhi anaa ku odhan lacagta ka dhin oo ka dhig 1000 doolar haddii kale dadka aan soo dirayo waxa aan u leexin *Kufra* oo ah magaalo kale oo ku taalla Liibiya. Dabadeed waxa uu naga codsaday in aan telefoonka ugu dhiibno Cabdul si ay u wada xaajoodaan. Muddo yar ka dib Cabdul ayaa garaacay. Axmed ayaa u sheegay in uu dadka marin doono dariiq kale haddii aanu ula dhaqmin si wanagsan. Waxa uu ku yidhi dadka kan qayb aannu ehel nahay ayaa ku jira. Waxa kale oo uu ugu hanjabay in uu dadka ku celin doono Soomaaliya haddii aan lacagta laga yarayn oo aan laga dhigin 1000 doolar sidoo kalena aan laga dhaafin kuwa awoodi waayay

Markan inkasta oo aan reerkayagii kala irdhawnay haddana waan la hadlay. Waa lagu soo diraya oo lacag baa lagu raadinayaa ayaa la i yidhi. Rajo waan qabay laakiin waxa aan jeclaa dadka kan bilaashka ku baxaya in laahay iga dhigo.

Nasiib wanaag, gabadhii aan meesha ka soo furannay ayaa abaal gud ahaan ka bixisay lacagtii saddex naga mid ah oo aan ku jiro. Wadahal ka dibna, waxa aan bixinnay lacagtii Axmed ku taliyay. Qofkii helayayna wuu baxshay qofkii kalena waa laga dhaafay.

Waxa nala joogay yar Carabiga aad u yaqaanna. Waxa ay na waydiiyeen markii aan wada hadalka bilawnay in uu jiro cid Carabiga taqaanna inuu nagu jiro. Bilawgii waa aan diidnay maxaa yeelay waxa aan ogaannay in ciddii Carabiga ku hadasha qol gaar ah lagu hayo loona addeegsado turjumaanimo ama af-celinta.

Annaga oo wali gurigii ku jirra ayaa kii Carabiga yaqaanay waxa uu maqlay isaga oo kii magafihii uu kala hadlayo magafayaal kale oo saaxiibadiis ah oo Banqaasi jooga in ay na qafaashaan marka uu isagu na sii daayo oo uu leeyahay "nimankii Soomaalida ahaa ee aan soo kaxeeyay markan, waxa ay la hadleen Axmedkii Kharduum joogay. Waxa ayna u sheegeen waxii aan ku samaynay. Midda kale lacag kama wada hayo oo lacagtii ma dhammaystirna. Markaa

We were still in that house when the young man who spoke Arabic overheard Abdul instructing the other smugglers, who were in Benghazi, to hold us hostage—as soon as he freed us—and make us pay a ransom, saying, ‘Those Somalis I smuggled this time spoke to a man [Ahmed in Khartoum] and told him what I did to them. What’s more, they didn’t pay the full amount! I’ll take them to near Benghazi. You go there with cars and take them. I’ll wait there for you for one hour. When you come, you should beat them and take them by force. You should hit them like animals. Take them to your neighbourhood and make them pay me USD 2,000 each. Those who can’t pay—feed them to your dogs. Even electrocute some of them to torture them. Goddamn Somalis! They let us down. They are garbage. Kill them!’

The journey to Tripoli

They divided us between two small vans that took us from Ajdabiya and brought us to the place the two men had agreed. When we got there, they said we had some time to relax while they went to town to get fuel. However, we realized they did not go to town but instead went back to where we came from. Therefore, we had to think how to leave this place. We agreed to run. We started to run toward the mountains and away from the town. The vehicles came as soon as we left. They started to search for us. The area had some trees and we lay down, hiding. Then the men in the cars used headlights. One time they nearly saw us. After a while, they went back to town. We then walked deep into the mountains.

We did not know where the town was. We had to keep running all night—running away from the USD 2,000 and the electric shock.

waxa aan keenayaa meel Banqaasi u dhaw. Ugu immo halkaa oo xoog ku kaxayso. Halkaa saacad ayaan ku hakinayaa. Marka aad timaaddo ulee gawaadhidana ku guro. U kaxayso dhulkaagii qof walbana 2000 doolar oo kale ka qaad. Wixii lacag bixin waayana aydaada sii, koronto ku qabo oo cadaab. Nacdal baa ku taala kuwan Soomaalida ah. Annagana way na ceebeeyeen waana kuwo wasakh ah ee laa.”

Socdaalkii Tiriboli

Waxa ay nagu kala qaybiyeen laba gaadhi oo yaryar oo noo qaaday Ajdabiya oo ah goobtii ay labada nin ku heshiyeen. Kadib markii aannu goobtii gaadhay ayaa waxa ay noo sheegeen in aannu waxogaa nasano iyaguna ay shidaal u doonayaan magaalada. Sikastaba ha ahaate, waxa aan garawsannay in aanay magaalada shidaal u doonan balse ay dib ugu laabteen goobti aanu ka nimid. Sidaa daraaded waxa aannu ka fikirnay sidii aannu meeshan uuga tagi lahayn. Waxa aannu isku raacnay in aannu yaacno. Waxa aannu u cararnay xagga buuraha si aan uga fogaanno magaalada. Gawaadhidi ayaa timid kadib wakhtiyar markii aannu sii maqnayn. Waxa ay bilaabeen in ay nagu raadshaan iftiinka gawaadhida. Waxa aannu ku sigannay in ay na helaan. Goobta aannu ku sugnayn ayaa waxa ay lahayd waxooga dhir ah oo noo suurto galisay in aan isku qarunno annaga oo beerka dhulka ku haynay. Kadib markii raggii magaaladii ku laabteen waxa aan hore u sii gallay buurahii.

Ma aannaan garanaynin jihada ay magaaladu naga xigto. Waxaa nala gudboonatay in aan yaacno habeenkii oodhan si aannu uuga fakanno labada kun ee dollaar iyo korantadii laysku qabanayay. Habeenkii oodhan waxa aan dhex waregaynayn buuraha. Kadib waxa aan seexannay buur udhaw magaalada halkaas oo aannu ka toosnay goor ku dhaw 10 subaxnimo. Kadib waxaan bilawnay in aan cunno iyo xog magaalada ku saabsan raadsanno. Annaga oo halkii raadin ku jirna ayaa waxa noo bildhaamay biro dhaadheer. Waxa aan u dhaqaaqay xagii birihu nooga muuqdeen. Waxa aan

We had been roaming in the mountains all night and then slept on a hill near a town and woke up at 10 a.m. We then started to look for food and information about the town. As we were going round, we saw distant towers. Going there, we learnt it was a cement factory. There were employees, the majority of whom were Egyptian.

The Arabic-speaking young man told them everything about us. He asked them to tell us the best way to town and where we could take a bus to the capital city [Tripoli]. They gave us bread and some fresh fruits to eat. They also asked us how many we were and gave us food for the rest of us. They told us not to walk during the day. They pointed to three different locations, saying that one was a small town, the other a village where smugglers stayed and the third a prison.

They said we would be safe once we reached the town. We would be able to get a bus and communicate with our families. They also instructed us to take the bus in twos or threes. They said the people in that town were good people but if we made a mistake we would either walk into the area of the smugglers, who would torture us and ask for a lot of money for ransom, or we would go to the jail, where we would either die or remain for years. Therefore, we had to walk straight ahead.

We returned to the others with the food and told them about the plan.

People had only dollar notes that could only be exchanged in Somali remittance offices. We asked if anyone had any Libyan money. Again, the woman [we rescued] said she had some and gave 100 Dinars to everyone. We thought the woman we had freed from captivity was God-given, helping us out of many problems.

ogaannay in ay tahay warshad sibiidhka samaysa. Shaqaale ayaa joogay warshadda ubadnaa dad masaari ah.

Wiilkii dhallinyarta ahaa ee af-Carabiga yaqaannay ayaa u sheegay cidda aannu nahay. Waxa aanu ka codsaday in ay noo sheegaan sida ugu habboon ee aan ku tagi karno magaalada iyo halka laga raaco baska tagaya caasimadda Tiriboli. Waxa ay nasiiyeen waxooga roodhi ah iyo khudaar aannu cunno. Waxa kale oo ay na waydiiyen inta qof ee aan ahayn oo waxa ay na siiyeen cunno aannu u gayno intii kale ee nala socotay. Waxa ay noo sheegeen in aannaan socon dharaarti. Waxay noo tilmaameen saddex jiho, iyagoo yidhi jihadaa waxaa idinka xiga magaalo yar, takale tuulo yar oo ay joogan mukhalasiin, ta saddexaadna waxaa ku yaal xabsi.

Waxay noo sheegeen in aan ammaan nahay haddii aan gaadhno magaalada. Waxaa noo suurto galaysa in aan helno bas oo aan la xidhiidhi karno qoysaskayagii. Waxa ay kale oo ay noo sheegeen in aan basaska u raacno laba-laba ama saddex-saddex. Waxa ay noo sheegeen in dadka magaladu ay yahiin dad fiican lakiin haddii aannu marno jihada qaldan in aannu gali goobta magafayaasha oo na ciqaabi nana waydiin doona lacag madax furasha ah oo badan, ama aannu ku bixi xabsiga, halkaas oo aannu ku jiri karno sannado dheer ama aan ku dhex dhiman doonno. Sidaa daraadeed, waa inaan u soconaa toos.

Waxa aan dib ugu laabannay dadkii kale annaga oo sidanna cunto waxa aanannu uga warranay qorshahii lagu tagayay magaalada.

Dadku waxa ay siteen kaliya lacag doolar ah oo lagu sarifikaro xawaaladaha Soomaalidu leeyihiin. Waxa aan is waydiinay haddii uu jiro qof haysto lacagta Liibiya. Gabadhii aannu soo badbaadinay ee meesha ku xidhnayd ayaa waxa ay haysatay waxooga lacag ah. Qof walba waxa ay siisay 100 diinaar. Waxa aannu u malaynay in gabadhii aannu soo furanay ay ahayd shimbir Ilaahay noo soo diray oo naga furatay lacag la'aantii nala soo gudboonatay. Habeenkii waa aannu seexannay waxa aanannu baxnay shantii aroornimo annaga oo magaalada u galayna laba- laba iyo saddex- saddex.

We slept that night and left early, at 5 a.m., entering the town in twos and threes.

I left with two others—a woman and a friend of mine. We arrived at the market and boarded a bus. The bus was full of Libyans. We were very dirty because we had not taken a bath for all that time in the desert. We were also very skinny and smelt bad. With our tattered clothes, we looked like scavengers. As we boarded the bus, people covered their noses. The seats in the bus were arranged in twos. We were asked to pay for the remaining empty seat because no one would dare to sit with us—those smelly Africans. I said we would even pay for the whole bus if we had the money. We paid for the empty seat.

We travelled around seven or eight hours and eventually reached Tripoli, where we took a taxi to the Somali embassy. The embassy was large, with thousands of Somalis. There were remittance offices and tea shops. The embassy also had some feeding centres.

Tripoli

Upon arriving in Tripoli and seeing so many Somalis, we all breathed a sigh of relief. We were happy again and regained our strength. People asked how many of us had died on the journey, how many we were and who the majority of us were. Everyone wanted to know if his or her relatives were among the dead. As we bought food and ate, [Somalis who worked with] the smugglers—organizing and preparing people for the journey across the [Mediterranean] sea—came up to us, asking us where we came from. They convinced us [to go with them] by saying they were

Anigu waxa aan la socday saxiibkay iyo ruux haween ah. Waxa aan soo gaadhay goobtii suuqa ahayd oo waxa aannu ka raacnay bas. Baska waxaa ka buuxay dad Liibiyaan ah. Uskag badan ayaa naga muuqday maadaama waxtiga dheer ee aan saxaraha ku soo jirnay aan jidhkayaga biyo taaban. Waxaa naga muuqatay diif badan oo caato ayaannu wada ahayn waxaana naga soo baxaysay ur aan wanagsanayn. Waxa aan gashanayn dharkayagii jeexjeexnaa oo waxa aan u muuqannay dad dawarsato ah. Markii aan baska soo fuullay, dadkii ayaa sanko naga qabsaday. Kuraasta baska laba laba ayaa loogu fadhiisanayay. Waxaa nalagu qasbay in aan bixinno lacagta kuraasta madhan maxaa yeelay qofna ma rabin in Afrikaankan uraya ag fadhiisto. Waan bixin lahayn baska dhan lacagtiisa haddii aan haysanno lacag. Hayeeshee waxa aannu bixinnay kuraastii madhnayd lacagtoodii.

Waxa aannu soconnay in ku dhaw toddoba illaa siddeed saacood. Ugu danbayntiina waxa aannu gaadhay Tiriboli oo aan ka raacnay tagsi na geeyay safaaradda Soomaalida. Safaaraddu waa mid baaxad wayn oo kumanaan Soomaali ahi joogto. Safaaradda waxaa ku yaallay xafiis xawaaladeed iyo maqaaxi. Sidoo kale waxa ay lahayd goobo dadka cunno laga siiyo.

Tiriboli

Markii aan gaadhay Tiriboli ee aan anargnay dad badan oo Soomaali ah ayay laydh qaboobi na gashay oo aan nafisnay. Waa annu faraxnay naftiina nagu soo noqotay. Dadka ayaa waxa ay nawaydiiyeen intii qof ee nagaga dhimatay safarkii saxaaraha tiradooda iyo qabiilkii ay u badnayeen. Qofkasta waxa uu rabay in uu ogaado in ay ku jireen cid qaraabadooda ah inta dhimatay. Markii aan cunno iibsannay ee an cunnay ayaa Soomaalida lashaqaysata mukhalasiinta oo diyaariya dadka u baxaya safarka badda ee lagaga gudbaayo badwaynta Midhatareniyanka noo timid. Waxa ayna waydiiyeen meesha aan ka nimid. Waxay naga dhaadhiciyeen in aan iyaga raacno iyaga oo noo sheegay in ay iyaguna sidoo kale ka

also from the north [of Somalia], and that they would give us a place to stay.

One man took us to a house. To more easily fit in, we bought new clothes. One problem in Tripoli was that if Somalis were seen riding a bus they would be taken to jail and left there. Another thing we were told was that Libyans hated black people and would beat them or kill them. Therefore we had to stay indoors.

At the house, the man enquired if we were going to cross the sea, saying that he would arrange a boat for us. We said we had no money and had to wait. After going to the embassy for two days in a row, we came to know that the rest of our group had already arrived and been taken to houses. We were back together again, or at least 18 of us were, and we decided to stay together in the same house.

We were happy because we thought this was the end of the migration but in reality we were not even at the beginning.

Crossing the sea

After several days, some people received money [from relatives] and 14 of us set off on the sea leg of our journey.

Three boats were immediately reported missing. Only one was rescued. The rescued one was an inflatable designed to accommodate 30 people but on this journey it was packed and carried 70. It had not gone far when its propeller stopped and it couldn't drive against the surging waves. It was ruined.

All three boats were ruined. One of them had a hole, another capsized, while the third was rescued by the Libyan security forces, who imprisoned the survivors. Of our group, seven were in the

yimaaden Waqooyiga [Soomaliland] oo ay na gayn doonan meel aannu dagno.

Nin ayaa na geeyay guri. Si aan dadka nalooga garan waxa aannu iibsannay dhar. Dhibaataada ka jirtay Tiriboli ayaa ahayd in haddii lagu arko adiga oo bas la socda magaalada dhexdeeda in xabsiga lagu taxaabay halkaasna lagu ilaawayo. Waxa kale oo nalagu wargaliyay in dadka Libiyaanka ahi ay aad u necebyahiin dadka madmadaw jidh dilaan amaba qudha ka jaraan. Sidaa daraadeedna aan guryaha ku jirno.

Gurigii marki aan tagnay, ninkii waxa uu na waydiiyay in aannu ka gudbayno badda, isaga oo noo sheegay in uu noo diyaarinayo doonta. Waxa aan u sheegnay in aannaan wax lacag ah haysan markaa laakiin aannu sugayno. Kadib markii aanu tagnay safaradda laba maalmood oo isku xiga, waxa aan ogaannay in dadkii kale ee aannu isla soconay soo gaadheen magaalada loona kaxeeyay guryo ay degaan. Waan isku soo wada noqonnay marlabaad. Siddeed iyo toban aan ahayn waxa aan go'aansannay in aan wada degno guri kali ah.

Waa aannu faraxsannahay waayo waxa aannu is leenahay waa tahriibka halkii uu ku dhammanayay. Balse, xaqiiqdii kawna ma aannaan joogin.

Ka- gudubkii Badda

Dhawr maalmood kadib, dadkii waxa ay heleen lacago ay u soo direen qaraabadii 14 naga mid ahina waxa ay cagta saareen safarkii badda.

Saddex doonyood ayaa markiiba la sheegay in ay badda ku dhex lunsanyihiin. Doonta la soo badbaadiyay ayaa ahayd mid naqas laga buuxshay oo loogu tala galay in ay qaado 30 qof balse la saaray 70 qof. May sii socon wax badan markii ay makiinaddu ka kharaabtay awoodna u yeelan wayday in ay dhex mushaaxdo hirarka badda ee kacsan.

Dhammaan sadexdii doonyood way xumaadeen. Mid kamid

rescued inflatable and seven others were in the two boats that sank. It was shocking to hear the names of seven people we knew among those who had died. Those who died had believed that reaching Tripoli was the end of their migration.

Despite everything, just several days later we prepared again for the same journey. We were around 60 people—including 11 of us. We were kept in a house and later transported under piles of rubbish to disguise us and prevent us from recognizing anything if the mission failed.

The truck drove us around and around so that we wouldn't have any idea where we were. We finally went through a gate to a large two-storey house. They took us upstairs to the top floor and told us to stay there. The ground floor was occupied by smugglers. They told us that we were in a place called Zuwara, and that it was not like the centre of Tripoli.²⁷ They instructed us not go out until the boat was ready, adding that the security men in the town would jail us and that there was no one who could protect themselves from them.

One of the smugglers collected our cash. He charged us USD 1,000 per person. He was a Somali who would later give the money to the Arabs. He would only come when people boarded the boat. He had a car and drove it around the neighbourhood [while he waited]. Then he finished the deal with the Arab smugglers. They dealt this way because they didn't trust each other. He wouldn't give them the money before we were on the boats as otherwise they would take the money and imprison him or refuse to pay his share.

We were in that room for more than 12 days, men and women

27 Zuwara is port city in Libya, approximately 100 km west of Tripoli.

ahi way dalooshantay, midina dagtay, halka tii saddexaadna ay soo badbaadiyeen ciidamada ilaalada badda Liibiya oo dadkii soo badbaadayna u taxaabay jeelka. Kooxdayadii todoba kamid ah ayaa ku jiray kuwa xabsiga loo taxaabay halka todoba kalana ka mid ahaayeen kuwa degay. Naxdin iyo qaadan waa ayay nagu noqotay kadib markii aan maqalnay toddobada qof ee dhintay. Waxa ayaminsanaayeen in gaadhitaanka Tiriboli ay tahay halkii tahriibku ku dhammaanayay.

Wax kasta oo dhacay kadib dhawr ayaamood markii aan halkii sii joognay ayaa waxa naloo diyaariyay safarkii badda mar labaad. Waxa aan ahayn tiro ku dhaw 60 qof oo ay 11 annaga ahayd. Waxaa nalagu hayay guri kadibna waxa nalagu raray gaadhi iyada oo nalagu dhex qariyay qashin si aanan u aqoonsan goobta aan marayno haddii qorshahani fashilmo. Gaadhigii ayaa cabbaar na wareejiyay si aanan u aqoonsan meesha annu joognay. Ugu danbayntii waxa aan galnay dayr dhisme laba dabaq ah oo wayni kuyaalo. Waxaa naloo waday xaga sare ee aqalka waxayna noo sheegen in aan halkaas joogno. Dabaqa hoose waxaa ka buuxay mukhalasiin. Waxay noo sheegen in aanu joogno meel layidhaahdo Suwara,¹¹ oo ayna ahayn sida farasmagalaha Tiriboli oo kale. Waxay nagu amreen in aannaan dibadda u bixin ilaa inta doontu diyaar noqonayso, iyagoo noogu daray in ragga ilaalada magalaada ka shaqeyaa ay na xidhi doonaan oo aanay jirin cid naga horjoogsanaysaa.

Mid kamid ah mukhalasiinta ayaa lacagtii naga ururiyay. Qofkasta waxa uu ka qaaday lacag dhan 1000 dollarka maraykanka ah. Waxa uu ahaa Soomaali lacagtana waxa uu ugaynayay carabta. Carabku kaliya waxa uu yimaaddaa marka dadka doonta la saaro. Waxa uu lahaa gaadhi uu ku dhex wareego xaafadda inta uu sugayo. Kadibna waxa uu heshiiska la dhammaystiri jiray mukhalasiinta carabta ah. Sidan ayay kuwada shaqaystaan maxaa yeelay midna midka kale

11 Suwara waa magaalo dekaadeed ku taal Liibiya oo qiyaastii 100 km galbeed kaga beegan Tiriboli.

together. They brought us food and kept telling us there were [too] strong tides at sea [to leave]. We all slept in that room. Women had become used to sleeping this way. They wouldn't even change their clothes. They would chat with us and almost became men. You would see a woman sleeping alongside three or four men. There was no concern about femininity and masculinity. The only thing we did not share was the toilet.

After 12 days of this situation we couldn't tolerate it anymore and asked the middleman to relocate us to a more convenient location. He told us that others had had to stay there for more than a month. We remained there for seven more days.

On the nineteenth day they came for us at 3.30 a.m. They loaded us into a vehicle and took us to a hill near the sea. Shortly after we arrived there, they brought an inflatable boat and started to assemble it. It was a surprise to see the same boat we expected to cross the sea with being assembled right there, in front of our eyes. They pumped air into it using a small compressor. And there stood a 6 by 4 metre boat that would carry the 60 of us. We took the boat and the propeller to the sea, after which they packed people in—first by seating them at the front, then at the sides and lastly in the middle.

They assigned one of us, who said he knew how, to pilot the boat. He was handed a satellite telephone. They also provided us with some dates, canned fish and stuff of that sort. Then we set off. It was 4.30 a.m. You would be surprised to see how congested the boat was with people. Because of the load the boat was carrying, the engine struggled against the waves. We had been sailing for about ten hours when all of a sudden the small propeller dropped off the boat, which came to an abrupt halt.

kuma uu kalsoonayn. Wax lacag ah ma siiyo kahor inta dadka doonta lawada saarayo. Waxa uu ka taxadirayay in ay xabsiga u taxaaban ama ay diidan in ay qaybtiisa siiyan.

Qolka ayaan ku jirnay in kabadan 12 maalmood, rag iyo dumarba. Cunno ayay noo keeni jireen iyaga oo noo sheegay inay baddu kacsantantay oo aan la socon karin wakhtigan oo kale. Qolkaa ayaan wadda seexanaynay. Dummarku way la qabsadeen noloshan. Waxa ay noqdeen rag oo kale oo xataa aan maryaha iska badalayn. Waxaad arkaysay gabadh dhinac huruda saddex ama afar rag ah. Ma jirin wax dareen ah oo ragnimo ama dumarnimo ah. Waxa kali ah ee annaan wadaagayn waxa ay ahayd musqusha.

Kadib marka aannu laba iyo toban cisho ku jirnay xaaladdii ayaannu u adkaysan waynay. Kadib waxa aan waydiinnay ninkii dil-laalka ahaa in ay noo wareejiyaan goob kale oo ka habboon. Waxa uu noo sheegay in dadkii kale ee annaga naga soo horreeyay ay halkan joogeen inka badan bil. Halkii ayaanan sii joognay 7 maalmood oo kale.

Maalintii sagaal iyo tobnaad ayay noo yimaaddeen abbaara sad-dexdii iyo badhkii subax nimo. Waxa ayna nagu gureen gaadhi noo qaaday xaggaa iyo buur u dhawayd badda. Kadib markii aan gaadhay goobtii, waxa ay keeneen doon kala furfuran. Waxa ay isku xidhidheen doontii. U qaadanwaa iyo layaab ayay nagu noqotay in aannu aragno doonti aan filaynay inaan kaga gudubno badda in hortayada lagu sameeyo. Hawa ayay ku buufiyeen iyagoo isticmaalaya bam yar.

Dabadeed markii la buufiyay mise waaba doontii yarayd oo dhinac 4 mitir ah, dhinaca kalana 6 mitir oo lagu qaadayo lixdanka aan ahayn. Doontii buufimada ahayd iyo mashiinkii ayaa aan xagga badda u qaadnay. Ka dib dadkii ayaa lagu raseeyay iyada oo qaar xagga hore la fadhiisiiyay, qaar xagga danbe, qaar kalena dhinacyada.

Mid naga mid ah ayay u xilsaareen in uu doonta kaxeeyo maadaama u sheegay in uu yaqaan sida loo wado doonta. Waxa loo dhiibay telefoon dayax-gacmeedka ku xidhan. Waxa ay nasiyeen

Once it lost its propeller the boat started to drift. We spent three days in the sea, going up and down. It was horrible and disorientating. Sea water splashed us, burning our skin. There was a lot of suffering. The food was gone and people were nearly ready to eat each other. At some point in those three days, one of the passengers became deranged. He had been through hardship and misery in Libyan prisons. We were in the middle of the sea when he suddenly stood up and said, ‘Please don’t take us past it. We are in Lampedusa.²⁸ Please stop for me by that tall building, I want to alight there.’ He then jumped into the water and was gone.

On the third day, we saw a ship coming towards us. We waved clothes and screamed. It then turned towards us. Recognizing that we were stranded, they towed us back to town. They put us all in prison. It was a ship owned by the Libyan marines.

Libyan prison

As soon as we arrived at the prison, they started to torture us on the basis that we were Somali migrants. It was horrifying to see those who were in the prison. We met Somalis who had been there for four or five years. Some of them had had their legs disabled, so they had to crawl. You would be shocked if you saw the rashes on their skin and the pus flowing. Some looked like ghosts. Asking them why they were like that, they said that every morning people were beaten for three hours. They said that the prison guards added allergy-inducing drugs into the drinking water, which caused skin rashes and pus secretion. Because of the poor hygiene in the prison, lice inhabited every part of your body.

²⁸ Lampedusa is Italy’s southernmost island and the European territory closest to Libya. It has become a transit point for migrants.

timir, iyo qasaacado kalluun ah iyo walxo kale. Waxa aannu dhaqa-aqnay 4.30 subaxnimo. Waxaa layaab nagu noqotay sida doonto dadka ula ciirciirayso. Xaddiga culayska saaran doontii awgii makiinaddii doonta waxa ay la daalaa dhacaysay in ay iska caabido hirarka badda. Waxa aan badda ku jirnay ku dhawaad 11 saacadood, markii hal mar matoorkii doontii ka go’ay oo badda ku dhacay doontiina istaagtay. Dabadeedna waxa ay noqotay in doontii ay sab-bayso. Saddex cisho ayaan ku jirnay badda oo aan baaxaa degaynay. Dhibaato badan ayaa na soo waajahaday. Biyaha badda ayaa jidhka nagaga dhacaayay oo gubayay diirka sare ee jidhka. Cuntadii ayaa naga go’day dadkuna waxay ku sigtee in ay iyagu is cunaan. Wakhti ka mid ah saddexdii cisho, mid kamid ah dadkii doonta saarnaa ayaa waxaa madax martay xaaladdii adkayd iyo dhibaataadii ka soo martay xabsiga Liibiya. Anaka oo ku sugan badda dhexdeeda ayaa hal mar inta uu kacay yidhi “maxaad noo dhaafinaysaan? Waynu joognaa Laanbeduusa. Maxaad inoo dhaafinaysaan. Ha i dhaafin. Anuu dabaqan dheerbaaban ku dagayaaye”. Kadibna waxa uu isku tuuray biyihii badda.

Maalintii saddexaad ayaa waxa na soo garab maray markab weyn. Waxa aannu u haadinnay maryaha una qaylinaay. Dabadeed wuu nagu soo leexday. Waxa ay arkeen in aannu nahay dad go’doonsan. Waxay dib noogu soo jiiddeen magaaladii waxaana naloo taxaabay xabsiga. Illayn waxa uu ahaa markab ay lahaayen ciidamada badda Liibiya.

Jeelkii Liibiya

Isla markii jeelka lana keenay, waxa la bilaabay in lana ciqaabo iyada oo lanagu eedaynayo in aannu nahay Soomaali tahriibayaal ah. Aragax ayay nagu noqotay markii aan aragnay dadkii ku jiray xabsiga. Waxa aan la kulannay Soomaali ku jiray jeelka afar ilaa shan sano. Qaar ayaa lugaha ka curyaamay oo gurguuranaya. Waxaa layaab kugu noqon lahayd marka aad aragto dadka finanka iyo xasaasi-yadda, qudhunka iyo dheecaanka ka dareeraya. Qaar kood ayaa u

In the prison, hundreds of people were placed in the same room. There was no place to sleep because it was so congested—people on top of each other, both men and women. We were not fed. The only thing they gave us was the treated water, which induced sleep. They did this to stop us from trying to run away from the prison and to make us forget the need for food.

[I think] they did all this because the Libyans were overwhelmed by foreigners.²⁹ They didn't care if they beat them, killed them, sliced them, robbed them or poisoned them.

In the midst of this misery we tried to get a contact for the Somali embassy. Fortunately, we were able to communicate with one of the embassy staff, who was a close relative of one of us. We told him about how we were suffering in the prison and requested him to connect us to the ambassador. We also told him that we were prepared to pay the ambassador off—USD 1,000 for each person. We promised him the bribe because we knew he would accept it. The relative then met the ambassador, who said he would facilitate the release of 20 of us on the condition that we paid him USD 20,000.

With this plan in place, we began calling home to tell our relatives that we were in prison and needed that amount of money for our release. Eventually 25 of us were able to raise the money. We then sent it through on the agreed channels. After spending

29 It is difficult to obtain reliable data on migration statistics for Libya, which has long been a transit country for migrants from sub-Saharan Africa. Since the overthrow of Colonel Gaddafi in 2011, the security vacuum in Libya has resulted in increased numbers of migrants and growing anti-migrant sentiments among Libyans, along with crackdowns—arrests, detentions and deportations—by the security services.

ekaa reer akhiraad. Markii aan waydiinnay waxa sidan u galay, waxa ay noo sheegeen in subax kasta maxaabista la qaraaco seddex saac dood. Waxa kale oo ay noo sheegeen in askarta ilaalada ahi ay biyaha lacabayo ku daraan dawo taas oo sababta in jidhku cuncuno oo kadib ay ka soo baxaan finan. Nadaafad xumada xabsiga ka jirta daraadeed, injir ayaa qaybkasta oo jidhka ah kaa galaysa.

Xabsiga boqolaal qof ayaa waxa lagu xereeyay qol kaliya. Meel la seexadana ma laha oo dadku way isku dul tuulanyihiin rag iyo dumarba. Nalama siin wax cunno ah. Waxa nala siinayaa kaliya biyo kiniin hurdo ku jiro oo loogu talagalay dadku inay ku seexdaan si aanay xabsiga uga baxsan oo anay cuntana u xasuusan.

Waxa aan u malaynayaa, waxa ay Liibiyaanku sidan u samaynayaan waxa ka batay dadka ajaanibka ah.¹² Markaa ajaanibka inay garacaan, inay dilaan, inay hantidooda dhacaan, inay googooyaan, iyo in ay sun siiyaan waxba kuma aha.

Intii aanuu ku jirnay silican waxa aanuu isku daynay in aan xidhiidh la samayno Safaaradda Soomaalida. Nasiib wanaag waxaa noo suurto gashay in aanuu Safaaraddii la hadalno. Waxa aanuu helnay mid ka mid ah shaqaalihii oo inan nagu jiray xigto yihiin. Waxa aan u sheegnay in xaaladayadu ay adag tahay waxa aanannu ka codsannay in uu noogu tago safiirka. Waxa aan u sheegnay in aanuu diyaar u nahay in aan lacag siinayno safiirka oo ah 1000 dollar maraykanka ah qofkii. Laalush ayaan ugu ballan qaaday, maxaa yeelay waxa aan ogayn in uu qaadanayo. Safiirkii ayuu u tagay oo yidhi hadii ay bixinayaan 20,000 dollar waan fududeyn karnaa sii dayntooda.

Iyada oo qorshahaasi meel noo yaal, waxa aan bilawnay in aan

12 Waa ay adagtahay in la helo xog lagu kalsoonaan karo oo ku saabsan tirakoobta tahriibayaasha ee Liibiya oo in badan ahayd dal ay ka sii gudbaan tabriibayaasha ka imanaya Afrikada Saharaha ka hoosaysa. Tan iyo markii la afganbiyay Kolonel Qaddaafi sannaddii 2011, amni darradii Liibiya ka jirtay waxa ay keentay in ay kordhaan tiradii tahriibayaasha iyo sidoo kale soo-galooti nacaybkuba iyada oo taa ay barbar socotay qabqabasho -xidhid, hayn iyo dib-u-celin- ay samaynayeen xoogagga ammaanku.

about a month and half in that hardship we were freed. Among us were some of those who had been disabled during their imprisonment, even some who were now bedridden and could only speak not move.

What had happened really made us lose momentum. We felt so disappointed. Some of us had died in the sea and the rest, including me, had endured a lot of suffering in that prison.

Daily life in Tripoli

We started to think of how we could fit into the town so that we could understand the best time to cross the sea and get to know the most reliable smugglers. We divided up and settled into different houses. I settled with a group of five others.

One day, three of us took a bus going to a place near the Somali embassy. We were well dressed, clean and smelt good. Strangely, as soon as we sat down, one of the passengers stood up, took an air freshener and sprayed it all over us, from tip to toe, while he insulted us. As a result, one of us protested and asked him why he had done that to us. The man then brutally kicked him. No one on the bus reacted or even asked why he had done that to us. The man then sat down. Another man sitting near him spoke and said that our skin smelled because we were not citizens.

This incident had a deep impact on us. It brought home the fact that we were not in our own country.

I remember another day we took a taxi to town. I sat in the front seat, near the driver, and my friend sat in the back. A man who was smoking then got in the back, next to my friend. As soon as he got in the taxi, he asked us where we were from. We told him

ehelkayagii la hadalno una sheegno in aan xabsi ku jirno aanannu lacag u baahannahay si naloo sii daayo. Ugu danbayn, 25 naga mid ah ayaa awooday inay lacagtii isku keenan. Waxa aan ku heshiinnay lacagtii halka lagu dirayo. Markii aan ku jirnay jeelka bil iyo badh ayaa nalaga soo daayay. Waxaa naga mid ahaa dad ku curyaamay intii ay xidhnaayeen iyo qaar dhul-yaal ah oo kaliya hadli karaya oo aan dhaqaaqayn.

Waxii nagu dhacay ayaa na karaarjabshay. Waa annu niyad jabnay. Qaar naga mid ah ayaa ku dhintay badda intayadii kale oo aan anigu ku jirayna wax annu la kulannay dhibaato intii xabsiga aan ku jirnay.

Nolol- maalmeedkii Tiriboli

Intii aan joognay Tiriboli, waxa aan ka fikirnay sidii aan magaalada ula qabsanlahayn, oo aan u fahmi lahayn xiliga ugu habboon ee badda laga gudbi karo iyo in aan ogaanno mukhalasiinta kuwa wax dira kuwa ugu wanaagsan. Waa aan is qaybinay waxa aanan degnay aqalo kala duwan. Anigu waxa aan la degay koox shan kale ah..

Maalin maalmaha ka mid ah, saddex aan nahay ayaa waxa aan raacnay bas tagayay meel u dhaw safaaradda Soomaalida. Waa annu labbisanahay, soo maydhannay cadarna isku soo buufinay. Markii annu gaadhigii soo fuulnay oo kuraastii fadhiisanay, ayaa mid ka mid ah dadkii gaadhiga saarnaa soo kacay. Cadar meesha saarnaa oo kuwan carfisyoooyinka udgoon ah ayuu soo qaaday. Saddexdayadii ayuu nagu buufiyay mijo iyo madax, isaga oo na caayaya.

Mid naga mida ah saddexdayadii ayaa waydiiyay sababta uu noo buufiyay. Ninkii ayaa si arxan darro ah leh u laagay. Qofna lama hadal ninkan mana odhan dadkan maxa aad sidaa ugu galaysaa. Ninkii wuu fadhiistay.

Mid kale oo markaa dhinac fadhiyay ayaa hadlay oo yidhi “Waxa uruya diirkiinna waayo muwaadiniin ma tahidin”.

Dhacdadani saamayn badan ayay nagu yeelatay. Waxa noo muuqatay in aannaan dalkayagii joogin.

that we were from Somalia. He replied that Somalis were trouble-makers. He then stubbed out the cigarette on my friend's thigh. My friend screamed, asking him why he had done that to him. He could do nothing else but ask the driver to stop. As we got out, the man started to slap both of us. The driver then got out, questioning my friend how dare he stop the taxi. He eventually asked us to pay him the taxi fare. We did. We had to walk all day to reach our destination.

Still another day, as we had run out of money, we went looking for employment. We went where a lot of Somalis, Egyptians and many other nationalities were. When we got there, some men in a car arrived. They were looking for workers, saying they needed three persons. We quickly accepted. They took us to a house outside town. They told us that our job was to bring building blocks from the bottom of a three-storey building all the way to the top. We had to climb a ladder, carrying four blocks on our backs. We agreed that they would pay us USD 20 per day.

We thought they were good people.

It was morning when we started the job. We did not have any breakfast. It was the first job we had ever had in Libya. We toiled up and down, carrying the blocks. Our knees couldn't bear the weight. We were not allowed to stop and rest. We carried more blocks than 20 men could do. We began to vomit as we climbed. Nevertheless we continued because we knew it was the only way we could earn some money. We had been carrying the blocks up the ladder for 12 hours when they came to us and said we still had to carry more blocks through the evening. They started to kick us out when we

Waxaan kale oo aan xasuustaa maalin kale oo aan taksi soo raacnay. Anigu shidhka hore ayaan fadhiistay ee wadaha agtiisa. Inankii kale ee ila socdayna waxa uu fadhiistay xagga danbe. Waxa isna soo fuulay nin Liibiyaan ah oo sigaar cabaya. Wuxuu ku yidhi saaxiibkay “xageed ka timid?” Markaas ayuu saxiibkay yidhi “wax aan ka imid Soomaaliya. Ninkii ayaa yidhi “Soomaalidu waa dhibleyaal”. Sigaarkii inta uu afka ka soo saaray ayuu bawdada kaga bakhtiiyey. Saaxiibkay waa uu qayliyay isaga oo waydiiyay sababta uu ugubay. Wax kale maanaan samayn karayn oo aan ahayn in aan wadaha ku nidhaa jooji. Gaadhigii markaan ka dagnay ayuu dhirbaaxo labadayadiiba la dhacay. Dirawalkii ayaa isna gaadhigii ka soo dagay, oo yidhi sidee ayaad gaadhiga u joojin kartaan. Waxa aannu waydiinnay in aan bixinno lacagta taksiga. Halkii ayay lacagtii nagaga qaateen. Waxa ay nagu qaadatay maalintii oo dhan in aan gaadhno meeshi aan u soconnay.

Maalin kale, lacagtii ayaa naga go'day. Waxa ay noqotay in aannu suuqa tagno oo aan shaqo raadsano. Waxa aan tagnay goob dadku iskugu yimaaddaan, Masaarida, Soomaalida iyo dad badan oo ah jinsiyado kala duwan. Markii aan meeshii soo gaadhay ayaa waxaa soo istaagay niman gaadhi wata. Waxay yidhaahdeen waxa aan u baahannahay saddex qof. Markiiba waa annu ku boodnay. Guri magaalada ka fog ayay na geeyeen. Wax aay na yidhaahdeen guri saddex dabaq ah ayaa halkaa hoose waxa laga qaadayaa jaajuurka dabaqa saddexaadna waa la geynayaa. Qof kastaa marka uu fuulayo saddex, afar jaajuur ah ayuu dhabarka saarayaa. Maalintiina waxa aad ku shaqaynaysaan 20 doollar.

Waxaan is lahayn nimankani waa niman wanaagsan.

Shaqadii ayaa an bilawnay. Waa aroor hore. Waa shaqadii noogu horreysay ee aan ka shaqayno Liibiya. Kor iyo hoos ayaan u noqonay, annaga oo sidna jaajurkii. Labada lafruug baa na bakhtiyay. Nalooma oggolaayn in aan joogsanno amma nasanno. Waxa aannu dhammaynay in ay 20 qof ku dhamaynaayeen maalin dhan. Inkasta

refused their proposal. A friend of mine couldn't tolerate it and protested. They then took sticks and beat us.

We had to walk more than four hours back to where we stayed. When we finally got there, we fell asleep in despair.

We were enduring one dreadful form of abuse after another.

oo marka aan sii fuulno matag sii daynaynay, haddana waxa aan xusuusanay in ay tani tahay sida kaliya ee aan lacag ku heli karno. Waxa aan fuulaynay dabaqa oo aan jaajurka guraynay 12 saacadood. Markii ay noo yimiddeen waxa ay noo sheegeen in aan gurno wali jaajur kale ilaa caawa. Markii aan diidnay fikraddan waxa ay nagu bilaabeen garaac. Saaxiibkay ayaa u dul qaadan kari waayay oo arrintaas diiday. Ka dib ulo ayay soo qaateen oo way garaceen.

Waxay nagu qaadatay in aan afar sacadood soconno si aannu ugu noqonno meeshii nalaga keenay. Annaga oo tabcaan ah ayaa aannu gurigii aannu daganayn gaadhay oo la jiifsanay niyad jab.

Marka aan tacadi ka baxnaba midkale ayaa na helayay.

PART THREE
The end of tahriib

Shortly after that the deportation of foreigners began. They [the Libyan authorities] did this every six months. There were a large number of Somalis living in some neighbourhoods. The army started to hunt them down. Some of the soldiers were armed with guns and metal rods, while others used electroshock sticks to torture people. They broke into houses where people lived, beating them and threatening them with deportation.

I remember one night. It was when we stayed in a large two-storey apartment building where more than 100 people lived. This meant that 20 people were in each room. There was no roof on the third floor, where around 30 people lived. It was evening when three land cruisers with armed soldiers circled the house. We had slept early as it was cold but were woken up by a warning call. A young man in the building kept watch to alert us when the army was near. At the sound of the warning, everyone rushed to leave the building. People ran in every direction trying to find any way to escape.

I was on the upper floor. People were throwing themselves off the building rather than be arrested by the police. I remember a friend of mine from Hargeysa who broke his leg when he jumped. He was not the only one but I remember him well. At the time, no

QAYBTA SADDEXAAD
Dhammaadkii Tahriibka

Muddo yar ka dib waxa bilaabmay celintii dadka ajaanibka ah. Hawshan lixdii bilood hal mar ayay dawladda Liibiya samayn jirtay. Soomaalidu way ku badnayd meesha, xaafado badan oo magaalada ka mid ahna way deganayd. Ciidankii ayaa bilaabay inay dadkii raafaan. Ciidanka qaybi hub ayay sitaan, qaybi budhadh biro ah, qaybna koronto dadka lagu dhajinayo. Waxa ay soo galayeen guryihii dadku ku noolaayeen, way garaacayeen oo qaadayeen iyaga oo u hanjabaya.

Waxa aan xasuustaa habeen habeennada ka mid ah oo aan daganayn guri wayn oo laba dabaq ah oo aad u balaadhan oo ay boqol qof deganaayeen. Qolkiiba waxaa seexanayay in ka badan labaataneeye qof. Dabaqa halka sare oo barxad ahayd waxaa seexan jiray dad soddon ka badan. Goor habeen ah ayaa afarta dhinac waxa naga soo istaagay Cabdibileyaal iyo ciidan. Waxa aan ku war hellay kalayaacadii. Halmar ayaa inan soo arkay dadkii qaylo dhaan kula soo dhex dhacay. Afarta dhinac ayaa loo kala yaacay.

Anigu waxa aan joogay dabaqa sare. Dadka ugu daranna waxa ay ahaayeen dadka xagga sare saarnaa oo ay noqotay in ay dabaqii xaggiisa sare ka yaacaan iskana daadiyaan Waxa aan xasuustaa wiil reer Hargaysa ahaa oo aanu saaxiibbo ahayn dabaqa xagga sare ayuu iska tuuray lug ayaanu ka jabay. Kaligii ma uu ahayn laakiin isaga si wanaagsan ayaan u xasuustaa. Cidna dan kama lahayn cid dhaawacantay iyo cid dhacday waayo dadku bilayska xidhaya ayey naftooda kala baxsanayeen.

Aniguna hoos ayaan usoo degay oo askartii ayaan isku dhiibay.

one cared whether people were hurt or fell. Everyone was trying to escape for their lives.

I went down to the ground floor and surrendered. A soldier took me, beat me and shocked me with the electric shock stick. It was very painful. I told him that I would go with him. I saw very tired people—some with broken bones and others who had been arrested by the soldiers. It was unbelievable how people were tortured with electricity, especially if you were suspected of trying to escape. I managed to slip away from that soldier as he was busy catching another young man.

I ran inside another house. It was mainly occupied by women, among them pregnant women and one who was sick. While we were there, discussing where to hide, we realized our pursuers were after us again. We started to run. The pregnant woman suffered the most and she could not escape. As she was running away, she slipped when her leg caught in a drain and her stomach hit the ground. She was bleeding and had no help. I heard her crying. I looked at her and found she was very seriously injured. I left her because I could not assist her. I thought the soldiers would take her wherever they wanted. I passed another girl who had fainted. They said she was traumatized and sick. She could only run for a little while.

Really, people were desperate. In a way, the worst affected were women. Men could manage to run away. At the same time, it was men who the soldiers were targeting. Men were accused of being behind what was happening. Women were running to avoid getting arrested and deported. If men were caught, they would be severely tortured and killed. Although women were afraid, they were not tortured like us.

Akari ayaa iqbata, i garaacay korantana igu qabtay. Runtii aad ayaa ay u xanuun kululayd. Waxa aan ku idhi waan ku raacayaa. Markii aan soo raacay waxa aan arkay dadkii qayb daalaa dhacaysa, qayb jajaban iyo qayb la isku ururinayo oo koronta lagu qabanayo haddii inyar laga dareemo ina ay baxsanayaan. Askarigii i waday waxa uu arkay nin kale intii uu ku mashquulsanaa ayaa aan cararay.

Waxa aan tagay guri kale oo ay gabdhuhu ku badnaayeen oo ay ku jirtay gabadh uur leh iyo gabadh kale oo xanuunsanaysa. Gurigii annaga oo joogna oo ka fakarayna halka aan ku dhuuman lahayn, ayaa haddana xaafaddii nalagu soo weeraray. Qax kale ayaa bilaabmay. Waxa ugu darnayd gabadhii uurka lahayd oo carar is tidhi dabadeedna iyada oo ordaysa bulaacad lugta la gashay, dabadeedna uurka dhulka ku dhufatay. Gabadhii dhiig ayaa ka yimid wax kaalma ahna ma helin. Waxa aan maqlayay oohinta ka baxaysa. Markii aan eegay waxa aan arkay in ay si xun u dhaawacantay. Waa an iska dhaafay waayo waxba uma aan qaban karayn. Waxa an is idhi ciidankan ayaa qaadaya meel ay geeyaanba. Gabadh kale oo iyaduna meesha joogtay way suuxday markii ay cabbaar oroday. Waxa la ii sheegay in ay naxday oo xanuunsatay sidaas darteed inyarba aanay ordin.

Runtii dadka waxa ka muuqday niyadjab. Dumarka ayaa ugu darnaa waayo raggu way ordi karayeen inkasta oo iyaga aad loo doondoonaayay waayo waxaa la is leeyahay waxwalba ragga ayaa ka danbeeya. Dumarku waxa ay u ordayeen baqdin ay ka qabaan in la xidho ama la musaafuriyo. Ragga haddii la qabto, si xun ayaa loo jidhdilayay amaba naftaa laga jarayay. Inkasta oo dumarku cabsan-ayeen, haddana looma jidhdilayn sida ragga oo kale.

Kadib markii aan muddo aan ordaynay ayaan haddana guri kale oo magaalada kuyaal tagtay. Xaafadda waxa aannu ugu tagay qolyo farabadan oo budhcad badeed oo lacag badan haysta oo deggan guri. Budhcad badeeddani waxa ay ahaayeen Soomaali oo maraakiib lacag badan kasoo qaatay oo koox iskula socota. Lacagtu waxa ay uga daadanaysaa sida qashinka. Mid ka mid ah budhcad

Sometime after our escape, we went to another house in town. That place was full of sea pirates who had a lot of money and lived in a very big apartment. The pirates were Somalis who had migrated together to Libya with the ransom money that they took from the ships they hijacked. They were awash with money. One of the pirates was a relative of a young man who was a friend of mine. It was he who took me to them. You would not believe the amount of money they had and the kind of house they lived in.

I stayed there for a short time. I had run out of money so I asked my family to send me some more. I had received money from them twice already—when I was in jail and another time. They had already sent me a lot of money so it was difficult for me to ask again.

Earning a living

So I thought about how to earn some money, knowing that there was not a single person who was willing to assist me. Then I remembered the four life vests we bought when we had been waiting for the boat. I thought selling them to migrants would be profitable. After that, I began to look for life vests to buy but I could not find a source anywhere. Because the police kept a close watch on the sale of life vest transactions, they were sold secretly.

I continued to think about how to make money since I had no money to cover my needs. I went to the Somali embassy and met some of the smugglers who had kept us and had been involved in the last boat incident. I asked where I could get life vests and one smuggler said that they were being sold in a market. He knew because a friend used to buy them for the smugglers. I asked him to assist me since I needed the life vests very much.

badeedda waxay ay qaraabo ahaayeen wiil aannu saaxiibbo ahayn isaga ayaana nimankii ii geeyay. Nimankaasi lacagta ay haystaan iyo guriga ay kiraysteen ma malaynaysid.

Halkaa muddo gaaban ayaan joogay. Waxa iga go'ay markaa sahaydii. Ilaa hadda xaafadayada mar iyo laba jeer oo aan wax waydiiyay way ii soo direen oo ah markii aan jeelka ku jiray iyo markale sidaa awgeed markan way adkaatay in aan cid danbe lacag waydiiyo.

Xoogsigii Tiriboli

Hadda waxa ay noqotay in aan bal maskaxda aan ka shaqaysiiyo si aan wax u heli karo waayo cid wax i taraysaa ma jirin. Wax aan xas-uustay maalmahii aan sugaynay doonta ayaa waxaa naloo keenay jaakado yaryar oo kuwa badda oo afar ah. Ka dib waxa aan ku fikiray in haddii aan dadkan tahriibayaasha aan ka iibsho aan lacag ka faa'iidi karo. Waxa aan raadshay jaakadahii oo koontarabaan ah maxaa yeelay bilayska ayaa isha ku haya kala iibsigaa jaakadaha badda oo si qarsoodi ah loo iibsho.

Maaddaama aanan lacag haysan waxa aan ka fikiray sidii aan lacag an baahiyahayga ku daboolo u heli laha. Safaaradda Soomaalida ayaan imidday. Waxa aanan kula kulmay nimankii na xerayn jiray ee doontii hore raray wiil kamid ah. Waxa aan waydiiyay jaakadaha badda sida lagu heli karo. Waxa uu ii sheegay in suuqa lagu iibiyo. Wuu ogaa meesha lagu iibsho, maxaa yeelay saxiibkii ayaa tahriibiyaasha u soo iibin jiray, Waxa aan u sheegay in aan aad ugu baahanahay.

Markii aan meeshii tagtay mise way yaalaan iyaga oo tiro badan ah. Runtii dadku ma yaqaanaan jaakadahan. Qiimahii ayaan waydiiyaay. Waxa la ii sheegay in qiimaha halka jaakad yahay 10 dirhamka Liibiya ah oo u dhiganta 8 doolar. Waxa aan ku soo noqday niman-kii budhcad badeedka ahaa iyo dadkii kale ee gurigii ku noolaa. Waxa aan ku idhi “Nimanyahow waxa aan idiin hayaa jaakadaha badda, waxaa la rabaa qaabkii aan suuq uga samayn lahayn aniga

We went to the place and saw so many life vests. Really, I realized people did not know about them. I enquired and was told the price of a vest was about 10 Libyan Dinar, equivalent to USD 8. I then went back to the pirates and other people living in that house, telling them I had life vests and asking about how to market them. I told them that there was not much profit for me but I only wanted people to wear them on their voyage because it could save them.

I started selling the life vests for USD 70 and USD 50 for bulk orders. I asked people to pay me in advance. I had bought the life vests at USD 8 each. I needed to make good money so I risked selling them on the black market. I got paid USD 1,000 for only 20 life vests. For me, I gained a profit of USD 42 per piece from the 20 life vests that had cost me no more than USD 200. That was really a lot of money.

After collecting the money, I took a taxi belonging to an Egyptian man who liked Somalis. The first time I tried to sell life jackets, I made a profit of over USD 1,000. And then I got another order for 27 more life vests. Unfortunately, the police noticed our presence, chased us and made us run away. They seized all of the life vests and beat everyone in the house harshly, thinking they were smugglers.

I then moved to another house where many people from Mogadishu lived. I continued my business because it was very profitable. The money lured me and motivated me. I offered to sell the people in the house my life vests. After that, I told them I would bring a sample of ten pieces for them to check because 100 of them needed life vests. The plan was that as soon as they received the sample I would then bring them 100 life vests. I went to the shop. I did not know that all this time I had been under police surveillance. It's

waxbadan iima saarna. Waa jaakaddii badda lagu mari lahaa oo aad ku badbaadi lahaydeen”.

Waxa aan uga bilaabay iibka 70 doolar halkii jaakad ama 50 haddii ay tiro badan rabaan. Waxa aan idhi lacagtii qayb ii soo horumariya. Anigu waxa aan ku soo iibsaday 8 doolar halkii jaakad. Jaakadahan waa ay hawl badan yihiin waana khatar madax dhigasho ah sidaa awgeed waa in lacag laga sameeyaa amma la iska daayaa. Waxa ay ii dhiibeen lacag 1000 dollar ah oo ah 20 xabo qiimahoodii. Waxa aan ka faa'iiday 42 doolar halkii jaakadba. Aniga waxa igaga baxday lacag aan ka badnayn 200 doollar

Kadib markii aan lacagtii soo qaaday waxa aan kiraystay taksi uu lahaa nin Masri ah oo Soomaalida aad u jeclaa. Markii u horraysay ee aan isku dayo iibinta jaakadada badda waxa aan ka helay faa'iido 1000 doolar ah. Sidaa awgeed, haddana mar labaad ayaa waxa aan dirsaday 27 xabbo. Nasiib xumo bilayskii ayaa naga war helay oo na baacsaday. Jaakadahii ayaa meeshii lagu qabtay, dadkii guriga loogu yimidayna waa la garaacay oo waxa la mooday dadkii wax tahriibinayay.

Guri kale ayaa an haddana usoo wareegay oo reer Xamar daggan yihiin. Gancsigaygii halkii ayaan ka kasii waday, waayo waan ku mamay oo lacag fiican ayaa iga soo gashay. Lacagtii ayaa i soo jiidatay oo i dhiirigalisay. Dadkii gurigan waxa aan u soo bandhigay in aan ka iibsasho jaakadahii. Kadib waxa aan u sheegay in aan u keenayo 100 xabbo oo tijaabo ah maadaama ay 100 xabbo u baahnaayeen. Waxa aan tegay meeshii lagu gadayay. Maan dareensanayn in bilaysku nala socday dhaqdhaqaaqayaga. Waxa laga yaabaa anaa sabab u ahaa weerarkii bilayska ee gurigii budhcad badeedda lagu soo qaaday.

Isla markii aan alaabtii taksiga saaray mise laba gaadhi oo bilays ah ayaa dhinacyadayada ordaya oo hoon ka yeedhsiiyaya laydhna shidanaya. Wadahii taksiga ayaa an ka codsaday in uu xoog u socdo. Waxa na qabatay ishaaraadii iyo gawaadhi taagnayd. Waxa aan ku qasbananay in gaadhigii istaago. Markii gaadhiga socodkiisii

possible that I was the reason why that house [with the pirates] was raided earlier.

As soon as I came out of the shop and loaded the life vests into the taxi, I saw two police cars with their sirens blaring. I asked the driver to step on it. Unfortunately, a traffic light and other cars in the way prevented us from going through the intersection. We stopped the taxi because we couldn't overtake them. As the taxi slowed down, I saw the police cars coming. I thought if they caught me, they would convict me as a smuggler because of the life vests in the car. I immediately opened the door and jumped out of the taxi to get away.

Then I went to where the boats set out to cross the sea. I paid for my place on a boat in advance and wrapped the rest of the money in a plastic bag and hid it under my belt. We were taken to a place to wait and then picked up to go to the coast for immediate departure. To my surprise, although we had all already paid, we noticed that the boat had a big hole in it. Some of the passengers insisted we take it despite the hole, indicating that they were not afraid of death and preferred it to being in a Libyan prison. Others, including myself, refused to board.

As people climbed aboard and the propeller was being installed air started to leak out. The Libyan in charge said the hole was too big. He said to delay the journey and he would arrange another boat. He was afraid because he knew the boat wouldn't get further than 2 km and they would all die. The boat had set out from his neighbourhood and everyone knew he was the owner. He wouldn't have cared if the boat could have gone 20 or 40 km out to sea and then sunk. Knowing it wouldn't get very far, he asked the passengers to get off. They refused. And so he poured petrol onto the

gaabtay, waxa aan arkay gawaadhidii bilayska oo nagu soo dhaw. Waxa aan is idhi maanta haddii lagu qabto mukhalas ayaad tahay ayaa lagu odhan maaddaama aad sidato jaakadahan. Si degdeg ah ayaan albaabkii u furay, gaadhiga iska tuuray una baxsaday.

Ka dib waxa aan tagay meeshii doonyaha laga raacayay. Doonni markaa diyaar ahayd ayaan lacagtii markiiba qadimay. Lacagtii kalena bac ayaan ku duuduubay oo suunka hoostiisa ayaan galiyay. Meel xero ah ayaa la na geeyay si degdeg ah naloo qaaday oo nala geeyay xeebtii. Waxa layaab ahayd in lacagtiina nalaga hayo doonta naloo keenayna tahay buufin dalool aan yarayn leh. Dadka qaybtood waxa ay ku adkaysteen in ay doonta daloosha fuulaan maxaa yeelay dhimasho kama ay cabsanayn oo waxa ay ka door bidayeen jeelka Liibiya. Qayb kale oo aan ka mid ahayna way diidday in ay fuulaan.

Dadkii markii ay fuuleen oo matoorkii lagu rakibayo ayaa carabkii yidhi daloolkeedu mid yar ma aha markaa doonkale ayaan idinsaarayaa dib safarka aynu u dhigno. Waxa uu oгаа in iyada oo aan gaadhin 2 km in ay istaagayso dadkuna wada dhimanayaan. Meesha laga rarayaana waa xaafaddiisii waana la ogaan doonaa in uu isagu lahaa doonta. Isagu wuu jecel yahay haddii ay ka soconayso 20km kiilomitir ama 40km oo baddaa ay galayso wixii ku dhammaanayana waxba kama galin. Markaa dadkii ayuu ku yidhi soo dega. Hasayeeshee way diideen. Ka dib iyaga oo saaran ayuu batrool ku rusheeyay doontii. Markii ay dageen oo ay ka yaa-ceennna dab ayuu ku qabtay waanay basbeeshay.

Waxa ay noqotay halkii in aannu ka lugayno habeenkii oo dhan oo magaaladii ku noqono.

Helliddii Shaqo Joogto ah ee Tiriboli

Magaaladii ayaa an ku soo noqday aniga oo in ka badan 1000 doolar igaga baxday doontii. Waxa aan is waydiiyay waxii aan qaban lahaa. Waan oгаа oo wali askartiina dadka way baacsanaysaa. Ka dib waxa la ii sheegay in uu jiro nin Soomaali ah oo niman Turki

boat. While the passengers were getting off, he lit the petrol and burnt the boat to ashes.

Then we had to walk all night back to town.

A steady job in Tripoli

I returned to Tripoli with a loss of more than USD 1,000. I wondered what to do. I knew that soldiers were still chasing people. Having seen the problems with crossing the sea, my friends and I decided to look for a job. I made contact with a Somali man who had business relations with Turkish men. He asked if we had any skills. We said that we knew everything. We said this because we really needed work. We said we were ready to be tested. So he took us in a small van to a Turkish construction company. We were offered three positions: a cleaner, who required strength, a flower worker and a night security guard, who would sleep all day.

The strongest of us was given the cleaning job, the other one became the night security guard and I was offered flower work. I was taken to see the management of the company. They asked me if I had any experience with flowers. I told them that I had some farming skills. I didn't want to admit that I knew nothing about flowers.

I was taken to a Turkish engineer who was responsible for planting flowers. Turkish people are strict but this man was flexible. I asked him to give me three-day induction training because it was a long time ago since I last did work like this. He trained me for three days, after which he left and handed the job over to me. I was to look after the flowers and water them. It was easy work.

In the first month, I received a salary of USD 600. I had been there for about a month and a half when my job was extended

ah la shaqaysta. Waxa uu yidhi shaqo waa la idiin helayaa laakiin xirfad ma leedihiin. Waxa annu u sheegnay in waxwalba an aqoon u leenahay. Sidan waxa aan u nidhi waayo shaqo ayaan aad ugu baahayn. Waxa aan nidhi imtixaan hanalaga qaado. Ninkii bas yar ayaa uu na soo saaray waxana uu na geeyay shirkad dhisme. Shirkaddii markii nala keenay waxa la yidhi waxaa bannaan saddex fursadood oo kala ah nadiifiye u baahan xoog, waardiye habeenkii ah oo maalin oo dhan hurdaya iyo, beeroole ubaxa dhaqaaleeya.

Kii noogu xoogga badnaa waxa la siiyay shaqadii nadiifinta, kii kale waardiye ayaa laga dhigay anigana waxa la i siiyay shaqadii ubax-dhaqaalaynta. Kadib waxa la ii geeyay madaxdii shirkadda. Waxa ay i waydiyeen in aan aqaano shaqada ubaxa iyo in kale. Waxa aan u sheegay in aan xirfadda beerista leeyahay. Ma aan rabin in aan qirto aqoon la'aantayda dhanka beeraha.

Waxa la ii geeyay engineer Turki ah oo dhirtan ku takhasusay. Turkigu waa niman ad-adag. Hase ahaatee, ninkii la ii geeyay, waxa uu noqday nin wanaagsan oo dabacsan. Waxa aan ka codsaday in uu i tabo- baro saddex cisho si aan ula qabsado shaqada. Waxa an u sheegay in shaqadan muddo iigu danbaysay. Tabo-barkii saddexda cisho ahaa ayaa uu isiiyay shaqadii ayaan fahmay, ninkiina wuu tagay shaqadiina waan la wareegay. Waxa la ii xilsaaray in aan dhaqaaleeyo ubaxa waraabshana. Waxa ay ahayd shaqo fudud. Bishii u horraysay waxa aan qaatay 600 oo dollar. Markii aan shaqeeyey bil iyo badh ayaa shaqadii balaadhatay oo waxaa la keenay geedo badan oo dhul badan lagu beerayo.

Sidaa awgeed waxa la keenay markaa toban shaqaale oo Bangaladheesh ah. Aniga iyo shaqaalahii Bangaladesh ka ahaa waa annu is fahmi waynay. Waa dad sida loo xamaalo uun garanaya. Waxaa la iiga dhigay guddoomiye. Maalintii oo dhan waxba ma qabtaan. Waxaan codsaday in la ii keeno mid afkooda iyo af-carbeedka labadaba yaqaanna. Waxa bilaabantay in aan ninkii idhaaho shaqaalahan ku dheh si fiican u shaqeeya. Tallabadan lafteedu waxba uma tarin. Marka ay i arkayaanna waa ay yara shaqeeyaan

beyond taking care of flowers. It turned out that I was supposed to handle a bigger area of land.

The company employed ten Bangladeshi men. I could not get along with them. The Bangladeshis were rude and only knew hard jobs. I was appointed to supervise them but I could not continue with them because they would do nothing. I requested the recruitment of a Bangladeshi who could speak Arabic. I then tried to communicate with them through him, telling them to do their job. However, this did not work either. They only worked in my presence and stopped when they found me busy with other things. When we reached a deadlock, I divided them into groups of five and assigned them different locations. I promised that I would reward them based on their performance.

Because of this new initiative, the two groups started to compete with each other, which resulted in an improved landscape. Then, after the end of the second month, my salary was increased to USD 900. The rest of the employees also had a salary increase. My performance attracted everyone's attention and they liked me for it. I was praised for what I did. On top of that, the man who recruited me was also applauded for his selection of Somalis. I doubled my efforts and was awarded another salary increase six months later.

Although I sent money to my family, I was able to save a good amount. I had been contacted by some of my friends who told me about other friends who had crossed the sea and survived. They told me they were going to cross the sea soon.

I then decided to quit my job and approached the management to inform them of my intentions. I told them that I had an urgent task

inta aan shaqada ku mashquul sanahayna waxba ma qabtaan. Ka dib markii xaaladdu ay adkaatay, waa aan kala qaybiyay shantii qofba meel gaar ah ayaan idhi ka shaqeeya. Waxa aan u ballan qaaday in kooxda shaqo fiicnaatana la siinayo abaalmarin.

Qorshahan dartii, waxa ay bilaabeen tartan labadii kooxood shaqadiina way socotay dhulkiina wada cagaar iyo qurux ayuu noqday. Markii ay bishii labaad dhammaatay mushaharkaygii waxa la gaadhsiiyay 900 oo doolar. Shaqaalahii kale laftoodii mushaharkii waa loo kordhiyay. Shaqadaydii qof walba way soo jiidatay waana la igu jeclaaday. Waxa la igu ammaanay waxqabadkaygii. Sidoo kale ninkii soomaaligaa ahaa ee na shaqaalaysiiyay waxa lagu ammaanay in uu dad wanaagsan oo Soomaali ah soo xulay.

Shaqadii aya aan aad usii dardar galiyay, lix bilood ka dibna waxa aan helay mushahar kordhin kale. Inkasta oo aan bilkasta reer-kayaga lacag u dirayay, haddana lacag fiican ayaan meel dhigtay. Maalintii danbe waxa ila soo xidhiidhay saaxibaday oo ii sheegay in qolo kale oo aan asxaab ahayn baddii ka gudbeen oo badbaadeen. Waxa ay ii sheegeen in iyaga laftooddu badda marayaan.

Kadib waxa aan u tagay maamulkii una sheegay in aan shaqada ka tagayo oo hawl dagdag ahi iisoo baxday. Runtii way ka xumaadeen waxana ay ii soo bandhigeen in ay lacagta ii kordhiyaan si ay ii joojiyaan. Kaligay ma aan ahayn saddexdayadii Soomaalida ahaydba halmar ayaan nidhi waan tagaynaa.

Waxa ay isku dayeen in ay noo caqli celiyaan naguna qanciyaan joogitaan. Runtii waxa noo muuqatay fikirkayagii aannu kaga nimid dalkii [laba sano ka hor] in aannu ka rumayno oo Yurubtii aan doonaynay aan u gudubno. Waxa ay na waydiiyeen in aannu soo noqonayno. Waxa ku qufulnaa maskaxdayada waad gudbay-saan oo waa tagaysaan maxaa yeelay lacag fiican ayaad haysataan. Waa an ka dhaqaaqay iyaga oo niyadjabsan.

to accomplish. They tried to stop me and offered me better terms. I was not alone. All three of us [who had been hired] wanted to quit.

They tried to reason with us but couldn't persuade us. We were determined to realize our goal of going to Europe—the same goal we'd had when we left our country [two years earlier]. They then asked us if we were coming back. We had in mind that this time we were really going for good because we had enough money. We left them disappointed.

At sea again

Coming back to town, we found a large boat ready that was about to sail. It was big enough to carry 300 hundred persons. We paid USD 2,000 each. It was night when 300 of us were loaded on board and we set off to sea.

The captain was instructed to take us to Malta. We were only 15 miles away from our destination when some of the other passengers, among them pirates who had been drinking alcohol, changed their mind about Malta and told the captain to sail to Sicily instead. They said in Malta finger prints were recorded and you had to stay there for three years. Others insisted we should continue to Malta. The intoxicated pirates insisted on their decision of going to Sicily. To avoid any physical confrontation that would risk capsizing the already congested boat, we turned toward Sicily. Two days and 50 miles later, the boat ran out of fuel and came to a halt.

Then the boat started to drift. People were pushed to one side of the boat as it moved up and down the waves. People started to scream, became disoriented and vomited. People thought the boat was sinking because it was not under control. We had already spent

Mar Labaad Iyo Baddii

Magaaladii ayaan soo galnay markiibana waxa aan helnay doon wayn oo qaadi karta 300 qof. Qofkiiba waxa laga qaaday 2000 oo dollar. Habeenkii markii aay ahayd 300 qof oo aan ahayn waxa la saaray doontii badda ayayna nala gashay. Kabtanka waxa lagu amray in uu na geeyo Maalta. Haddii aan Maalta u jirno wax aan ka badnayd 15 mile ayaa qolyo badan oo ka mid ah budhcad-badeedii nala socotay oo khamri cabbayay yidhaahdeen doonta u duwa Sisiliya. Waxay ay yidhaahdeen Malta faraha ayaa la inaga dhigayaa oo saddex sano ayaa la joogayaa. Qayb kale waxa ay ku adkaysteen in Maalta la tago. Budhcad-badeedii sakhraansanayd way ku adkaysteen in loo leexdo Sisiliya. Si looga taxaddiro in la isku dul qabsado doonta buuxda oo aanay u hafan waxa aannu u leexanay dhankaa iyo Sisiliya. Ka dib laba cisho iyo konton mayl doontii way shidaal beeshay waanay isa soo taagtay halmar.

Waxa ay noqotay in ay doontii iska sabbayso. Dadku hadba dhinac ayay iskugu daadanayeen. Waxaa bilaabmay oohin, wareer iyo matag. Dadku waxa ay u qaateen in ay dagayso maxaa yeelay faraha ayay ka baxday. Meeshii maalin iyo habeen markii aan saarnayn ee dhaxan iyo qabow nagu helay aya waxa naga hor yimid markab calanka Sisiliya sita. Waxa uu noo soo turay sharaab iyo biyo.

Annaga oo cunnay oo cabnay oo is leh oo Sisiliya ayaa la idin gayn, ayaa markab wayni yimid waxa aanu dib noogu soo jiiday Tiriboli caasimaddii Liibiya.

Waxa aan ku soo noqonnay isla jeelkii aan lacagta laaluushka ah ku bixinay si aan uga fakanno. Mar labaad waxa ay noqotay in aan u adkaysanno dhibta iyo tacadiga. Hadda laaluush lama ogolayn waayo dadka soo galootiga ah waa la tarxiilayay.

[Markii ay gaadhay in nala tarxiilo], waxa nalagu soo qaaday gawaadhi yaryar oo afartii qofba gaadhi afar askari saaranyihiin la saaray. Afartayadii waa aannu isku il-jabinnay markii gaadhigu soo yara qaboobay. Waxa jirtay markii uu gaadhigu cabbaa socday

a day and a night in that situation, feeling cold, when a ship bearing a Sicilian flag approached us and started throwing water and other drinks to us.

We ate and drank, thinking we were waiting to be taken to Sicily when all of a sudden another big ship came and towed us back to Tripoli.

We were back in the same prison we had bribed our way out of before. Once again, we had to endure the suffering and abuse. This time bribes were not accepted because foreigners were being deported.

[When it came to our turn to be deported] we were picked up in small vehicles, four of us per vehicle, with four security men. We signalled to each other to jump when the car slowed down. There was a woman who jumped while the car was moving too fast. We saw her spinning and rolling. The rest of us jumped together, at the same time. Unfortunately, two were caught, beaten on the head and returned to the vehicle. The rest of us, however, ran through farming areas and eventually arrived in town.

Returning home

After six months of mental breakdown, I decided to go back home, together with a friend. We began our journey back. We managed to get money to buy a ticket and the go-home documents. We left Libya with all its problems and headed to Berbera [in Somaliland] via Dubai in late 2011.

When we arrived home we kissed the ground. We slept well and felt very happy. We felt like we had come through hell and were now in paradise. Everyone in my family was happy to see me safe.

gabadh gaadhiga oo xoog u socda iska tuurtay. Iyada oo sii qalaama -rogmanaysa ayaa noogu danbaysay. Halmar baan iska daadinay afartayadii. Nasiib darro, laba naga mid ah inta ay askartii qabteen, madaxa ka garaaceen ayaa ay gaadhigii saareen. Intayadii kale waxa aannu dhex yaacnay dhul beero ah sidaas ayaanan ku gaadhnay magaaladii.

Soo Guryo -noqoshadii

Lix bilood oo murug badan ka dib, waxa aan go'aansaday in aan dalkii ku soo noqdo. Waxa aan bilawnay socdaalkii soo guryo noqoshada. Waxa noo suuro gashay in aan helno lacag aan ku iibsanno tigidh iyo waraaqo dalku-noqosho. Dilkii iyo dhibkii Liibiya sidaas ayaan kaga soo noqonnay. Waxa aan soo marnay Dubai kana soo degnay Berbera dabayaaqadii sannadkii 2011.

Markii aannu dalka nimid ciidda ayaannu dhunkannay. Waa an seexannay oo waxa aannu dareenay farxad aan la koobi karin. Waxa aannu dareemaynay sidii dad in ta ay cadaab ku jireen jannada la geeyay. Markii aan dalka imid, Hargaysa ayaan kusoo horreeyay oo aan muddo joogay kadibna waxa aan u dhaafay Ceerigaabo oo aan aabbahay iyo reerkayagii ugu tagay. Waa la iisoo dhaweeyay qofkasta oo i arkaana wuu ku farxayay aragtidayda.

Markii aan Liibiya joogay waxaan waraysan jiray mar walba dadka naga horeeyay ee Yurub tagay. Ma aanan maqal hal qof oo nolol fiican ku nool. Waxa la ii sheegay in kaliya dadkii meesha iyaga oo yaryar la keenay, ama gaaloobay ama sifican wax u bartay ay rajo wanaagsan leeyihiin.

Mar haddii aan soo badbaadday dalkiina aan ku soo noqday waxa aan bilaabay in aan ummada ka wacyigaliyo khatartahriibka. Waxa aan ogaaday in ay jiraan dad badan oo u heellan in ay tahriibaan. Waxa aan ka sameeyay hawlo badan oo wacyigalin ah meelo badan aniga iyo inan saaxibkay ah. Waxa aannu ka shaqaynay wacyigalin, horumarinta waxbarashada, dayactirka dugsiyada,

I spent some days in Hargeysa with relatives and then travelled to Erigavo where I met my father and my family. They were very glad to see me again and received me well.

Because of what I experienced, I would never decide to go abroad again—even with the promise of money.

When I was in Libya, I was in contact my friends in Europe. I never heard from anyone who had a good life. They said the only people who had a good chance in life were those who either went there when they were young, or those who embraced Christianity or those who were well educated.

Having survived and returned home I have started to mobilize people to stop them from the adventure of emigrating abroad. I have realized that there were a lot of people who were interested in going on *tahriib*. I have conducted mobilization activities in many places, together with a friend of mine. We've done a lot of awareness raising, education development, school rehabilitation, supporting street children and orphans, and establishing small businesses.

I can do this because I am not living as an unwanted person in a foreign country. I am in my own country. I can implement any initiatives I have created. I am very glad that my life has changed so much.

Really, I have a good job and I am getting a good education. I am living with my family. It is very rewarding when I go to see my father after work. My life is good now and I hope it will continue that way.

iyo taakulaynta carruurta darbi-jiifka ah iyo agoomaha. Waxa aan samaystay meherad.

Waxkasta wuu ii suuro galay waayo kuma nooli dal shisheeye oo aan la iga jeclayn. Waxa aan joogaa dalkaygii, maskaxdaydu way furan tahay waxwalba oo aan hindisana waan fulin karaa. Waxa aan aad ugu faraxsanahay in noloshaydii aad isku badashay.

Run ahaantii, shaqo waan haystaa, waxbarasho wanaagsanna waan haystaa. Waxa aan la noolahay reerkayagii. Farxad waxa iigu filan marka aan habeenkii shaqada ka baxo ee aabbahay sii salaa-mayo. Noloshayddu hadda aad ayay u farxad badan tahay. Ilaahay ayaa aan ka baryayaa in uu sidaa iigu sii wado.

Glossary of words, acronyms and phrases

<i>buufis</i>	(<i>Somali</i>) a slang term linked to migration and <i>tahriib</i> , with different meanings ranging from someone having a strong urge to leave and have already taken the decision to leave, or awaiting resettlement in a refugee camp, as well as the the psychological stress associated with this.
<i>Harakat al-Shabaab al-Muja'eddin</i>	(<i>Arabic</i>) Mujahideen Youth Movement. A militant group in Somalia which is active across East Africa, commonly abbreviated to al-Shabaab.
<i>magafe</i>	(<i>Somali</i>) the one who never misses, used by Somalis to describe someone who makes a business out of kidnapping migrants heading to Europe via the Sahara Desert.
<i>tahriib</i>	(<i>Arabic</i>) specific, growing form of unregulated, illegal emigration, which involves a large number of young Somali men and women leaving for Europe via Ethiopia, Sudan and Libya, and thence across the Mediterranean Sea.
Xamar	a local colloquial name for Mogadishu, derived either from the Somali word for the tamarind tree or Mogadishu's red soils.

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‘This is a vivid account—one of the best I’ve come across—of what it is to be a Somali migrant in pursuit of a safer future elsewhere, away from the precarious life in the Somali Peninsula. I’ve found it a wonderful, intelligent, well-organized and gripping read—and I recommend it.’

‘Waa sheeko ka mid ah kuwii ugu xiisaha badnaa ee aan la kulmo, oo ka warramaysa waayoaragnimada qurbaawi Soomaali ah, oo ka raadsanaya meel kale, nolol aayatiin dhaanta tan aan xasilloonayn ee geyiga Soomaalida. Akhriskeedu waxa uu ii noqdey mid caqiibo leh, si cilmiyeysan u qoran, oo aanad ka xiiso goynayn. Waan dhiirigelinayaa akhriska sheekadan.’

—Nuruddin Farah

—Nuuradiin Faarax

