Mohamed A. Mohamed Transcription

“Mohamed’s Story”

Mohamed Mohamed is a Somali immigrant. He is a student at Saint Paul College taking Contemporary History. He is happily married to a fellow Somali immigrant named Halimo Mohamed, who got here before he did and helped him get to the United States. This presentation will tell his story of his journey from Somalia to the United States.

Mohamed Mohamed was born on October 3rd 1980 in Hargeisa, Somalia, a city in northern Somalia. Life was hard in Somalia. This was due to intense poverty and violence, exacerbated first by violent unrest that broke out in northern Somalia in 1988, and by 1991, the outbreak of the Somali civil war. When Mohamed was just a child, he was badly injured by a government arterially barrage in his neighborhood to weed out opposition groups. He, his family, and his neighbors fled to Ethiopia as refugees. They stayed in a refugee camp and later returned to a Somalia that had a devastated infrastructure, including a devastated education system. It was the devastation of the Somali education system that caused him to go to Egypt for an education.

In 1988, violent unrest broke out in northern Somalia between the Somali government and opposition groups. The Somali government was weakening at this point. In 1991, the Somali civil war broke out thanks to the collapse of the Somali government. It was fought between the remnants of the Somali government and various rebel factions with a variety of motives. The result was overall devastation of the Somali infrastructure with hundreds of thousands of Somalis becoming refugees.

In 2003, with the desire to make a better life for himself, Mohamed wrote an essay that won him a scholarship to Al-Azhar University. While studying Islamic Law at Al-Azhar University, he met his current wife, Halimo, and that is how he ended up in the United States. He came to the United States in May of 2012 for this reason. Halimo is also a Somali immigrant who has been in the United States longer.

The object of immense importance here is the essay that got him the scholarship. This was the essay that got him a scholarship to the Al-Azhar University. His essay was about the traumatic memories of the Somali civil war, which made up much of his childhood and early adult years. It is also of very significant importance because it enabled him to pursue an education and thus pursue a better life, first in Egypt then when he met his wife in Egypt, then in United States.

Mohamed's story has taught me there is a critical difference between an immigrant and a refugee. An immigrant chooses to leave their home country, a refugee is forced to leave their home country. Mohamed is a member a growing East African population in the Twin Cities. He has taught me to be perceptive of the changing community around me. Mohamed impressed me because he showed perseverance, observance, a high level of intelligence, and a willingness to survive. I live a few blocks away from St. Paul College. There is a large East African community nearby. Next time I meet an East African immigrant or refugee, I will think about the miles they have traveled and the struggles they face in pursuit of a better life. Thank you.