

James Aleu

Age: 38

Region: Bahr Al Ghazal

I am an only child and both my parents passed away. In 1999, when I was 22 years old, I left my home because it was unsafe and I was afraid for my life. I went to the church and asked for help. The church gave me money so I could leave Sudan. From Khartoum, I took a train to the border of Egypt. From the border, I took a boat to Cairo.

In Cairo, I stayed in a rented house that I shared with other people because Egypt refuses to make camps for people. My house had two small rooms, a kitchen, and a bathroom. It was too small for all of us, but at least I had accommodations. Finding a place to sleep and finding food were the hardest things I experienced. I sometimes had to stand in long lines to get food. I usually ate bread, beans, rice and fruit.

After staying in Cairo for several years, I applied to the United Nations to come to the United States. Two years later, my application was finally accepted and on January 25, 2004, I came to the United States.

The most surprising thing about American culture is that when I came here, whenever I saw a neighbor, they wouldn't say "hi" to me. I thought that they didn't care. What I like the most about the United States is that I feel safe here and the U.S. has good people. I used to take some classes at Glendale Community College. I study English. I really like Arizona but the weather is very hot!