



Liban, a Somali refugee's story.

Elaine: Perhaps you'd like to introduce yourself, say your name.

Liban: My name is Liban and I come from in Somalia, especially Bu'aale (?) and I was a forestry man before and I am the leader of the Kamil (?) and after I come into the district of near Kismaayo, they call it Bu'aale (?) in 2007, then I have a supermarket. Then I work from there, then when I work from there, I get more problem about somebody that live from there that they kill the people. Then that people they attacked me and they kill my father, they killed my brother. Also, they injured me. That's why I afraid and I escaped my country, because I afraid to die from there. Then I come in France, clearly France is good country, good people, they really they help me, France people. Also, they give me hospital for I am like in handicap, then, because I have shooting. Then they give me operation and ...

Elaine: That was in Pontivy?

Liban: In Pontivy hospital. I thanked my doctors, and because they helping me, because before my life is dangerous, when I stay there. Just I get secours and the stability and I am very happy because the French people. I don't know what I say before, because all the people, the France people like my mother and my father, the younger generation my brother and my sister. Really I am very, very happy because they, the people, the country, they don't know, they resist, because everybody, black and white is the same in France. Everybody is same. Really, I don't know what, how, what I do, because even if they, because they help me, this government even if they say, "Please, Liban, be volunteer," or "work for us without money," I give my power of my, because I am young, but just I am 26 years old, even they say, "to work for us without money," I am ready to work, even if they say "give your blood" or your power or be ..., so I am ready to give my, what I can.

Elaine: Because you've been through so much ...

Liban: Yes

Elaine: ... and to see your father killed, and your brother killed, ...

Liban: Yes

Elaine: ... and I believe you have a family in Somalia

Liban: Yes, before I, yes I have, I have wife and two children. When I escaped in Somalia, they killed people. Really, up to now, I don't know where they stay, my wife and my children, really three years, because I find -- I contacted a some my family, or my clan, I say, "find, I don't know where they stay, whether they die, or where they stay." I don't know my wife and my children, really I am alone, because I prefer to kill me that people. I prefer to die in the sea Mediterranean, because when I come from Somalia, I come in Sudan, I come in Libya, because I stay in the Libya Sahara seven months, that people also, dangerous people, they banish me every time. Then, I prefer to die in the sea. Then I see, I come in Europe. I don't know any person when I come in France, just I get secours, I get stability. Last week I go in OFPRA, I make interview, because this country, they accepted me and they say, "welcome," they make



me interview, just I wait results. I stay in France nine months. Just I try to learn French language. Really, I want to, because, to understand people, because French language important, because if you not speak French, it's difficult ...

Elaine: It's very difficult ...

Liban: It's very difficult. You don't understand the people, you know. Because I'm a young boy, because really, because I need a future ... because before I don't have ... before when I stay in my country, because I never dream to escape my country, because my country, Somalia, is beautiful land, because we have river, we have Indian Ocean and sea, we have everything. But we have some of people against the people or because we are civil war. Somalia has 25 years not government. They fighting against ...

Elaine: ..each other

Liban: each other, they kill each other, because not stability, not security, because if not attack that people, clearly, I don't like to escape my country, because I want, I like ...

Elaine: Of course, your family was there ...

Liban: With my family, I was happy that -- I never dream one night that I have to go, to escape my country ...

Elaine: That must be very difficult decision.

Liban: Yeah, but when I get not get security -- everything is security, because today, the young generation that's some of the world, because today, the older world, because every person there have gun, because we don't have, because we are all are-- our religion is Sufia [Sufi], we are religion Sufia, we are Muslim, we are Sufia. We are not like another people. We are -- it is forbidden to kill the people. We like this, because religion say don't, your heart don't kill the people; your mouth don't say or abuse any person. We are Sufia, we are Sharia, we are haqiqa, we are peace people ...

Elaine: Peaceful people

Liban: ... peaceful people. Really, everybody, today, same for me. Everybody, same for me.

Elaine: Absolutely.

Liban: Yes. Really, that's why I come here and this country really accepting me and very happy. They give me a house, they give me everything. I applied to find work.

Elaine: Who did you say helped you -- the company?

Liban: The government.

Elaine: The government

Liban: Because I agreed to work. Because I stay here nine months, they agreed to work. Then, I thank all the government, President Macron, parliament, are all great and the younger generation, all of the French people, I thank really. I am very happy, also you ..

Elaine: So, how did you meet Françoise?

Liban: Françoise, really, she is, I don't know what I say, because she is a great woman. Because Françoise ... and when I am injured, or when I am in hospital, they make an impression in the hospital that time because we live same village, because she is my neighbour, because the first girl in my village, she speak English. Because all these French people, because it's great, because they speak French. Because she speak very English.

Elaine: She speaks English.

Liban: Yes, that's why we learn each other and, because she helping me, the language, because she teach me, she showed me more places in Breton. Before, I don't know, before, I'm alone. I don't know any person to speak, so, when Françoise, she show me many places. Also, she teach me Breton dancing.

Elaine: Oh, right.

Liban: Yeah, yes, great. Because I like very night to go ...

Elaine: ... to dance ...

Liban: To dance, Breton dancing.

Elaine: I understand you sing also?

Liban: Yes, because when I stay in Somalia, for us, because it's forbidden to sing in Somalia, because some people, they catch the air, they kill the people. So, I sing, "The Time in the Forest" and the "Leader of the Camel" because when I stay tonight in the camel, near a camel, I hear maybe three hours ... if you walk three hours, because some winding, some people make dancing like this, I go from there. All the night I run, because sometimes he want to kill me, light on, I see everything. That time, I go there and I make song, everything I prepared, because they love me, that people. Also, I try to my sing now

[Liban sings ...]

Liban: I am very happy, because "The Forest Time" also I sing because Françoise, she take me to a festival, to a big festival that time, because first time to sing in front of the French people. Because they don't understand your language, because they ask me, "Liban, you are Somali?" I say, "yes." "You have language?" I say, "yes, also, we sing, also we have language, Somali language." Then I show and I proud, and I show the French people what I am, I am Somali. I'm proud I am Somali. And I show my culture and my song. They very, very happy. Also, I just want to try, because I want to make effort to learn French language. When I learn, I also want to sing French. Because if I stay [in] Somalia I can't

sing--because if I sing, they kill me. They are afraid to sing. But just when I come here, I get free and secure and there is stability. I am very happy.

Elaine: You're very welcome to sing all over Brittany.

Liban: Yes.

Elaine: And obviously you have no plans, because of the dangers, of going back to Somalia to find your family. So, you'll be staying here for a while?

Liban: That's good question, thank you, Elaine, because I never dream to escape my country. I tell you before, because if I not get to that problem, I never escape my country. Because, the people, they kill my father, they kill my brother, also, they come to kill me, because ... but God, he protect me, because they kill me, and I am injured, that time. Then, I run in the forest, all the night I run in the forest. Because when I injured in the night, because in the evening, I go in the forest, they follow me that time, because I go in the tree. [in the trees] That time I say, "if you stay here," ... I see my body, I touch my body, because I feel blood, I want to go and I fall, and I say, "if you sit like this in the forest, maybe they take the battery and they follow you and they see you, that people, they kill you." Then I go maybe 8 kilometres, all the night ...

Elaine: At this point, you're injured?

Liban: Injured, my stomach and my leg. Then, I go all the night, then I get one man, forestry man, and the camel, because I see the fire. "Please," I say, I speak to him, I day "please helping me, because they kill me, some people, like this." ... He say, "if I help you, that people, tomorrow they kill me, and I can't help you." Then, what I do? But he give me ... He give me water and he give me something to make to marcher-- to walk--a stick. Then I go and I see another man. That man I say, "Please helping me, I am like this, today, tonight they kill me," because if I tell that people name, ... because if I tell the name of that people, because you're not helping me. But, I say "please, this afternoon they kill me," thieves -- they need to take my money. They kill me, please help me, because my village is not a hospital. The hospital is district of the Kismaayo. Then, that man, he helping me, really, and I take hyna, he have donkey, he have something like a cart that he bring me ...

EA: He put you in a cart ...

Liban: ... put me in the cart, then he bring me in the Kismaayo hospital. That time also they come to kill me the hospital, that people to try, then I escaped my country, that's why, because they want to kill me. If I go back my country, the people that kill my father and my brother, that people, they kill me.

EA: Yes, they'll find you.

Liban: Yes and I asked the government of France to accept me and I tell my problem. Then they accept me. I thank the France government.



Elaine: You're very welcome here and I hope that your stay here will continue to make you even happier, and maybe one day -- fingers crossed, as we say -- that you will find your wife and your children.

Liban: Also, I when last week I went in OFPRA, I tell ... it's difficult, because two children, my girl is 4 years, my son is 5 years, or 6 years, yes. I say because I never hear where they stay ... he die, maybe, you believe he die. But somebody not die, you don't know where he stay, because ... your blood, your children, you feel, and I say "helping me please, because I don't know where I find ... because they say 'we tried to find' ... because if I got my children and my wife, I'm very, very so happy."

Elaine: We hope, we will all hope for you that maybe they will be found and they could be brought here to join you in Brittany. That would be the best.

Liban: Yes, because -- Breton, really I like it because if I get also my family, if I get my wife also to live in here, Breton, it is good, I like it, because ...

Elaine: ... very good, warm people ...

Liban: Yeah, the people, really, where you go, the people smile, the people, they say "welcome", "assieds-toi", "bonjour", "ça va?", "comment ça va?" Really, because language is difficult, but I like to learn, because the people, they often help and they smiled, and they're great, great people. I thank the Breton people and I am very happy to be Breton dancing.

Elaine: Thank you very much. Thank you Liban, it's been wonderful hearing your story. You have such courage and I wish you all the luck.

Transcribed by Jane Crisler
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Sufism

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