

## Father of the Year

There once was a man who knew nothing about compassion. This man had his own business and lived with his whole family in Hergeysa, Somalia. In 1988, his normal life was brutally interrupted when the President of Somalia Said Barre gave the order to kill all of the Issaq clan, of which this man was a part of. The “Somalilanders” who lived in the Northern region of Somalia, to this day remember this act of genocide. This man was now responsible for his whole family, business, and himself. He had a wife who was five months pregnant, five children, and both his and his wife’s family. Even though this would be a burden to anyone, this courageous man worked quickly in this dangerous time. To keep everyone safe, he helped evacuate his extended family to Ethiopia who wanted to stay in their homeland. There was much chaos in Somalia and this man had to leave quickly for the sake of his family. With no regrets, this man went to the store into which he had put his sweat and blood. Not having the slightest thought he opened his store and left it open as he left the country. In his heart this man knew by opening this small store he may help a family, a wounded civilian, or even an orphan to find food or shelter.

Now, came the difficult part, moving his seven month pregnant wife and his five young children. First, he gave all the remaining clothes and food to people who were less fortunate because they had left their homes. Then he took his family to Southern Somalia, a place safer for his family, so he could wait for his wife could give birth. With joy, his wife gave birth to his second son. Despite the circumstances, they named their new-born son Warsame which in Somali means “good news”. Eventually, this man and his family made their way to America. However, this man achieved his lifelong purpose: he made

sure that his family would be protected and have all the happiness he could provide them. This man might have not known what compassion was, but performed the acts of compassion everyday of his life. I know this personally because this warm-hearted man was my father.

My father now happily lives in Washington State with his wife and five children, but unfortunately he's diagnosed with kidney failure. He can never go back to his homeland, never be able to go with his family and see his homeland rebuilt. I'm a sophomore at my high school. I have been through and seen my father performing his acts of compassion towards others, and seeing this only inspired me to follow in my father's footsteps.

My father has given me much wisdom about the importance of giving back to my homeland. He constantly tells me the problems facing Somalia and the solutions to them. When I graduate from high school and hopefully from a university I plan to use my education and father's solutions to rebuild my homeland. Somalia hasn't had a stable government for 30 years. The main reason is that Somalilanders who established their own country in the Northern region of Somalia, called Somaliland want their own recognition from Somalia. These Somalilanders consist of the Issaq clan, who after the genocide of 1988 decided to break away from the rest of Somalia. This separation is not something new but was formed when the British and Italians first came to the Horn of Africa. Britain colonized Somaliland and Italy colonized Somalia. Optimistically, in 1960 Somalia and Somaliland gained independence and openly decided to become one country called Somalia. All this changed, when the leading clan of the government gave the order to eliminate the Issaq people to retain power.

Having Somaliland being recognized as its own country would bring happiness to all of the Issaq people who lost many of their love ones in brutal executions. This specific problem is important to me because it hurts me when someone asks' me where I'm from and I'm forced to answer "Somalia". Fully knowing, that if I said Somaliland the person would have no clue what I was talking about. My people deserve recognition, and I would like to return to my homeland. After becoming an educated adult I would try my hardest to go to the UN council and educate them of this significant cause. I would also strive to write to the representatives of the U.S president and other inspirational leaders, to get them to acknowledge the struggles of Somaliland gaining recognition.

I know that this problem is a big political issue for any one person to handle, but watching my father's compassion I know that anything is possible. Somalia and Somaliland are not only faced with this political problem but with famine, droughts and floods, and being one of the poorest nations in the world. This is the main reason why so many Somali people are leaving their homeland and most of them never coming back. My extended family who still live in Somaliland tell me the Somali people mostly need hospitals with healthcare, education, electricity, shelters, and rations. Even though, the Somali people need a lot of help and need many basic necessities, it figures with Somalia only having 18 million to run the failed state of nine million. With all the help around the world, people would wonder why that help is not reaching the Somali people. The answer is that Somalia is the one country in the world that is the most dangerous for aid workers. However, this difficulty hasn't held back many of the wonderful organizations like the Oxfam, the UN, and other international aid, on which 2.1 million Somalis are totally dependent.

One day, in the future I hope to look at Somalia and Somaliland with my father and show him how his compassion has encouraged me to bring peace and happiness in our homeland.

## Bibliography

[oxfamamerica.org/whatwedo/emergencies/Somalia](http://oxfamamerica.org/whatwedo/emergencies/Somalia)

[un.org/events/tenstories\\_2006/story](http://un.org/events/tenstories_2006/story)

[nytimes.com/Somaia](http://nytimes.com/Somaia)

