

## SUDAN

Sudan is a country in Africa. It is ruled by a military leader. There has been civil war in Sudan since the 1980s. Young children become soldiers. Many people have died. Millions of people leave their houses, farms, animals, and other properties to seek refuge in Chad, Egypt, Syria, or other countries. Life in the refugee camp is very hard and lonely. People live in tents, take rations of food, and can't do much to establish a good life for themselves or their families. The United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) helps manage the refugee camps with support from different countries and non-profit organizations.

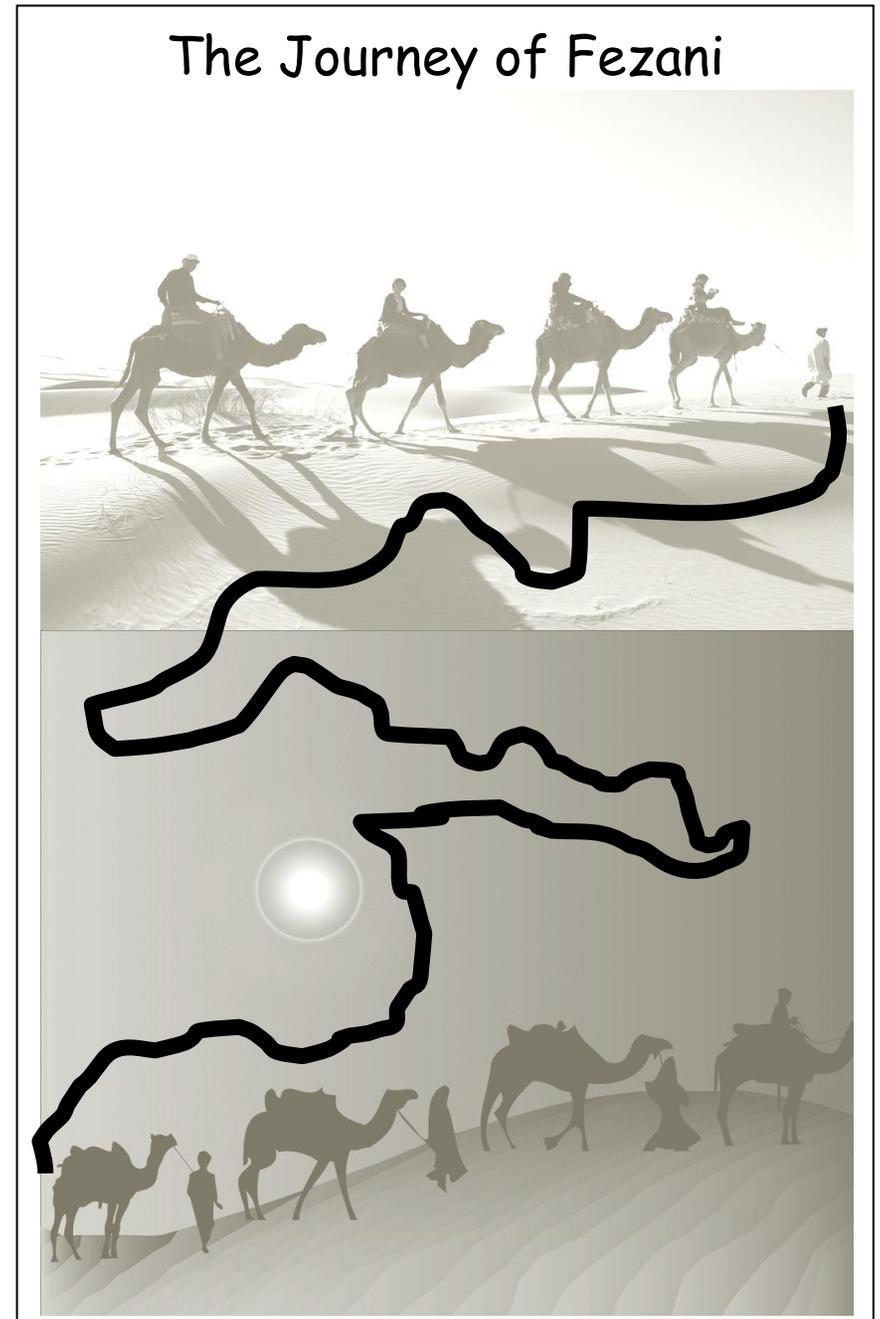
There is a big difference between the northern and southern part of the country in terms of natural resources, way of living, religion, language, and culture. In 2011, the people from South Sudan voted to become autonomous. Because of this, South Sudan is the newest country in the world.

### Volunteer Opportunities

If you are interested in culture, diversity, community engagement, or simply want to assist refugees start their new life in our community, please contact:

**Commonwealth Catholic Charities**  
**820 Campbell Avenue SW, Roanoke 24016**  
**Telephone: 540-342-7561**

**Produced by the Roanoke Refugee Mental Health Council.**  
**More at: [www.dbhds.virginia.gov/professionals-and-service-providers/oclc/oclc-focus-areas/refugee-mh/roanoke-council](http://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/professionals-and-service-providers/oclc/oclc-focus-areas/refugee-mh/roanoke-council)**



## Reading Activity

### The Journey of Fezani

In one village in Sudan, there lived a tribe of peace-loving animal herders. Their wealth was based on the number of animals they had. Ethnic rivalry was very strong. When there was fighting, the people ran to the forest and hid among the trees and bushes – except for men and boys as young as 12 years old, who had to stay to defend the village. Many were wounded or died this way.

Mother My son, listen to me, and listen well. In 2 days, the caravan will pass by. I will ask the leader to take you with them so you can leave our village and be safe.

Fezani No mother...

Mother Listen to me. You are to follow what the leader says. He will protect you but you have to help the men in the caravan. Do what they tell you to do. When you reach Chad, look for work so you don't get hungry. You understand?

Fezani Yes mother.

*Narrator After 2 days...*

Mother It's time for you to go. Do not return as long as there is war. May your father's spirit will guide you. May Allah will guide you and keep you safe. As-Salaam-Alaikum.

Fezani Wa-Alaikum-Salaam.

*Narrator The caravan went from village to village to buy and sell goods. Sometimes, the caravan would travel for days and see nothing but desert sand. Sometimes, they stopped to let the sandstorm pass by. The journey from Sudan to Chad took over 2 months.*

*Fezani stayed in Chad while the caravan moved on. He*

*worked in the farm tending to the animals. After four months, war broke out in Chad. Fezani, along with another person of his age, travelled to Syria.*

Friend Goodbye, Fezani. Allah will bring you happiness in Syria.

Fezani Goodbye, friend. Allah will bring you happiness wherever you go. As-Salaam-Alaikum.

Friend Wa-Alaikum-as-Salaam.

*Narrator In Syria, Fezani went around everyday to see who needed help in their businesses. He worked as a cleaner, handyman, delivery person, and all other sorts of manual jobs. After three months, war broke out in Syria and Fezani used his savings to buy a bus ticket to Egypt. The ride took him two days.*

Fezani As-Salaam-Alaikum.

Man Wa-Alaikum-Salaam.

My name is Ahmed. I make jewelry. What do you do?

Fezani I do all kinds of work. In the morning, I go around the city asking for work. Sometimes I don't have work.

Man Where do you live?

Fezani I have no home.

Man Come with me. I live in a refugee camp?

Fezani Refugee camp?

Man Yes, many people have escaped our country because we are not safe. Like me, I came from Nigeria. I have lived in the camp for 2 months. I will help you register.

*Fezani was taken in the camp as a refugee. There, he learned how to write his name for the first time. Fezani and Ahmed became very close, like brothers. They both learned to read and write. After four years, Fezani was resettled to the United States from Egypt. Ahmed was resettled in Canada. They are still in contact with each other – like true brothers.*