

Translation of N12 Article - July 10, 2021

The young man who was deported from Israel as a child volunteers as an instructor at GHIS and dreams of enlisting

- **Deng Kio Meyar was born in Sudan, but because of the war, he fled with his family to Israel and grew up in Tel Aviv**
- **When South Sudan gained independence, he was deported back, but good memories from Israel were seared in him**
- **"Soldiers who captured us at the border, treated my broken arm," he said**
- **At 17 he returned to Israel as a student at GHIS and now he's interested in serving in the IDF**

Staff of the Givat Haviva International School in the Menashe region have already become acquainted with quite a few extraordinary resumes of both students and instructors from around the world since the school was founded, but the story of Deng Kio Meyar managed to excite even them. The young man, now 20-years-old, who was deported from Israel about nine years ago to his South Sudan homeland after it gained independence, returned to Israel as a student at GHIS in 2018, and after two years, he remained for an additional year to volunteer at the boarding school. His next goal—to enlist in the Israel Defense Forces.

"I was a refugee all my life," Deng says in an interview with N12. "I was born in Sudan, but my family suffered a lot there and when I was a small child, we moved to Egypt. When I was six the situation in Egypt worsened and we fled on foot to Israel on a night journey that lasted several days. On the way, I broke my arm, but there was no medical treatment. When we got close to Israel, we were warned not to let IDF soldiers capture us, because they might hurt us. Soldiers did catch us, but it turned out to be a big surprise for the good. They took care of my broken arm, played football with me and brought me bamba."

This experience greatly affected Deng, and as a result he decided that in the future he wants to serve in the IDF. "I lived in Israel for six years as a refugee and slowly it became my home. I went to school in north Tel Aviv and had good friends, but in 2012, after South Sudan was declared a state, we were deported back there, even though I thought and felt that I was an Israeli."

In South Sudan, Deng's family got caught up in a civil war and were again forced to flee to Egypt. In 2014, with the help of the Come True organization that helps children from South Sudan who were deported from Israel, he went to school in Uganda and four years later became a student in the first cohort at

GHIS. "All those years I dreamed of returning to Israel and through GHIS I got the opportunity to study here and integrate into society," says Deng.

"The three years at GHIS was a formative and life-changing period for me in so many ways," Deng adds. "In my community there were many prejudices, but here I had the opportunity to develop real friendships with Jews and Arabs from Israel and friends from all over the world, of all religions. The South Sudanese community is very closed and segregated. Suddenly, international life opened me up to human diversity, community life and leadership capabilities. "I learned to listen to people who think differently. I feel like I'm a citizen of the world."

The GHIS International School for Leadership, Coexistence and Peace, is a high school that runs a biennial program for acquiring an International Baccalaureate diploma, as well as a boarding school for 11th-12th grade students. The school is designed so that half of its students come from around the world, and the rest come from Israel, in an equal distribution between Arabs and Jews. To date, students from 24 countries have studied at the school.

GHIS Executive Director Nurit Gery explains that this is a "unique educational space where young people from all over the world live and learn together, and run a common and egalitarian society as a way of life. We believe this is the way to grow leadership and young leaders in Israel, the Middle East and the world. Living together at school allows students to develop a routine of ongoing dialogue space, where they not only learn about leadership, conflict resolution and democracy, but live it on a daily basis."

Link:

https://www.mako.co.il/news-education/2021_q3/Article-3274732a2209a71027.htm?sCh=31750a2610f26110&pld=173113802



Deng Kio Meyar /Danielle Mehler Photography



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