

Declaration of John Feruzi

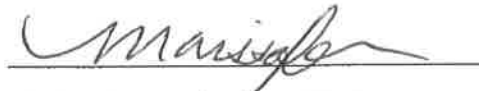
1. My name is John Feruzi. I am around 21 years old. I do not know the exact day and month that I was born, but I do know I was born in 1995. I was born in the Congo. Now I live in Dzaleka Refugee Camp in Malawi.
2. I cannot say anything about my birth parents because never knew them. I went to live with my uncle, Mwenda Watata, when I was very young. I do not consider him my uncle. He is my father. I call him "Baba," which means "Dad" in Swahili. His wife is like my mother. She raised me, too. She breastfed me as a child. I call my aunt "Mom." I do not refer to them as my uncle and aunt. They are my parents.
3. Dad is the only father I have ever known. He means everything to me. I love him very much. He brought me up. I have loved living with him. He has always been there for me.
4. I lived with Dad and Mom ever since I was a child, ever since I can remember. Dad always says I am his child, even though I am listed as his nephew on paperwork. He refers to me when he talks about his sons, because he has always considered me to be his son. Though we are cousins by birth, his birth children and I consider each other brothers and sisters. I am considered born into the family, not just a cousin.
5. My dad means everything to me. He took me to school. He gave me advice just as he did to his birth children. He took care of me when I was sick. He treated me exactly the same as his other children. We always ate together as a family.
6. When I was about 14 years old, Congo soldiers attacked our house and our family. I do not remember many details, but I remember that our family was on the run until we reached Malawi. That is really all I can remember. I was about 14 at the time. I believe we came to Malawi around October of 2009. We applied for refugee status around that time.
7. Our whole family started the application process together. We filed together. I was included because I was considered one of his children, even though I am listed as his nephew in the application. We went through all the steps together. We were fingerprinted at the same time. We took our photos at the same time. We all went to the interviews together. We completed our forms together and turned them in together. We finished the process together. We made travel arrangements together. Our cases progressed together. Dad handled everything and told us children what we needed to do.
8. Dad and Mom never officially adopted me. We just never thought it was necessary. Mom breastfed me. I was their kid. It was never a question. I was listed as their nephew on the paperwork, but we were all still processed together as a family. The fact that I was their nephew by birth never came up in my interview. It never was an issue until we all got to the airport to travel to the United States and they divided us. I never expected it to be an issue. We always thought I would be resettled with the rest of the family.
9. On the 4th of July, 2017, our whole family went to the airport together. We were all going to be resettled in Arkansas in the United States.
10. I expected that we would travel together and live together in the United States. All of a sudden, we got to the airport and I was told to stay behind. I think maybe this was because I was not considered family. I do not understand this system. I feel like I don't

understand anything anymore. All the people I grew up with are gone. This is my family. This is my Dad. This is my Mom. These are my brothers and sisters. I am separated from the people I love most in the world. My family is in the U.S. now without me. They are all there, except me. I am in the refugee camp without them.

11. I am not someone who cries easily. After this happened, I cried more than ever before in my life. I'm not in a good situation emotionally. All the people I care about are gone. My father who took care of me my whole life is gone. My whole family is all gone. I can't wrap my head around what happened. I don't understand why it happened. I'm scared I'll never get to join them. I'm afraid I'll never see Dad, Mom, and my brothers and sisters again.
12. I am providing this declaration in the hopes that somehow it might help my family and I be together again.
13. If anyone can get in touch with my dad, please tell him I'm thinking of him and the family. Please tell my dad I love him and miss him so much. If there is anything I can do to help move this process along, I'll do it. I'll do whatever I can. I just want to be with my family again.
14. I authorize Marissa Ram, attorney with the International Refugee Assistance Project ("IRAP") to sign this declaration on my behalf. I live in Dzaleka Refugee Camp and I do not have access to a printer. I would have to go out and pay to use one. Unfortunately, I do not have any money. Dad helped provide for me and now that he is gone I do not have any money. If my signature is needed at a later date and someone can pay for mailing service, I can and will sign the declaration myself.

07/11/2017

Date




Marissa Ram, Attorney with the
International Refugee Assistance Project,
on behalf of John Feruzi

I, Nancy Wallace, certify that I am fluent in the English and Swahili languages, and have verified that the above declaration is an accurate translation.

07/11/2017

Date



Nancy Wallace