

*My name is Deko
Abdi. I am 25 years
old. I'm Somali by
nationality, lived in
Kakuma refugee
camp for 17 years.
In the year 2008, my
mother, a single pa-
rent, fled from Soma-
lia with us due to the
difficult conditions.
After some time in
Dadaab refugee
camp, we were relo-
cated by UNHCR and
IOM to Kakuma
refugee camp in
2009. I am now 25
years old and spent
most of my life
growing up in
Kakuma with my
mother and siblings.
Life in the camp was
never easy, but with
hope and patience,
we endured the
many challenges. In
2025, I was
fortunate to receive
the opportunity from
UNHCR and IOM to
come to Germany. It
was truly a dream
come true – a new
beginning filled with
joy and gratitude. I
feel deeply indebted
to those who gave me
this golden chance to
change my life. Loo-
king ahead, I feel it
is my responsibility
to work hard,
become independent,
and promote peace,
love, and respect,
with helping others
as my aim in life.*

„NOT BY CHOICE,

We are refugees, Not criminals.
We are not what the world sometimes calls us.
We are not thieves of peace,
We are seekers of it.
Not criminals in the night,
But survivors of endless days without light.

We did not choose war,
War chose our homes,
Turned them into ashes,
Scattered our memories like dust in the wind.
We ran, Not out of weakness,
But because we want to live.

We carry no bombs, only burdens.
We hold no hatred, only hope.
We are mothers with lullabies trapped in our throats.
Fathers with dreams folded in pockets of fear,
Children with eyes too wide for their years,
All craving one thing,
A chance.
Just a chance.

We build from ruins,
We love despite the loss.
We plant seeds in foreign soil,
Hoping one day, our children will harvest peace.

We do not come to take,
But to give.
Our hands, our hearts, our hope.
We honor every door that opened,
Every hand that reached out.

BUT BY HOPE“

You fear what you do not know.
But come close,
And you'll see;
We are storytellers, peacemakers, pain-bearers turned bridge-builders.
We don't bring war,
We ran from it.
We don't break laws,
We respect them.
Because we know what it's like to live without justice.

So don't see us as shadows.
See us as mirrors –
Reflecting all that is human;
The need to be safe,
To be heard,
To be home.

We are refugees –
Not by choice,
But by circumstance.
Not less human,
But more resilient.

We carry nothing but stories,
And dreams heavy with hope.
Let us live.
Let us belong.
Let us breath.

*Illustration S. 51:
Max V. aka
POLYTOX ist
deutsch-
mexikanischer
Künstler aus
München. Er hat
über die Jahre seinen
eigenen Stil
entwickelt. Er arbei-
tet in einem Inklusi-
ons Café.
Ihr findet ihn auf
Instagram unter
@polytoxart*