



## WA winners in UNHCR School Writing Competition

A year-eleven student from Cyril Jackson Senior Campus has won second prize in a UNHCR Writing Competition for the vivid story of his journey as a refugee from war-torn Sudan to a new life in Perth.

Sudanese refugee known as David Sam (now aged 20) was just a small child when war erupted in his home village of Toris, Southern Sudan, and his family fled to city of Juba. But here his family faced further persecution and one day Sam and his sister were captured by soldiers and forced to work for them. Making their escape, the pair eventually made their way to Lokichogio, still in South Sudan, where they were registered with UNHCR and taken to Kakuma Refugee camp in Kenya.

In his twenty years, David Sam has had to cope with more than most Australians would ever face in a life time. But today, David feels lucky with his new life in Perth even though he misses his family in Africa. "I have a lot of knowledge, speak English and have a part time job. I am looking after my sister and her children. We are safe," he says in his story.

Writing competition judge and Time Magazine journalist Tom Dusevic commended David's entry for its 'vivid story telling'.

Two more west Australians, Nada Abdulehadi of Cyril Jackson Senior Campus and Emmanuel Labusa, of Mirrabooka Senior High School, won highly commended awards in the competition

UNHCR runs an annual writing competition for high school students around Australia with the aim of generating understanding of refugee issues through the sharing of personal stories. The competition now comprises three categories: an article based on an interview with a refugee; a personal story written by a former refugee; and an essay based on the World Refugee Day theme *It takes courage to be a refugee*. In 2005, more than 160 entries were received.

The stories of winners and finalists in all three categories have been published in a book, *Refugees: telling their stories*, available online at [www.unhcr.org.au](http://www.unhcr.org.au) or in hard copy from UNHCR.

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UNHCR's External Relations Officer and another competition judge, Ariane Rummery, said the collection includes some excellent writing from Australian high school students and also showcases the diverse refugee communities that have built a new home in Australia over the past five decades. "The collection includes stories ranging from refugees fleeing WWII, the 1956 Hungarian uprising, Cambodia in the 1970s, Bosnia in the 1990s to the more recent arrivals from Sudan," she said.

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