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VARIATIONS ON THE THEME  
OF  
SOMALINES

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## There Is No Law in My Country

A short story

A Somalian man once went to the Immigration Service Centre. He brought with him his university certificates which he wanted to get evaluated. A young woman received him. When he had sat down, she was very curious to know more about the country of crisis, Somalia, and she asked him the following question:

'What is the name of your president?'

'We don't have a president.'

'Oh I'm sorry, is your country a monarchy?'

'No, it is not a monarchy, we don't have a king.'

The woman was confused... She was not satisfied with the answer. She took the certificates from him and started to study them.

She said she wanted to help him send the certificates to Stockholm with an application to get them evaluated.

When the woman told the Somali man that it was important to contact a Somali university to receive confirmation that the certificates were authentic, their dialogue continued like this:

'I'm sorry, don't you know that we don't have any university in our country?'

'What happened to your university?'

'It was turned into flats instead.'

'But what happened to all the documents?'

'They were plundered. They were looted.'

'What did your police do?'

'We don't have any police.'

'If there is no university, where will your students continue their studies after secondary school?'

'We don't have any secondary schools.'

'So you only have primary schools?'

'We don't have any primary schools either.'

'But why don't your government solve this problem?'

'I'm sorry, we don't have a government...'

'But who will see to it that the laws are followed?'

'We don't have any laws!'

The woman could neither understand nor believe what the man had said, and she thought that the misunderstanding resulted from his lack of knowledge in the Swedish language. She decided to get an interpreter, and then she said to him:

'It would be better if you could come tomorrow, I'll find an interpreter for you!'

'I am an interpreter myself, and you don't have to get a second interpreter for me.'

'Then it is better if you come back another time when you are calmer than now.'

When the man came out, he started to complain aloud to himself:

'It is a confusing place we come from, a people with no government, university, police, schools, military, ministers, president, embassy. I myself wonder how it can be like this. How would a person from another country be able to understand it...'

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