

## Somalis learn U.S. justice works

**Landlord dispute takes time, ends happily for renters**

**By Dan Linehan**  
The Free Press

MANKATO — Ali Jimale's first reaction upon getting stiffed from his landlord was to knock on his door and demand his money back.

That's how a dispute like this would've been resolved in his native country.

"If this would've been Somalia, it would've been solved the next day," said Harbi Hassan, the outreach specialist at Mankato Community Education and Recreation.

The only problem: It would've been "solved" with an assault, or perhaps a murder. Or maybe a punishment of a chopped off hand from an Islamic court, Hassan said.

Jimale and fellow Somali immigrant Adem Hussein got their money back Friday — about \$1,300 each — with the pro bono help of Mankato attorney Aaron Glade. The case lasted about 10 months.

Hassan helps connect parents with other resources, such as housing and legal help. Hussein has seven children and Jimale has six.



Ali Jimale



Adem Hussein

Harbi Hassan

In this case, Hassan referred the case to Legal Aid, which asks attorneys if they're willing to work for free.

Glade said he takes "a few here and there" and agreed to take the men's case, which involved a landlord who refused to refund a safety deposit after the men decided not to move into his property.

The immigrants, who speak limited English, effusively thanked the attorney through Hassan, who has been acting as their translator.



"You were an active guy," Hussein said. Then Hassan translated more: "They were very happy to see how you handled the case."

Jimale speaks Somali; Hussein speaks the East African language Oromo. They worked at a chicken factory in Madelia and Jimale still works there.

Hussein said he's happy for how the American justice system worked.

"They talked it through."

---

The Free Press, Mankato, MN 418 South Second Street Mankato, MN 56001