

# TB can affect anybody in the Community



Garang Malek is a former TB patient, who was treated at Nyamlell Hospital a few years ago and now works as security guard there.

“Many years ago, he says, when I was a young man, I was looking after a cattle camp. Like all Dinkas, I was proud of my cattle wealth.

During the north-south war

however, my cattle was stolen by Arab militias Rizeygat and Misiriyyah, which made me decide to join the SPLA.

I held the rank of lieutenant and I was always on the move: Juba, Maridi, Rumbek, wherever the SPLA needed me. One day I felt sick and I began coughing. It was a dry and irritating cough, which continued for weeks and months getting progressively worse.

I had pain in my chest, which became worse by coughing. I lost several kilos in a few months and I had fever at night, which made me sweat profusely. One day, a general sensation of tiredness struck me. I felt so weak that I could no longer hold my gun, which was pretty bad for an SPLA soldier like me! I had no choice but to report it to my commander, who told me to stay in the barracks. I put up with my cough for three long years, during which I took all kind of medicines that did not work. In the end, I was given permission to go home. I felt as if I was going to die soon. Someone advised me to go to Nyamlell Hospital where I was put straight on treatment after a laboratory test.

It took me six months to get better. I am now cured and I am happy to be a security guard here. I don't want to be a soldier anymore, the war is over and I want to think about peace. What I

realized is that, had I known about TB, I would have gone to the hospital much earlier and suffered much less.

I was so happy to know that treatment is free, which is great for people like us who own nothing. I just wish AAA could give me a bicycle so that I could go around the villages and tell people about TB. Raising awareness of TB symptoms and treatment is vital.

People should be aware of the possibility of having TB so that it is diagnosed without delay. Whenever I hear people coughing I tell them to go for a TB test at the hospital rather than wasting time with medicines that do not work. And if they are reluctant I always tell them: Trust me, because if you are half dead, just like I was, AAA can cure you and you'll be alive again.

By ARKANGELO ALI ASSOCIATION - AAA