

October 26, 2023

My name is Abner Afzal, I was born to a Christian family in Pakistan.

I'm detailing below the information about my family members.

- 1- Afzal Abdul Karim – April 18, 1954 (Father)
- 2- Zakia Afzal – September 17, 1966 (Mother)
- 3- Rahief Afzal – September 20, 1986 (Brother)
- 4- Pearl Afzal – November 16, 1988 (Sister)
- 5- Sharon Afzal – July 13, 1992 (Sister)
- 6- Abner Afzal – December 9, 1998 (Self)

July 30, 2015: I completed my high school at Farqaleet Grammar School, Karachi.

October 26, 2018: I completed my senior high school at Saint Patrick's College, Karachi.

December 2, 2022: I finished my 3-year IT (Information Technology) diploma program at Aptech, Karachi.

January 2023: I lived with my parents and began assisting my father with running Salika Tailors and Drapers, our family's little tailoring business.

August 16, 2023: My father's shop neighbor, Nasir, adhered to fundamentalist doctrines of Islam. He stopped me when I was passing by his shop. He stopped me and started his conversation with me on a Pakistani YouTuber, and ex-Muslim, Adam Seeker, who does streams on his channel debating about Islam with Muslims. I'm copying the link to his YouTube channel for your reference:

Adam Seeker Urdu: <https://www.youtube.com/@AdamSeekerUrdu>

Nasir asked me, Do you watch their streams? I informed him that I watched just two or three of them, and I strongly deplore these debates against any religion. He answered, Yeah, but now he is a pagan too, a Christian. I refuted him and responded that no, no, all Christians are not the same, we really do respect everyone. Adam Seeker might have been converted to Christianity recently, that's why he does those nasty debates. He must not know much about the Bible, which teaches simply about loving each other.

Nasir took the Quran and told to me that it is written directly by God, of which the original text exists eternally in heaven, and each word was transmitted by the angel to Muhammad. But the Bible was authored by so many different people over so long a period. I answered him that these numerous books are "inspired by God", and directed the complete thought and experience of the writers so that they would deliver a truthful revelation. He laughed at me.

Nasir asked... well, tell me, how could Jesus be the son of God? Can God take a wife? I answered him that in Christian preaching there is not the least notion of a sexual relationship between God and any one of His creatures. When the New Testament names Jesus "the Son of God", this does not for a second suggest that God begot a child through a woman, as men beget their children. The title must be understood along with all the other names given to Jesus in the Bible; Jesus is also called the servant of God, the Son of David, the Son of Man, the Lord, the Savior, the new Adam, the Mediator, the High Priest, etc.

He might perceive my answers as an insult. Suddenly, his voice tone grew high, and he started ranting at me while repeating Naur-ub-illah (seek refuge in Allah) continuously. He said that you are all pagans, son of bitch. Jesus did not die on the cross.

I was very terrified of his actions since I observed the other Muslim employees who could hear Nasir's ranting, and they started coming out from their shops. Then my father and his employee, Saleem, also came over and started apologizing for anything that hurt. This all may have finally evolved into false blasphemy charges, probably if my father and his employee, Saleem, hadn't come to bend their knees at his shop. We recognize that as a religious minority, we must live in peace. We can't comprehend breaching critical laws.

August 17, 2023: As usual, I reached the shop to open it and clean it up. Six men suddenly appeared from behind me when I stooped down to unlock the shop's shutter. One man took my collar from my back, placed my hand under his foot, and yelled - You are no longer permitted to open the shop, nor reside in our nation. I told him this is my shop and I open it daily. Who would be supposed to open it, if I don't?

The same man who held my collar whacked my occiput. He said, No questions! He pulled his revolver from his back and pointed at me, saying - No Christians are permitted to do business, nor stay in our country.

I removed my hand from under the man's foot while trying to stand simultaneously. I placed the keys back in my pocket and said to him, "Okay, I'm leaving". The man left my collar and asked me, where
hmm... motherfucker! Take out your keys and ID.

I surrendered the keys without saying anything. Because another guy who also had a weapon came and collected the shop keys. He put the keys in his pocket and took his phone to click my photos. Then he asked me to hold the ID card. He took one photo of my ID and the other with me holding my ID. He put the phone in his pocket and abruptly punched my face, which hit my right eyebrow. Another man stood to my left side, hit me with a punch on my upper lip. The punches were hard, and for a few seconds, it was like I went into a coma. When I got stabilized, I realized they were all punching me like a punching bag. The good thing was that they couldn't manage to take me to the ground. Then I just joined my hand, keeping my head down, saying sorry again and again, and started walking to the road where my motorbike was parked. They proceeded to follow me and kicked me many times from the back. They were shouting stuff like chanting, get out of here, motherfucker. One man was stating, "Christianity has attacked the honor of Muslims by desecrating the Quran in Sweden. If a Christian desecrates the Quran in another country, we Sunni, who walk the path of martyrdom, shall make Pakistan a hell for Christianity".

When I reached my motorbike, one man was saying, "We know where you live, we know your father and mother. And we do have your phone numbers. We will disseminate your ID and photo to our people to put you on our checklist. Give Zakat (a tax, containing percentages of personal income of every kind), otherwise, you'll be dead if you open your shop again without paying it".

Hurriedly, I started my motorcycle and departed that place. Then, after traveling for a few minutes, I saw a place to park, called my dad, and informed him about everything.

The same day in the evening, we grabbed some of our clothes and documents along and traveled to our aunt, Razia's house, which is located one hour's drive away from our house, and where we had to stay in hiding for over two months till we could manage to depart Pakistan.

August 21, 2023: My cousin, Sarfaraz, went to pick up the cash from my father's shop.

August 22, 2023: In the afternoon, our Christian neighbor, Kamar, called my father and asked - Where are you? And are you safe? My father answered him yes, we were at our relatives' residence. He asked Kamar whether all was well. Kamar informed my father that several individuals from the Sunni organization came to your house and started chanting that Abner is a blasphemer. Kamar said that when they discovered the door was locked. Some started beating on it with rods, and some were forcibly pulling it together, yelling, get out, motherfucker. While others were asking for you and Abner to tell everyone in the area that if anyone knows where you and your family are, gone. My father stated that it all happened because they knew that our shop was open yesterday.

August 30, 2023: I applied for the renewal of my passport because the previous one had three years of validity left.

September 12, 2023: I got my new passport. The same day in the evening, my father gave our passports to the travel agency who prepared our documents, which were required to apply for Thai tourist visas.

September 27, 2023: We went to the Thai consulate in Karachi and applied for our travel visas.

October 4, 2023: We received our passports with the visitors' visas stamped.

October 11, 2023: My father received the money after selling his shop's setup. And they purchased the plane tickets.

October 23, 2023: Finally, my parents and I were able to fly from Pakistan.

January 24, 2024: In Karachi, Pakistan, where my family and I had been in hiding since August 2023 due to threats from extremist groups.

On this day, a group of armed militants from Lashkar-e-Jhangvi raided the home of my aunt, Razia Ilyas, and her husband, Uncle Ilyas, who had risked their lives to shelter us. The attackers fired gunshots into the air before storming the house, demanding to know where my father and I were hiding. According to Uncle Ilyas, the militants showed him a photo of me holding my ID card - the same image taken during the assault on August 17, 2023, as proof of their intent.

Miraculously, neighbors intervened, testifying that no outsiders had been staying at the house, which likely prevented further violence. Uncle Ilyas believes the militants acted on suspicion rather than

confirmation, as they left after failing to locate us. However, this incident confirms that our persecutors remain actively hostile and continue to target anyone associated with our family.

This event underscores the grave danger we face as a Christian family in Pakistan. Despite fleeing to Thailand, we remain deeply concerned for the safety of our relatives still in Pakistan.