

July 20, 2023

Office of UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner of Thailand

My name is Qasim Masih, and I am from the city of Lahore in Pakistan. I was born into a Christian household and am the eldest of five siblings. On **March 17, 2023**, I came to Thailand with my family, which includes my wife and two sons.

Below are the details of my family members:

1. Qasim Masih – January 1, 1979 (Self)
2. Komal Qasim – September 10, 1994 (Wife)
3. Yashwa Qasim – May 25, 2015 (Son)
4. Edric Qasim – May 3, 2017 (Son)

On April 10, 2023: I submitted my application to the UNHCR via email. In my application, I briefly stated my situation. However, due to my limited education, I did not realize that I needed to explain every event that happened to me in Pakistan in detail. Therefore, I will now try to describe each event that occurred to me as thoroughly as possible.

In 2005: I trained for a year as a tailor at a garment company in Lahore called Stitch Graph. After becoming skilled in my work, I continued working as a tailor from 2006 to December 2019 in various garment companies, such as Nishad Apparels, Stylers, US Apparels, Zara Apparels, and Gulf Nishad.

In 2017: When I began working at Gulf Nishad as a tailor, I met Muhammad Ali, a Muslim coworker who later became a friend. With years of experience, good relations, and some savings, I decided to start my own business in partnership with Muhammad Ali.

On January 10, 2020: We started a small garment stock business together in a partnership. We started with 12 machines, with a total investment of 2 million PKR, each contributing 1 million PKR. This investment covered the down payment for a warehouse and the purchase of 6 sewing machines, 2 fedoras, 2 button press machines, and 2 overlock machines. We had 12 professional tailors, including myself, and 4 helpers. We used to buy defective pants and shirts in bulk from various companies, repair them, and then sell them in the market for a profit.

In February 2021: Due to the business's success, Muhammad Ali and I each invested another 2 million PKR. We purchased 6 more machines, but most of the investment went towards stock purchasing. The pandemic had left many companies with overstock, which we were able to acquire at a low cost. As a coworker and business partner, Muhammad Ali and I had a good professional relationship. However, from time to time, he would engage me in discussions about religion. I always felt that he was asking these questions out of genuine curiosity, as he might have been unclear about certain aspects.

In February 2022: Muhammad Ali asked me if I believed that Prophet Jesus was superior to Prophet Muhammad. As a Christian, I knew this question could strain our relationship. I paused for a moment and then replied, "Brother, your question is complicated. I respect all religions, but I cannot answer that question."

A few months later, he asked me again, "Can God have a son?" This time, I replied, "Of course, God is full of power, and it is not necessary for Him to have a son in a physical sense. We can refer to Jesus as His spiritual son." I knew my answer wouldn't satisfy him completely, but I chose to keep the discussion light rather than delve deeper.

On June 20, 2022: Muhammad Ali asked me if a human being could be God's son. He questioned the validity of this belief, stating that no religion could teach such foolish facts. He then claimed that Islam is the only religion based on facts and urged me to choose between truth and falsehood. Although I had an answer to his questions, I chose not to respond and simply said, "Brother, my teachings are different, and I agree with you on many points, but I don't want to make any decisions right now."

On July 2, 2022: At 2 PM on a Saturday, Muhammad Ali once again asked me, "Was Prophet Jesus crucified?" I replied, "Yes, he died on the cross, but on the third day, by his power, he rose from the dead." Muhammad Ali exclaimed, "God forbid! Can God die? Oh Allah! Such ignorance, this is blasphemy." He then said, "Don't you want to live with dignity in this world? There's still time, understand and accept Islam. Then you will be given a high position not only in this world but also in paradise." At this point, I was fed up with Muhammad Ali's repeated invitations to convert to Islam. I told him, "Brother, I can no longer continue our partnership. According to my teachings, anyone who comes after Prophet Jesus is a liar. Either return my investment or give me half the machines and stock."

Muhammad Ali, in anger, shouted, "Kafir (infidel), how dare you! Neither will I return your money nor will you take anything from this warehouse. Now get out!" His shouting caught the attention of the four helpers present in the warehouse, who immediately gathered around.

I pleaded with him again, saying, "Brother, please, at least return my money. I have young children, and I need to start my own work to support them." Muhammad Ali shouted, "What money? I will not give you a single penny. This warehouse and everything in it belongs to me." His words hurt me deeply, and I said, "Does your religion teach you to take away someone else's rights?" He shouted back, "How dare you, you mother—!" And then, as soon as he punched me, the other four men also started beating me. One of the helpers, named Raza, hit me on my left shoulder with a wooden rod. As I fell to the ground, the others continued to beat me. I covered my face with my hands. Suddenly, I grabbed Muhammad Ali's leg, causing his head to hit the corner of a table, and he fell to the ground as well. At that moment, the other four stopped hitting me and began helping him up. I took the opportunity to escape, leaving my bike behind, and ran through the streets for about 10 minutes without looking back. When I saw a rickshaw approaching, I got in and went to my uncle (Nanak Masih)'s house in Shah Jamal, Ichhra. My uncle's house was a 45-minute drive from my warehouse, while my own home was 35 minutes away.

At 3:15 PM, my neighbor and friend Kamran called to inform me that some men had come to my house a while ago and had been very rude to my wife. She was crying uncontrollably. After receiving his call, I borrowed my uncle's bike and reached home within 30 minutes. I took my wife and two children to a nearby clinic, Sooraj Medicals. My wife, who was five months pregnant, had a miscarriage due to the injuries she sustained. She was in the operating room for an hour, and when she was brought to the general ward at 5:30 PM, she told me everything that had happened to her. She said, "Qasim, what has happened? Is this all because of Muhammad Ali? There were 8-10 men who were banging on the door and shouting, 'Bring out the blasphemer, or we will set the house on fire.' When I opened the door, two men entered the house searching for you, while one man grabbed me by the hair and asked, 'Where is your husband?' I told him that you were at work and would be home in the evening. He shouted, 'Don't

lie! Tell the truth, where is the blasphemer?' I said, 'You must be mistaken, he would never do such a thing.' Then another man kicked me in the stomach. As I fell to the ground, I clutched my belly and screamed that they had killed my baby. Perhaps hearing this made them leave, but as they left, they kept shouting that the punishment for blasphemy is death and that they would find and kill you wherever you are."

Even after my baby's death, they seemed unfazed. Komal said she did not want to return home. That night was the first time my wife cried herself to sleep.

July 3, 2022: At 5:30 AM, I returned home alone to collect our clothes and essential items. At exactly 6 AM, I returned to my uncle's house in Shah Jamal, Ichhra, with my wife and children. When I informed my uncle of the entire incident, he advised us that it would no longer be safe for us to stay in Pakistan. He urged us to leave the country as soon as possible, as these people would not give up easily. A few days later, my uncle arranged for our visa to Thailand through a friend of his.

On July 20, 2022: I submitted our documents for the visa process through my uncle's friend.

On July 22, 2022: My friend Kamran called again, telling me that some men, who identified themselves as members of Jamaat-e-Islami, had come and were asking everyone about me.

On July 23, 2022: I left Lahore with my family and went to stay with my other uncle, Riaz Masih, in Multan.

August 17, 2022: We were issued a visit visa for Thailand, but due to a lack of budget for tickets, we could not travel. We stayed with my uncle in Multan until **March 16, 2023**.

November 16, 2022: My friend Kamran called to check if we were safe. He informed me that a large group of people had gathered outside our house near the Jamia Mosque that morning. Some of them were the same individuals who had previously come to our house and assaulted my wife. This time, they stayed in the neighborhood from morning until early afternoon, stopping every person to inquire about our family.

Given the seriousness of the situation, we decided to apply for a Thailand visa again. My wife requested money from her family, and I asked my brother for funds to buy tickets. I sent my passport to my uncle in Ichra, Lahore, to reapply for the visa.

December 19, 2022: Our visit visa for Thailand was stamped.

On March 16, 2023: We left Lahore for Bangkok, Thailand, leaving behind our home and country.