

HELP RABIA
TO REUNITE
WITH HER FAMILY
ESCAPED FROM
AFGHANISTAN

My name is Rabia. I am currently based in Burnaby Canada. I was born and raised in Afghanistan, and I belong to the Hazara ethnicity. I grew up in Afghanistan but left the country by myself at age 18, spent a few years in Hong Kong as a student, and then moved to Canada at the beginning of 2020. I am currently finishing my bachelor's degree in Psychology and counseling.

Due to the crisis that happened in Afghanistan, many families have been displaced to neighboring countries such as Pakistan, Iran, and Tajikistan including my family. My mom, my brother, and my sister-in-law have been displaced to Pakistan since August 2021. They are now in Pakistan with no status, living their toughest life in Pakistan since they are not allowed to go around freely, don't have the right to work, to get an education, and have a fear of getting arrested and sending them back to Afghanistan. They are disparately waiting to get resettled to Canada.

AFGHANISTAN

On August 24, my mom, my brother, and his wife took a bus from Kabul to Kandahar to escape the country by crossing the border. They were left with no choice but to flee and leave Afghanistan for Pakistan. It took them 16hrs to arrive in Kandahar. They stayed one night in Kandahar and then walked 4hrs to get to Chaman (border between Afghanistan and Pakistan). Crossing the border was another nightmare. They tried 4 times to cross the border but failed. For the fifth time, they managed to cross the border. It was the worst experience in their life they said. My brother was bitten up by the border police and my mom had the hardest time crossing the congested border.

FAMILY

I have had a unique background, one of privilege, and one of tragedy and resilience at the same time. I was very young when I lost my father, I knew I had lost a hero and someone who I dearly loved. Life ever since then was very difficult. After I lost my father, my mom had to raise 5 children by herself. As a single mom, she has struggled a lot raising her 5 children. It breaks my heart when I listen to my mom's story and the challenges, hardships, sorrows, and suffering she has gone through. She says that "in order to provide food and other belongings, she would have to work hard, she worked in people's houses as a cleaner". Also, she used to make money by sewing clothes and scarves. Yet, she never complained and tried her best to raise her children in the best possible ways. Although my mom is illiterate, she has tried her best to provide every single opportunity for her children to get an education. She raised socially conscious and educated children. Imagine how hard and challenging it is to be a single mom and raise 5 children alone.

Life has been very difficult in Afghanistan for my family. I lost two of my brothers in a bomb blast on peaceful protestors in Kabul, 2016. Their loss not only brought emotional pain but also struck irreparable financial hardship on my family. I, however, didn't give in to the challenges I had to face. I worked hard after I finished high school in Merefat, Kabul. I got a full scholarship at the University of Hong Kong. 2.5 years later, I came to Canada on an exchange student visa. Later, I filed an asylum case here in Canada and now I am a protected person here.

HAZARA

My family is of Hazara descent, which is a minority and persecuted group in Afghanistan. Hazara persons living in Afghanistan are accosted with systematic racism and discrimination. Because the Hazara people often have different physical structures, we are easily recognizable amongst the Afghan population. The Hazara people have a long history of persecution in Afghanistan, including ethnic cleansing and slavery. Still, Hazara people continue to be targeted and killed because of their ethnicity in Afghanistan.

I would like to sponsor my mom, my brother, and his wife to Canada. Thanks for walking with me in this journey.

幫助 RABIA
與逃離 阿富汗 的
家人團聚

我的名字是 Rabia，現居於加拿大的本拿比市。我在阿富汗出生長大，屬於哈扎拉民族 (Hazara)。18歲的時候我就獨自離開阿富汗，前往香港唸了幾年書，在2020年初來到加拿大；目前正完成心理和輔導學的學士學位課程。

因為阿富汗的種種危機，很多家庭流離失所，隨而逃到了巴基斯坦，伊朗及塔吉克斯坦等鄰近國家。我的家人包括媽媽，兄弟和他的妻子都在2021年8月逃到巴基斯坦。他們在那裡沒有合法地位，過着極其艱苦的生活；沒有行動自由，沒有工作、讀書的權利，還要害怕被逮捕及遣送回阿富汗；他們正迫切地等待著移居來加拿大。

阿富汗

在8月24日，我的媽媽、兄弟和他的妻子，在別無選擇之下，乘坐公共汽車由喀布爾 (Kabul) 去到坎大哈 (Kandahar)，打算越過邊界，逃離阿富汗到巴基斯坦去。他們花了16小時才到達坎大哈，在那裏停留一夜之後，再步行4小時去到Chaman (阿富汗和巴基斯坦的邊境)。要跨過邊界又是另一個惡夢：他們嘗試了四次都未能通過，到了第五次嘗試，才得以越過邊界進入巴基斯坦。他們形容那是有生以來最可怕的經歷，我的兄弟被邊防警察毆打，我媽媽在擠塞的邊境也吃盡苦頭。

我的家庭

我有一個獨特的背景，當中融合著特權、悲劇和對抗逆境的韌性。我很小的時候就失去了父親，他是我的英雄和至愛的人，生活自此也變得十分艱難。失去父親之後，媽媽要獨自撫養五個孩子，一個單親媽媽要撫養五個孩子真的是困難重重。聽着媽媽的事、挑戰、艱辛、悲傷和經歷的苦難，我心都碎了。她辛勤工作，到不同人家裡做清潔工作，也曾靠縫製衣服和圍巾賺錢，以應付一家人的食用所需。但她從來沒有抱怨過，只會盡力給予孩子最好的待遇。她自己盲，卻努力爭取一切機會讓孩子受教育，把孩子培育成為有社會責任感和有教養的人。一位單親媽媽獨自撫養五個孩子要面對的艱苦和挑戰實在難以想像。

我家在阿富汗的生活著實非常艱難。2016年在喀布爾一場和平示威中，炸彈爆炸，我失去了兩個兄弟。這不單止帶來情感上的傷痛，也讓我們一家陷入無法修復的經濟困境。然而我沒有在面臨挑戰時退縮，在Marefat, Kabul 中學畢業後，我繼續努力，獲得了全額獎學金前往香港大學就讀。兩年半之後，我藉着交換生簽證來到加拿大。隨後，我在這裏申請了政治庇護，現在我是一個受保護的居民。

哈扎拉民族

我們一家屬於哈扎拉族裔 (Hazara)，是阿富汗一個少數民族和受逼迫的群體。在阿富汗，哈扎拉民族讓人聯想起系統性的種族主義和歧視。由於哈扎拉人的外貌普遍與其他阿富汗人不同，在國民當中容易辨別，哈扎拉人在阿富汗長期受到種種迫害，其中包括種族清洗和奴役。今日在阿富汗的哈扎拉人民，仍然基於種族的原因，持續地被針對和殺害。

我希望贊助我的媽媽、兄弟和他的妻子前來加拿大，感謝大家在這過程中與我同行。

A girl like me by Rabia Kaihan

When I was a little girl, I used to be very witty and hilarious. That's why I used to make friends easily and I had a lot of friends. I still remember my happy days of childhood that I used to sneak away from my mom and play with my peers in the street of my house. And whenever my mother caught me she would follow me home angrily (because most of the time I went to the street without asking her permission) and knock the yard gate so that I couldn't go back to the street. Then I would always go to my grandmother to tell me a story. She was the kindest grandmother and always told me her sweet stories. When I was a kid, I used to find happiness in my grandmother's sweet stories, in my mother's causeless kindness, and in my sibling's smiles.

I was full of dreams just like every one of you, when I was a kid I wanted to become a doctor to help people and patients. And I well remember that when I was playing with my dolls, I was their doctor when they got sick. Since I did not have a lot of toys I used to make my small home with the pillows at the corner side of the bed and stay inside it and play with my dolls.

A girl like me used to find happiness in very little things, like ice creams, chocolate, playing with my friends, playing in the street, running around, being by the water, watching birds, riding my bike. But as much as I grew up and got into the wider world, life took a different color and I had to work very hard in a society like Afghanistan that almost everything was impossible for girls, but I never give up on the challenges I continued to stay brave and become a girl I am today. I am the first girl from my family to go to high school and enter university.

And in the end, we are born to live a life of love, not fear. So never give up and follow your dream and use the smallest facilities available to you. We are right here to help each other, love each other and respect each other.