

## **To whom it may concern.**

**Bangkok 2016-08-08**

My name is Sunny Gill, s/o Bernard Gill (late) & Suriya Gill, my wife's name is Joyce Gill, I was born on 25 December 1987, I have 4 siblings 2 married sisters and 2 married brothers.

I have done my schooling from St Patrick's Technical School and also my 3 years associate engineering in automobiles from St Patrick's technical institute Karachi.

### **My profession**

I started my journalist career in 2009 with a USA based Pakistani Christians news post. After that I started writing for different news channels and NGO's around the world. During this time, I also worked with international journalists on documentaries about persecuted Christians in Pakistan, Education, Minority issues etc.

I was the Karachi correspondent for UCA NEWS which is a Thailand based catholic news desk and also wrote for the Weekly Christian Voice newspaper. Here I made a project about Pakistani Christians for the Versfelt Communications Group Inc. USA.

Beside journalism I also run my Photography business in Pakistan.

Since I started working for Christians in Pakistan I have been threatened many times. I received this threats via phone calls, texts messages, papers nailed on my door and letters sent to my address.

I have always raised my voice using photos/articles/documentaries to help my Christian community in Pakistan which is oppressed. I also joined a Christian political party "All Pakistan Christian league" and worked there as media coordinator in Sindh in 2012. We moved our address due to the threats more times.

It is common for journalists in Pakistan to get threats but unfortunately I was threatened physically on 5<sup>th</sup> of august 2013 at Shara-e-Faisal road in Karachi when 2 men on a motor bike stopped me and pointed a pistol at me. Then he slapped me in my face and said: "We warned you before, but you always write against Islam and because of your writings our friend got arrested"!

While they were molesting me and waved with the gun pointing at me, fortunately a police squad was coming up the road and when they saw the police cars with the lights on, they ran and screamed: "We will see you again!" Of course I was scared and I worried for my family. I had never expected someone would stop me and point a gun at me. I went to the local police station and reported the incident, but I didn't launch an official complaint. I was

worried about my family and myself. I have heard and seen so much, so I did not - and I do not now, today - trust the Pakistani attorneys or the police at all.

### **The ANP**

I have been a target for the ANP now for a long time. The so called activists in the political party, ANP, are always chasing Christians in Pakistan. I have also written about them in a negative way in local newspapers as well as in international media. After these articles threats increased and I have always told my overseas and Pakistani journalist friends that I am getting lots of threats. They all were worried because in Karachi many journalist has been killed due to political and religious issues, which is confirmed in more international reports, that states that Pakistan is the most dangerous country in the world to work in as a journalist.

After the attack on the road, my friends suggested me to leave Pakistan with my family as soon as possible. I was lucky I got away unhurt that day.

By the help of my overseas and Pakistani friends I succeeded to get out of Pakistan on 20<sup>th</sup> of august 2013.

*In December 2013 my mother and my elder brother – together with his family – left Pakistan after threats against him because of me.*

*He had his office on the same road where I was threatened and we think it is the same persons who threatened me that also came after him. I feel bad for have been putting them at risk.*

### **Living in Bangkok**

My wife and I arrived in Bangkok on 21<sup>st</sup> august 2013, I filed my request in UNHCR Thailand on 24<sup>th</sup> of august 2013 for protection. After waiting 3 months UNHCR called me and registered me as asylum seeker in December 2013 and they gave me a date of my final interview which was 11<sup>th</sup> may 2015.

After waiting almost 2 years they postponed my interview for 1 years without any reason - although they know this country is non-signatory to Geneva convention 1951 and its protocol 1967 and therefore has not any legal law for asylum seekers and refugees. If you get arrested, they send you to the IDC, detention center which is hell on earth.

When I arrived in Thailand with my wife, we both travelled with tourist visa which expired after 2 months. Once your visa has gone over time in Thailand, you are considered as illegal, although you have asylum/refugee status from the UNHCR. The Thai authorities consider asylum seekers and refugees as illegal migrants, no matter what.

I have knocked many doors since I am to Bangkok. I left Pakistan because I was targeted and I naively thought, if I come and ask for protection the UNHCR – as the human right institution they claim to be - would listen to me and provide needed protection. I never expected that it would be so hard for us, and that we would be stuck in limbo - it's like from one hell to another.

Fear of Arrest and detention is in our minds every hour. We cannot work here, of course that is illegal without permit. The UNHCR do not support with either money or shelter, not even medical facilities.

### **A little documentation:**

Many researchers present records that show, that Pakistan is the most dangerous country for journalists. Here is a link to an article from 2014.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/815075/pakistan-most-dangerous-country-for-journalists-in-2014-report/>

The second link is from 2016 which tell same story how hard it is to do journalism in Pakistan especially when you are from minority groups.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1040096/at-least-2297-journalists-killed-since-1990-ifj/>

There is a new documentary from BBC about the current situation of Pakistani Christian asylum seekers in Bangkok from February 2016:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-35654804>

And this is from the nation newspaper about arresting of asylum seekers by Thai authorities:

<http://www.nationmultimedia.com/breakingnews/Thailand-alleged-with-detaining-asylum-seekers-30268908.html>

A link to my interview in a British media:

<http://www.libertygb.org.uk/news/interview-persecuted-christian>

An article with me in a German news magazine SPIEGEL ONLINE. They use “YUSUF” as an alias name for me in this article:

<http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/fluechtlinge-muessen-beim-unhcr-jahre-auf-erkennung-warten-a-1026447.html>

My photos, reports and news can easily be seen and read on Google if you just type: “*Sunny gill from Karachi Christian journalist*”.

When we came to Bangkok we stayed on tourist visa for 2 months as the law makes it possibility. We applied for asylum and were registered at the local UNHCR office.

Now we have been in Bangkok in 3 years and not yet achieved to get a comprehensive interview about our status at the UNHCR office.

Some of the time I have – with help from my friends – been able to buy a legal visa for some months at a time. This possibility is also now made impossible.

The result is, that me and my wife are forced to stay in hiding in an expensive one room flat (12 sqm including balcony. In the building many more refugees, Christians from Pakistan, are living under hard conditions, always afraid of being rounded up and sent to the IDC (Immigration Detention Center) by the Thai police.

More organizations have tried to help us out, but none of these NGO's have the financial strength to pay for an illegal and unsecure route to the west. Now we do not know if that is possibly more, after the refugee wave into Europe and the West last autumn. It is like Christians are not very high prioritized by the international UN organizations.

We are registered as a family by the UNHCR. Total 5 adults and 2 children. I enclose all their details here.

### **Family**

I am very worried about my family, especially for my mother she has high blood pressure and diabetes.

Now after these years living in misery, underground and isolated from the world we really need to help. The possibilities to get help through the UNHCR as for example quote-refugees now, with the overwhelming stream of refugees in Europe, seems more far away than ever.

WE need help for real!

Sunny Gill

Enclosed are all official papers concerning our family!