



Shagufta and Shafqat are relieved to finally be free.

The last eight years have been incredibly hard, but we are so happy to be reunited with our children.

We are very grateful that so many people, especially the teams from ADF International and the Jubilee Campaign, helped and protected us by bringing us to safety. The country that welcomed us has been very generous in offering us asylum.

Although we will miss our country, we are happy to finally be somewhere safe.

Hopefully, the blasphemy laws in Pakistan will soon be abolished, so others won't suffer the same fate Shagufta and I did," said Shafqat Emmanuel, when arriving.



f t v / voiceforjusticepakistan

Free at Last!

This is how freedom looks like. After 8 years of being penalised unjustly by Pakistan's blasphemy laws the Christian couple Shafqat and Shagufta are finally free and in a safe country in Europe, far away from those who wanted to harm them.

It has not been an easy road, marked by eight years of forced isolation while held in separate prisons by the government and years of separation from their children, some who became young adults during their imprisonment. Even after the couple's acquittal their lives were not safe in Pakistan. Islamist groups were calling for their death and they had to hide in a safe house.

After their release - there was a struggle to get out of the country safely. While the couple's case is a clear asylum case that would be granted in most EU countries, asylum claims cannot be tried in the asylum seekers home country. This is where the need for a **humanitarian visa** comes in - the alternative is a risk-filled journey to try to cross borders - which in the couple's case would expose them to greater risks of being found out by the Islamists trying to kill them.

While EU states would accept the asylum claim of the couple, most EU states have a pro forma denial of humanitarian visas. The couple received a standard rejection email from Germany, for example, in their plea to leave the country. But eventually, with the support of the [European Parliament resolution](#), one country took up their case and provided the humanitarian visas enabling them to flee.

The escape from Pakistan for Shafqat, Shagufta and their family could not have come sooner. Shortly after they left, another complainant was trying to [appeal the Lahore High Court acquittal](#) decision with the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

There are still many however, who continue to fight the same plight as Shafqat and Shagufta. Jubilee Campaign together with Voice for Justice and other organisations

are taking on advocacy for [Stephen Masih](#) - who suffers from a mental disability and was arrested by police in March 2019 and later charged with blasphemy. In Pakistan usually individuals with mental disabilities are freed of guilt and culpability - in this case however, the authorities are denying Masih his rights as a person of disability by continuing his detention and trial, delaying his medical examination for over a year and denying him bail.

Praise + prayer points

- **Thank God for the acquittal and escape of Shafqat, Shagufta and the family.** Each step a miracle.
- **Thank God for the bravery of the lawyers, judges and advocates** in Pakistan who worked for the couple's acquittal despite death threats.
- **Pray for the family** as they settle into their new home, in a new country, with a different language and culture.
- **Pray for those still in prison** under Pakistan's cruel blasphemy laws. **Pray** that they will be released.

Hear from Shafqat and Shagufta's son and the lawyer and advocates who supported them:



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Jubilee Campaign USA | 9689-C Main Street, Fairfax, VA 22030

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