

Although Uzbekistan presents itself as an Islamic country, people had limited rights. According to what my mom tells, many religious families, who studied more about our religion and tried to take lessons in religious lectures and read Islamic books, prayed 5 times a day and women wore scarves. And after these actions, they were suspected for preparation of terrorism. Even those men who had beards were considered as 'Wahabists'. The government began to investigate all suspected families. Many families were accused for terrorism and got imprisoned with false witness in court and got many years in prison. And the others were announced as wanted. It was too dangerous for us to stay in this country. Successfully some families and my family managed to escape the country.

I was only 1 year old when I and my family left our homeland. We came to Kazakhstan, which was one of Uzbekistan's neighboring countries.

Refugees changed their name and lived hidden in their homes. We changed our location all the time. Nobody could go outside or go to work, except those who knew the Russian or Kazakh language. But, despite this, I and my sister could go to our home in Uzbekistan sometimes and visit my grandmother.

We stayed over five years in Kazakhstan. Until I was six and after so many attempts and requests, UNHCR helped us to get out of this country. We took a plane to London and then to Sweden.

Now

, I am grateful for a life where I can freely and completely follow my own religion without being scared of anything.

Girl from Uzbekistan, 17 years