

## **After finally getting U.S. visa, Pakistani grandma reunites with family in Somerset, Wis.**

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### **Body**

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When Naseem Francis landed in New York City last week, the relief was so unbelievable, she had to kiss a wall at JFK airport.

The **Pakistani** grandmother had been waiting more than 1 1/2 years for her immigration **visa** to pass through bureaucratic red tape so she could join her **family** in **Somerset**.

Now, **finally**, they are together.

"She's home, and she's thrilled to be safe with her grandkids," said daughter-in-law Jessica Francis, who described Naseem Francis as "ecstatic" to be with the **family** that had long worried about her safety.

In Rawalpindi, Pakistan, Francis had been living in fear. She discreetly attended Mass in the back rooms of private homes, afraid of the escalating violence and threats directed at Christians in the area.

These days, though, she tries to go to Mass every day at St. Anne's Parish in **Somerset**.

"She's trying to make up for what she's been missing for so long," Jessica Francis said.

Naseem Francis and her husband, Saleem Francis, were approved for permanent residency in the **U.S.** in 2007 **after** one of their sons, a resident of **Somerset**, became a **U.S.** citizen. Within weeks of the approval, Saleem Francis was granted his immigration **visa**. His wife, however, was forced to wait -- without explanation.

Saleem Francis stayed with his wife in Pakistan until his **visa** was about to expire -- about a year ago -- then he came to **Somerset**. The Francis **family** believed Naseem Francis would soon be granted her **visa**, but the months dragged on.

Her case was pending in the **U.S.** consulate in Islamabad. Lynn Becker, spokeswoman for Sen. Herb Kohl, D-**Wis.**, had said it's not uncommon for reviews there to take more than two years because of background-check delays and national security concerns.

As a Christian living in a household without men, Naseem Francis felt particularly vulnerable to danger from the violence in her region.

Feeling the urgency of **getting** Naseem out, her **family** tried to find out what was holding up her **visa**. But they didn't **get** any answers.

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Frustrated, the Francis **family** began seeking help from lawmakers and collecting signatures for a petition. They contacted the media, hoping the attention would help their cause.

On June 17, one day before Jessica Francis was set to fly to Washington, D.C., to meet with **U.S.** senators Amy Klobuchar and Russ Feingold, the **family got** word: The **visa** had been approved.

When Naseem Francis heard, she "cried with happiness and sadness at the same time ... and then prayed and thanked God that it came true," she said, her son Bernard Francis translating.

"She's very glad that now she's in America, where she is a safe and free person," he said.

Naseem Francis arrived in **Somerset** on July 28.

But there is still worry for remaining relatives in Pakistan. Just this weekend, the Francis **family** watched news reports of a mob that attacked a Christian community and killed eight people in the same province where Naseem Francis had been living.

"This is what we were worried about," Jessica Francis said.

Still, the **family** is happy to have Naseem home and the community's support behind them.

"We didn't expect to be embraced as much as we were," Jessica Francis said. "What we're deeply impressed by is how much the community rallied around us ... and how much of a difference that ended up making."

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