

# Most of All, I Miss My Mum

**Name:** Marwais

**Arrived in Sweden:** 2007

**From:** Afghanistan

**Aspiration:** To become an engineer in the airplane industry

My name is Mirwais and I come from Kabul in Afghanistan. I was born in 1989 and have a mother, a father, a little sister, and a little brother. My mum is a doctor and my dad was active in a political party.

In Afghanistan I had a good life, if you compare it with many others' who couldn't go to school. I attended a private school where I studied a lot of Mathematics and English. Sometimes in Afghanistan, you have to do a lot of exams all on the same day, which is why I also studied extra.

When I was 11, I also started working in a bike shop. In the beginning I started by cleaning the shop, but after a while I got to help repair bicycles. I liked my job, but my father preferred me to come home and study. Then, the problems came. I didn't have many friends, but there were several gangs that wanted me to hang out with them. They had knives and often started fights. But I didn't want to go with them.

One time, I saw that several of these youths hid weapons near where I lived. I told my dad, who said that if you tell the soldiers in the ISAF-force about hidden weapons you can get money for it. So we did. But the youths realised it was me that had told them, which made it dangerous for me.

I was 16 when we started talking about me leaving Afghanistan. Some cousins in the Netherlands had promised to help with money, but in the end they didn't want to. So dad had to sell our house.

My father and I travelled to Islamabad in Pakistan. There it's easy to find smugglers if you can pay in American dollars. At the time, we thought that I would travel back to Afghanistan in between, but the smugglers said we could leave straight away. So I never really got to say a proper goodbye to the family. I just hugged my dad and then we said goodbye. I was sad, but I didn't want him to see it.

First, I flew to Turkey. From there, I hiked for four days to get across to Greece. There were eleven of us—teenagers from Afghanistan, Syria, and Uzbekistan. It was hot and we didn't get enough to eat or drink. The smugglers had different spots where we could hide along the way. They'd say: "Go over the mountain; we'll be waiting on the other side". Then they'd travel by car themselves. At one spot we had to cross a river, and I can't swim.

The only thing I had with me was an extra t-shirt and extra jeans in a bag. The smugglers don't let you take anything else. I still have the bag itself. It means a lot to me because I bought it with my mother one time.

In Greece, my money ran out and I had to find more money. In Athens there's a place called Victoria Park where lots of refugees live. Many children sleep on the street and hardly have any clothes. I managed to find a room that was 16 square metres that I shared with seven others. It cost 300 euros a month. I only ever spent time with other refugees. We were afraid of the Greeks.

There were different ways to make money. Some bought and sold old mobile phones. I sold loose cigarettes to people who didn't have enough money to buy a whole pack. I paid about 50 kronor for a packet and sold the cigarettes for about 5 kronor each. After four months in Greece, I was able to pay for a new smuggler. I left the money in a shop, who would take care of the money until they knew I was safe in Italy, upon which they'd hand over the payment. We agreed on a code, a password. I hid in a truck amongst lots of boxes. It was dark and I had to sit curled up small and with only bad air. I just had to sit there, and the only thing I could think about was that I wanted to get out. The trip took 24 hours.

In Italy, I asked for directions to the train station. Once I was there, I bought a ticket to Germany via Switzerland. I'd been given a Bulgarian ID-card by the smugglers. They said it was real and that I was quite similar to the boy on the photo. I also had to learn some words in Bulgarian.

I arrived at the Central Station in Stockholm on the evening of the 28th September, 2007. I met an older couple there who were kind and asked if I wanted to come home with them. They gave me food, and I was able to shower. I borrowed a room to sleep in, but I was afraid the whole time. In the morning, I went to the Migration Board, and from there I was put in a halfway house. I had lost 15 kilos during the trip from Afghanistan.

Right now, I'm working in a bike shop, but my dream is to become an airplane engineer. My family is still in Afghanistan. I don't know if they'll come to Sweden one day or not. I miss my mother the most. Everything's more difficult with my father. He worked all the time, and showed a lot more affection to my little brother. I remember that he always drove him to football training, whilst I had to walk. I have always taken care of myself.

I never get tired of talking on the phone with my mother. We talk about everything, about life and about me studying further. I cry every time. She has given me so much love.