Thursday, March 13, 2014

To Chris Alexander, Minister of Citizenship & Immigration,

I am writing to you on behalf of Head & Hands, a community organization in Montréal, regarding the deportation of Mrs. Khurshid Begum Awan. As Minister of Citizenship and Immigration in Canada, you have the discretionary power to put a stop to the unjust deportation of Mrs. Awan and her family, and to grant them status so that they may continue to live in this country.

Canada commends itself as a nation that respects refugee and women's rights. Yet at this moment, Mrs. Awan is seeking refuge from the trauma and violence she and her family were facing in Pakistan. Her grandson, Ali, was subjected to violence by his father when living in Pakistan, who also physically and sexually abused Ali's mother. By fleeing the country, the Awan family escaped one source of violence, yet still have to endure the violence of navigating this government's Immigration and Refugee system, which, on top of seeking sanctuary in a church, is a great source of stress for them. If Mrs. Awan is deported back to Pakistan, she faces the threat of abuse and possibly murder, and so does the rest of her family.

As a community organization in Montreal that recognizes the Awan family as being part of the Montreal community, Head & Hands would like to echo the demands of the Awan family support committee. As such, we urge you to take action against their deportation, and that you grant them permanent status on humanitarian grounds immediately. Furthermore, we demand that Mohammad Khalil Awan be able to return to Canada and be granted permanent status as well. We urge you to allow Khurshid Begum Awan, Mohammad Khalil Awan, Tahira Malik, and Ali to be reunited and live a dignified life.

Respectfully,

Jon McPhedran Waitzer, Director

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