

Statement in Support of Khurshid Begum Awan :

to demand that she be granted status immediately &
that her husband be allowed to return to Canada

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Khurshid Begum Awan's life is here in Montreal, along side her daughter and grandson. Despite this reality, she was given a deportation order to Pakistan, where she faces the risk of murder. By deporting her husband, Mohamad Khalil Awan, in April 2013, the Canadian government began to divide a family and placed a human being's life in danger. In placing a removal order against her, the government is systematically inciting violence on her, her family and community.

Khurshid Begum Awan came to Canada from Pakistan in 2011, with her husband and grandson Ali. In Lahore, they were targeted by extremist and criminal gangs related to the Sipah E Sahaba, an anti-Shia group that is banned in Pakistan.

Mrs. Awan's daughter, Tahira Malik, came to Canada and obtained refugee status in 2000, when at the age of 17 she was forced to leave her parents and 1 year old son in order to escape a violent marriage. Her husband, linked to Sipah E Sahaba members, continued to terrorize and beat up her parents for money.

In December 2012 Mr. and Mrs. Awan's refugee claim was rejected. In April 2013, Mr. Awan was ordered deported. Since returning to Pakistan he has survived an armed attack, and now lives in hiding.

Shortly after, Mrs. Awan was also ordered deported. Despite letters from three general physicians, one emergency physician and one cardiologist clearly stating that she should not travel to Pakistan in her current health condition, Federal Court Judge Simon Noël refused to grant her a stay of removal. It was not until she suffered a heart attack in the Montreal CBSA office on July 4th that the removal procedures against her were finally delayed temporarily.

But not three weeks later, CBSA agents sparked public outcry by entering a hospital emergency room in an attempt to arrest Mrs. Awan, declaring to her suddenly that she was to be detained upon release and deported the next day. She was being treated after collapsing in the CBSA offices and being rushed to hospital. Agents only agreed to leave when



top hospital staff insisted that according to Canada's own guidelines, she was not to fly for at least six weeks due to her recent heart attack.

Mrs. Awan was called into Immigration offices on August 20th. Despite another letter from her doctor as well as a cardiologist, stating that she should not fly before having received adequate treatment, she was given a removal date for the evening of August 21st, 2013,.

Subsequent to the federal court refusing to hear her request for an appeal of the deportation order, and with all legal channels exhausted, Khurshid Begum Awan courageously decided not to present herself for removal.

An Anglican church in Montreal offered to take her in under the tradition of sanctuary to those who are fleeing violence. She now lives in the church, unable to leave. This causes inordinate amounts of daily stress for her, her

daughter and her grandson.

Mrs. Awan's current reality – one of basic survival – is caused by systemic exclusion of migrants in Canadian society and violence within Canada's Refugee and Immigration system.

More recently, the Canadian government has continued its attack on refugees by implementing the "Refugee Exclusion Act". Since its implementation in December 2012, the rate of refugees accepted in Canada has plummeted – the acceptance rate for the first half of 2013 was only 33%, the lowest in the history of the Immigration and Refugee Board. The number of refugee claims made has similarly fallen to less than half of previous averages, according to IRB statistics. Meanwhile, RCMP figures show that there are an estimated 500,000 migrants living in Canada without papers. As immigration laws become increasingly repressive, creating more precarity for refugees and migrants, more people will be forced to go underground and take drastic measures.

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED, CONDEMN the deportation of Mr. Mohamad Khalil Awan, which has divided a family and condemned this man to live in hiding. We demand that he be allowed to return to Canada to join his family.

WE CONDEMN the removal procedures against Mrs. Khurshid Begum Awan, and her treatment by the Canada Border Services Agency and Immigration Canada, which have placed an overwhelming amount of stress on her. This has in turn caused irreparable damage to her health. Treating doctors have in fact noted that since July, her heart failure has significantly worsened.

WE CONDEMN the fact that these procedures have



taken place in complete and wanton disregard of Mrs. Awan's health, of the real danger of violence, extortion and death should she return to Pakistan, and of her role as one of the primary parental figures in her grandson Ali's life.

WE RECOGNISE that people have historically resisted against, and to this day defy, laws and regulations that are violent and unjust. This is true when people's freedom to movement is under attack. In this light, we publicly state our committed support for this strong individual taking sanctuary and fighting for a dignified life alongside her family here in Montreal.

WE DEMAND that Mrs. Khurshid Begum Awan be granted Permanent Resident status on humanitarian and compassionate grounds

without delay, and that her husband be allowed to return to Canada to join his family.

WE WILL CONTINUE TO ACT in solidarity with Mrs. Awan and her family in affirming their (and all migrants') right to a peaceful and just life.

Signed,

The Awan Family Support Committee, and supporters



For more information on how to support the Awan family in their struggle for justice visit:

www.soutienfamilleawan.org

Email: soutien.famille.awan@gmail.com

Facebook: Solidarité avec la famille Awan / Justice for the Awan family