

# ***RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS***

*60 Lowther Ave, Toronto, ON M5R 1C7*

April 14, 2014

The Honourable Chris Alexander  
Minister of Citizenship and Immigration  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario  
Canada K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Alexander:

We are writing to you concerning the situation of Mrs. Khurshid Begum Awan, a refugee from Pakistan who has taken sanctuary in a Montreal church in courageous defiance of her deportation order. She has been in this church since August 2013. This is very stressful for her, as well as her daughter Tahira Malek and grandson Ali, as they essentially live with her in the church.

We support Mrs. Awan in her decision to migrate to Canada to escape from the violence and years of trauma she and her family faced in Pakistan. Khurshid often talks about the violence that her grandson Ali has endured from his father, as well as the physical and sexual violence faced by her daughter Tahira. Khurshid came to Canada to build a life based on dignity alongside her family members. However, in her attempt to do so, she and her family have continued to face hardship in Canada, particularly when navigating the Refugee and Immigration system.

Khurshid's life is here, in Montreal, with her daughter and grandson. She faces the risk of murder if sent to Pakistan. Yet, she was given a deportation order, in Canada's attempt to separate this human being from her family, community and support system. Canada has also rejected Khurshid's husband's claim for status here. This action has placed Mr. Awan in grave danger in Pakistan.. He has already survived an attempted assassination.

We ask you to grant Khurshid permanent residency immediately on Humanitarian and Compassionate grounds, and to allow her husband to return to Canada so that he can join his family and live freely.

Sanctuary has been used for centuries in order to provide refuge to people fleeing persecution. As a faith based organization, we support Mrs. Awan's decision to protect herself from violence that threatened her in Pakistan by seeking refuge in Canada.

Thank you,

Elizabeth Block, Acting Clerk  
Peace & Social Action Committee

Philippa Davies, Acting Clerk  
Refugee Committee

EB.PD/sp