



Press Conference Statement (October 8, 2013) - by Ghazala Munawar

The South Asian Women's Community Centre is an organization that has been in existence for over 3 decades campaigning against injustice as it impacts migrant women, providing advocacy and services to immigrant women and their families.

In Khurshid Begum Awan's struggle against the injustice that she has faced, people at SAWCC have developed a relationship with this courageous woman, her daughter Tahira and grandson Ali.

We support Khurshid in her decision to migrate to Canada from the violence she and her family face in Pakistan. This family has faced years of trauma. Khurshid often talks about the violence that her grandson Ali has endured by his father, as well as the physical and sexual violence faced by her daughter Tahira.

We fully support people's decisions to remove themselves from situations of violence. 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 endure violence 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. She was unjustly forced to make a decision to confine herself in a place that has offered her sanctuary. This has rendered her feeling imprisoned – fretting her movements beyond the walls of a building, removed from her home. Witnessing the violence that their mother and grandmother faces, Tahira and Ali face exorbitant amounts of stress themselves.

Subsequent to rejecting Mr. Awan's claim, Canada has placed him in grave danger in Pakistan where he is currently attempting to survive, including a targeted shooting attempting to take his life. By deporting Mr. Awan, Khurshid's husband, Canada began to divide a family who very much wants to remain together. In continuing to do the same with Khurshid, Canada's actions exemplify systemic methods of inciting violence on a family and community.

For Khurshid to be living here without permanent status is inherently a form of violence that wreaks havoc in a person's life. This is unacceptable. Khurshid, like migrants around the globe, made the difficult decision to migrate to Canada to live in dignity. As such, for us, it is very clear: the injustice she and her family face ends now.

We demand that the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Chris Alexander grant Khurshid permanent residency immediately on Humanitarian and Compassionate grounds and that Mr. Awan be able to return to Canada so that he can join his family and live freely.

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