

PRESS RELEASE

On June 26th, 2010, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper hosts the G-20 Summit, welcoming to Toronto, world leaders, including King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia and US President Barak Obama, while a coalition of organizations and individuals, including The Nathalie Morin Support Committee, Muslims for Progressive Values, Canadian Gulf War I veterans and others shall gather in Protest in front of the Saudi Embassies in Ottawa and Washington, DC to demand freedom for Canadian, Nathalie Morin and her children and end Gender Apartheid in Saudi Arabia.

Ottawa, June 22, 2010 -

Twenty six year old Canadian, Nathalie Morin, of Montreal and her three young children, Abdullah, Samir and Sarah are in Saudi Arabia, right now, unable to escape the neglect and abuse inflicted by Nathalie's common law husband, Saeed Al-Sharahni and his family. Nathalie is held in a tiny storage room for long periods of time, in isolation, given little food and water and since entering Saudi Arabia five years ago has been beaten and raped. Photos of Nathalie's two sons, Abdullah and Samir, show scars on their heads from physical abuse. Their baby sister, Sarah, less than two years old, due to her mother's confinement has little opportunity to be looked after by her. Nathalie has relayed the details of her ordeal to her mother, Johanne Durocher, the only person from her family permitted to talk to Nathalie. This communication has been allowed only occasionally.

The Harper government has failed to obtain the release of Nathalie and her children, despite ongoing pleas by the Nathalie Morin Support Committee and demands by the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, which organization has advised the Harper government it has the legal right to demand the return of Nathalie Morin and her children under international law.

The Saudi male guardianship system, under which Nathalie Morin is unable to leave without Saeed Al Sharahni's consent, is a legally enforced system of gender apartheid. The male guardianship system was supposed to be abolished under the UN resolution of CEDAW (Convention to Eliminate all forms of Discrimination Against Women) to which Saudi Arabia is a signatory. But notwithstanding it remains enforced and is responsible for flagrant violations of human rights in that country.

Reform in this area is badly needed. Men, women and children - all suffer because of the male guardianship system. In extreme cases, men lose their wives and children lose their mothers when women are jailed for failing to attend government offices without a guardian. Women, such as Nathalie, who are beaten by their guardian – who may be their father/ brother/husband - cannot escape the brutality. Family law as it exists in Saudi Arabia makes it difficult, even in cases of abuse on the part of a father, such as in Samir and Abdullah's case, for a mother to obtain custody of her children and for a woman, like Nathalie, to travel without her husband's permission - in order to seek safety and obtain a separation. In the ordinary course, women cannot attend school, seek employment, or travel freely in the absence of the consent of their male guardian.

The male guardianship system is un-Islamic. It abrogates the rights provided to Muslim women in the Holy Quran in the sixth century, including the right of self determination and freedom from oppression.

Canadian Nathalie Morin and her children must be returned to Canada immediately to protect their safety. Canadians of all beliefs will not tolerate gender apartheid anywhere in the world, particularly as it affects the lives of fellow Canadians. Gulf War I Veterans of the Canadian Armed Forces are relinquishing the Kuwaiti Liberation Medals, awarded to them by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in opposition to the male guardianship system, including Michael Larocque of Nova Scotia, who has come forward now in support of Nathalie Morin and her children.

We urge G20 leaders to use their conscience and their influence to guide them in this matter. We remind them of the words of US President Barak Obama, in Cairo – ***«But I do have an unyielding belief that all people yearn for certain things: the ability to speak your mind and have a say in how you are governed; confidence in the rule of law and the equal administration of justice; government that is transparent and doesn't steal from the people; the freedom to live as you choose. These are not just American ideas; they are human rights. And that is why we will support them everywhere.»***



Information : www.nathaliemorin.org, www.mpvottawa.com

Email : soutiennathaliemorin@gmail.com, khansalter@rogers.com

Phone: (514) 826-9482, (613) 260 8798

Organizations standing in solidarity with the Nathalie Morin Support Committee and Muslims for Progressive Values, include :



Fédération de ressources d'hébergement
pour femmes violentées et
en difficulté du Québec



عنوانہنہ زیرِ ایش مسام قوانینہ
Women Living Under Muslim Laws
النساء في ظل قوانين المسلمين
Femmes sous lois musulmanes