



Saanich Peninsula Refugee Initiative Group

UPDATE #26

December 4, 2020

PRAY FOR SAFAA AND HER CHILDREN

Safaa is an amazingly strong, clear-headed woman. Today she lives moment to moment. It is too painful for her to dream of the future or dwell in the past. Her family live far away in Belgium and Canada and she misses them deeply.

The refusal of their application was very painful for Safaa and her four children who dreamed of coming to Canada and of getting away from their current situation. In the midst of the chaos in Lebanon because of the political situation and economy, COVID 19, as well as unreliable internet service, Safaa tries to keep up to date in her dental profession and to encourage her children to apply themselves to on-line schooling.

Safaa tells us that this drawing by one of her daughters “reflects the state in my home”.



JUDICIAL REVIEW

As stated in UPDATE #25, this summer the SPRIG Steering Committee consulted with a recommended immigration lawyer in Toronto. We asked him to provide an opinion on the chances of success of a judicial review of the visa office decision. After obtaining and reviewing various documents related to Safaa’s case the lawyer noted some matters of procedural fairness that, in his opinion, warrant a review.

Since then Safaa and her Canadian brother, Osama, have been central to the process of pursuing this review. The SPRIG Steering Committee reconfirmed its commitment to ensure that Safaa’s application receives procedural fairness. We will continue to support Safaa and her children to proceed down this legal path. The application for a Judicial Review has now been submitted to the Federal Court.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Last month Safaa’s brother and the Steering Committee raised nearly enough money to cover the initial legal costs of the court application. Their financial contributions cannot receive charitable tax receipts.

None of the charitable money that is held in trust by St. John’s United Church Refugee Sponsorship Fund will be used for legal expenses. This fund can only be used for the settlement of refugees after they arrive in Canada. It will either be used to settle Safaa and her children here or it will be used to sponsor other refugees.

YOUR FEEDBACK and SUPPORT

If you have questions or comments, or if you wish to support the legal effort to review Safaa’s case, please phone Mabel Jean Rawlins, SPRIG chair, at 250 656 0834.

www.sprig.me

info@sprig.me



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