



June 1, 2017

SAWCC demands immediate action by Canadian Government in support of Bissan Eid and Baby Sarah

Bissan Eid, a 24-year-old Canadian of Palestinian origin and a graduate student of Concordia University, Montreal has been prevented from leaving the Palestinian territory of Gaza for over four months. Bissan was facing a difficult pregnancy and was in urgent need of support from the Canadian government to secure an exit permit from the Israeli government. Due to slow processing of her exit permit by the Israeli authorities and slow response from Canadian government, Bissan was unable to leave Gaza in time to be with her family and friends in Montreal to deliver the baby.

Gaza has been under Israeli military blockade for more than 10 years. Hospitals and primary healthcare facilities were damaged or destroyed during the Israeli military attacks in 2014 and are hardly repaired or restored. Thus the facilities remain overstretched, medicine shortages are common, and services are frequently interrupted by power cuts compromising reproductive health care. As a women's organization, South Asian Women's Community Center (SAWCC) understands the importance of having good facilities for pregnant women and the new born.

Despite the challenging circumstances faced by medical workers in Gaza, on May 11, local healthcare workers were able to support Bissan in safely delivering her baby girl, Sarah.

Bissan is now seeking citizenship papers for Sarah and is struggling to secure an exit permit from Israeli authorities.

SAWCC urges Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and the Canadian government to take action and follow through on their responsibilities to support Bissan and Sarah. We demand that the government expedites the processing of Sarah's citizenship papers and that they continue to pressure the Israeli authorities to ensure that exit permits are issued for Bissan and Sarah. We further demand that safe passage is ensured for Bissan and Sarah so that they can safely return to Canada via Jordan.

The Canadian government needs to take immediate steps with both Israeli and Jordanian authorities to secure this exit permit in addition to issuing citizenship papers for Sarah.