

## PRESS RELEASE

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### Parallel to the G-20 summit, a coalition of groups is protesting in front of the Saudi Embassies in Ottawa and Washington for Nathalie Morin's freedom

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**Montreal, June 26 th, 2010** - At the same time as a Saudi Arabian delegation, with King Abdullah at its head, will participate in the G-20 summit in Toronto, a coalition of feminist groups, Muslims and Gulf War veterans is protesting in front of the Saudi Embassies in Ottawa and Washington to demand the liberation of Nathalie Morin and her three children, and their immediate repatriation to Canada. They are also demanding that Saudi Arabia puts an end to its male guardianship system (mehrem), veritable gender apartheid that oppresses women and legitimises violence against them.

Nathalie Morin, a 26 year old Canadian woman, who has been detained against her will for five years in Saudi Arabia by her partner, is one of the numerous victims of this archaic system. A victim of conjugal violence, of confinement and maltreatment, Nathalie is asking to be repatriated to Canada with her three children. But in Saudi Arabia a woman must have the authorisation of her male guardian to leave the territory and her aggressor refuses to let her leave. According to Amnesty International's latest report, family violence is widespread in Saudi Arabia and the perpetrators of these criminal acts are not brought to justice.

According to Muslims for Progressive Values Ottawa, the mehrem system that is in effect in Saudi Arabia constitutes a violation of women's human rights and of international law. It goes against values of social justice and democracy, and for these reasons must be eliminated. Seizing the opportunity of King Abdullah's visit to Canada, protesters are demanding that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia take action for human rights by allowing Nathalie Morin and her three children to leave Saudi territory. They are also requesting that the Canadian government stand up and fulfil its duty as a state by repatriating her and her three children to Canada immediately, such that these Canadian citizens confined in Saudi Arabia may at last be brought to safety.



Michael Larocque, a veteran of the Canadian Armed Forces having served during the second Gulf War, will return his Kuwait Liberation Medal granted to him by Saudi Arabia in order to denounce the system of male guardianship that is still practice in Saudi Arabia, and to demand the liberation and repatriation of Nathalie Morin and her three children.

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Organised by Nathalie Morin's Support Committee and Muslims for Progressive Values Ottawa with the participation of the following organisations:



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



محوائتہ زیر اش مسام قوانین  
Women Living Under Muslim Laws  
النساء في ظل قوانين المسلمين  
Femmes sous lois musulmanes