**RAPAR**

*The Manchester based Human Rights organisation working with displaced people*

**PRESS RELEASE**

***For immediate release – Thursday, December 8th 2011***

## KEEP MANJEET SAFE IN THE UK

**DISABLED WOMAN SEEKING ASYLUM TAKES CASE TO HIGH COURT**

* ***Solidarity vigil to be held outside Manchester Civil Justice Centre, 1 Bridge Street West (corner of Gartside Street), Manchester.***

***10 am, Monday, December 19th***

**A disabled woman who claimed asylum in the UK after her husband disappeared in India has won the right to a judicial review at the High Court in Manchester.**

**Manjeet Kaur, who lives in Whalley Range, came to the UK in March, a month after the disappearance of her husband Amitt Bhatt - a journalist and Kashmir human rights activist who was threatened and attacked because of his anti government articles and books. In the past, Amitt has spoken on the same human rights platform as Jemima Khan.**

**Manjeet fled to the UK because she was beaten twice and threatened with rape and murder by people who were looking for her husband. She uses a wheelchair due to paralysis caused by polio and the injuries she sustained during the beatings have worsened her condition.**

**Manjeet was born and lived in Afghanistan until the death of her father, a doctor in Kabul. Since her husband disappeared, Manjeet has no-one to care for her in India but she has relatives in England who can support her.**

**The UK Border Agency has refused her asylum claim and wants to return her to India where 90 per cent of the infrastructure is not accessible to wheelchairs - this would severely restrict her ability to protect herself from more attacks.**

**Manjeet is taking her case to the High Court to challenge the UKBA's decision to refuse an “in country” appeal against the rejection of her asylum claim. A High Court judge has given permission for a judicial review of the decision, and Manjeet has received financial backing from trade unions and individuals in order to pursue her case.**

**Her campaign, organised by RAPAR, is backed by trade unionists and community and disability rights activists. The International Federation of Journalists is currently in contact with journalist trade unions in India in a bid to find news of her husband.**

**Manjeet's solicitor, Gary McIndoe, of Latitude Law, said: “In granting permission for judicial review, His Honour Judge Pelling QC recognised the high threshold the Secretary of State must reach before she may certify a claim for protection. It is Manjeet's case that this threshold has not been reached; her evidence of her husband Amitt's politically motivated disappearance, and the physical harm she has suffered, make this a clearly arguable case.”**

**Dr Rhetta Moran, of RAPAR, added: “The level of support Manjeet has attracted from all sections of the community is a testimony to the strength of her case and to the way she has used her skills to work with people in her community and with other people seeking asylum.”**

**For more information, please contact:**

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**Details of Manjeet's case can also be found on the RAPAR website www.rapar.org.uk**