

RAPAR

The Manchester based human rights organisation working with displaced people

PRESS RELEASE

for immediate release

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UK BORDER AGENCY SET TO EVICT DISABLED WOMAN SEEKING ASYLUM

The UK Border Agency plans to evict a disabled woman from her accommodation in Whalley Range later today (Tuesday).

Manjeet Kaur, 32, who is wheelchair bound, has been living in Oaklea, Upper Chorlton Road, which is managed by Happy Homes, for the last four weeks after being housed in Manchester when she made a fresh claim for asylum. Her claim has now been turned down but, even though her solicitors are still working on the case to see if there are grounds for a judicial review, the UKBA has withdrawn her housing support and she has been told she must leave her accommodation by 5pm today.

Happy Homes, based in Ashton Old Road, Manchester, is now considering a request to extend her accommodation for a few days until alternative housing can be found but this has not yet been approved. Manjeet, who uses a manually operated wheelchair, has been seeking help from Refugee Action but, so far, they have not been able to find any other accommodation.

Manjeet sought asylum in the UK two months ago following the disappearance in India of her husband Amitt Bhatt, a journalist and human rights activist who has written articles and books about the treatment of the Kashmiri Pandits. Manjeet is from Afghanistan and has relatives in London but she lived in India with her husband who she married five years ago.

Her husband had been threatened and attacked for his journalistic work before his disappearance in February this year. Afterwards, Manjeet continued to receive threats, by post and over the phone. She has also been physically attacked.

A spokesperson for RAPAR said: "Manjeet sought asylum in this country because she was very frightened when her husband disappeared and she was alone in the house and continued to receive threats.

"She has relatives in this country, her grandmother, uncle and cousins. There is no-one she can turn to in India and there is nowhere she can live in Afghanistan after her father, a doctor in Kabul, died some years ago. Manjeet is desperately worried about her husband but is frightened of returning to India where she has been targeted because of her husband's journalism and writings.

"Given Manjeet's medical condition, the UKBA's withdrawal of housing support is particularly heartless and we believe they are contravening the Equalities Act. We urge them to reverse this appalling decision and to restore her housing immediately."

For more information, please contact Kath Grant on 07812471047

