

# SOUTH ASIAN WOMEN'S COMMUNITY CENTRE

Bulletin Mai 2017

In Tiohtià:ke (Montreal) on unceded Kanien'kehá:ka [Mohawk] territory



## Le Centre communautaire des femmes sud-asiatiques

### Inside this issue:

Cover page	1
Centre update, EC meeting, bulletin guidelines	2
Open house	3
Job offer	4
Silent mobilization in Montreal metro	5
Program with McGill's Jill Hanley	6
SAWCC session on anti-Muslim racism	6
Living and working in safety and dignity	7
The good immigrant	7
Bilkis Bano	8
Against demagoguecracy	10
Member news	11
Activities, membership	12

### Qu'en pensez-vous? What do you think?

- Let us know your thoughts about the bulletin.
- Que pensez-vous de notre journal?
- We encourage you to send in your stories and articles for upcoming newsletters in any language by the 25th of every month to:
- [sawccbulletin@gmail.com](mailto:sawccbulletin@gmail.com)
- Écrivez - nous à

[sawccbulletin@gmail.com](mailto:sawccbulletin@gmail.com)



**This year we will have our AGM on June 18th from 10:00 am -1:00 pm.**

- Important facts and figures- learn about our great work
  - Mingle with us- be informed and become part of this awesome group
  - Your voice matters- we want to hear, take part into our decision making
- Are you ready? .... See you then!

## CENTRE UPDATE



### Centre Hours/heure d'ouverture

**Monday & Thursday/lundi & jeudi 9am—9pm**

**Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday/mardi, mercredi & vendredi– 9am-5pm**

The Centre is wheelchair accessible

Le centre est accessible aux fauteuils roulants.

**Volunteers** — If you are interested in helping out at the Centre, please contact Juvaria (Ext. 104 or [juvaria@bellnet.ca](mailto:juvaria@bellnet.ca)) to coordinate a meeting!

South Asian Women's Community Centre, 1035, rue Rachel est, 3ième étage, Montréal, QC .H2J 2J5

**Next Executive Council Meeting: Tuesday, May 16, 2017 at 6pm.** All are welcome.

## **Executive Council Meeting Highlights Meeting of April 20, 2017**

- ♦ Session with Sadeqa Siddiqui on finances
- ♦ Preparation for upcoming AGM on June 18th
- ♦ Budget projections for current financial year
- ♦ Starting of summer camp and hiring councillors
- ♦ Grant applications update
- ♦ Research request proposals

### **SAWCC Bulletin -- submission guidelines:**

SAWCC members are encouraged to send submissions to the Bulletin, to share items of interest with other members. Send submissions to: [sawccbulletin@gmail.com](mailto:sawccbulletin@gmail.com)

If using the post send to: SAWCC Bulletin, 1035 Rachel est, Montreal, Quebec, H2J 2J5

Submissions should reach by the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month.

Submissions may be original work or reprints (with permission) and can include --

art, reports, photos, information, opinion pieces, short fiction, poetry, announcements, recipes, etc.

Publication criteria are guided by SAWCC's commitment to not negatively discriminate on the basis of physical and mental ability, religion, colour, nationality, age, sexual orientation and identity, caste, and class. Publication is further guided by the feminist ethos of sis-terhood, and principles of intersectionality\*, equality, equity, and transparency. As well, material that may compromise confidentiality of individuals without their consent will not be published.

SAWCC reserves the right to select, reject or edit submissions. When authorship identified, items reflect the views of the authors.

\*Intersectionality -- the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, that create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

## Open House

**South Asian Women's Community Centre** cordially invites you to our centre for an "open house" on the 26<sup>th</sup> of May. We will take you on a short journey to South Asia to celebrate Asian Heritage month and show you a glimpse of our rich and colorful culture.



### Agenda for the day:

- 2:30 - 2:45 ---- Arrival & Welcome
- 2:50 - 3:20 ---- Brief presentation of who we are and what we do
- 3:25 - 3:50 ----- Recipe demonstrations « Mango Lassi » & « Chana Chat »
- 3:50 - 4:15 ----- Tasting of South Asian food
- 4:15 - 4:30 ----- Henna printing & learning to wear Saree

**BONUS:** The centre staff will be wearing traditional dresses of South Asia and you can see and learn about the traditional costumes.

**RSVP:** Please let us know **by May 18<sup>th</sup>** if you will be able to visit us so that we can make your visit memorable.  
Juvaria Yasser: 514-528-8812/ 104, [juvaria@bellnet.ca](mailto:juvaria@bellnet.ca)

**VENUE:** 1035 Rachel east, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Montreal. H2J 2J5

**Le Centre Communautaire des femmes Sud Asiatiques** vous invite cordialement à notre centre pour une «porte ouverte» le 26 mai. Nous allons vous emmener dans un court voyage en Asie du Sud pour célébrer le mois du patrimoine asiatiques et vous montrer un aperçu de notre culture riche et colorée.

### Ordre du jour de la journée:



- 2:30 - 2:45 ---- Arrivée & Bienvenue
- 2:50 - 3:20 ----- Brève présentation de ce que nous sommes et de ce que nous faisons
- 3:25 - 3:50 ----- Démonstrations de recettes «Mango Lassi» et «Chana Chat»
- 3:50 - 4:15 ----- dégustation de nourriture sud-asiatique
- 4:15 - 4:30 ----- impression d'henné et apprentissage de la tenue de le Saree

**BONUS:** Le personnel du centre portera des robes traditionnelles de l'Asie du Sud. Vous pouvez voir et découvrir les costumes traditionnels.

**RSVP:** Veuillez nous le faire savoir **avant le 18 mai** si vous pourrez nous rendre visite afin que nous puissions rendre votre visite inoubliable.

Juvaria Yasser: 514-528-8812/ 104, [juvaria@bellnet.ca](mailto:juvaria@bellnet.ca)

**VENUE:** 1035 Rachel east, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Montreal. H2J 2J5



Metro Mont-Royal



# JOB OFFER- POSTE D'EMPLOI

## ***The South Asian Women's Community Centre***

**Position:** Counselor for Summer Camp for children aged 4-14 years

**Start date:** July 4, 2017 (2 hour paid orientation on Thursday, June 29th)

**Duration:** 6 weeks

**Hours:** 9am – 5 pm (40 hours / week)

**Salary:** \$12/hour

### **Requirements:**

- This position is for students who were enrolled as full-time students in 2017, and will be full-time students as of August/September in CEGEP or University.
- Be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident.
- Fluent in English & French. Ability to speak a South Asian language is an asset.
- CPR training is an asset (please provide certification documents)

### **Task and responsibilities :**

- Be responsible for the safety and well-being of 15-20 children aged 4 to 14 years old for 5 days a week across 7 weeks, between 9am – 5pm.
- Plan, organize and animate daily indoor and outdoor activities in accordance to summer camp objectives of child empowerment
- **In-door activities** can include: arts and craft, storytelling, activities, music and dance
- **Out-door activities** can include: Visiting historical, cultural, and educational places
- **Sports and recreation:** Swimming, basketball, baseball and soccer and picnics in the park
- Recruit and manage volunteers and parents for indoor and outdoor activities
- Organize information sessions for children on the issues impacting them
- Work collaboratively with, and when needed, to seek support from SAWCC community workers

Please send your CV and a cover page, addressed to the Hiring Committee, by **Friday, May**

**26th by 5PM** by email at [sawcc@bellnet.ca](mailto:sawcc@bellnet.ca) . For further information, please contact: (514)528-8812 ext. 103.

*We recognize that as this is a youth position, we encourage those interested but who do not yet have camp counselor experience to still apply.*

## ***Centre communautaire des femmes sud-asiatiques***

**Poste:** Moniteur(trice) de camp d'été pour enfants de 4-14 ans.

**Date d'entrée en fonction:** le 4 juillet 2017 (2 heures d'orientation jeudi le 29 juin)

**Durée de l'emploi:** 6 semaines

**Horaire:** 9 h 00 à 17 h 00 (40 heures / semaine)

**Salaire:** \$12/heure

### **Exigences:**

- Avoir été étudiant à temps plein en 2017 et garder ce statut en août/septembre dans un Cégep ou une université
- Être citoyen canadien ou résident permanent
- Pouvoir communiquer en anglais et en français. Une langue sud-asiatique sera un atout
- Formation en RCR est un atout (veuillez joindre vos documents de certification)

### **Principales fonctions et responsabilités:**

- S'assurer de la sécurité et du bien-être de 15-20 enfants âgés entre 4-14 ans 5 jours par semaine, de 9 h 00 à 17 h 00, pour un total de 7 semaines.

- Planifier, organiser et animer quotidiennement des activités intérieures et extérieures qui répondent aux objectifs de découverte de ses pouvoirs du camp d'été pour enfants.

- **Activités intérieures** peuvent inclure: arts et artisanat, contes, activités, musique et danse.

- **Activités extérieures** peuvent inclure: visites de sites historiques, culturels et éducatifs.

- **Sports et loisir** : natation, basketball, baseball, soccer, pique-nique au parc.

- Recruter et gérer des bénévoles et des parents lors des activités intérieures et extérieures.

- Organiser des séances d'information pour les enfants qui touchent à des thèmes qui les affectent.

- Travailler en collaboration avec les travailleurs sociaux du CCFSA et au besoin, s'assurer de leur soutien.

Envoyez votre CV et une lettre de motivation adressée au comité de sélection, avant **vendredi**

**le 26 mai 2017 à 17h**, par courriel au **sawcc@bellnet.ca**. Pour plus de détails, communiquez

au (514) 528-8812 poste 103.

*Nous reconnaissons que ce poste est pour les jeunes, nous encourageons ceux qui sont*

*intéressés mais qui n'ont pas encore de l'expérience en tant que conseiller de camp à appliquer*

*quand même.*

## Silent mobilization in Montreal metro: SAWCC Participation



Women's centres' national week of actions against austerity

Montreal, Wednesday April 26th 2017.-Today, between 10 AM and noon, a hundred participants from various Montreal-Laval women's centres took part in a silent mobilization in the Montreal metro to symbolically voice their opposition to Law 25 (social assistance reform) and bring attention to its impacts on society's most vulnerable and more specifically on women's lives. Today's action was part of the Women's centres' national week of actions against austerity.

### A silence that speaks volumes

Carrying female silhouettes displaying hard-hitting messages, numerous women silently waited on metro platforms from Jean-Talon to Côte-des-Neiges stations. The injuries on the silhouettes took the form of compelling messages that clearly illustrated the violence of the impacts of this reform and of austerity policies on women. Wearing capes the silhouettes exemplify the solidarity and determination of the members of the Greater Montreal region's women's centres as well as those throughout Quebec.

### Social assistance: a fundamental right

Initially, Quebec developed its social assistance program to ensure a minimum income for everyone, to prevent society's most vulnerable from living in destitution. To live with dignity is a fundamental right and the government's role is to uphold it. Yet, in bringing forth new conditions – such as forced employability measures, Quebec's Liberal government restricts access to this fundamental right. As a matter of fact, the government now forces all first time applicants to enroll in employability programs or face the threat of having their meager \$623 monthly cheque cut to \$399, an amount that is clearly insufficient for meeting basic needs. This is unacceptable! Furthermore, this unjust measure encourages prejudices against people receiving social assistance and then treating them as « abusing the system ». «Minister Blais, social assistance is not a choice but a right! » declared Graciela Mateo, spokesperson for the Table régionale des centres de femmes de Montréal métropolitain et Laval (TRCFMML).

### Impact of Law 25 on women

Montreal and Laval women's centres denounce this law because once again, it is women who will be most affected by it. Far from being « lazy », it is mainly women who leave their jobs in order to take care of loved ones or who experience workplace harassment and violence. It is women who have lost employment as a result of budget cuts in the health, education and social services; jobs mainly occupied by women. This law adds to the draconian cuts imposed between 2014 and 2016 by the Liberal government. Throughout Quebec, these measures have impoverished women even further. «With incomes too low to allow them to survive, women are kept in poverty, this is unacceptable», stated Graciela Mateo.

Contd. page 6



### Women's centres demand massive reinvestment in public services

Women's centres and the TRCFMML ask the Quebec government to invest massively in public services and to abolish Law 25. « Budget surpluses were obtained through cuts in services to which we have a right, the government must now reinvest these surpluses in public services » explains Graciela Mateo. Social assistance must continue to be a social safety net accessible to everyone in times of trouble. Women's centres invite the government to put into practice fiscal solutions developed by the Coalition Main Rouge which would allow to collect over 10 billion dollars. If, for example, the government chose to tackle tax evasion or tax avoidance instead of targeting society's most vulnerable with Law 25, it could recover 740 billion dollars annually. We have the means to finance our public services!

Source:

Geneviève Dauphin-Johnson

Responsable média

438-937-7515

[genevieve.dauphin-johnson@cflaval.org](mailto:genevieve.dauphin-johnson@cflaval.org)



### Program with McGill's Jill Hanley on Care-deficit at SAWCC

### SAWCC Session on Anti-Muslim Racism



On Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> April SAWCC continued and held a session open to members to come and share. The objective was that out of this would come material for an official SAWCC statement on this reality. About 15 people attended, spoke about different realities and finally put pen to paper to write and draw their sentiments on this issue. These words and images will be displayed at SAWCC's Open House this month. And a SAWCC statement will be drafted.

We had a program with Jill Hanley, McGill School of Social Work and her team on the 2nd of May at SAWCC. We talked about our experience of care-deficit in immigrants. If anyone is interested to learn more about this program, please contact SAWCC staff.

## LIVING AND WORKING IN SAFETY AND DIGNITY-- Stella denounces Mayor Coderre's intention to close erotic massage parlors

-- Press release --

e-mail: [info@chezstella.org](mailto:info@chezstella.org)  
Montreal, March 31, 2017

*"The legislator has the power to repress nuisance, but not at the cost of health, Safety and life of prostitutes "(Supreme Court of Canada, Bedford)*

The Bedford decision of the Supreme Court of Canada is clear: *"the negative impact of the bawdy-house prohibition (section 210) on the applicants' security of the person is grossly disproportionate to its objective of preventing public nuisance. The harms to prostitutes identified by the courts below, such as being prevented from working in safer fixed indoor locations and from resorting to safe houses, are grossly disproportionate to the deterrence of community disruption. Parliament has the power to regulate against nuisances, but not at the cost of the health, safety and lives of prostitutes."*

On the other hand, the Mayor of Montreal announced today that for him, the Supreme Court is worth nothing, that the Charter Is not worth anything and that sex workers are, in his opinion, only pawns in his re-election. While asking the provincial government for more powers to close down our workplaces, the chosen mayor prioritizes his political objectives to the detriment of our health and safety. He launches the message to our community that we are not full-fledged residents and that our lives are disposable to appease complaints from neighbors or if the elections approach. He launches the message to all those who exploit, steal, fight and rape us that we are indeed good targets because that it is never in our interest to be visible or to use the SPVM (Montreal Police) if we need help. Who are the women who will be among those most affected by this hatred perpetuated by the City of Montreal? Migrant women, trans women, racialized women, poor women, women who have poor working conditions, women who are victims of violence and those living with disabilities.

A few weeks ago, we joined our friends at Solidarité Sans Frontières and other groups denouncing how the Mayor Denis Coderre's declaration of Montreal as a "sanctuary city" protects no one if the city and its police service continue to collaborate with the Border Services and continues to facilitate the repression of migrants without status or precarious status. We talked about how sex workers who do not have Canadian citizenship or Permanent Residence are deported if they are found in the sex industry and how urgent it is, if the mayor really intends to make Montreal a real solidarity city, that the crackdown on massage parlors stops. Today, the mayor announces that he wants more powers to close the massage parlors. Today we have irrefutable proof that the City of Montreal is not a city that cares about the migrants. Today, all migrant sex workers in Montreal are less safe and must find ways to protect themselves from the state.

Rather than demanding new repressive powers, the City of Montreal must apply the unanimous judgment of the Supreme Court of Canada, which confirms the importance of being able to work in groups and the federal government must immediately decriminalize sex work and the provincial government must give us access to the protections available to all and ensure our ability to work in safe workplaces with decent working conditions. Municipal councillors, like all other elected officials, are required to apply the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and respect human rights before any other legal or political consideration. It is time that the hatred of sex workers and state violence against the community must stop immediately.

*Stella, Maimie's friend is an organization by and for sex workers. Stella aims to improve the quality of life of sex workers, raise awareness and educate society as a whole of society to the different forms and realities Sex workers to have the same rights to health and safety as the rest of population. Our team makes between 5000 and 8000 contacts a year with sex workers in the Montreal and militates in the decriminalization of sex work.*

## THE GOOD IMMIGRANT -- ed. Nikesh Shukla

**Fifteen writers explore what it means to be Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic in Britain today**

Keep out, Britain is full up.

Or so goes the narrative of immigration in this country all too often. We are a country in flux – our media condemns refugees one day, sheds tears over them the next. Our narrative around immigration is built on falsehoods, stereotypes and anxieties about the diminishing sense of what Britishness means.

Meanwhile, we're told that we live in a multicultural melting pot, that we're post-racial. Yet, studies show that throughout the UK, people from BAME groups are much more likely to be in poverty (with an income of less than 60 per cent of the median household income) than white British people (Institute Of Race Relations). It's a hard time to be an immigrant, or the child of one, or even the grandchild of one.

Contd. page 8



Unless you have managed to transcend into popular culture, like Mo Farah, Nadya Hussain or the other 'good immigrants' out there. It's a bad time to be a bad immigrant. My conversation with Musa Okwonga about this led to the very generation of this collection. I said I wished there was a book of essays by good immigrants. He reminded me of the Chinua Achebe quote, if you don't like the story, write your own.

*The Good Immigrant* brings together fifteen emerging British black, Asian and minority ethnic writers, poets, journalists and artists. In these fifteen essays about race and immigration, they paint a picture of what it means to be 'other' in a country that wants you, doesn't want you, doesn't accept you, needs you for its equality monitoring forms and would prefer you if you won a major reality show competition.

The book will explore why we come here, why we stay, what it means for our identity if we're mixed race, where our place is in the world if we're unwelcome in the UK, and what effects this has on the education system. By examining popular culture, family, profession and the arts, we will be looking at diversity and questioning what this concept even means anymore. The essays are poignant, challenging, funny, sad, heartbreaking, polemic, angry, weary, and, most importantly, from an emerging generation of BAME writers.

Contributors to this extraordinary state of the nation collection will include: Musa Okwonga (poet/broadcaster), Chimene Suleyman (poet/columnist), Vinay Patel (playwright), Bim Adewunmi (Buzzfeed), Salena Godden (poet/writer), Sabrina Mahfouz (playwright), Kieran Yates (journalist), Coco Khan (journalist), Sarah Sahim (journalist),

Reni Eddo Lodge (journalist), Varaidzo (student), Darren Chetty (teacher), Himesh Patel (Tamwar from Eastenders), Nish Kumar (comedian), Miss L from Casting Call Woe (actor), Daniel York Loh (playwright and actor), Vera Chok (actor/writer), Riz Ahmed (actor/rapper), Inua Ellams (poet/playwright) and Wei Ming Kam (writer).

I'm been shouting about the need for more BAME voices for so long on Twitter. I'm glad I can finally do something about it.  
<https://unbound.com/books/the-good-immigrant>

## Bilkis Bano: 'I Want Justice, Not Revenge, I Want My Daughters to Grow Up in a Safe India'

8 May 2017

<https://thewire.in/133493/i-want-justice-not-revenge-bilkis-bano-expresses-gratitude-to-mumbai-high-court/>

***The Gujarat 2002 survivor thanked the high court for its order – possibly the first time that police complicity in communal violence has been clearly acknowledged and punished by the judiciary.***

**New Delhi:** "I want justice, not revenge. I want my daughters to grow up in a safe India," Bilkis Bano, one of the gangrape survivors of the 2002 Gujarat riots, said in reply to a question on whether she wanted the death penalty for those convicted in the case. In New Delhi to express her gratitude to the Mumbai high court, which on May 4 upheld the lower court's order of life imprisonment for the 12 accused persons and also set aside the acquittals of five policemen and two government doctors in one of the most horrifying gangrape and murder cases that emerged from the riots, Bilkis recalled the trauma she and her family experienced in the last 15 years during her struggle for justice.



"We led a life of vagabonds all these years. We shifted at least 20-25 houses out of fear," said Bilkis as she questioned the Gujarat government's decision to grant parole to the accused persons several times after they were convicted by the trial court in 2008.

"Each time they were out on parole, they held meetings and threatened us. We had no hope from the police, who were complicit in the crime. I am happy the high court punished the accused policemen too," she said.  
*(Bilkis Bano with her husband Yakooob and their daughter before the press conference in New Delhi on May 8. Credit: Shome Basu)*

*Last week's judgement has ushered in new hope for Bano and her family, which lived under a constant cloud of fear.*

*"We want to start afresh. We want to educate our children. Such has been our experience in the last 15 years that our eldest daughter wants to become a lawyer now," said Bano as her husband Yakooob sat beside her holding their one-month-old daughter.*



"Although our journey for justice has been long-drawn, our faith in the Indian judiciary had been re-established. We are relieved now. I also hope that, like Bilkis, rape survivors of all communities should get justice," Yakoob said with a sigh of relief on his face. But starting afresh may not be as easy as one may think. And Yakoob already has an inkling of what comes next. "Our traditional business has always been cattle-rearing and trading. But now we are being seen as butchers. We fear getting attacked all the time just for doing our job. We have to figure out what to do in future," said Yakoob as he hinted at the duplicity of the cow protection campaign and rogue *gau rakshak* groups in Gujarat.

### Case history

On March 3, 2002, Bilkis, who was a 19-year-old girl at the time, fled her village along with her family in a truck as Muslim homes were targeted by Hindutva mobs in the riots. The truck was stopped by an armed mob of around 30-35 rioters in Randhikpur village of Dahod district near Ahmedabad. The mob gangraped Bano, who was pregnant then, and killed 14 of her family members including her two-year-old daughter and her mother Halima.

Her long, arduous journey to secure justice had only just begun. She approached the Limkheda police station, where officials reluctantly filed a FIR but did not name the rapists, whom Bano had identified. In March 2003, the Limkheda judicial magistrate effectively closed the case on the basis of a "Summary A" report filed by state police officials who quoted "inconsistencies" in Bano's version.

Bano was forced to appeal at the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), which requested senior counsel Harish Salve to represent Bano in Supreme Court (SC). Bano, who became a petitioner in the SC case, prayed for the quashing of the "Summary A" report and, a CBI enquiry and action against the Gujarat police officers and adequate compensation. Meanwhile, the state CID had started harassing Bano and her extended family, forcing the Supreme Court to hand the case over to the CBI. It was only in 2004 that the CBI arrested 12 accused people and found the Gujarat police complicit in the cover-up of the horrific crime. As she and other witnesses faced threats continuously, the Supreme Court transferred the case to Mumbai and appointed a public prosecutor on Bano's request.

On the basis of the CBI charge sheet, which had named 20 people including six police officers and two government doctors as the accused, and the cross-examination of 73 witnesses, the Mumbai sessions court found 12 people guilty but acquitted five police officers and the two doctors. One of the convicts had died during the trial.

### Sexual violence and riots

Several estimates indicate that more than 250 women were gangraped during the riots and the conviction rate in these cases has been abysmal. "Lots of documentary evidence prove that [women's bodies](#) are first and the easiest targets in any situation of a riot. Sexual violence has become a frequently-used tool to silence the powerless. Communalism and sexual violence against women are intricately linked with each other," said Kavita Srivastava, activist with the People's Union for Civil Liberties. Vijay Hiremath, the counsel for Bilkis, said that in such a context, she should be really appreciated for her immense strength. "I have seen a number of cases in which survivors pull out because of many extraneous factors. Bano stood strong and took immeasurable pain despite such a long-drawn judicial process." He said that the high court judgment is one of the rare cases in which police officers have been convicted and the complicity of state officials have been acknowledged by the court. He also read out portions from the judgment: "They tried to gag the mouth of the prosecutrix... Her evidence emerged before us like a collage which we find completely trustworthy... They investigation was not only unsatisfactory but it smacked of dishonest steps to screen the culprits. This itself is the most incriminating circumstance against the accused... The earlier investigation has played the role of villain in the case... The omissions on the part of police accused are so grave and so obvious that their malafides and intentions are very apparent... The investigation is not only faulty but it is downright tainted."

Activists who accompanied Bilkis said that the high court order is a historic moment as it is possibly the first time that police complicity was clearly acknowledged by the judiciary. "The impunity the police enjoy in India has been questioned. And many who have frequently pointed out the role of police in aiding and abetting the perpetrators of violence in riots stand vindicated. Not only Bilkis but many such survivors of riots will see this as a reference point," said Gagan Sethi, a Gujarat-based activist who works on Dalit issues.

Farida Abdulla Khan, a member of the National Commission for Minorities told *The Wire*, "I think her victory is huge in the current political environment where everyday violence against minorities is on the rise. I admire the judges that they held the complicit state officials accountable. This reinforces the state's responsibility to protect its citizens irrespective of caste, creed and religion. The conviction of police in this case is great first step towards securing justice for many like Bilkis Bano."

Others pointed out that adequate mechanisms to compensate the survivors of mass violence need to be set up by the government. "It is sad that people like Bilkis had to fight their cases without any state support. The governments are not even talking about compensation. It is high time they start thinking about it," said noted writer-activist Farah Naqvi. The award-winning director Shonali Bose, whose film *Amu* chronicles the 1984 pogrom against the Sikhs of Delhi, also addressed the press conference, as did retired bureaucrat N.C. Saxena. "The judgment is being hailed as historic as it is the first time that state officials – such as the police and doctors – have been indicted in India for the cover up of a crime," Bose said in a Facebook post after the event. "However, while this is indeed an absolutely terrific accomplishment on the part of the activists and Bilkis, it is the very least we can expect in a supposedly modern democracy and polity. The cover up was not just denial of an FIR but the beheading of the corpses and burial in mass graves to prevent future identification. For this heinous crime these officials have been given the extremely light sentence of 3 years."

## AGAINST DEMAGOGUECRACY

To think of it, now, even a day later,  
 In a plane lifted so far above the din,  
 Where it is almost possible nothing matters,  
 Satiated with tamarind rice, too much as always,  
 Packed by *amma* for any travel, a few  
 Sips of water, a book of stories by Leanne  
 Betasamosake Simpson – whom I will listen to  
 For sanity, wisdom, and light as soon  
 As this plane lands in Montreal, and yet –

Even now, far above the political debacle of the now,  
 Closest to the celestial realm in this mechanized womb,  
 I choke, as if replaying the wounds left by a lover,  
 Or raw after long hours of fighting with family – intimate  
 Profanities, choked up, speechless,  
 More like being slapped unexpectedly  
 For doing the most innocuous thing  
 Like tripping over and spilling his drink  
 Or casting a vote, and expecting the world  
 To be the same the next day –

But to know, understand fully,  
 Reconcile to the truth that the visceral  
 Hatred accumulated in hearing years of invectives:  
*Go back to where you come from!*  
*I'll give you \$50 for a blow job!*  
*Fucking lesbians! Fucking Indians! Fucking bitches!*  
*This is NOT your home!*

Is here to stay, permanently in place,  
 Framing our lives, our every thought,  
 Our every movement, our breath  
 And if we just exhale, then becoming  
 The New Normal.

Not that any of us were ever the fools  
 For thinking democracy gives refuge  
 To all who are dispossessed, marooned,  
 Broken, reeling from wars and traumas  
 Of history and present, the new Jim Crow,  
 Walls in our bedroom, across deserts,  
 Cutting through people's homes, yards,  
 From Nogales to Nuevo Laredo and Brownsville –

We were alert and awake  
 For the ways in which we want  
 Black Lives to matter; for  
 Latinex lives to be reckoned with;  
 For the million declarations that have to be offered  
 By our Muslim friends; for the communities  
 Converging on Standing Rock to stand  
 Resolute against black snakes; for

The embattlement faced by our LGBTQ kin  
 And for the perpetual fear all of us  
 Live in the shadow of the Right,  
 In the shadows in Turkey, Nigeria, India, Britain, USA  
 –

We were in the midst of mourning  
 And gathering and bearing witness  
 To all the lives lost, brutalized, victimized,  
 The chant that marks for those of us who envision  
 An anti-imperial, anti-western, anti-patriarchal,  
 Indigenous sovereign pan-African Sistren of world-  
 making –

I can't breathe!  
 I can't breathe!  
 I can't breathe!

The list is long –  
 Genocide in Syria, death and dying in Pakistan,  
 Protests in Tunisia, Hong Kong, Venezuela, indige-  
 nous  
 Lands in Missouri and Mohawk territories;  
 The hope remains in the unusual  
 Catalogue now building up  
 Resurgent and present  
 Against all walls:

### A RESISTANCE OF THE ELSEWHERE

The Mexicans, the Latinex, the indigenous  
 And Queer nations, dark denizens from everywhere,  
 The criminalized and the brutalized,  
 Women, men, people who lean left  
 And rainbow and swim deep  
 In the eddies of beautiful ideas,  
 Songs, drumbeats of another tomorrow,  
 Might augur a coalition that reaches  
 Across borders, acknowledges the humanity of the  
 Other,  
 Then, as the tide turns, dreams up the Revolution.

**Shreerekha Pillai**, Nov. 10, 2016

[performed at National Women's Studies Association  
 conference in Montreal]

## Member News

Amina Ahmed | Komail Aijazuddin #BLM  
 Chuck Alston | Sarah Bloom & Mir Masud-Elias  
 Charles Burwell | Bryan DeProspero  
 Lynda Grace | Farha Najah | Amol K. Patil | Sean Plaskett  
 Maryanne Pollock | Daisy Rockwell | Fabian Rush  
 Sumesh Sharma | Saba Taj [May 5 - June 24, 2017]

#BLM @ 12G  
twelve gates arts

Farha Najal, who has been actively involved with the South Asian Youth (SAY) collective and SAWCC in the recent past, continues to focus on social justice art activism. This month, her work is part of the **#BLM@12G: Masterminding Our Ordered Rage** exhibit in Philadelphia.

The exhibit takes place in the context of acknowledging, affirming and supporting “the critical role that Black lives and struggles for Black liberation have played in inspiring and anchoring, through practice and theory, social movements for the liberation of all people,” as stated by the #BlackLivesMatter movement.

Farha Najah's contribution to this collective art space aims to confront anti-Black racism within Brown South Asian communities, including those in Canada, a colonial settler nation-state built on the theft of Indigenous land and Indigenous and Black slavery. Her piece is entitled, "Honouring Fierce Resistance," and is inspired by the story and rebellious acts of Marie-Joseph Angélique.

For more information on the exhibit and other participating artists, please visit [twelve-gatesarts.org](http://twelve-gatesarts.org) and [farha-najah.com](http://farha-najah.com)



title inspired by Yolanda Wisner's *From Imhotep's Kundalini* curated by Atif Sheikh



**SAWCC wishes happy mother's day to all**

**Centre Communautaire des femmes sud-asiatiques**

South Asian Women's Community Centre, 1035, rue Rachel est, 3ième étage, Montréal, QC H2J 2J5

Phone: 514-528-8812  
Fax: 514-528-0896  
E-mail: sawcc@bellnet.ca







36 years of sisterhood, strength, struggle and success 1981-2017

[www.sawcc-ccfsa.ca](http://www.sawcc-ccfsa.ca)

May 2 - Women's group activity  
May 9 - Small claim court  
May 16 - Job Search Program by  
Centre Génération Emploi  
- EC meeting  
May 23 - To be determined  
May 26 - Open house  
May 30 - Regi du Logements By  
McGill Legal Clinique

2 mai - Activité de groupe féminin  
9 mai - Petit tribunal de réclamation  
16 mai - Programme de recherche  
d'emploi par Centre Génération Emploi  
- Réunion du comité d'ex  
ecutif  
23 mai - Session sera déterminée  
26 mai - Porte ouverte  
30 mai - Regi du Logements By  
McGill Legal Clinique

## May 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2  Women's group activity	3	4	5	6
7	8	9  Small claim court	10	11	12	13
14	15	16  Job search/EC meeting	17	18	19	20
21	22	23  To be determined	24	25	26  Open house	27
28	29	30  Regi du Logements	31			

## Membership Renewal

Please renew your SAWCC membership to ensure you get all the mailings and can participate fully in the organization.

Changes to your information (address, phone number, etc. email, etc.)? Download the membership form from our website, insert the correct information and send it along with your membership dues.

<http://www.sawcc-ccfsa.ca/EN/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Membership-form.pdf>

Please mail cheque to: SAWCC, 1035 Rachel est, Montréal, Qc., H2J 2J5.

Make cheque payable to: "South Asian Women's Community Centre".

Indicate in the note section: "membership".

Making a donation to SAWCC at the same time? Donations of \$20 or more will receive a tax-deductible receipt. If including a donation indicate as well the amount towards "donation".

### Membership dues:

\$15.00 (for salaried)

\$7.00 (for non-salaried)