

URGENT ACTION ALERT



**PLEASE HELP 14 YEAR OLD SCHOOL GIRL
MELTEM AVCIL TO BE RELEASED FROM
DETENTION BEFORE HER 15TH BIRTHDAY ON
NOVEMBER 21, 2007.**

"For education, I get maths for 9 year olds, and then jigsaw puzzles, no they don't give you an education, and even if they did I don't think u can get educated in there when you know its really a prison."

Please help 14 year old Doncaster schoolgirl, Meltem Avcil, and her mother to be released from Yarls Wood Detention Centre, where they has been held for OVER THREE MONTHS since August 2007.

Meltem and her mum are Kurdish. Meltem speaks with an English accent. They fled persecution from Turkey to Germany in 2001. They were refused asylum in Germany and sought asylum in the UK. Meltem's most formative years have been spent here. She fears being deported back to Germany, and then Turkey, a country she says she simply does not know anymore.

In August 2007, 12 immigration officials carried out a dawn raid on the Avcil's family home in Doncaster. They were then taken to a police station, and driven in a caged van for 2 ½ hours to Yarls wood detention centre.

On Thursday 1 November 2007, Meltem and her mother were refused bail for a FIFTH time. We understand that the judge refused bail because she wanted medical evidence to show that Meltem 'does not want to stay Yarls Wood'. It is unbelievable that a judge would want 'medical evidence' to ascertain whether a 14 year old girl - who has committed no crime whatsoever - would want to stay in Yarls Wood, especially when that child is stood right in front of you at a bail hearing, and can speak English without an interpreter and is intelligent enough to understand any questions the judge might wish to put to her about whether she wants to stay in Yarls Wood.

We are very concerned about Meltem who has been incarcerated at Yarls Wood for more than three months now and no one in authority seems to be concerned about this or the psychological trauma she is suffering as a result. After being refused bail the fourth time, she began to self-harm and cut her arms, something she has never done before. Some of you will remember the Ay family, who were detained at Dungavel immigration centre in Scotland for more than a year. They were granted indefinite leave to live in Germany on humanitarian grounds, after psychiatric reports showed they had been psychologically traumatised during their incarceration at Dungavel.

Speaking tearfully of her experience at Yarls Wood, Meltem said:

"I feel like I've committed a crime or something, I feel ashamed. They treat people like animals in here – it's no different from a jail. I've been living in this country for six yrs now and they want to deport me back to a country I don't even know.

"For education, I get maths for 9 year olds, and then jigsaw puzzles, no they don't give you an education, and even if they did I don't think you can get educated in there when you know it's really a prison.

"I saw an officer slapping a little two year old baby because he was playing with lights. And a mother crying for her baby because they wouldn't take her to healthcare but baby was vomiting and had a high temperature. The officers were being really nasty like they're just lowering them down saying words to make them sadder."

Meltem went on to say she missed her school friends, and her teachers, including Mrs Jones (English), Mr Richardson (Science) and Miss Westoby (Drama). She said:

"At school I was good at science, maths, and history, I wanted to become a doctor. My teachers, they were really kind, and really tried to help me. I miss them all so much, just being a schoolchild and doing normal things, with my friends Kirsty, Charlotte and Natalie. .. I want just to get out of here and see my teachers and friends again. I want to stop seeing my mum so sad and crying".

Currently, there are 50 children being held in Yarls Wood, the oldest is Meltem and the youngest are babies.

Meltem's school was unaware until two days ago that she was still in the UK, or that she was in Yarls Wood. At her school, Hall Cross Lower School, in Doncaster, Meltem was described by her teachers as a "Number 1 student".

WHY ARE THEY BEING INCARCERATED?

Meltem and her mum were threatened with removal by Home Office officials on at least three previous occasions but have NEVER tried to abscond.

There are very good grounds for the family to remain in the UK.

The Avcil family's lawyer, Andrew Van As, is also still pursuing a judicial review on their behalf. (Meltem has spent her most formative years in this country, and has been at school here for more than five years, they have settled fully into their local community, and under the Ankara agreement they may have grounds to remain in the UK).

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Please telephone, write to, email or fax the following individuals asking them to help Meltem Avcil. In all cases, please email home@paih.org copies of your correspondence and we will forward this to the lawyers and Meltem along with any messages of support.

FAX THE DUTY CHIEF IMMIGRATION OFFICER

Ask the Chief Immigration Officer to release Meltem Avcil and her mother from Yarls Wood so that Meltem can pursue her education at Hall Cross Lower School, Doncaster. Send your fax to:

R. Neligan
Duty chief immigration officer
Chief Immigration Office
B.I.A. North East Yorkshire & Humberside Enforcement Unit
FAX No: 01709501812

FAX THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR HOME DEPARTMENT

Ask the Secretary of state for the Home Department to allow Meltem Avcil and her mother be released from Yarls Wood and be allowed to pursue their judicial review and Meltem's education at Hall Cross Lower School, Doncaster.

Fax: 0208 196 3248

WRITE, FAX OR EMAIL THE FAMILY'S MP

Rt Hon Rosie Winterton MP

Ask Rosie Winterton MP to intervene with the Secretary of State for Home Department and ask for Meltem Avcil and her mother be released from Yarls Wood and be allowed to pursue their judicial review and Meltem's education at Hall Cross Lower School, Doncaster.

Email: wintertonr@parliament.uk

Constituency office:

Room 9
The Trades and Labour Club
115 St Sepulchre Gate West
Doncaster
DN1 3AH
Tel: 01302 326297
Fax: 01302 342921

Parliamentary Office:

House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA
Tel. 0207 219 0925
Fax: 0207 219 2811

FAX, WRITE OR TELEPHONE THE HEAD TEACHER OF HALL CROSS LOWER SCHOOL, DONCASTER

Ask the head teacher of Hall Cross Lower School to call for the release of Meltem so that she can resume her education in freedom until her asylum claim is settled.

Head teacher
Hall Cross Lower School
St. Michaels Road
Doncaster
South Yorkshire
DN4 5LU
Tel: 01302 535559
Fax: 01302 533960

WRITE TO THE HOME SECRETARY

Ask the Home Secretary to allow Meltem Avcil and her mother be released from Yarl's Wood and be allowed to pursue their judicial review and Meltem's education at Hall Cross Lower School, Doncaster.

Fax: Jacqui Smith, Home Secretary on: 020 7035 4745.

OR write to:

Jacqui Smith
Minister for Immigration
Home Office
50 Queen Anne's Gate
London SW1H 9AT