

Deportation ordeal



DAVE SIDAWAY, GAZETTE

Tired of the wait for processing, 6-year-old Dameon Forde slumped on suitcases at Dorval airport yesterday, shortly before he and his mother, Yolanda Williams, 21, were sent back to St. Vincent. A last-ditch appeal for ministerial intervention was denied, and Williams fears her stepfather will carry out his threats to kill her. Story, Page A3

Woman deported as last plea fails

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The Gazette

Yolanda Williams was reluctantly escorted by two officials from Immigration Canada to the Air Canada check-in desk at Dorval airport yesterday afternoon, where she collected her deportation ticket to the Caribbean.

A last-ditch attempt by Williams's lawyer, Eric Sutton, to ask Federal Immigration Minister Lucienne Robillard to intervene in Williams's fight to stay in the country failed less than two hours before the woman's plane was to depart.

Williams, 21, had been living in Canada since 1995, when she fled from her native St. Vincent with her 6-year-old son, Dameon Forde. Williams said she had endured a hellish existence in her home country: she was the victim of sexual abuse by her stepfather; she witnessed him killing her mother and

she testified against him at his murder trial, when she was 9 years old.

Sutton had appealed to Robillard to grant Williams a visa exemption on humanitarian and compassionate grounds. Williams's stepfather threatened twice to kill her for testifying against him, and that spurred her to move to Canada for refuge. Williams said she is convinced her stepfather will carry out his threats when she returns home.

Eric Tétrault, Robillard's press attaché, did not give a reason why Williams's request was denied. "The minister's office has chosen not to intervene in this case. We're not disclosing the reason."

Sutton said the minister's office informed him Williams's case did not meet criteria worthy of humanitarian or compassionate consideration.

"Quite frankly, I'm mystified as to what the definition is. I'm disappoint-

ed in the decision. We all understand what compassion means. It seems to me that this was a case worthy of it."

Williams sat quietly by her three packed bags yesterday, looking lost and on the verge of tears, as her small, sprightly son rode back and forth on a baggage trolley, while waiting for Immigration Canada to greet her.

Williams said she left behind, in her small apartment in Montreal West, clothes, books, and other personal belongings, hoping to the end she might be granted a stay of removal.

"It's very frustrating. I'm very upset. I don't know what's happening with me. I don't have any relatives over there. I have nowhere to go. It's very difficult for me right now. I'll miss Canada. I'll miss the winter. Dameon, too. He likes to go outside and make snowmen."

Williams is five months pregnant. She would not disclose the identity of

the father but said he lives in Toronto and is Canadian.

Wearing a thick, brown-leather winter jacket over a pair of blue jeans and toting a small backpack, Williams took hold of her son's hand as she checked in for a 5 o'clock flight bound for Toronto.

From there she will catch a flight to Barbados, and then on to St. Vincent.

A discouraged Williams said she thought it was unlikely she would re-apply for Canadian citizenship.

"I'm leaving - how can I get the passage to come back here? Nothing has worked so far."

She said she is going back home with no money, no friends and no relatives. She has no idea where she will live, or how she will buy food for herself and Dameon.

"This is a nightmare for me. Right now I know nothing is going to work for me."