



# Canadian Council for Refugees Conseil canadien pour les réfugiés

*'CCR is an advocate for the displaced, dispossessed, uprooted people that no one else seems to care about. It is our collective voice for fairness, equality and humane treatment for refugees and their families.'*

*-Mulugeta Abai, Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT), Toronto*

The Canadian Council for Refugees is the leading national voice on refugee protection and newcomer settlement in Canada. Created in 1978, the CCR is non-profit umbrella organization committed to the rights and protection of refugees in Canada and around the world and to the settlement of refugees and immigrants in Canada.

The CCR's primary activities are networking, information-exchange and advocacy.

The CCR is recognized as a key advocate for refugee and immigrant rights in Canada. Together we have accomplished this by:

- > Identifying new and emerging issues affecting refugees and immigrants.
- > Engaging in sustained dialogue with elected officials and civil servants.
- > Researching and reporting on the effects of policies on refugees and immigrants.
- > Educating the public about the real issues facing refugees and immigrants.
- > Speaking out consistently through the media.

The CCR provides the leading forum for networking and information-exchange among NGOs in the sector across Canada.

The CCR has established an excellent reputation for its work internationally, promoting networking on refugee rights.



*'The CCR is able to take complex issues and formulate credible public policy positions that support the rights of refugees. They provide a much needed national voice for refugees.'*

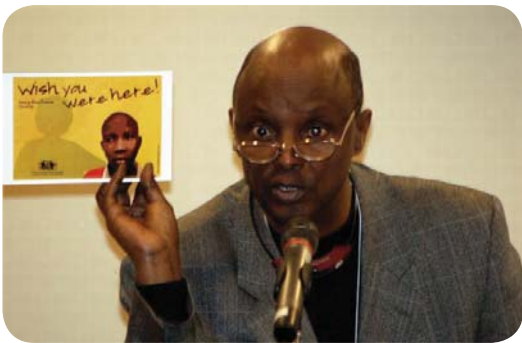
*- Mario Calla, Executive Director  
COSTI Immigrant Services, Toronto*

## Why become a member of the Canadian Council for Refugees?

As a member of the CCR, your organization joins a vibrant and active national network of over 180 organizations across Canada. CCR membership is a way for organizations to stay up-to-date on refugee and immigration issues, and to work collaboratively with others to promote policies and programs that respond to the needs of refugees and immigrants.

CCR members benefit from:

- > Opportunities for professional development.
- > An ideal forum for networking with organizations engaged in similar work.
- > Information and tools to support you in serving refugees and immigrants, advocating for their rights and educating the public.
- > Participation in Consultation meetings, Working Group meetings, projects, committees, activities, including participation at the international level.
- > The right to vote, set policy for the CCR, shape the direction of the CCR, nominate and vote for members of the Executive Committee.



*'The CCR has played a more-than-pivotal role in keeping refugee and multicultural issues in the public consciousness, and in advocating strongly and effectively for a more compassionate Canadian attitude.'*

*- Arne Sahlen, Cambodia Support Group, Kimberley BC*

## Mission Statement

The Canadian Council for Refugees is a non-profit umbrella organization committed to the rights and protection of refugees in Canada and around the world and to the settlement of refugees and immigrants in Canada. The membership is made up of organizations involved in the settlement, sponsorship and protection of refugees and immigrants. The Council serves the networking, information-exchange and advocacy needs of its membership.

The mandate of the Canadian Council for Refugees is rooted in the belief that:

- > Everyone has the right to seek and enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution; (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 14.1)
- > Refugees, refugee claimants, displaced persons and immigrants have the right to a dignified life and the rights and protections laid out in national and international agreements and conventions concerning human rights;
- > Canada and Canadians have responsibilities for the protection and resettlement of refugees from around the world;
- > Settlement services to refugees and immigrants are fundamental to participation in Canadian life;
- > National and international refugee and immigration policies must accord special consideration to the experience of refugee and immigrant women and children and to the effect of racism.

The Canadian Council for Refugees is guided by the following organizational principles:

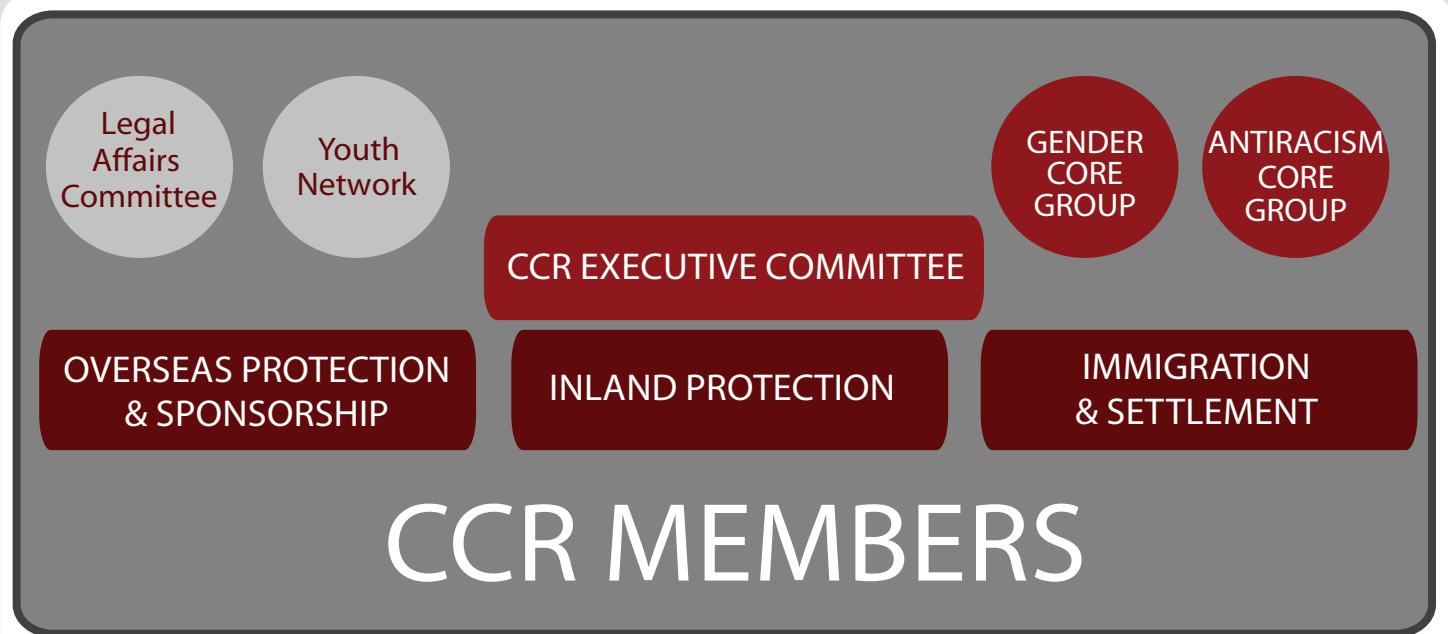
- > The membership of the Canadian Council for Refugees reflects the diversity of those concerned with refugee and settlement issues and includes refugees and other interested people in all regions of Canada;
- > The work of the Council is democratic and collaborative;
- > Our work is national and international in scope.

The Canadian Council for Refugees fulfils its mission by:

- > Providing opportunities for networking and professional development through conferences, working groups, publications and meetings;
- > Working in cooperation with other networks to strengthen the defense of refugee rights;
- > Advancing policy analysis and information-exchange on refugee and related issues;
- > Advocating for the rights of refugees and immigrants through media relations, government relations, research and public education.

Adopted by the membership November 1993

## What is the structure of the Canadian Council for Refugees?



- ALL CCR MEMBERS
- ELECTED BY THE CCR MEMBERSHIP
- WORKING GROUPS (ALL CCR MEMBERS)
- COMPOSED OF CCR MEMBERS

## How is the Canadian Council for Refugees organized?

More than 180 organizations from across Canada make up the Canadian Council for Refugees. Together their actions are the foundation of the CCR's work.

### CCR MEMBERS:

- > Share information about emerging issues and opportunities to advance the rights of refugees and immigrants.
- > Contribute to the development of CCR policy positions.
- > Advocate for the implementation of CCR policy recommendations.
- > Educate the public on refugee and immigration issues.
- > Provide leadership for the organization, through the Executive Committee, Working Group chairs and numerous other positions.

CCR member organizations participate in the discussions of one or more of the CCR's three Working Groups on Immigration and Settlement, on Inland Protection and on Overseas Protection and Sponsorship. The CCR's policy base is established through resolutions adopted at its General Meetings, held in the spring and fall of each year.

CCR members also exercise the right to vote for members of the Executive Committee. Elections take place each year during the November Annual General Meeting.



Immigration and Settlement Working Group meeting participants

## WORKING GROUPS

The Working Groups meet four times a year: in summer (early September) in Montreal and winter (late February) in Toronto, and in fall and spring at the Consultations (location moves around Canada). Each Working Group has two elected Co-chairs who serve two year terms.

All CCR members are encouraged to attend the meetings of the Working Groups, which are also open to other non-governmental people interested. The meetings are closed to media and government. CCR members receive mailings of their selected Working Group, which include minutes of meetings.

### WORKING GROUP ON IMMIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT

- > looks at all issues relating to refugee and immigrant settlement in Canada (e.g. settlement services, access to employment, needs of youth).

### WORKING GROUP ON INLAND PROTECTION

- > is concerned for the protection of refugee claimants in Canada or seeking to come to Canada.

### WORKING GROUP ON OVERSEAS PROTECTION AND SPONSORSHIP

- > looks at issues relating to the selection of refugees overseas (refugees sponsored by either the government or private groups) and the programs for them here in Canada. Also interested in protection issues for refugees around the world.

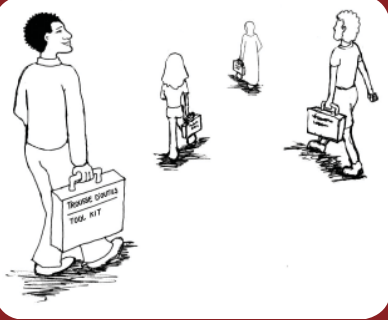
## LEADERSHIP INITIATIVES

The CCR is committed to promoting the voices of refugees and youth in its discussions, policy development, advocacy and public education efforts. Special programs such as the Amina Malko Fund, the Refugee Leadership Development Program and the CCR Youth Network help to bring forward issues and foster leadership potential within the CCR and in local communities.



*'Amnesty International is proud to be a member of the Canadian Council for Refugees. The CCR is a passionate and effective champion for the rights and well-being of refugees, in Canada and around the world. The CCR draws organizations across the country together in common cause, and ensures that the voices and perspectives of refugees themselves are at the forefront of efforts to strengthen their protection.'*

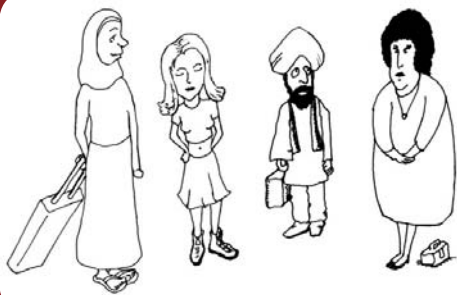
*- Alex Neve, Secretary General, Amnesty International Canada*



## CORE GROUP PROJECTS

### Pathways to Gender Justice

The Core Group on Gender Issues has developed the toolkit 'Pathways to Gender Justice'. It provides guiding principles for gender equity work in the immigrant and refugee serving sector. It explores gender analysis as it applies to newcomer settlement and recommends additional reading. It also offers resources that can be used for individual reflection or exploration of questions and issues in a group and it examines how different aspects of our identity intersect with gender.



*'The CCR has succeeded in bringing a gender perspective to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, and in bringing trafficking issues on to the national arena. The CCR has an excellent gender component and because of this many refugee women have had the opportunity to contribute with refugee issues and play a leadership role.'*

*- Loly Rico, Co-Director,  
FCJ Refugee Centre, Toronto*

## CORE GROUPS

The two Core groups work to ensure that important issues are highlighted in the work of the CCR. The members communicate several times throughout the year, primarily by conference call. Each Core Group has two elected Co-chairs who serve two year terms. Core Group members are elected to their positions.

### CORE GROUP ON GENDER ISSUES

- > ensures that gender issues receive a high profile within the Working Groups and the CCR as a whole

### CORE GROUP ON ANTI-RACISM

- > ensures that anti-racism receive a high profile within the Working Groups and the CCR as a whole

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The CCR is governed by an Executive Committee of twelve members (or thirteen, if there is a Past President). They are elected by the membership at the Annual General Meeting in November. Members serve terms of two years. They meet four times a year. A call for nominations for candidates for the Executive Committee is made to CCR members over the summer. Candidates are sought who have been active within the CCR and who represent its diverse membership.

## YOUTH NETWORK

The Canadian Council for Refugees Youth Network began in 2006 and has evolved through online discussions, teleconferences, the organization of youth-led workshops and strategy sessions and the development of youth-driven projects – all with the vision and commitment to give refugee and immigrant youth a voice and to address challenges faced by refugee and immigrant youth.



## How can my organization become involved in the Canadian Council for Refugees?

*'Participation at national conferences, communication via the listserv and the CCR website allow MISA staff to be interconnected with their counterparts across Canada and to exchange information, experiences and concerns. It also allows an opportunity for establishment of collaboration and partnerships with organizations that deal with similar issues to collectively address policy gaps.'*

*- Zlatan Musanovic, Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association (MISA), Halifax NS*

### CCR CONSULTATIONS

CCR members and others meet twice a year at CCR consultations. Held at the end of spring and in the fall in different cities, the consultations offer excellent opportunities for networking and information-exchange and allow the CCR to develop policy positions.

Check out the Meetings page on the CCR website at: <http://www.ccrweb.ca/meetings.htm> for information on upcoming consultations.

### WORKING GROUPS

The working groups are the forums in which CCR members can exchange information, network and develop policy positions in particular areas of concern. They are responsible for preparing resolutions and planning workshops at the consultations, as well as for advising the Executive on policy.

CCR member organizations and individuals are welcome to become active in the activities of one, two or all three Working Groups.

See the section 'CCR Structures' (on pages 4 and 5) for more information on the CCR's Working Groups.

### ACTION CAMPAIGNS

The CCR has several key campaigns that it asks its members to promote in their community and to take action on.

Frequent calls for action, input and participation are sent out through the CCRLIST - the CCR's electronic listserv. For more information on receiving updates and exchanging information with other CCR members through the CCRLIST, see:

<http://www.ccrweb.ca/eng/about/ccrlist.htm>

For more information on the CCR's current issue campaigns, check out the campaigns webpage at:

<http://www.ccrweb.ca/eng/issues/campaigns.htm>

### PUBLIC EDUCATION

The CCR encourages its members to inform the public about the rights of refugees and immigrants in Canada and to correct false information and common myths, using resources like the popular pamphlet Facing Facts. Through initiatives like the CCR Regional Promoters program, the CCR equips volunteers from CCR member organizations to take information from the CCR into the community.



## How can my organization become a member of the Canadian Council for Refugees?

To be eligible to become a voting member of the Canadian Council for Refugees, an organization must be a Canadian non-profit organization concerned for refugees and for the settlement in Canada of refugees and immigrants. For reasons of continuity, participation, and commitment we seek organizations as Members rather than individuals, although the latter can join as Associate Members.

To apply to become a Member, please fill out the CCR Member form included in this package or available on the website and mail it to the CCR office with the required documents. The fee structure can be found on the second page of the form — it tells you what fee to pay according to your organization's budget.

All applications for membership are subject to approval by the CCR Executive Committee. For the Committee to evaluate a membership application from an organization the following information is needed (also stipulated on the application form):

- > a completed application form
- > a cheque for the first year's membership
- > a copy of your organization's mission statement or constitution, or a description of the work it does relating to refugees and immigrants
- > a copy of the last completed financial report
- > confirmation that your Board or Executive Committee has endorsed application for membership in the CCR (minutes from the relevant Board or Executive meeting would suffice).

Once we receive your completed application, we will present it for approval to the next meeting of the CCR Executive Committee (at the time of the next Consultation or Working Group meeting, whichever comes first), and you will be informed of the outcome.

CCR members receive regular informative mailings containing analyses of policy changes, up-to-date information on refugee and immigration issues and tools to help with grass-roots advocacy and public education initiatives. They also benefit from lower registration rates at our Spring and Fall Consultations. The most important benefit – and responsibility – of membership is the right to vote, and thus the right to shape the policy direction of the CCR and the right to nominate and vote for the Executive Committee. By participating in and voting at the Consultations, and at the Summer and Winter Working Group meetings, you help set the policy for the CCR and take action to improve the rights of refugees and immigrants in Canada and abroad.

### For a pamphlet about the CCR:

[www.ccrweb.ca/documents/CCRinfoen.pdf](http://www.ccrweb.ca/documents/CCRinfoen.pdf)

### For a Powerpoint presentation about the CCR:

[www.ccrweb.ca/documents/CCREN.ppt](http://www.ccrweb.ca/documents/CCREN.ppt)

For more information on the Canadian Council for Refugees and its activities, see:

**[www.ccrweb.ca](http://www.ccrweb.ca)**

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# What are some of the CCR's key issues?

## Family Reunification

The CCR calls for speedy family reunification for refugees in Canada and for family reunification to be given a higher priority on the government's agenda.

## Canada-US Safe Third Country Agreement

The CCR calls for the cancellation of the Canada-US Safe Third Country Agreement, which has closed the Canada-US border to most refugees since December 2004.

## Implementing the Refugee Appeal

The CCR calls for the implementation of the merit-based appeal process to review refused refugee claims, as laid out in the 2001 *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*.

## Private Sponsorship of Refugees

The CCR supports private groups that sponsor refugees from abroad for resettlement in Canada. Together, we call for solutions to the long processing times of refugee sponsorship applications.

## Professionalization in the Settlement Sector

The CCR, in partnership with provincial and regional settlement umbrella organizations, is working to achieve professional standards in the settlement sector.

## Iraqi Refugees in the Middle East

The ongoing daily violence in Iraq has forced over two million Iraqis to flee as refugees. So far Canada has opened its doors to only a very few Iraqi refugees, despite the scale of the crisis. The CCR urges the government to increase the numbers of refugees resettled to Canada, so that there can be a significant increase in the numbers of Iraqi refugees resettled here.

## Countering Myths and Misconceptions about Refugees and Immigrants in Canada

Join the CCR in reaching out to general public to counter myths and damaging false information about refugee and immigrants in Canada.

## Trafficking in Persons

Trafficking happens in Canada, but Canadian law does not protect the rights of trafficked persons. The CCR calls for legislative change and additional measures to adequately protect the rights of trafficked persons in Canada.

## Proud to Aid and Abet Refugees

The CCR calls for action to change the law so that no one acting on humanitarian motives is charged for aiding and abetting refugees.

