

Mission Statement

The Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR) 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.

Executive Committee (2003-2004)

President: Nick Summers, St. John's
Past President: Kemi Jacobs, Toronto
Vice-President: Amy Casipullai, Toronto
Treasurer: Ibrahim Absiyi, Toronto
Secretary: John Docherty, Montreal
Counsellors

- Jihad Aliweiwi, Toronto
- Andrew Brouwer, Toronto
- Tigist Dafla, Edmonton
- Mitchell Goldberg, Montreal
- Gilbert Iyamuremye, Windsor
- Eva Osorio-Nieto, Halifax
- Victor Porter, Vancouver
- Ariana Yaftali, Winnipeg

Staff

Janet Dench, Executive Director
Guadalupe Macias, Office Manager
Alfred Lukhanda, Settlement Policy Director
Catherine Balfour, Communications and Networking Coordinator
Ana Reinoza/ Maria José Merzario/
Marie-Laure Konan, Office Assistants
Afsaneh Hojabri, Trafficking Project Coordinator

Canadian Council for Refugees

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CANADIAN COUNCIL FOR REFUGEES CONSEIL CANADIEN POUR LES REFUGIES



2003~2004 Annual Report



CCR Forum Theatre participants, Montreal, May 2004

Message From Nick Summers, CCR President

To say that the year since I became CCR President has been interesting is an understatement. Within weeks of my election we had a new Prime Minister, a new Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, the Citizenship and Immigration department lost many of its functions to a new border agency, and we heard the first rumblings of a "refugee reform". The next few months were spent trying to make sense of what the Government was doing and just what "refugee reform" entailed. Then came the federal election in June 2004. Once again the Government's agenda is unclear and we still don't know what aspects of the refugee system the Government wants to reform or what changes are proposed.

The year has seen a number of developments to immigration and refugee issues – some good and some bad. On the downside we have seen (1) an increased reference by the Government to refugee issues as "security" issues; (2) a cut in refugee resettlement targets; (3) front end screening of refugees by the new Canada Border Services Agency; and (4) a continued refusal by the Government to implement the Refugee Appeal Division (RAD). On the positive side, due in large part to the efforts of the CCR and its member agencies, have been the following developments: (1) the

Government was persuaded to reverse its earlier decision and returned responsibility for the Pre-Removal Risk Assessment to Citizenship and Immigration Canada; (2) the Government agreed not to permit a Security Certificate to be issued with the signature of only one Minister; (3) the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and the Prime Minister pledged to end patronage appointments to the Immigration and Refugee Board and have, so far, not interfered with efforts to put a fair appointment process in place; and (4) the "Safe Third Country" agreement with the United States has still not been implemented (although due mostly to its low priority in the U.S., we celebrate any delay in the implementation of this awful agreement).

This summer the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration made some ill-advised statements to the press criticizing churches for giving sanctuary to refugees at risk of deportation.

Her statements resulted in an outpouring of public support for refugees and provided an excellent opportunity for CCR members and others to underline to the Canadian public the need for implementation of the Refugee Appeal Division.

Mandate

The Canadian Council for Refugees fulfills its mission by:

- Providing opportunities for networking and professional development through consultations, working groups, publications and meetings;
- Working in cooperation with other networks to strengthen the defence 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.

The mandate of the CCR 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 CCR's organizational principles are:

- 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.

We have recently been led to believe by some Government officials that "refugee reform" is back on the table. Hopefully we can use the momentum of this past summer to convince the Government that Canadians support refugees and want our country to be a haven for them. This message is being taken to politicians during CCR's first annual Lobby Day in October 2004.

In closing, I would like to strike a cautionary note. Too often we get caught up in the day-to-day fight for immigrant and refugee rights, and forget to keep an eye on how we as an organization are living up to our principles. We cannot afford to become complacent about our commitment to make CCR an inclusive and empowering place for refugees, immigrants and people of colour. We have policies to promote inclusion, but we must ensure life is given to those policies. The current Executive Committee is committed to

this and we are seeking to improve the organization's performance. However, CCR member agencies must also play a role. They must ensure that refugees, immigrants and people of colour (whether staff, volunteers or clients) are supported to attend CCR functions and encouraged to play a leadership role in the organization. We can never hope to empower new leaders if only the "old guard" are able to attend meetings.

I thank the staff of CCR who have made my first year as President easier than I thought possible. I also thank the members of the CCR whose hard work all over this country have made it a pleasure and a privilege to represent the CCR to Government and to international organizations. It is your dedication and perseverance which has opened doors, given our organization credibility, and forced the Government to take our submissions seriously.

2003-2004 Highlights

Public opinion: The CCR continued to give priority to educating the public about immigration and refugee issues. Media offers an effective way of reaching many Canadians: the CCR issued 12 news releases and CCR spokespersons were regularly cited in media. The CCR also coordinated regional meetings designed to support member organizations interested in increasing and improving their media work. To give members tools for public education work, the CCR produced more information materials such as pamphlets on security issues and the need for an appeal for refugees, and a glossary of terms for discussing refugee and immigrant issues. Towards the end of the year, a new Communications Core Group was formed, and the CCR staff team was strengthened by the addition of a new position, a Communications and Networking Coordinator. Both developments are designed to increase the communications capacity of the CCR and its members.

Trafficking in women and girls: The CCR coordinated a series of regional meetings followed by a national meeting in November 2003 to network, raise awareness and develop recommendations to respond to the needs of those who have been trafficked. The meetings stimulated significant interest in the topic and led to many new connections. Having produced a report on the recommendations that emerged, the CCR supported a second series of regional meetings designed to plan concrete action to promote protection and raise awareness.

Integration initiative: The CCR carried out an international project to support the integration of resettled refugees by stimulating exchanges between countries. An extensive "Inventory of Opportunities and

Needs in the Integration of Resettled Refugees" was produced and is now available on our website. The inventory contains information on resettlement and integration practices in 13 countries. The project was approved by the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement and received funding from seven states.

International networking: In addition to its work on the Integration Initiative, the CCR was active internationally in other ways: through representation on the Canadian official delegation to the UNHCR Executive Committee meeting, participation in an emerging detention network and commenting on the draft "Multilateral Framework of Understanding on Resettlement."

Fall and Spring Consultations - November 2003, in Winnipeg & May 2004, in Montreal: The CCR consultations continue to represent a key opportunity for networking, training, identifying issues of concern and developing policy positions. The fall consultation celebrated the 25th anniversary of the private sponsorship of refugees, while the spring consultation focused on the theme of "Collaboration: A National Dialogue on Settlement and Immigration." Altogether 51 resolutions were adopted at the two General Meetings. At the spring consultation, participants took part in the CCR's first Forum Theatre, using popular theatre for public education purposes.

Dialogue with government: As always, an important part of the CCR's work involved raising a wide range of concerns with the government, especially with Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the Immigration and Refugee Board and the new Canada Border Services Agency.

2003-2004 Highlights (cont'd)

Among the positive developments was the announcement by the Immigration and Refugee Board that it would begin to work on guidelines for survivors of torture (10 years after the CCR and others first requested such guidelines) and reforms to the process of appointments to the Immigration and Refugee Board (another longstanding CCR recommendation).

Government restructuring: The CCR was active in responding to changes to the Immigration Department announced by Paul Martin when he became Prime Minister in December 2003. Concerns raised by the CCR about some of the impacts led to an invitation to participate in a high-level meeting with government representatives. In October 2004, the government announced further changes, including the reversal of two aspects that the CCR had contested.

CCR in print 2003-2004

CCR PUBLICATIONS

- Resettlement, Durable Solutions and Signatory Countries: Policy Position, 30 June 2004
- Refugee Determination System: CCR Essential Principles, June 2004
- Federal elections 2004: Questions for political parties
- Talking About Refugees and Immigrants: A Glossary of Terms, April 2004, fact sheet
- Questions about Canada's Security Agenda and its Impact on Refugees & Immigrants, 22 April 2004, pamphlet
- Key issues: Immigration and Refugee Protection, March 2004
- Anti-terrorism and the Security Agenda: Consequences on citizenship, immigration and refugee policies in Canada, presentation made at the Forum of the International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group (ICLMG), 17 February 2004
- Comments on proposed regulations re: immigration consultants, 12 January 2004
- Comments on proposed amendments to Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations, published in the Canada Gazette, Part I, 27 September 2003, Comments submitted 25 November 2003
- First annual report card on Canada's refugee and immigration policies, 20 November 2003
- Comments to the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration on the Proposed National Identity Card, 6 November 2003
- Trafficking in Women and Girls: Report of Meetings, fall 2003, report
- Protecting refugees: Where Canada's refugee system falls down, 2003, pamphlet

CCR NEWS RELEASES:

- World Refugee Day: The CCR deplores the separation of refugee families, 18 June 2004

Direct back petition: In April 2004 the CCR and a number of other NGOs submitted a petition to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, asking it to declare Canada's policy of returning asylum seekers to the United States without hearings to be a violation of international law. The petition was prepared with the assistance of the Harvard Immigration and Refugee Clinic and the Harvard Law School Advocates for Human Rights.

Children: CCR members expressed particular interest in how children are affected by Canada's immigration legislation. Following a workshop on the topic at the fall consultation, the CCR began work on a report, to be published in the coming months.

- CCR decries security policy's impact on refugees, 28 April 2004
- National Organizations Meet with Deputy Prime Minister - Groups ask for a "full and thorough" review of existing security legislation, 21 April 2004 (joint release with CAIR-CAN, CAF and COMO)
- CCR denounces Québec budget cuts for immigrant services, 6 April 2004
- Rights Groups Urge OAS to Declare Canadian Refugee Policy a Rights Abuse, 1 April 2004
- Cuts to Legal Aid in BC Threaten Fundamental Refugee Rights, 6 February 2004
- New Security Certificate Rules Further Reduce Rights, 26 January 2004
- New Border Agency Threatens Refugee Protection in Canada, 8 January 2004
- CCR calls on RCMP to address anti-refugee prejudices, 21 October 2003
- CCR denounces detention based on suspicion, 2 September 2003

OP EDS

- "Dilemma of sanctuary", Janet Dench, CCR and Mary Corkery, KAIROS, Globe and Mail, 3 August 2004
- "Why sanctuary is necessary", Mitchell Goldberg, Montreal Gazette, 10 August, 2004
- "Ri case exposes a muddle", Andrew Brouwer and Janet Dench, 3 March 2004, Globe and Mail.

CCR Website Visit the CCR website (www.web.ca/~ccr) for these and many other CCR documents.

CCRlist Stay in touch with the CCR through our online activist network. To subscribe, send your name, organization and email address to Guadalupe at ccr3@web.ca.

WORKING GROUPS AND CORE GROUPS

The working groups are the forum in which CCR members exchange information, network, and develop strategies and 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. Working groups meet four times a year.

Working Group on Immigration and Settlement

This working group examines issues relating to immigration and to refugee and immigrant settlement in Canada. The settlement core group is made up of representatives of provincial, regional and national organizations. Co-chairs: Debbie Douglas & Sherman Chan

Working Group on Inland Protection

This working group is concerned for the protection of refugee claimants in Canada or seeking to come to Canada. Co-chairs: Janis Nickel & Deborah Isaacs

Working Group on Overseas Protection and Sponsorship

This working group looks at issues relating to the selection of refugees from overseas and the programs for them here in Canada, as well as protection issues for refugees around the world. Co-chairs: Marzia Ali & Tom Denton

Core Groups on

- **Gender Issues,**
- **Anti-racism and**
- **Communications**

Core groups ensure that certain issues receive a high profile within working groups and the CCR as a whole. They are made up of representatives of the three working groups. Norrie de Valencia chaired the Core Group on Gender Issues; Marianne Van Der Meij & Gideon Kpotsi chaired the Anti-Racism core group, and Jihad Aliweiwi & Judith Boer chaired the Communications Core Group.

Fundraising Committee Report

Fundraising is an important and necessary activity for the CCR in ensuring the financial integrity of the organization. It enables us to continue to work towards fair policies for refugees and immigrants.

Last year the Fundraising Committee of the Executive set a target of \$68,500, to be raised through activities such as Direct Mail, new Friends (monthly donors) as well as events. We were successful in meeting 93% of our target. We exceeded our targets for the Friends program, recognizing 20 new Friends. We continued to receive funds from faith communities, unions, and general donations, and we held a successful fundraiser during the Working Group meetings in February 2004. Direct mail donations continued to decline, due partly to the demographics of our list, and to our focus on the Friends program.

The Fundraising Committee recognizes and extends our sincere thanks to all those members, friends and supporters for their contributions this past year and looks forward to your continued support and generosity.

How you can stand up for human rights for refugees

- Welcome refugees to your community
- Promote positive attitudes towards refugees and other newcomers among your friends and neighbours
- Encourage your organization to join the Canadian Council for Refugees
- Join the CCR as an associate member if you are not part of an organization
- Volunteer at our national headquarters or with a member group in your community
- Attend the CCR consultations
- Make a charitable donation (you will receive a receipt for tax purposes)

The Canadian Council for Refugees is a non-profit charitable organization. Business number: 11 883 0470RR 0001. Donations are tax-deductible.

CONSEIL CANADIEN POUR LES RÉFUGIÉS CANADIAN COUNCIL FOR REFUGEES

Audited statement of operations year ended August 31, 2004

	2004	2003
	\$	\$
Revenue		
Donations	61,508	72,075
Grants		
Governments	126,521	68,474
Others	30,232	46,165
Events	2,243	2,766
Conference registrations	52,129	58,056
Membership fees	46,627	44,399
Publications	1,102	957
Interest	1,997	1,675
	<u>322,359</u>	<u>294,567</u>
Expenses		
Staffing expenses	174,333	174,607
Administration expenses	38,660	39,275
Conference expenses	48,414	23,213
Executive Committee	26,849	29,606
Working Group expenses	20,427	5,874
Fundraising	2,310	1,821
	<u>310,993</u>	<u>274,396</u>
Excess of revenues over expenses	11,366	20,171

Balance Sheet as at August 31, 2003

	2004	2003
Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash	5,294	6,560
Term deposit (note 4)	40,000	54,000
Accounts receivable (note 5)	30,756	23,368
Prepaid expenses	2,726	1,107
	<u>78,776</u>	<u>85,035</u>
Investments (note 4)	40,000	30,000
	<u>118,776</u>	<u>115,035</u>
Liabilities		
Current liabilities		
Accounts payable (note 7)	18,319	6,599
Deferred contributions (note 8)	11,444	30,789
	<u>29,763</u>	<u>37,388</u>
Net assets		
Restricted for stabilization fund	10,000	10,000
Unrestricted	79,013	67,647
	<u>89,013</u>	<u>77,647</u>
	<u>118,776</u>	<u>115,035</u>

Copies of the complete audited statements, including notes which are an integral part of the financial statements, are available from the CCR office.