

# News from the CCR



Updates from the **Canadian Council for Refugees**

October 2017

## **Refugees are our neighbours, they need to be treated with dignity.**

After a long and painful journey in search of safety, Stephanie\* recently reached Canada.

*“I can’t go back to Haiti”, she said, “I would rather die than go back to the country that did not protect me when I was raped”.*

Stephanie is one of the many people who have walked across the border from the United States into Canada this summer. In the focus on the numbers of people crossing, the individual human stories, like Stephanie’s, tend to get lost. Fortunately, the various levels of government have mostly responded positively to the increased numbers of refugee claimants. At the Canadian Council for Refugees, we have been active giving feedback to the federal government about realities on the ground and needs, with some good results.

The CCR’s focus is on making sure that everyone is treated with humanity: that those who need protection receive it and that everyone’s basic needs are met.

In July, together with Amnesty International and the Canadian Council of Churches, we launched a legal challenge of the designation of the United States as a safe third country for refugees.

*“This Agreement encourages desperate people to take desperate measures which may put their safety and even their lives at risk,”* said Loly Rico, President of the Canadian Council for Refugees. *“From the perspective of humanity, human rights, and responsible border management, the Safe Third Country Agreement should be suspended. There has been no convincing explanation from the Canadian government as to why they will not take that step.”*

Stephanie has lived and worked under Temporary Protected Status in the United States for the past 5 years. After recent US announcements, Stephanie fears she can no longer rely on protection in the United States and she is worried about being sent back to her country. Now, her only hope is to find a permanent safe haven in Canada. Unfortunately, the Safe Third Country Agreement means that she can’t come to an official border crossing and be admitted to make a refugee claim in Canada.

Thanks to your support, the CCR has been in a position to take action to protect the rights and dignity of people seeking asylum in Canada.

## **We need to lead. Again.**

With your help, the Canadian Council for Refugees has also launched a campaign to promote welcoming attitudes towards refugees among Canadians. This is intended to counter the negative reactions, seen in some parts of society, towards those seeking Canada's protection.

The campaign also calls on the Canadian government to step up its efforts for resettled refugees and make needed reforms to the refugee determination system.

Refugees are part of our fabric but their voices and contributions are often ignored. Thanks to your support, considerable progress has been made in setting record straight about refugee issues with the public and in giving refugee advocates the tools they need to for refugee and vulnerable immigrant rights.

Thank you for making a difference and helping us achieve our mission.

*\*Name has been changed to protect identity*



### **Learn more**

Under the Safe Third Country Agreement, in effect since 2004, Canada and the US each declare the other country safe for refugees and close the door on most refugee claimants at the US-Canada border. The Canadian Council for Refugees strenuously opposes the Agreement, because the US is not a safe country for all refugees. The CCR also denounces the purpose and effect of reducing the number of refugees who can seek Canada's protection.

<http://ccrweb.ca/en/safe-third-country>

### **Welcome refugees**

Canada is a nation of immigrants. We have the capacity to resettle more refugees and the government must take the lead, on behalf of all Canadians.

Those who come as refugees give back in so many ways because they have talents and they make our communities stronger and better. As human rights defenders, we need to show our support and our respect to those who are in search of a better life.

<http://ccrweb.ca/en/time-to-lead>



### **In the media**

[It's Time to Lead: How Canada must respond to refugee claimants crossing the Canada-US border](#) - Media release, August 2017

[Nixing Safe Third Country agreement could reduce refugee smugglers, advocate says](#) - CBC, August 2017

[Federal government works to clarify immigration policies for public](#) - The Globe And Mail, September 2017.