

News from the CCR



Updates from the **Canadian Council for Refugees**

“I cannot tell you what we are feeling now. Words cannot describe it!”

April 2017

Because all families have equal value

This month we celebrated Refugee Rights Day (April 4th) by reminding Canadians of the importance of family reunification for refugees. The CCR has been working for many years to speed up reunification, especially for children who are separated from their parents. Needless to say, family separation particularly affects children and can have lasting effects on families’ stability.

Just a few months ago, Tanya and Oleg were finally reunited with their six year old son, Sasha, who had been left in the care of his grandmother when his parents had to flee to Canada as refugees. They recently shared their thoughts with us:

“I cannot tell you what we are feeling now. Words cannot describe it! [...] Our son was in the care of our mother in Ukraine who is retired with no extra support, and for our son it was a very tough time.”

The CCR intervened in this case to speed this family’s reunion and processing took “only” one year. Fortunately Sasha is now with his parents.

Because Canada’s immigration system treats families unequally, many families – like Tanya, Oleg and Sasha - wait years to be reunited, even when there are children separated from both parents. The government recently announced faster processing for spousal sponsorships, but these measures do not apply to the families of many refugees and live-in caregivers. Refugees, especially with family in some regions such as Africa, and live-in caregivers actually wait much longer for family reunification than others.

We believe that immigration policy must always be guided by the best interests of children affected. Because of your support, we are able to continue to represent families and inform the public and the government about the harms of keeping families apart. Thank you for helping to ensure that our immigration system treats all families equally, regardless of immigration category and region and that the same standard short processing times are applied to everyone.

What we have been doing

Family reunification campaign

On 4 April 2017, 20 CCR representatives met with 37 MPs, Senators or their office, as well as senior officials of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, to discuss our key concerns:

<http://ccrweb.ca/en/family-reunification>

Providing practical advice

CCR offers [resources](#) and [training](#) to frontline workers and legal professionals to help families negotiate the reunification process.

We recently held three webinars for frontline workers on intricacies in the law.

Researching and advocating on particular provisions

The CCR is gathering information from member organizations and discussing specific barriers faced by vulnerable newcomers with government officials, including the “one year window of opportunity” for resettled refugees. We are collaborating with a group of lawyers to find solutions for families affected by the “Excluded Family Member” rule

<http://ccrweb.ca/en/117-9-d-infographic>

Intervening in cases

CCR has an arrangement with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to expedite certain cases involving children (as was the case with Sasha). We have supported over 150 families in this way. This intervention can speed up processing dramatically.



Canadian Council for Refugees
Conseil canadien pour les réfugiés