

News from the CCR



Updates from the **Canadian Council for Refugees**

January 2018

Message from the CCR's President, Claire Roque



The Canadian Council for Refugees is pleased to announce that Claire Roque was elected President at its Annual General Meeting on 2 December 2017.

Ms. Roque is a representative of Refugee Ministries at the Roman Catholic Diocese of London, based in Windsor.

I have been fortunate to have been involved with the CCR since 2012. My work for the Diocese of London Refugee Ministry located in Windsor, Ontario has exposed me to the unique needs of refugees in smaller communities.

I felt like the best way to serve them was to reach out to those who had already gained expertise in this area, so I tapped into the CCR. A couple of years later, I found myself in a leadership role through the Inland Protection Steering Committee, which really allowed me an opportunity to bring forward issues pertinent to rural communities.

As I became more active in my role, I saw the great importance of the work of the CCR and knew that continuing to be active would only further guide my work in the community. I am privileged in my day-to-day work – to not only be immersed in issues specific to refugee claimants but also to work alongside a ministry that welcomes refugees through private sponsorship. This exposure has helped me to gain an understanding of a broader range of refugee issues.

My local role allows me to do work on the ground, and see the struggles of refugees and other vulnerable migrants first hand. My involvement with the CCR has enabled me to gain the confidence and motivation to serve in the capacity as President, knowing that CCR members have always been so supportive of their leaders.

Struggle brings out the very best in people. In every community where refugees are welcomed, no matter how small, the tendency is for the community to come together as a whole to best serve any newcomers. There is no doubt that this impacts everybody positively. Kindness is truly contagious. Welcoming refugees to Canada allows us to go back to the basics of kindness and human dignity. In this precarious world, we need to be reminded of these basics daily. Thank you for being part of our efforts to welcome refugees and build stronger communities!

2017 - The year in retrospect

2017 was once again a busy year for the CCR: our focus turned to refugee claimants after a period when resettled refugees were at the fore. Since December 2004, Canada and the USA have each recognized the other as a “safe third country” for refugees, effectively closing the door on most refugee claimants seeking protection at the US-Canada border. According to the Canadian government, 2017 holds the record for the number of individuals intercepted crossing the border outside of a border point. Why would they do this, only to be arrested by Canadian officials? Because the USA is not safe for all refugees and people seeking protection. Turning refugee claimants back at the border violates refugee rights under international law and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This is why, together with the Canadian Council of Churches and Amnesty International, we launched a legal challenge of the Safe Third Country Agreement in July!

[Read more](#)

Ensuring respect for refugee rights means offering protection to each family member so they can remain together. This past year we succeeded in ensuring that the Canadian immigration system now treats families more fairly by changing the definition of a dependent child from “under 19” to “under 22 years”. Many more refugee families with young adult children can now hope to be reunited!

[Read more](#)

Looking ahead to 2018



What does “protecting refugees” mean to you?

Since the end of World War II, Canada has welcomed more than one and a quarter million refugees[★]. Once settled in Canada, they pay more income tax than millionaire investor immigrants^{★★}.

There are so many reasons why we should open our doors and communities to refugees. They offer knowledge, new ideas, innovative skills, entrepreneurial drive, community leadership and so much more to the Canadian society.

Not only does your support allow us to work to ensure respect for refugee rights but it also helps to create stronger communities and make Canada a diverse and inclusive home for all.

Find out more about CCR’s campaign and why welcoming refugees is good for all of us at <http://ccrweb.ca/en/stronger-communities>

[★]Source: CCR compilation of government statistics.

^{★★}Source: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/business/refugees-pay-more-income-tax-than-millionaire-investor-immigrants-1.2984982>