



Canadian Council for Refugees Annual Report 2006-2007

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

President

Elizabeth McWeeny, Thunder Bay

Past President

Nick Summers, St. John's

Vice-President

Amy Casipullai, Toronto

Treasurer

Jamila Aman, Toronto

Secretary

Simbo Conteh, Abbotsford

Counsellors

Jehad Aliweiwi, Toronto
Julie Bédard-Mathieu, Montréal
Tigist Dafla, Edmonton
Diane Nancy Doray, Montréal
Nicholas Dubé, Sackville
Gilbert Iyamuremye, Windsor
Eva Osorio-Nieto, Halifax
Wanda Yamamoto, Winnipeg

Staff

Janet Dench, Executive Director
Guadalupe Macias / Alec Valodine,
Office Manager
Meissoon Azzaria, Settlement Policy
Director
Colleen French, Communication
and Networking Coordinator
Maria-Victoria Buitrago / Malika
Abou-Saïd, Office Assistant

Canadian Council for Refugees

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From the President, Elizabeth McWeeny

Refugee rights have been under even greater threat during 2007, challenging the Canadian Council for Refugees to advocate on many fronts to safeguard access to protection and durable solutions for refugees. This year our government has reversed commitments to protect refugees seeking asylum here and increased barriers to persons applying from abroad. Sadly, Canada has also joined a growing list of countries eroding human rights in the name of national security, with particular detriment to refugees and migrants.

CCR, along with Canadian Council of Churches and Amnesty International, continues to protest in the courts and other fora against the Safe Third Country Agreement between Canada and the United States, since the US is certainly not a safe country for all refugees. At the time of writing, we are awaiting a decision from the Federal Court on this issue. Despite CCR's repeated urgings, Cabinet has so far failed to meet its legal obligation to review the designation of the US as a safe third country.

In the meantime, Canada has not lived up to its commitment to halt direct backs of asylum seekers at our border, drawing protests from the CCR and UNHCR. In September border officials arrested and charged a humanitarian refugee rights worker who brought asylum seekers to the Lacolle port of entry. The CCR along with other rights organizations, legal associations and faith groups has launched the "*Proud to Aid and Abet*" campaign calling for a change in the law to protect humanitarian workers who assist refugees and who are clearly not smugglers. At the same time, our campaign against human trafficking proposes legislation to support and protect the victims of human trafficking.

Family reunification is a recurring theme in all our work at CCR. The *Family Reunification Manifesto* and our *Wish you Were Here* campaign provide a focus for our continued efforts to bring families together who are separated for many

years by war, circumstance and administrative delays. Family fragmentation impacts the children and adults directly involved but also has high costs for all Canadians: immigrants and refugees cannot fulfill their potential for integration when they are separated from their children and spouses.

The humanitarian disaster for the more than two million Iraqi refugees has failed to prompt the broad international response required to provide bilateral aid to countries hosting huge numbers of refugees, and resettlement for those most in need. CCR efforts earlier this year contributed to an improvement in the outcome for privately sponsored Iraqis and we have continued to advocate for increased resettlement of Iraqi refugees to Canada, especially those who are most vulnerable or who have family links in Canada. Equally important, however, is our continued urging for an increase in the overall numbers of refugees resettled. Simply put, Canada can and should resettle more refugees.

Take a look at the CCR website, a great source of information on these and the many other issues on our agenda. That agenda continues to expand as refugee rights are challenged and eroded nationally and internationally. Our committed and talented staff works closely with CCR members on initiatives that range from court challenges, submissions to Cabinet, resources supporting inclusion and gender equity, public awareness and media resources, information and training pieces and our neverending submissions to government that promote dialogue and work towards improved rights for refugees.

It has been my privilege to be a part of this work and to lead this amazing organization for the past two years. In looking back at achievements I am convinced that we do make a difference and must continue speaking with and for refugees seeking protection and human rights, thereby enriching all Canadians.



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Mandate

The Canadian Council for Refugees fulfils 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 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.

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.

Getting the word out

The CCR gives a high priority to public education. This means helping Canadians to better understand the realities of refugees and immigrants. It also means informing decision-makers about the impacts of policies and programs on refugees and immigrants.

Some of the highlights of the past year include:

- ▶ An attractively redesigned website to provide easy access to the wealth of information generated by the CCR.
- ▶ Development of the use of videos to get the message out. A CCR Youth Network video is posted on YouTube.
- ▶ Timely materials to counter myths and misinformation, including an update of the popular pamphlet, *Facing Facts: Myths and misconceptions about refugees and immigrants in Canada*.
- ▶ An active presence in the media, with 17 media releases and countless interviews with print and electronic media, ensuring that the CCR perspective is widely heard.
- ▶ *The Chronicle*: a monthly e-bulletin that provides a quick and easy way for people to keep abreast of emerging issues affecting newcomers.

The CCR's work in this area receives significant support from the Maytree Foundation.



Photo credit: Taro Hashimoto

Panel participants at a workshop session during 'Taking the Lead: Refugee and Immigrant Youth', the CCR Fall Consultation in November 2006.

Advocating for Justice

The CCR is the leading voice in Canada for refugee rights. With broad participation from the members, the CCR is tireless in advocating for policies and programs that are fair for refugees and immigrants.

Some of the many issues on which the CCR was active were:

- ▶ Family reunification
- ▶ Right of appeal for refugees
- ▶ Safe Third Country Agreement
- ▶ Rights of temporary workers
- ▶ Security certificates
- ▶ Iraqi refugee crisis
- ▶ Settlement services
- ▶ Nationals of moratoria countries in limbo
- ▶ Protection of trafficked persons



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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 & 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: Rick Goldman & Deborah Isaacs.

Working Group on Overseas Protection & 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: Yosief Araya & Paulette Johnson.

Core Groups

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. Jamila Aman chair the Core Group on Gender Issues and Amy Casipullai chair the Anti-Racism Core Group.



Strengthening the network

The CCR plays a key role in strengthening the organizations across Canada that serve refugees and immigrants, by helping them learn from each other and challenge each other to constantly improve their services.

Highlights include:

- ▶ Launch of a toolkit, *Pathways to Gender Justice*, to help organizations bring a gender analysis to their services. The CCR is developing a second phase to this project.
- ▶ National consultations held in Montreal and Edmonton, bringing together hundreds of participants to learn from each other and identify new issues.
- ▶ Activities internationally, including to develop an international network on refugee rights. The CCR also took on the role of coordinating NGOs for the coming year in relation to the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement.
- ▶ Providing information to members to help them respond to complex cases (for example, involving children at risk separated from their parents).

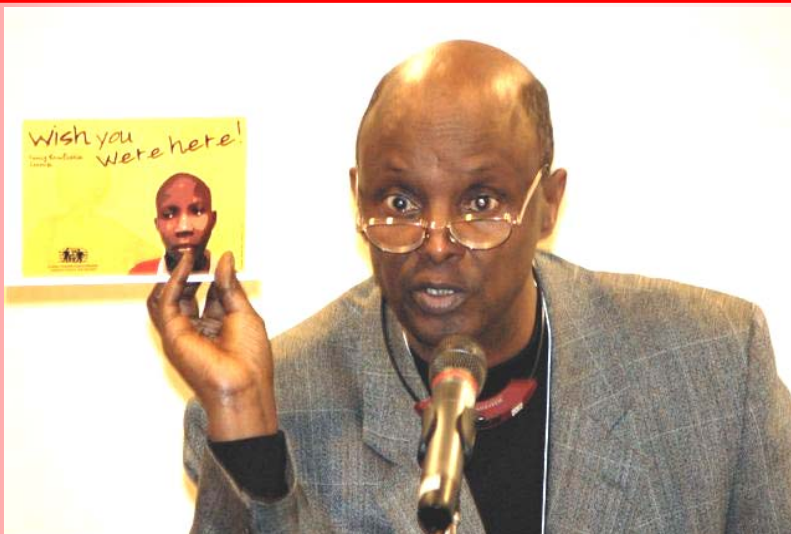


Photo credit: Marty Dolin

Ibrahim Absiye, past CCR Executive member, promotes the CCR's Family Reunification campaign 'Wish you were here'.



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Report on Fundraising from Jihad Aliweiwi, CCR Executive Member

In 2008, the Canadian Council for Refugees will mark its thirtieth year of active advocacy and support for refugee protection community in Canada.

As part of the anniversary celebrations, the CCR is embarking on an ambitious fundraising and resource development plan to ensure that the future growth of the CCR is built on a solid foundation of resources and support. Thank you to those CCR supporters who have made the first thirty years a success – we could not have come this far without you!

You are invited to be a part of this exciting initiative:

Become a bonafide 'Friend of the CCR'

We invite individuals standing up for refugee and immigrant rights to make a monthly pledge to the CCR.

The stable financial support provided through the 'Friends of the CCR' program allows the CCR to maintain its strong, independent voice in favour of the rights of refugees and immigrants. It allows the CCR to keep at the forefront of actions to respond to new developments affecting refugees and immigrants.

Information on the 'Friends of the CCR' program and how to pledge your financial support is available at:

www.ccrweb.ca/eng/donate/friends.htm

or contact the Communications and Networking Coordinator at: ccr4@web.ca

How you can stand up for the human rights of 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 to the CCR (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.

Audited statement of operations year ended August 31, 2007

	2007	2006
	\$	\$
Revenue		
Donations	104,546	70,186
Grants		
Government	91,404	148,841
Others	50,536	69,767
Events	1,106	2,088
Conference registrations	65,003	63,680
Membership fees	55,975	42,070
Publications	1,320	702
Interest	1,805	1,504
	371,695	398,838
Expenses		
Staffing expenses	202,090	221,510
Administration expenses	38,637	34,602
Conference expenses	43,580	81,832
Executive Committee	27,690	22,793
Working Group expenses	5,109	30,185
Fundraising	1,785	2,392
Legal fees	29,034	0
	347,925	393,314
Excess of revenues over expenses	23,770	5,524
Balance Sheet as at August 31, 2007		
	2007	2006
Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash	17,020	300
Term deposit (note 3)	61,791	36,238
Accounts receivable (note 4)	43,894	61,407
Prepaid expenses	348	1,488
	123,053	99,433
Investments (note 3)	10,000	10,200
	133,053	109,633
Liabilities		
Current liabilities		
Excess of outstanding cheques	0	12,167
Accounts payable (note 6)	15,014	4,635
Deferred contributions (note 7)	9,600	8,162
	24,614	24,964
Net assets		
Restricted for stabilization fund	20,000	10,000
Unrestricted	88,439	74,669
	108,439	84,669
	133,053	109,633

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