



Support the implementation of the Refugee Appeal Division Meeting with a Member of Parliament

1. Plan the meeting

- Plan your remarks carefully and be selective. You can't hope to communicate everything. It is better for the MP to go away with a clear message, than to be confused by too much information.
- If possible, find out in advance a bit about what the MP has done or said relating to refugees in general, or the Refugee Appeal Division in particular (you can do a search on the Parliamentary website at: www.parl.gc.ca)

2. During the meeting

Keep your comments brief to leave time for an engaging discussion with the MP and ask them for their commitments, instead of presenting to the MP for the entire meeting. Insist on a straight answer. Does your representative agree or disagree with you?

This structure is meant to serve as a guideline, not as a rigid and only approach to your meeting with the MP.

a) Introduction / Ice Breaker (1 minute)

- Thank the MP for the opportunity to speak to them. Present yourself and if you live/work in the constituency.
- Explain that you are part of a nation-wide organization representing over 180 organizations, the Canadian Council for Refugees, dealing with refugee and immigration issues. CCR members and allies are visiting MPs to discuss the importance of implementing the Refugee Appeal Division.

b) Identify the Issue (2 minutes)

- The Refugee Appeal Division (RAD) was included in the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (IRPA), but has never been implemented. Further delays put the lives of refugees at stake.
- A Private Member's bill (Bill C-280 in the past Parliamentary session), forcing the implementation of sections of the IRPA on the Refugee Appeal Division, has already been debated in the House of Commons and the Senate. With a new Parliamentary session starting, you are asking your MP to support the speedy passage of Bill C-291, which is the same text as Bill C-280, as amended by the Senate.
- Bill C-280 was very close to becoming law. All that was left was for the House of Commons to vote on the amendments made by the Senate.
- A Senate amendment delaying the implementation of RAD for a further year is most unwelcome. However, since the Senate approved the bill in this form, passing this version is likely the fastest route for Parliament to force implementation of the refugee appeal.
- You are asking your MP to vote in favour of Bill C-291 and to support its quick passage through the House of Commons.
- Bill C-291 needs to be passed quickly. It is already more than six years since the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* came into effect without implementing the right of appeal for refugees provided for by Parliament in the Act.

c) Present what is at stake (5 minutes)

- *Refugee lives are in the hands of a single person* - In 2002, the government went ahead with sections of the IRPA that reduce the number of board members hearing a claim from two to one member. This means that a single person decides the fate of a refugee claimant, even though a wrong decision may mean that a claimant is sent back to face persecution, torture and even death.
 - *Any decision-making process will make mistakes* - As human beings, we are all bound to make mistakes from time to time, however hard we try. An effective system, which includes a refugee appeal, recognizes this and provides a mechanism to correct errors.
 - *There is NO appeal on the merits for refugee claimants* - Contrary to much popular opinion, there is currently **no** appeal on the merits for refugee claimants – the limited recourses that are available are incapable of correcting many errors in refugee determination.
- Cite some local examples of the need to implement the RAD, or refer to the cases highlighted in the ‘Refugee Appeal Backgrounder’, available online at:
www.ccrweb.ca/RADbackgrounder.pdf

d) Questions from your MP

- Your MP may have questions about the Refugee Appeal Division and its importance. Refer to the ‘Refugee Appeal Division Backgrounder’ for possible answers to Frequently Asked Questions, available online at: www.ccrweb.ca/RADbackgrounder.pdf
- If you are meeting with the MP in person, give the MP the one-pager (<http://www.ccrweb.ca/documents/RADonepager2009.pdf>) and backgrounder outlining the issue.

e) Solutions/Requests to MP (1 1/2 minutes)

- Ask for the MP’s support and vote in favour of Bill C-291, and for its speedy passage through the House of Commons.
- *Try to leave the meeting with a straight answer from the MP.*

f) Thank You and Follow-up (1 minute)

- Thank the MP for his/her time. Recap the commitments made and promise to follow up with their office.

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