



Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization
Organisme Communautaire des Services aux Immigrants d'Ottawa



Report Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR) National Lobbying Campaign

October 15th and 22nd, 2004 – National Capital Region
(30 – 60 minute sessions)

OCISO requested meetings with seven Members of Parliament in the National Capital Region during the CCR campaign. Four of these were met:

<u>Member of Parliament</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
Hon. Ed Broadbent	New Democrat
Marlene Catterall	Liberal
Marc Godbout	Liberal
Hon. Mauril Bélanger (met with community outreach staff)	Liberal

A fifth Member of Parliament, **David McGuinty**, called personally and suggested that the delegation meet with the Liberal Caucus for the National Capital Region. He would arrange this and a date has not yet been set.

The OCISO delegation was as community based as possible. The delegation was represented by members of several New Canadian communities including: Somali, Colombian, Iranian, Nepali, Bangladeshi, Sudanese, Congolese, and Botswanan. Staff members from OCISO and a Board Member (Kim Campbell) also participated.

All MPs remarked on their constituency offices' inundation with requests for assistance on immigration issues (more than 70% of their workload). The main request from MPs was to provide recommendations for action, which we provided according to the suggestions from the CCR. Notable comments from the MPs were related to the complexity of the circumstance and the impact of new security measures since September 2001. Issues included negative perceptions from the general public on new immigrants, taxation and aversion to any elevated costs, the work burden within Citizenship and Immigration Canada and visa officers world wide, and communication / understanding between Canada and multi-lateral agencies like UNHCR.

Our understanding was that MPs are giving high priority to immigration issues. This was reflected in the granting of a minimum 30 minutes to our delegation. The Hon. Ed Broadbent was clear about prioritizing immigration issues, especially on humanitarian grounds and Canada's commitment to international conventions. Mr. McGuinty declined meeting with us only for the purposes of finding appropriate time to focus on the issues at a later date. Notably, this was also a busy time in Ottawa, given that Parliament had just returned to session, and granting time to our delegation was appreciated.

Following is the simple agenda which we used in our meetings. We formally presented the 3 key national issues and allowed for personal examples in discussion. Note that we also briefly discussed integration issues, emphasizing that immigration is a long process and does not end with a simple arrival on Canadian soil. There is also a list of the members of the delegation (s). The information package provided by the CCR was given to each of the MPs visited.

A good and worthwhile effort!

JP Melville
Cross Cultural Education Coordinator (OCISO)





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AGENDA

Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR) National Lobbying Campaign

October 15th and 22nd, 2004 – National Capital Region

Purpose: Meet with Member of Parliament to present three key issues:

1. delays private sponsorship
2. delays family reunification for accepted refugees
3. non-implementation Refugee Appeal Division

Attending: New Canadian Delegation, MP, Advisor

Introduction (3 minutes)

- a. We thank you for your valuable time and interest in meeting with us.
- b. We are a group of local people actively involved in Ottawa's and Canada's changing cultural mosaic, intimately linked to immigration policies at a federal level.
- c. We represent a nation wide campaign concerning immigration and refugees, organised by the Canadian Council for Refugees which is based in Montreal.
- d. Introduction of Delegation

Key Issues (12-15 minutes)

- a. Delays in overseas processing private sponsorship
- b. Family reunification of recognized refugees
- c. Refugee Appeal Division

Discussion (15 minutes, according to MP time)

Recommended Actions (2 minutes, mentioned in discussion, repeated for emphasis)

- a. Spouses and families of accepted Convention Refugees be allowed immediate access to Canada for processing
- b. Implement Refugee Appeal Division
- c. Study processing problems in Private Sponsorship
- d. Integration – contributing to Canada (professional, employment, training) (Harcourt Advisory Committee)

Conclusion

- a. Thank you for your valuable time and interest.
- b. Please remember that through the voluntary and non-government organization sector that a wealth of information is available, including detailed services and analysis on the issues presented today.
- c. Thanks again.





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Delegation Members

Ahdi Guy	Settlement Councillor OCISO
Gordon Luaala	South Sudanese Community Association
Wali Farah	MLO manager OCISO
Yieb Malek	South Sudanese Community Association
Eugene Luanda	Intake Officer OCISO
Lulama Tobo-Gillespie	Inter-Amicos Sponsorship Program OCISO
Radha Basnyat	Nepalese Canadian Association of Ottawa
Jaime Boquero	Columbian Community Association
Kim McKenzie	Reconnecting with Diversity / OCISO
JP Melville	Cross Cultural Education Coordinator OCISO
Nasir Tarafder	Settlement Councillor OCISO
Kim Campbell	OCISO Board
Marie-Hélène Carr	Settlement Councillor OCISO

