



Conseil canadien pour les réfugiés  
Canadian Council for Refugees

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[Home](#) > Open letter: discourse on refugees and migrants in upcoming elections

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## Open letter: discourse on refugees and migrants in upcoming elections

4 June 2019

To the leaders of all federal political parties

We are writing because we are concerned about how refugees and migrants in Canada may be characterized during the upcoming federal election campaign.

We welcome thoughtful discussion on complex issues related to migration, and recognize that there are many legitimate perspectives.

We are also conscious that refugees and migrants are easily victimized in political debates. In many countries around the world, especially during election campaigns, refugees and migrants have been talked about in ways that insult their dignity and humanity, contribute to xenophobia and racism, and are frequently grounded in distortion and misinformation.

We believe that every leader, every candidate, and every political party, has a role to play in preventing this from happening in Canada. We therefore ask you to engage in discussions about migration in ways that recognize:

- Our shared humanity,
- That Canada finds opportunity through diversity,
- That refugees strengthen our communities,
- That refugees help build our economy,
- That Canada has legal obligations to respect and uphold the human rights of those fleeing persecution

We believe that how we respond to refugees, and how we talk about vulnerable migrants, is an important part of our collective identity.

We want to be a country that welcomes refugees, that respects the dignity and human rights of vulnerable migrants, and that treats them fairly.

We know Canadians value compassion, equality and safety for all.

In the upcoming federal election campaign, we call on you to demonstrate your leadership by respecting these principles and speaking out when they are undermined by others.

Canadian Council for Refugees

Amnesty International Canada

The Canadian Council of Churches

Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers

Action for Healthy Communities

Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA)

Anglican Diocese of BC

Anglican Diocese of Niagara

Anglican Diocese of Qu'Appelle

Anglican Diocese of Saskatoon

Beacon of the Freed

Canada Tibet Committee

Canada Without Poverty

Canadian Council for International Co-operation

Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East

CARE Canada

Carrefour d'Action Interculturelle

Catholic Social Services

Central Alberta Refugee Effort (C.A.R.E.)

Diocese of London Inland Protection of Refugees

DisAbled Women's Network (DAWN) Canada

Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers

Egale Canada

Embarkation Law Corporation

Feminist Alliance for International Action Canada

FrancoQueer

Golden and Golden Law, Darcy Golden, Barrister and Solicitor

Human Rights Watch

Immigrant Services Calgary

Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria

International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group

Journey Home Community Association

KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives

Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organizations (MANSO)

Matthew House Refugee Reception Services, Toronto

Mennonite Central Committee

Mosaic Newcomer Family Resource Network

Multicultural Family Resource Society

Nobel Women's Initiative

North End Sponsorship Team (NEST)

PINAY (Filipino Women's Organization in Quebec)

Rainbow Refugee Association of Nova Scotia

Refugee 613

Refugees for Brockville

Rideau Institute

Romero House

Sanctuary North

Saskatoon Open Door Society Inc.

Service d'aide aux Néo-Canadiens

Sojourn House

Somali Canadian Women and Children Association

Southern Alberta Language Assessment Services

Syria-Antigonish Families Embrace (SAFE) Society

The Centre for Spanish-Speaking Peoples

The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (Anglican Church of Canada)

The United Church of Canada

Tides Canada

Vancouver Island Counselling Centre for Immigrants and Refugees

Victoria Coalition for Survivors of Torture

West Kootenay Friends of Refugees

YWCA Prince Albert

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