



MADHU VERMA MIGRANT JUSTICE CENTRE

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New Brunswick must fund refugee legal aid

This winter, large numbers of refugee claimants began arriving in Moncton and Fredericton. More refugees are expected to arrive from Quebec where the province is transporting refugees that have crossed at Roxham Road to other provinces.

Refugee advocates across the country, including the Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers (CARL), are deeply concerned that the absence of refugee legal aid in New Brunswick will mean refugees will fail their claims and be deported back to their home countries where it is not safe for them to live. One of the families that has just arrived in Moncton fled their home country when their daughter was assassinated.

Refugees arriving in Moncton and Fredericton have a right to legal aid.

The government of New Brunswick can look to Quebec and Ontario, both of which provide provincial funding to maintain a network of staffed legal clinics that provide not just immigration and refugee law but also family law, disability and poverty law services.

Quebec's clinics receive provincial funding for immigration and refugee law. Ontario used to provide provincial funding for refugee law, but the Ford government cut all provincial funding in 2019 in a callous move linked to the so-called illegal border crossings such as Roxham Road. Now, Ontario's clinics provide refugee law services using federal funding.

The New Brunswick Refugee Clinic was established to address the dire need for refugee legal aid, but they need lawyers on staff and resources to address the explosion in the number of claims they will be receiving this year.

We are asking the government to New Brunswick to:

Fund refugee legal aid, starting with the hiring of least four staff lawyers to address the number of claims expected this year.

For more information, contact the Madhu Verma Migrant Justice Centre at info@madhucentre.ca