

Your voice. Your future.

Annual Review 2008

CAIR  **CAN**
Canadian Council on American-Islamic Relations

CONTENT

CAIR-CAN Annual Review 2008

01

MESSAGE

From the Chair5

02

ASPIRATIONS

Our Vision & Mission8
In the Office10

03

PEOPLE

On the Board12
Our Volunteer Consultative Committee (Shura)16
Where Are They Now?19

04

WORK

A Year in Review20
Media Engagement22
CAIR-CAN on the Record23
Community Education24
Civil Liberties Defence26
Public Advocacy & Human Rights33
Opinion Pieces36
Letter to the Editor44

05

EVENTS

CAIR-CAN Gala Dinner48
Second Annual CAIR-CAN summer BBQ49
Index50

01

Muslims are a fundamental part of this country's social fabric. We are as strong as we are diverse – in culture, occupations, skills and educational backgrounds.

MESSAGE

From the Chair

Assalaamu'alaykum,
Peace be with you.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Canadian Council of American Islamic Relations (CAIR-CAN), I would like to welcome you to our annual profile for 2008. This is our fifth annual report to you. In it you will find an overview of our education outreach, media engagement, defence of civil liberties and political activism.

The case of Abousfian Abdelrazik, the Iacobucci Inquiry, the detention of Huseyin Celil, the security certificate matters, the "Toronto 18" and the Bouchard-Taylor Commission; these are some of the matters on which we have been hard at work over the last many months.

In many respects, 2008 was a particularly challenging year for CAIR-CAN as the organization operated without an Executive Director at the helm. Following Karl Nickner's resignation, we accepted applications for the position through the end of 2007 and interviewed a number of candidates in early 2008. By the summer of 2008, the Board was also able to persuade our own Ihsaan Gardee to consider applying for the ED role.

We are pleased to report that as this profile goes to print, the Board has reached an agreement with Ihsaan and appointed him as the organization's new ED. As you may be aware, Ihsaan has served as CAIR-CAN's Community Relations & Operations Director for the better part of the past two years. In many ways, he has served as a de facto ED for the organization.

Ihsaan has a background in marketing and communications in Canada and the UK. He obtained degrees from the University of Western Ontario (BA) and Windsor (BComm). In addition to his educational and professional qualifications, Ihsaan brings to the table excellent inter-personal skills together with a passion for and commitment to the organization's work. We are very pleased to promote him to the role of ED and look forward to his leadership.

We also welcome our newest Board member - Khalid Elgazzar of Ottawa. Khalid grew up near Cornwall, Ontario and is a distinguished graduate of the University of Ottawa's Faculty of Law. He currently practises law with an Ottawa-based litigation boutique. Khalid has long been a volunteer with CAIR-CAN and we hope to rely on his good sense and judgment (not to mention his legal experience) on the Board.

As we welcome Ihsaan and Khalid on board, it is with regret that we note the departure of Faisal Kutty from the organization. Faisal's contributions have been instrumental to CAIR-CAN's growth and development as a national voice for Canadian Muslims. In particular, Faisal has:

- served as legal counsel for CAIR-CAN since its inception
- played a central role in CAIR-CAN's legal advocacy including intervenor work on the Iacobucci and Arar Inquiries, the Air India Inquiry and security certificate issues
- presented at seminars on various human rights and civil liberties issues including presenting CAIR-CAN's "Know Your Rights" workshop

MESSAGE

- appeared on behalf of the organization at academic conferences as well as community lectures on civil liberties and social justice issues
- assisted with numerous human rights cases many of which were resolved through mediation
- helped establish, co-ordinate and administer CAIR-CAN's Human Rights Committee which consists of lawyers, law students and social justice workers who handle the cases that are referred to the organization
- served as a member of the Board of Directors since 2001
- served as Vice Chair from 2006 to 2008
- published numerous papers and articles in various journals and media on human rights issues
- drafted and made submissions to government committees and agencies on various topics including the Passenger Protect or "No-Fly list" program and Al Jazeera's application for a broadcast license in Canada

Faisal's activism and contributions have earned him the respect and admiration of Canadian Muslims and indeed, Canadians of all stripes who have had the good fortune to work with him.

In May of this year, Faisal decided to take a break from CAIR-CAN to focus on completing a doctorate in law at Osgoode Hall Law School and explore the possibility

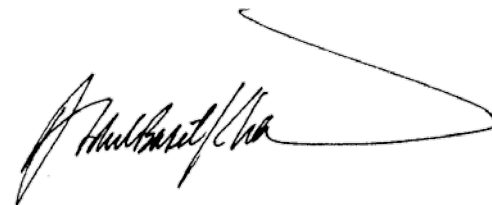
From the Chair

of pursuing an academic career in the law. It is with sincere gratitude that we bid him farewell and wish him the best in his future endeavours.

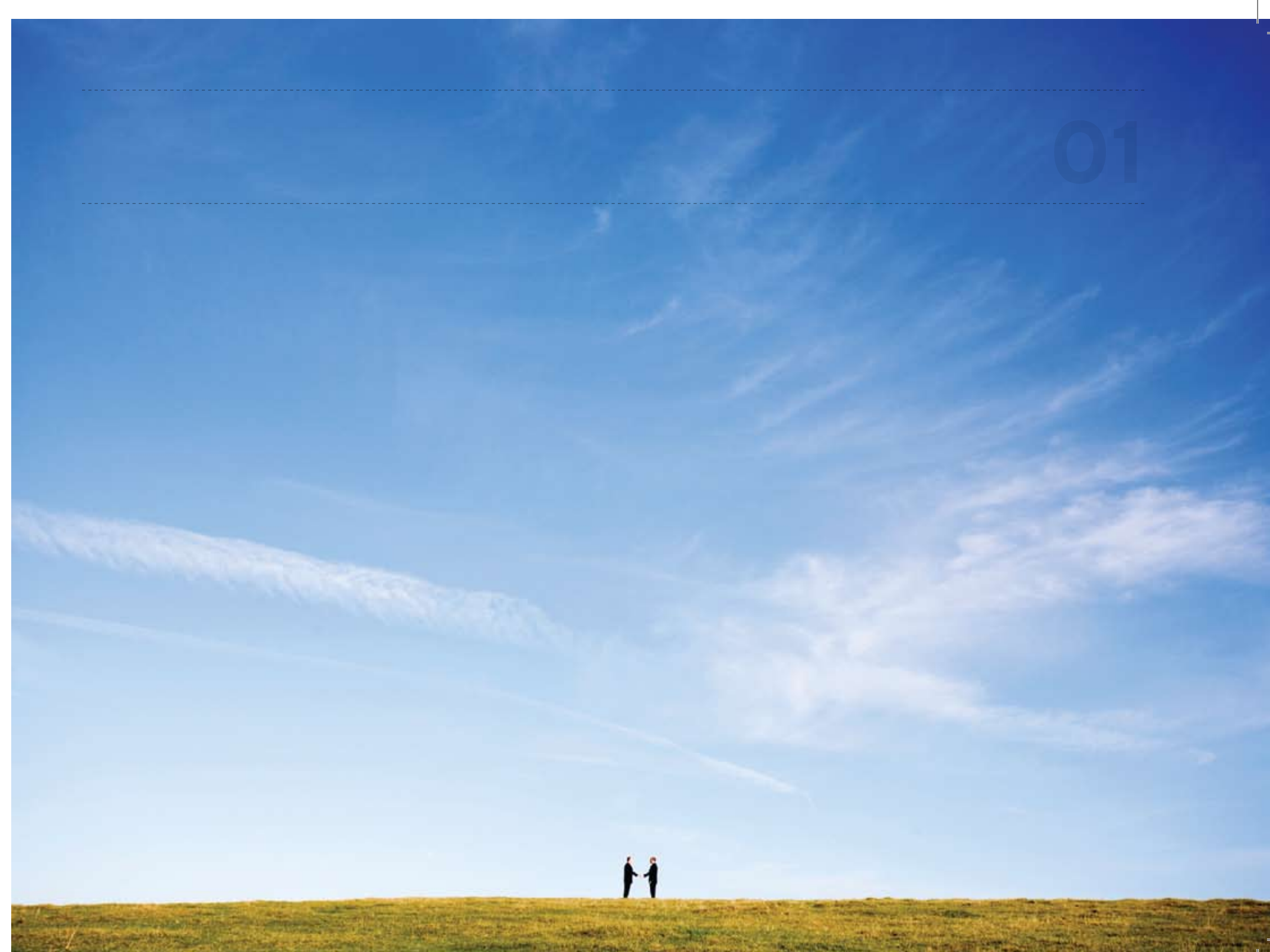
Finally, on behalf of the Board, I would like to thank the many volunteers, including shura members, dinner organizers and men and women across the country who have demonstrated an unflinching commitment to the work of our organization. We are grateful to you all.

We look forward to continuing in our efforts to serve you better. We look forward to your support, advice, constructive criticism and, as always, your generous financial assistance.

Wa salaamu'alaykum,
Peace be with you.



Abdul-Basit Khan, Chair



ASPIRATIONS

Our Vision

{ Striving to be a leading voice that enriches Canadian society through Muslim civic engagement and the promotion of human rights. }

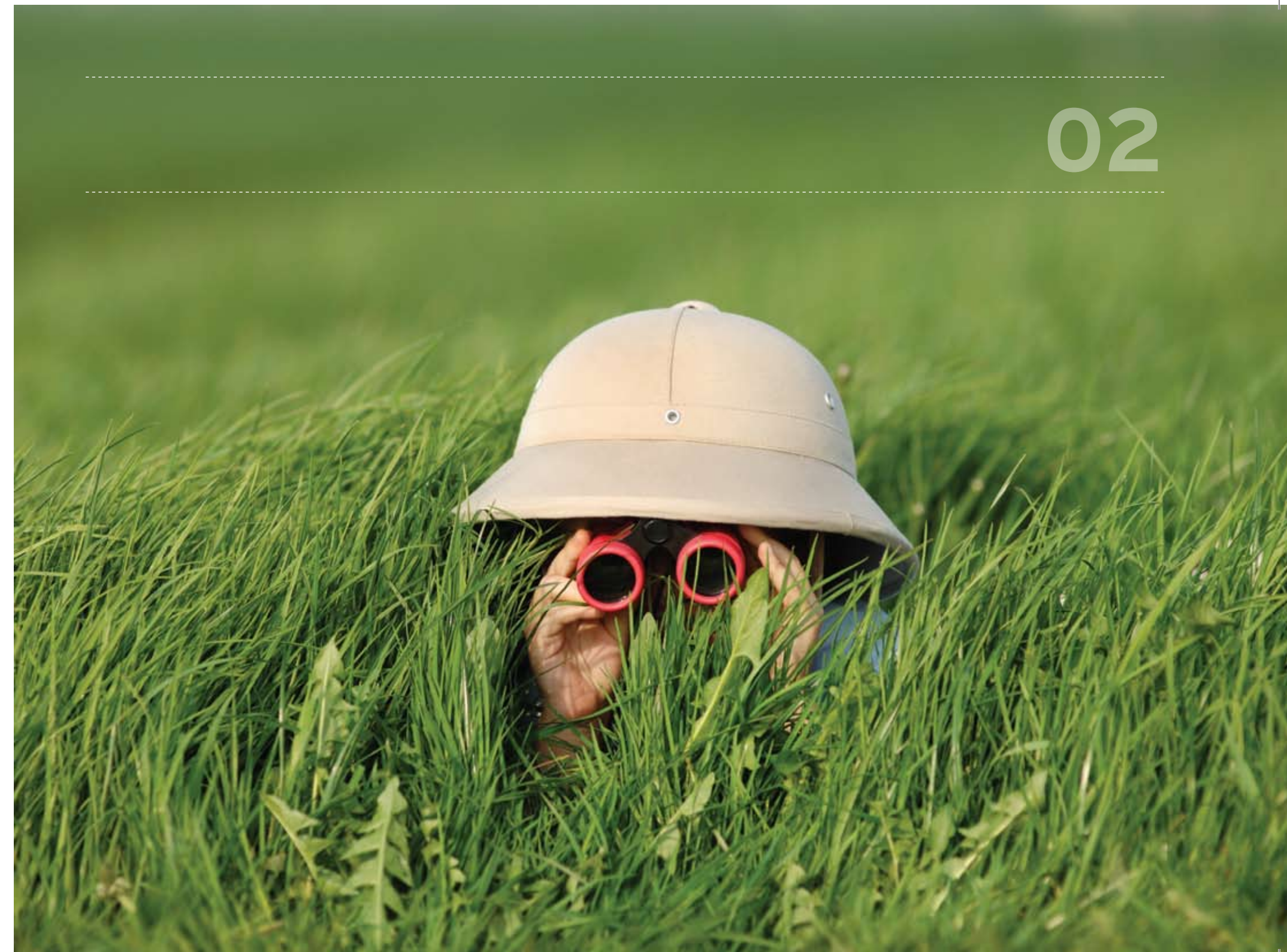
Our Mission

The Canadian Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-CAN) is a national, not-for-profit, grassroots organization that represents the concerns of Canada's Muslims through dedicated and professional activism.

CAIR-CAN works to foster an accurate understanding and greater appreciation of Islam in Canadian society through: **1** community education and outreach, media engagement, anti-discrimination initiatives and public advocacy, and; **2** the empowerment of

Canadian Muslims through topical research and publishing; conducting seminars and workshops, and working with other social justice organizations on joint initiatives that benefit and enrich the Canadian mosaic.

CAIR-CAN is separate and fully independent of the Washington-based CAIR, although the two may coordinate on areas of mutual concern.



INTRODUCTIONS

In the Office



Currently, CAIR-CAN has 3 employees:

➤ **Sameer Zuberi**
Media Relations
& Human Rights Coordinator

➤ **Maryam Dadabhoy**
Community Relations Coordinator
(Toronto)

➤ **Ihsaan Gardee**
Community Relations
& Operations Director

At Your Fingertips - www.caircan.ca

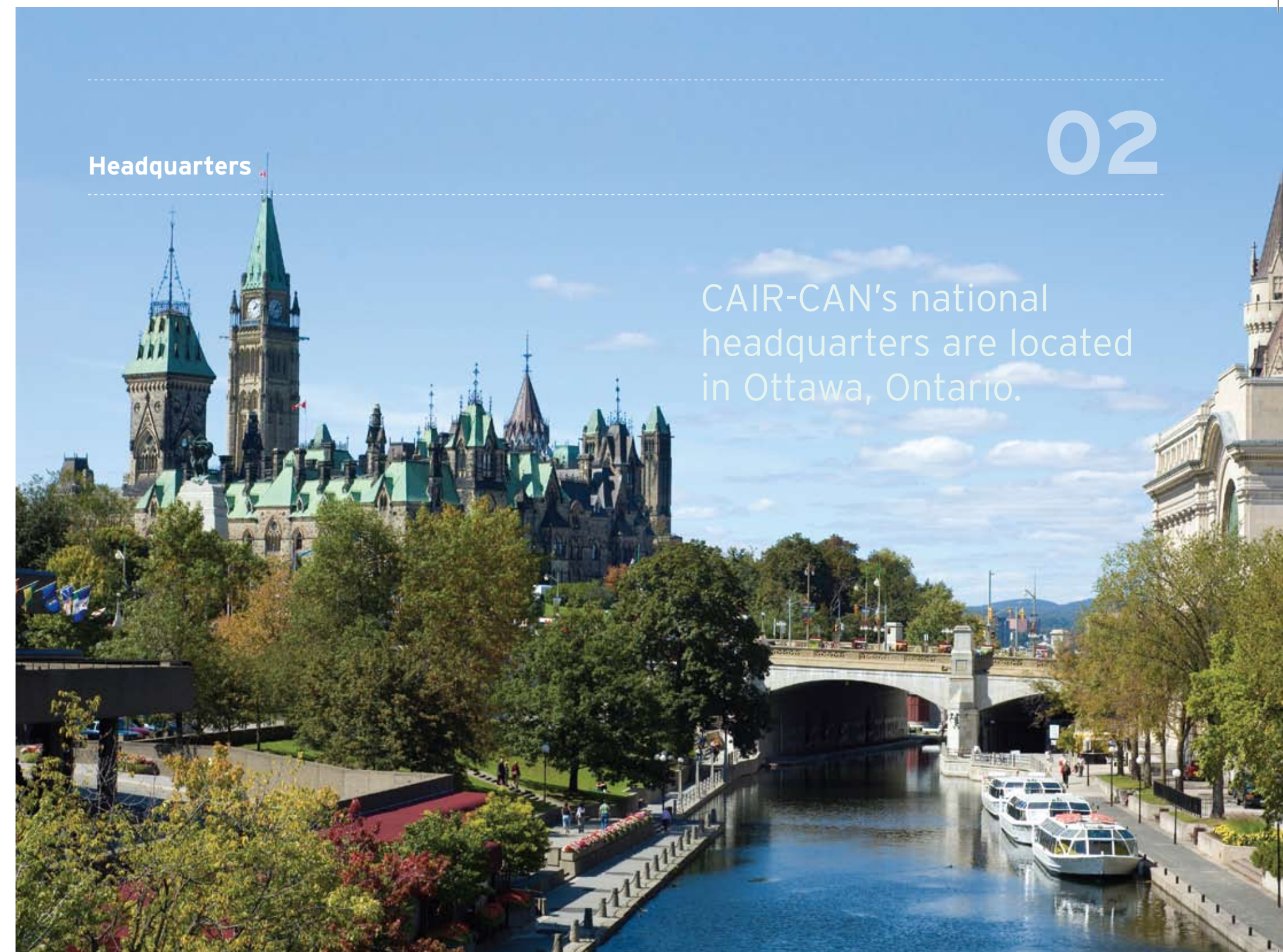
CAIR-CAN's website provides a comprehensive resource for news, opinion pieces and issues affecting Canadian Muslims and allows for easy online reporting of discrimination, racial profiling and hate crimes. The website features a complete historical archive of

CAIR-CAN's work, press releases, action alerts, opinion pieces and a regularly updated record of media coverage regarding human rights and civil liberties issues as well as media reports addressing Muslims and Islam in Canada.

Headquarters

02

CAIR-CAN's national headquarters are located in Ottawa, Ontario.



PEOPLE

On the Board



> Chair: Abdul-Basit Khan

Abdul-Basit Khan has been serving as the Chair of CAIR-CAN's Board of Directors since taking over the helm from Dr. Sheema Khan in 2005. Abdul Basit is a graduate of McGill University's Faculty of Law and is currently a Partner with Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP in Toronto where he practices labour and employment law. Abdul-Basit (affectionately referred to as "A-B-K") is highly regarded by his peers for his community activism.



> Selma Djukic

Selma Djukic is a magna cum laude graduate of the University of Toronto and President of White Owl Global Services Ltd., a pharmaceutical drug development consultancy based in Toronto. A pioneer amongst early community youth workers, Selma has dedicated the better part of the last 30 years to empowering youth and women through the initiation and development of numerous grassroots, national and international organizations. CAIR-CAN has come to depend on Selma's considerable technical and management expertise which she is enhancing through the completion of the University of Toronto's Advanced Certificate in Strategic Leadership.



> Kashif Ahmed

Kashif Ahmed of Calgary holds a business administration degree in finance from the Paul Hill School of Business at the University of Regina. He is currently in his second year of law school at the University of Saskatchewan where he is focusing on commercial and corporate litigation. Prior to his legal studies, he worked for Imperial Oil in Calgary. Kashif has extensive experience in media relations and public advocacy.



PEOPLE

On the Board



> Khadija Haffajee

Khadija Haffajee, a retired schoolteacher who calls Ottawa home, is a regular speaker on issues that affect Muslims in Canada and internationally. She regularly works with other organizations in interfaith dialogue, the empowerment of women, spiritual counseling and the development of civil society.



> Dr. Jamal Badawi

Dr. Jamal Badawi, one of North America's most renowned Islamic scholars, is a professor at Saint Mary's University in Halifax, where he is a cross-appointed faculty member in the Department of Religious Studies and the Department of Management. Often called upon to comment on issues relevant to Canadian Muslims, he has also produced publications on gender equity as well as an impressive collection of audio materials introducing Islam.



> Aftab Sabir

Aftab Sabir, one of the founders of CAIR-CAN, is based in Calgary. Aftab obtained his MBA in financial and organizational development from the Schulich School of Business at York University. A former founder and manager with Salam Financial, Aftab now works for the City of Calgary.

03



> Dr. Wael Haddara

Wael Haddara, a graduate of Queens University's Faculty of Medicine, is a pharmacist and doctor who resides in London, Ontario. Wael is well known as a Canadian Muslim academic, speaker and activist, and his particular strengths include strategic media coordination and political engagement.



> Shahina Siddiqui

Shahina Siddiqui is the founder and volunteer Executive Director of the Islamic Social Services Association based in Winnipeg, Canada. Shahina also sits on the board of the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg and the Voluntary Non-Profit Sector Organization of Manitoba. Additionally, she provides important feedback as a member of the RCMP Commanding Officer Diversity Committee and the Citizens Equity Committee Against Racism and Discrimination. In addition to her work with these organizations, Shahina contributes as a freelance writer, spiritual counsellor and public speaker. Shahina is a proud grandmother of two.



> Khalid Elgazzar

Khalid is an Ottawa-based lawyer who has been an active member of the community since moving to Ottawa nearly 10 years ago. He obtained his LLB in 2005 from the University of Ottawa after completing his Bachelor of Commerce at the same institution. He currently practices in the areas of civil liberties as well as commercial and civil litigation at Hameed Forrokhzad St-Pierre. Previously, Khalid worked in the areas of insurance defence, commercial and construction litigation at Soloway Wright, LLP. Prior to being called to the Ontario Bar, Khalid worked at the University of Ottawa Community Legal Clinic on a variety of matters ranging from employment law to human rights.

PEOPLE

Our Volunteer Consultative Committee (Shura)

CAIR-CAN's Shura or Volunteer Consultative Committee is comprised of a dedicated and dynamic team of volunteers across Canada that generates ideas, provides constructive feedback, vets draft publications including op-eds, press releases and articles and contributes to the organization's overall body of work. What follows is an introduction to some of the members of the Shura group.

➤ Rahat Godil - Toronto, ON

Rahat Godil is an Associate practising in the Litigation Group with the law firm Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP in Toronto. Rahat graduated from the University of Toronto with a Juris Doctor from the Faculty of Law. Before attending law school, she completed a bachelor of business administration at the University of Toronto. Rahat has a keen interest in human rights and is on the steering committee of the Human Rights Watch Toronto Network.

➤ Safiyyah Ally - Toronto, ON

Born and raised in Canada, Safiyyah Ally is host of "Let the Quran Speak", a television talk show that airs nation-wide on VISION-TV at 4:00 p.m. every Saturday. Safiyyah is currently pursuing her PhD in Political Science focusing on political theory as it pertains to minority religious communities in the liberal democratic context. Her opinion pieces and commentaries have been published in online magazines and newspapers including the Toronto Star and the Ottawa Citizen.

➤ Mihad Fahmy - London, ON

Mihad Fahmy has a graduate degree in law and works as a labour and human rights lawyer based in London, Ontario with the law offices of Eliot, Smith. She is a contributing columnist with the London Free Press and works closely with CAIR-CAN on human rights and anti-discrimination issues.

➤ Dr. Aisha Sherazi - Ottawa, ON

A successful biologist, Aisha Sherazi migrated to Canada seven years ago from the UK. The former Principal of a full time Muslim elementary school in Ottawa, Aisha now freelances as a writer for the Ottawa Citizen. Aisha also sits on various community boards and committees including the Community Advisory Committee to the RCMP, the Islamic Social Services Association of Canada and the Ontario Federation of Independent Schools. When she's not working as a teen counselor, Aisha is giving presentations and workshops on topics from education to youth, Islam and the Muslims.

➤ Tim Weis - Edmonton

Having recently made the move to the nation's capital from Edmonton, Tim is a Gatineau, Quebec-based renewable energy researcher with a focus on wind energy development in First Nations Communities. Tim has a Master's degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Alberta, and has been an active member of CAIR-CAN's advisory board since 2002.

➤ Eric Engler - Calgary

Eric Engler has a Bachelors degree in Religious Studies specializing in Islamic History and is currently a student in the University of Calgary's Master of Teaching Program. He has been an active member of CAIR-CAN's advisory committee since 2001.

03



PEOPLE

Our Volunteer Consultative Committee (Shura)

> Natasha Persaud - Toronto, ON

Natasha Persaud is a lawyer with the Human Rights Legal Support Centre in Toronto. Natasha completed her law degree at Osgoode Hall Law School and was called to the Bar in June 2008. Prior to this she articulated at Parkdale Community Legal Services and was an instructor in international and criminal law at Southwest University of Political Science and Law in Chongqing, China for one semester.

> Anwaar Syed - Toronto, ON

Anwaar Syed is a communications specialist and runs a consultancy company, Jara Communications. He has held contracts with Ontario's Ministries of Transportation and Finance and worked with the Toronto District School Board. Anwaar earned his undergraduate degree in Communication Arts and Post-Colonial Literature at York University and completed Graduate Studies in Corporate Communications and Public Relations at York and Centennial College.

A word about volunteers: the backbone of the organization

There are many volunteers including students and professionals who selflessly give their time to assist CAIR-CAN, doing everything from folding thousands of letters and stuffing envelopes to writing letters and dealing with local communities. Many of these individuals do so with no wish for thanks or recognition. From all of us, thank you - you know who you are.

That being said, certain individuals deserve special credit.

Thanks this year go to Mudassir Chaudhry, Mohamed Afilal and Hani Ezzadeen who regularly assist with a broad range of administrative and operational tasks to help CAIR-CAN get its message out to the community. Always available and willing to help at a moment's notice, each of them go the extra mile to make sure that the different wheels of the organization keep turning.

Thank you all and we look forward to your continued support.



Where are they now?

One of the constants of CAIR-CAN has been its ability to attract talented individuals from diverse backgrounds. Never a static organization with staff "for life", CAIR-CAN believes in and encourages the renewal and regeneration that new faces and ideas bring. This is our small effort to bridge the past with the present.

> Sheema Khan (former Chair)

Sheema is currently working as a patent agent in Ottawa. She is also Globe-trotting - of sorts - writing monthly for the Globe and Mail Op-ed section, and serving on the newspaper's bimonthly online religion panel. Sheema, who recently became a hockey-mom, is also a graduate of McGill's chemistry program and Harvard University where she completed her PhD in Chemical Physics. All she has to do now is shoot some moose and she too can run for political office.



OCTOBER 2007

PR Council's Proposed Hijab-ban discriminates Against Quebec Women

› Friday, October 05, 2007

PR Immigration Minister Urged to Stay Deportation of Said Jaziri

› Monday, October 22, 2007

NOVEMBER 2007

PR Joint Statement of 50 Groups on C-3, security certificates

› Thursday, November 08, 2007

PR 'Don't Interpret Rules Narrowly' Judo Manitoba Urged

› Sunday, November 18, 2007

PR Human Rights Complaint Filed on Behalf of Airport Worker

› Monday, November 19, 2007

PR Shahid Mahmood To File Human Rights Complaint Against Air Canada Over Canada's Unofficial No-Fly List

› Tuesday, November 27, 2007

DECEMBER 2007

PR 20 Muslim Groups Urge 'Zero Tolerance' for Domestic Violence

› Tuesday, December 11, 2007

AA Call Your MP to vote down C-3

› Wednesday, December 12, 2007

FEBRUARY 2008

PR CAIR-CAN Urges Accommodation for Blind Taxi Passengers

› Wednesday, February 06, 2008

OE Rushing Injustice through the Senate - Toronto Star

› Wednesday, February 13, 2008

PR CAIR-CAN Calls for Full Police Investigation of Hate Crime

› Tuesday, February 26, 2008

MARCH 2008

PR CAIR-CAN Condemns Arson Attack of Calgary Home

› Sunday, March 16, 2008

OE Truly Muslim, truly Canadian - Winnipeg Free Press

› Saturday, March 29, 2008

APRIL 2008

PR Consular Officials Must Act as Observers for Kohails in Saudi Court

› Wednesday, April 09, 2008

PR CAIR-CAN Applauds Ontario Rights Commission Statement on Maclean's

› Wednesday, April 09, 2008

PR Open Letter on 'Toronto 11' to Authorities from 19 Groups

› Tuesday, April 22, 2008

MAY 2008

PR Government Must Allow Canadian in Sudan Return to Canada: CAIR-CAN and ICLMG

› Friday, May 02, 2008

PR Investigate Alleged Prisoner Abuse at Maplehurst: Human Rights Groups

› Thursday, May 08, 2008

PR CAIR-CAN Announces Changes to its Board

› Thursday, May 08, 2008

AA Write MPs on Israeli Ambassador's Views on Canadian Muslims

› Tuesday, May 13, 2008

PR CAIR-CAN Welcomes Bouchard-Taylor Report on 'Reasonable Accommodation'

› Sunday, May 18, 2008

PR Support Canadian Muslim Imprisoned in China

› Thursday, May 22, 2008

PR Arab and Muslim Organizations Welcome Recommendations of the Bouchard-Taylor Report on 'Reasonable Accommodation'

› Friday, May 23, 2008

JUNE 2008

PR Canadian Muslim Organizations Salute Alexa McDonough for her contributions

› Tuesday, June 03, 2008

PR AIR-CAN Applauds Supreme Court Ruling on CSIS Destruction of Evidence

› Thursday, June 26, 2008

JULY 2008

PR CAIR-CAN Calls Upon Canadian Companies to Stop Building Israeli Settlements

› Friday, July 11, 2008

AA Write Government to Return Omar Khadr to Canada

› Thursday, July 17, 2008

OE Clear the air on security inquiries - The Ottawa Citizen

› Tuesday, July 29, 2008

PR Rules of Engagement with Afghan Civilians Flawed

› Wednesday, July 30, 2008

PR CAIR-CAN Calls Dismissal of High School Sexual Assault Charges 'Deplorable'

› Thursday, July 31, 2008

AUGUST 2008

AA Participants Sought: Research Project on Traveler Surveillance

› Thursday, August 07, 2008

AA CAIR-CAN Ramadan 2008 Community Publicity Kit Released

› Thursday, August 28, 2008

SEPTEMBER 2008

OE A fresh start - Vancouver Sun, 11/09/08

› Thursday, September 11, 2008

PR Poll Shows Islamophobia on the Rise

› Saturday, September 20, 2008

PR CAIR-CAN Comments on Verdict of Toronto 18

› Thursday, September 25, 2008

AA Vote Tue Oct 14, You Can Make the Difference

› Sunday, September 28, 2008



WORK

CAIR-CAN's media work - whether in print, radio or television - is notable for its depth and breadth. Whether it is issue-based commentary, one-on-one interviews, live broadcasts, radio and television talk-ins, informative panel discussions or heated debate, CAIR-CAN is there to provide experienced and articulate representation for Canada's diverse Muslim communities.

Over the last year, CAIR-CAN has spoken, for example, on such broad issues as the Court Challenges Program; the cases of jailed or exiled Canadians including Huseyin Celil, Omar Khadr, and Abousfian Abdelrazik among others; the continuing erosion of civil liberties and the rule of law post 9/11; the ongoing Iacobucci inquiry;

reasonable accommodation debate in Quebec and the subsequent Bouchard-Taylor report and its recommendations; hate crimes against numerous mosques and Islamic centres; and Islamic rites such as fasting and Hajj (pilgrimage).

"Whether it's the issuing of a 'Good News' alert, providing an overview of media coverage on an issue of specific pertinence to Canadian Muslims, or analyzing the effects of anti-Muslim discrimination and harassment, CAIR-CAN provides an important service to all Canadians."

› Lois Sweet, Assistant Professor, School of Journalism and Communication, Carleton University

"CAIR-CAN is a valuable resource for writers, reporters, producers and editors."

› Karlene Nation, Diversity Reporter/Producer, CFTO/CTV

Media Engagement

On The Record

On the Toronto 18 terrorism suspects

"The mystery surrounding this case and this unorthodox turn of events raises serious doubts about the accused's chances of a fair trial and due process."

› Sameer Zuberi

Source: www.threadbare.tyo.ca

Date: September 26, 2007

On domestic violence

"There should be zero tolerance for violence of any kind against women or girls,"

› Shahina Siddiqui,

Source: www.embassymag.ca

Date: June 27, 2007

On the religious rights of Toronto 18 Terrorism Suspects

"Prisoners of all religious backgrounds are guaranteed the right to continue practicing their faith while incarcerated,"

› Sameer Zuberi

Source: www.toronto18.com

Date: May 8, 2008

On the Reasonable Accommodation debate

"I think it's important to recognize that the entire premise of reasonable accommodation is a dubious premise," he says, explaining that the entire debate is centred around the false argument that there are constant requests for accommodations that are somehow unreasonable"

› Sameer Zuberi

Source: <http://www.siafu.ca/story/76>

Date: August 27, 2008

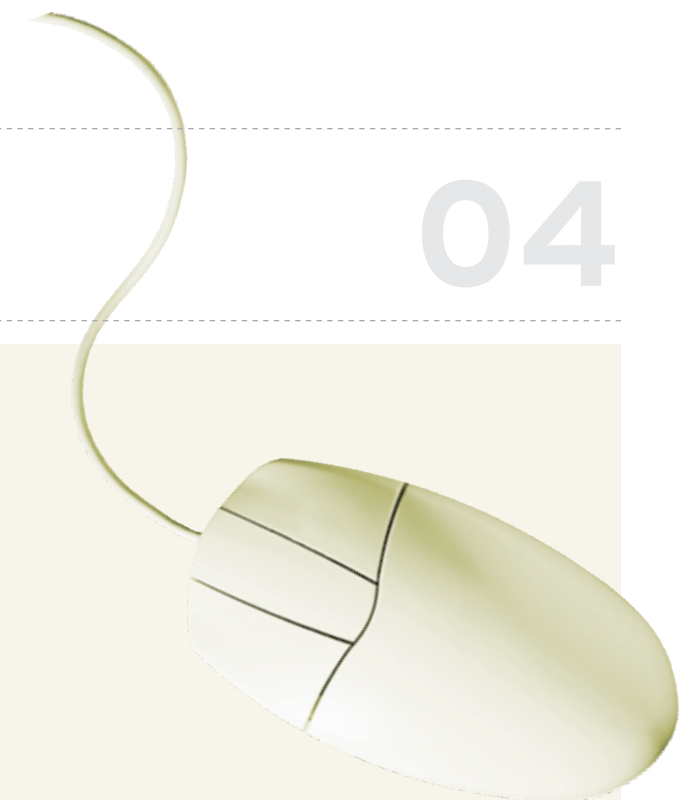
On the case of exiled Canadian Abousfian Abdelrazik

"The Canadian Council on American-Islamic Relations is calling on the government to immediately repatriate Canadian citizen Abousfian Abdelrazik," said CAIR-CAN spokesman Ihsaan Gardee, echoed by Amnesty International.

› Ihsaan Gardee

Source: Association France Presse (AFP)

Date: September 17, 2008



> Publications & Kits

CAIR-CAN's publications are still in demand by both the private and public sector. Over 400 Know Your Rights booklets were sent to one conference alone and another 120 copies of the Educator's Guide to Islamic Religious Practices were ordered by one school board. Currently, the entire library of publications from our Guides to Islamic Religious practices for journalists, employers, and health care providers are being updated and revamped with a new look, so keep an eye out for them.

Other organizations that have ordered our publications include government agencies such as the Canadian Human Rights Commission, Arts Canada, Canadian Heritage, the Department of National Defense, Citizenship and Immigration Canada; media organizations such as CTV and CBC; private companies such as UPS, Client Logic, Convergys and law firms; police services such as the RCMP and the Canadian Police College and others.

CAIR-CAN's comprehensive and practical community media kits on Ramadan and Hajj are essential resources in the toolbox of any Canadian Muslim media activist.

> Workshops and Seminars

CAIR-CAN offers seminars and workshops to the public and private sector. Workshops on anti-discrimination, Islam and Muslims have been delivered to educators, employers, media professionals and the law enforcement community.

Furthermore, CAIR-CAN's workshops for various Muslim communities provide leaders and activists with the essential tools and knowledge for effective media relations and human rights advocacy.



> Conferences & Speaking Engagements

CAIR-CAN representatives are regular panelists at national conferences across Canada. Over the past year CAIR-CAN representatives have spoken at numerous events organized by such diverse organizations as:

- > Human Rights Rally on "Bring Abousfian Abdelrazik back to Canada" - Ottawa, ON
- > Know Your Rights seminars for several groups including the Justice for Adil Charkhoui coalition and the Somali Youth Festival - Montreal, QC and Ottawa, ON
- > Bridging the Gap with the Muslim Community Workshops hosted by the Multicultural Inter-Agency Group of Peel - Mississauga, ON
- > Conference on "Arab and Muslim Identities on Trial: Youth Step Up and Speak Out!" at Arab Community Centre of Toronto - Toronto, ON
- > Aqsa Parvez Domestic Violence Vigil - Toronto, ON

> Guantanamo Bay Panel

On June 26, 2008, CAIR-CAN co-hosted a panel discussion event with Human Rights Watch Toronto Network entitled Guantanamo: Time for Canada to Act. The purpose of the panel was to provide a forum for a meaningful discussion about Guantanamo Bay

and the opportunity for Canadians to play a positive role in remedying some of the damage done as a result of the human rights violations which have occurred there.

The panel featured the following speakers: Michelle Shephard, National Security Reporter, Toronto Star; Julia Hall, Senior Counsel, Terrorism and Counterterrorism Program, Human Rights Watch; and Sujit Choudhry, Associate Dean, Faculty of Law, University of Toronto.

Michelle Shephard, author of Guantanamo's Child, focused on the plight of Canadian citizen Omar Khadr and recounted her experiences from her several visits to Guantanamo Bay. She shared with the audience the conditions in Guantanamo, the manner in which Omar has been detained over the years as well as the Canadian public's attitudes towards Omar and his family.

Julia Hall provided a synopsis of the legal and political issues surrounding Guantanamo, including background on a category of detainees whom the U.S. has indicated ought not to have been detained but who remain at Guantanamo as they have no safe place to return to. She urged Canada to help close Guantanamo by offering humanitarian assistance and refuge to the Uighur detainees and to repatriate Omar Khadr.

Professor Sujit Choudhury focused on legal analysis and jurisprudence from the Canadian courts relevant to these issues, and particularly on the significance of the Supreme Court of Canada's decision in Khadr v. Canada.

Protecting the legal and political interests of Canada's Muslims requires vigilance and sustained government advocacy. CAIR-CAN is at the forefront in defending basic Canadian rights and liberties against the politics of fear and division. CAIR-CAN has organized media conferences and offered written and oral testimony before parliamentary committees on legislation relating to charitable fundraising and terrorism, and the anti-terrorism omnibus legislation.

"CAIR-CAN plays a valuable role empowering Canadian Muslims with a deeper understanding of their rights as citizens. By addressing issues of particular interest to and impact on Muslims, as individuals and as a community, in an insightful and educated manner, CAIR-CAN has helped foster greater understanding and dialogue among all Canadians."

> Alexa McDonough, (former) MP Halifax and NDP Foreign Affairs and International Development Critic

"The dedicated and professional team at CAIR-CAN are important partners in the ongoing and critical effort to ensure that new laws, policies and practices, adopted in the name of enhancing security here in Canada as well as abroad, do not adversely impact the fundamental human rights and civil liberties of all Canadians."

> Alex Neve, Secretary General, Amnesty International Canada



As the victims of the first publicized case of extraordinary rendition, Maher Arar and his wife Dr. Monia Mazigh have become household names in both Canada and the United States.

Whisked away under the cover of night from New York's John F. Kennedy Airport on October 8, 2002, Maher was deported to Syria and repeatedly tortured over the span of 10 months and 10 days. From the outset of Maher's ordeal, CAIR-CAN stood side-by-side with Monia to publicize his case and to call for his return to Canada.

Later, CAIR-CAN partnered with nearly 20 organizations including Amnesty International, the Council of Canadians, the Canadian Arab Federation and the International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group, to call for a public inquiry into the involvement of Canadian officials in Maher's deportation and torture.

In response to public pressure, on February 8, 2004, Canada struck a public inquiry presided over by Justice Dennis O'Connor. CAIR-CAN was granted official Intervener in the inquiry and provided testimony to articulate the sentiments of Canadian Muslims.

Following months of in-depth testimony and analysis, Justice O'Connor concluded that the RCMP erroneously labeled Maher an "Islamist extremist linked to Al-Qaeda" and found that it shared this information with American officials. The Arar Inquiry produced two reports. The first report, issued in September 2006, outlined 23 recommendations to correct human rights abuses which resulted in Maher's deportation and eventual torture. To date, there has been no report on the implementation of these recommendations.

The second report, released in December 2006, called for the establishment of a strong and comprehensive review body to oversee the practices of all intelligence agencies in Canada. If implemented by the government, Justice O'Connor's prescriptions would help prevent future tragedies like Maher's from recurring. Unfortunately, there has been no sign on the part of the government of Canada to indicate they will be implementing Justice O'Connor's recommendations regarding the need for intelligence oversight.

CAIR-CAN intends to work with the Muslim community and Canadians of all backgrounds to maintain pressure on the government to follow up on Justice O'Connor's recommendations.



The story of Abousfian Abdelrazik, which is still unfolding, represents yet another dark page in the history of human rights and civil liberties in Canada.

Mr. Abdelrazik, a 46-year-old Sudanese Canadian who became a citizen in 1995, was fingered by CSIS as an alleged terrorist suspect after travelling to the Sudan to visit his ailing mother in 2003. A few months after arriving in the Sudan, Mr. Abdelrazik was picked up and, according to documents made public under freedom of information legislation, detained twice (at least once at the request of Canadian officials). Mr. Abdelrazik claims that, during his detention, he was interrogated by Canadian officials and tortured while in prison. He has been languishing for nearly 5 years in Khartoum where he remains, at the time of this writing, holed up in the Canadian embassy since late April 2008 having been granted “temporary safe haven”.

Despite being aware of Mr. Abdelrazik’s situation, successive Canadian governments have failed to provide him with emergency travel documents and have thwarted all efforts to bring him home to Montreal and to his family. Most recently, the Canadian government reneged on its pledge to issue Mr. Abdelrazik emergency travel documents after his lawyers found an airline willing to provide him transportation back to Canada via Abu Dhabi. The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade asserts that Mr. Abdelrazik cannot be returned to Canada so long as he remains on a UN travel ban list compiled under Security Council Resolution 1267. Nevertheless, citizens of other countries who are still on what is now know as the “1267 list” have been successfully repatriated, even under circumstances where they had to fly over other UN member

countries to get home. Mr. Abdelrazik, who faces no criminal charges, has never been indicted or convicted either in Sudan or Canada and denies having any connection to Al-Qaeda or ever having been to Afghanistan. Mr. Abdelrazik’s case appears to be yet another “Canadian version” of extraordinary rendition. Eerily similar in many respects to the cases of other men including Maher Arar, Abdullah Almalki, Ahmed El-Maati, and Muayyed Nureddin, Mr. Abdelrazik’s case stands in stark contrast with that of Canadian citizen Brenda Martin who, after being tried and convicted of a criminal offence in Mexico, but where doubts remained about the process, was promptly repatriated to Canada by the Federal Government.

Unable to leave the Canadian embassy for fear over his own personal safety, Mr. Abdelrazik continues to spend his days and nights in the common areas of the embassy having limited ability to contact his estranged family and his lawyers. As a Canadian citizen who has not been convicted or even charged with a crime, Mr. Abdelrazik’s right to enter Canada ought to be absolute. If allegations exist against Mr. Abdelrazik, those allegations should be made clear to him and he should be afforded the opportunity to respond to any such charges here in Canada in a fair, open and transparent judicial process.

After months of promising to assist Mr. Abdelrazik, the current government seems content to raise unnecessary legal hurdles and arbitrarily withdraw citizenship privileges on a case-by-case basis. CAIR-CAN and others call on the Federal Government to reverse this Kafkaesque trend to security and governance and to respect the inalienable rights of Canadian citizens. All Canadian citizens are entitled to due process and Canadians should demand no less.



The cases of three Canadians tortured overseas: Abdullah Almalki, Ahmad Abou-Elmaati and Muayyed Nureddin.

On October 21, 2008, Justice Iacobucci released his 544-page public report. The report stated unequivocally that all three men were tortured while detained in Syria and Egypt, and that the actions of Canadian officials indirectly contributed to their torture. Justice Iacobucci also stated, in the cases of Abou-Elmaati and Nureddin, that Canada contributed to the overseas detention of the men. Equally important, Justice Iacobucci effectively cleared the three men of any wrongdoing or terrorist affiliations. In his news conference on October 21, when asked if the men are innocent, Iacobucci stated they should be considered innocent until proven guilty. In his report he stated that the RCMP and CSIS used inflammatory labels like “imminent threat” or “Islamic extremist” to describe the men when these were unsubstantiated suspicions at best.

The three men are now seeking an apology from the Government of Canada for the involvement of Canadian officials in their detention and torture. They are also seeking financial compensation for the months and years spent in torture cells, the effects of which have left permanent impacts on their lives.

CAIR-CAN continues to fully support their struggle for justice and is working to ensure that what happened to Abdullah Almalki, Ahmed Abou-Elmaati and Muayyed Nureddin does not happen again.



Huseyin Celil, a Canadian Muslim of Uyghur descent, has been sentenced to life imprisonment by the Chinese government. Coming from the historically oppressed Muslim Uyghur minority in China, Huseyin Celil received refugee status in 2001 and eventually earned his citizenship while serving as an Imam in Hamilton, Ontario.

While on a trip to visit relatives in Uzbekistan in 2006, Celil was arrested by Uzbek authorities and deported to China, against protests from the Canadian government. In August 2006 Celil was sentenced to life imprisonment for alleged “terrorist crimes.”

Along with other human right organizations, CAIR-CAN has repeatedly mobilized Canadians to call for his release. In response, and to its credit, the Harper government strongly pressed Chinese officials for his return to Canada. This call has been supported by the Americans.

Despite increased world scrutiny of China’s human rights record leading up to the recent 2008 Olympics held in Beijing, Celil remains imprisoned and Chinese officials refuse to recognize his Canadian citizenship.

CAIR-CAN continues to monitor his case and shed light on developments as they happen and is committed to keeping up the struggle to free Imam Celil.



Five Muslim men, Adil Charkaoui, Mohamed Harkat, Mahmoud Jaballah, Mohammed Mahjoub and Hassan Almrei, are currently named under federal legislation known as security certificates.

As part of Canadian immigration law, security certificates allow for the government to deport permanent residents or refugee claimants based on reasons of security or criminality.

For a number of years security certificates have been critiqued on a number of grounds by academics, human rights organizations and legal groups. They have pointed out that the information used to support a certificate is gathered by intelligence agencies and is kept in secret, not disclosed to the named person or their lawyer.

A judge then determines if intelligence provided in the certificate meets the low threshold of “reasonableness,” a test that is below evidence beyond the shadow of a doubt.

In 2006, as a result of a national debate on security certificates, the Supreme Court decided to consider a constitutional challenge on the legislation by Adil Charkaoui.

With funding provided by the Court Challenges Program, CAIR-CAN, represented by Bakerlaw, contested the legality of the security certificate.

In a landmark victory, the Supreme Court unanimously ruled that the non-disclosure of evidence was unconstitutional in February 2007. The court also said the named person’s right to a fair trial was compromised by not being able to know the case against them.

In February 2008, Parliament passed a law to resurrect security certificates by inserting a Special Advocate into the process, so that the rights of the named person might be protected. However, Special Advocates cannot discuss evidence with the named person to test the intelligence.

Currently, the security certificate faces a second constitutional challenge at the Supreme Court on the grounds that Special Advocates cannot ensure due process. It remains to be seen how the Court will rule but the Muslim men named under security certificates remain in detention or under house arrest and continue to seek their day in open court. CAIR-CAN continues to support all efforts to ensure a fair and open process is afforded to each of them.

On June 2, 2006, 17 Muslim men and boys were arrested and faced criminal charges in an alleged plot to conduct terror attacks in Canada.

A few days later an 18th person was also arrested. Since then the news media and government officials have referred to them as the “Toronto 18.”

As this Annual Review goes to print in October 2008, the original 18 individuals now have differing legal status. Seven men have had their charges stayed or effectively dropped, 10 still remain in front of the courts, and one, a youth at the time of his arrest who cannot be named, was found guilty on September 25, 2008.

The September 2008 guilty verdict came as a surprise to human rights organizations, including CAIR-CAN, as the accused seemed like a peripheral figure in the alleged plot. The youth still has the opportunity to appeal the verdict and this conviction should not prejudice the outcome of the remaining 10 men.

In an effort to ensure fair treatment of the Toronto 18 while in prison, CAIR-CAN met with Ontario MPPs to ensure that allegations of prison mistreatment were investigated. CAIR-CAN has also defended the right of the accused to a fair trial and due process and will continue to do so as the cases unfold.

CAIR-CAN was one of the only advocacy groups to prepare and file a submission against Canada’s Passenger Protect or “No-Fly” List program, launched in the summer of 2007. The thirty-page submission was endorsed by more than 27 organizations from across the country. CAIR-CAN’s in-depth review and critique of the No-Fly List has found that it is fundamentally flawed in no less than nine (9) different levels.

These include the following:

- 1) Lack of authority without being sanctioned by elected representatives
- 2) The questionable need or effectiveness of List
- 3) The violation of liberty rights and lack of due process and fundamental justice
- 4) The violation of privacy rights of individuals
- 5) The lack of independent members on Passenger Protect Advisory Group (PPAG)
- 6) The lack of independent oversight and meaningful appeal channels
- 7) The difficulty of having one’s name removed from the List
- 8) Violations of other Charter rights
- 9) The List’s likely result in racial/religious profiling

The question that must be asked in evaluating this security measure is “How is it, that someone who is too dangerous to fly is innocent enough to walk the streets or take a bus or train?” We have yet to see how the No-Fly List will fare in the months and years ahead. However, it is safe to say the List will have a profound impact on fundamental liberties and human rights.

To download CAIR-CAN’s full submission please visit our website at www.caircan.ca



Throughout 2007 Quebec news media was inundated with reports of seemingly unreasonable requests for accommodation by Quebec’s religious minorities. At first sparked by a distorted report that a Hasidic Jewish synagogue in Montreal asked a YMCA to frost its windows so boys studying would not be distracted by exercising women, dozens more accommodation stories appeared in the media. Pundits made it out to be that there was a tension between traditional Quebec values and the newly landed immigrant and religious communities.

During the reasonable accommodation debate, stories appeared in the press about Azzy Mansour who was ejected from a Laval soccer field; Sondos Abdelatif, who was fired from Bordeau jail; and five tae kwon do players dismissed from a final tournament. All faced intolerance due to the hijab. CAIR-CAN was at the forefront of each of these issues and defended the rights of Quebec Muslims by commenting in the media, contacting government officials and forging links with Quebec civil society.

Provincial politicians in the midst of an election campaign attempted to derive political capital from the debate. In particular, representatives of Action démocratique du Québec (ADQ) rode the populist wave and stated that something had to be done. The Quebec Liberals and the Parti Québécois (PQ) played the role of spectators.

Reasonable Accommodation: A legal concept where an employer or institution has a duty to accommodate when a law or norm is in conflict with rights as outlined in the Canadian and Quebec charters. However, with media reporting focusing on a handful of religious and cultural accommodation questions, the debate has been one of Quebec values and to what extent religious and cultural practices will be accepted.

In order to channel the debate, the Quebec premier and Liberal Party leader Jean Charest struck the Reasonable Accommodation Commission headed by sociologist and historian Gérard Bouchard and philosopher Charles Taylor. The commission received testimony from hundreds of groups and individuals in cities across Quebec. CAIR-CAN testified before the two commissioners and assisted other organizations in the preparation of their briefs.

The Bouchard-Taylor Report released in May 2008, was for the most part, overwhelming positive for Quebec’s religious and ethnic minorities.

Key findings of the Report included:

- 1) Recognizing the existence of Islamophobia and stating that “The way to overcome Islamophobia is to draw closer to Muslims, not to flee them”;
- 2) Refuting the notion that most accommodation requests are made by immigrant communities (the majority of accommodation requests came from Protestant Quebecers);
- 3) Recognizing that immigrants are not a threat to the French language;
- 4) Reasserting the rights of non-Catholics to take their religious holidays off;
- 5) Underlining that Quebec Muslims are not ghettoized;
- 6) Acknowledging that Quebec Muslims are amongst the best educated citizens but also have high unemployment; and,
- 7) Quebec values do not contradict Islamic values.

Protecting the rights and freedoms of Canada’s Muslims requires vigilance and sustained government advocacy. CAIR-CAN continues to be at the forefront of Canadian Muslim organizations in defending civil liberties. CAIR-CAN has, moreover, fulfilled this role by working closely with national organizations across Canada such as Amnesty International, the International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group, the Canadian Arab Federation and the Canadian Council on Refugees.

As a human rights organization, a significant aspect of CAIR-CAN’s work involves fighting discrimination and harassment faced by Canada’s Muslims. We regularly receive complaints from individuals who feel that they have been discriminated against by their employer, landlord, government agency, or other service provider. Our staff provide advice and options to the concerned parties, and occasionally, publicize certain cases.

Human Rights Committee

Many Canadians know about CAIR-CAN through our involvement in high profile cases. Several of these have already been described in this Annual Review. However, a significant amount of the organization’s resources is invested in our little known but substantial Human Rights Committee. This committee is composed of volunteer lawyers and law students who graciously give their time to help Canadian Muslims facing discrimination due to their faith.

Each year over a hundred Muslims across the country call our national headquarters in Ottawa to seek help in human rights disputes. Our Human Rights Committee

makes an assessment of incoming cases to see if the complainant has been discriminated due to their faith. If so, we will either: **1)** provide information and advice to empower the complaint in their effort to seek a resolution, **2)** refer the complainant to a human rights lawyer if the case requires expertise beyond the capacity of our volunteer committee, or **3)** assign the case to our volunteer lawyers and law students.

Once a case is assigned to a member of our Human Rights Committee, we will correspond with the alleged offending body to hear their account of events and to seek a resolution. If a satisfactory agreement cannot be found we then can escalate the case in a number of ways including publicizing the incident in the media, contacting the affected person’s MP or filing a complaint with a human rights commission or oversight body. CAIR-CAN’s Human Rights Committee consists of a team that includes:

- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|------------------|
| > Ali Ahmed | > Nafisah Chowdhury | > Najia Mahmud |
| > Sameer Akhtar | > Jose Correa | > Mueed Peerbhoy |
| > Samreen Beg | > Rahat Godil | > Zeenath Zeath |



It has taken almost six years, but today the case of Omar Khadr is well known to Canadians, with many calling for his repatriation. In 2002, Omar Khadr was captured by the US Marines following a firefight in Afghanistan. Even though he was 15 at the time, qualifying him as a child soldier according to international law, Khadr was labeled by the American government as an “enemy combatant” and detained in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. He has been held in the detention facility since, where he awaits trial.

From a video released earlier this year, it became apparent that CSIS agents visited Guantanamo Bay to interview Khadr. After being subject to the “frequent flyer program,” a form of sleep deprivation to soften detainees for interrogation, Khadr assumed Canadian government officials were there to secure his release and repatriation to Canada. However, CSIS agents visited Guantanamo Bay to subject him to a Canadian round of interrogations.

CAIR-CAN has repeatedly called for the closure of Guantanamo Bay and Omar Khadr’s repatriation to Canada. Last year, CAIR-CAN, with 20 organizational endorsements, twice wrote the government to demand that it take steps to repatriate Khadr. In October 2008, CAIR-CAN also joined the “Bring Omar Home” campaign, a coalition of groups consisting of Amnesty International, the Canadian Arab Federation, the Canadian Islamic Congress, the Canadian Muslim Forum, the Council of Canadians and others.

Currently, Omar Khadr is the only western national being held in the detention

Halima Muse, a Canadian Muslim woman, was employed as a Screener at Pearson’s International Airport for over 5 years and had no problems with her employer until 2007 when she began to wear a longer version of the skirt that was part of her uniform to work.

Screeners were required to wear a shirt, jacket, and pants, or a shirt, jacket and skirt. The skirt’s hemline was a few inches below the knee and some female screeners raised the hemline without penalization.

Ms. Muse was laid off without pay for lengthening her skirt’s hemline and for refusing to wear the uniform pants. She was without work for three months.

Ms. Muse approached CAIR-CAN for assistance and also filed a grievance through her union - Teamsters Local Union 847. CAIR-CAN partnered with the union and filed a joint complaint with the Canadian Human Rights Commission, alleging that Ms. Muse had been the subject of religious discrimination.

Throughout November 2007, Ms. Muse’s story was then shared with the media and extensive coverage appeared in national outlets - print, television and radio.

As a result, Ms. Muse’s complaint was quickly resolved.

She was fully compensated for lost wages, benefits and seniority and the uniform policy was amended to allow women to wear a longer version of the skirt that was part of the uniform.

WORK

Opinion Pieces

Opinion pieces are arguably the most influential and creative way to articulate a perspective on important issues of the day. CAIR-CAN has an unprecedented rate of opinion piece success. In our last review we had published 91 op-eds. Currently that figure stands at 105. CAIR-CAN has published pieces in the The Globe & Mail, the Toronto Star, the Ottawa Citizen, the Montreal Gazette, the Kingston Whig-Standard, the Calgary Herald, the Edmonton Journal, the Winnipeg Free Press, the Windsor Star, the Regina Leader-Post, the Saskatoon Star Phoenix, the Vancouver Sun, the London Free Press, the Charlottetown Guardian, and the Cape Breton Post. For your convenience we have reproduced, in the following pages, five of our recent op-eds for you to read through and see for yourself.

1

Head coverings and Islam: Qur'an requires both women and men to dress modestly

- Winnipeg Free Press, 10/14/07

Shahina Siddiqui, CAIR-CAN Board of Directors

My first memory of a burqa (South Asian-style hijab) is of trying to find my mom's burqa within the heap of black burqas, after a spiritual gathering of women at a cousin's house. I always managed to find it since I could smell the perfume my mom used. The security my cousins and I felt as we played grownups and giggled through the niqabs (face veils) are priceless memories that still comfort me.

In the mid-1960s, on my father's insistence and my

grandmother's reluctant approval, my mother stopped wearing the burqa. While still maintaining her modesty she ventured out in the world of social and official obligations my father had thus far attended alone.

I remember my mother's nervous demeanor and her teary-eyed conversations with her sisters on how guilty and how exposed she felt. My mother eventually adjusted to her new look. In fact, she started to appreciate that she could now fully participate in my father's life.

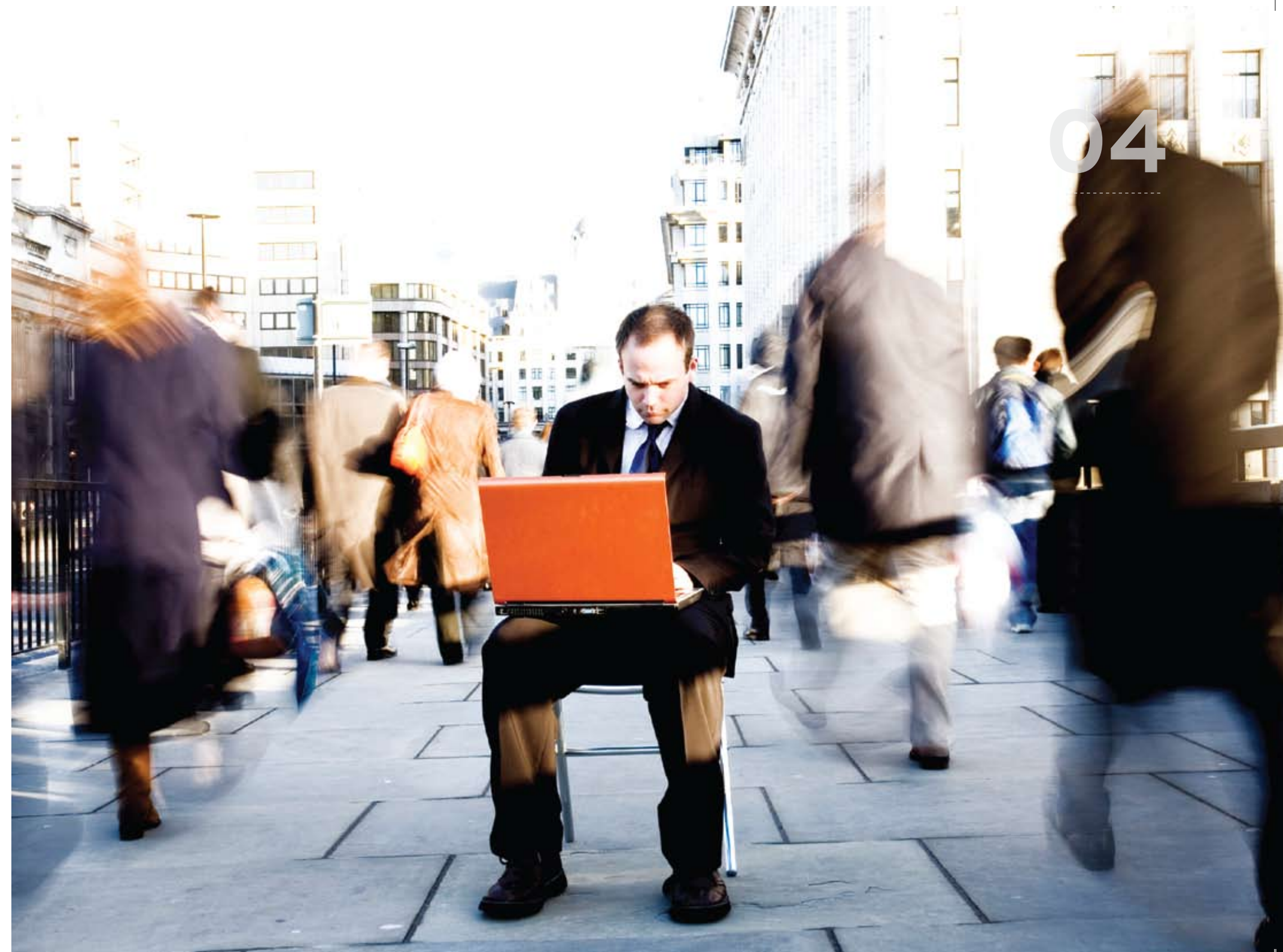
I grew up swearing that I would never observe purdah (segregation of women) as practiced by some in my country of birth. Even as a child I could not fathom that a Merciful Creator would require women to be barred from full participation in society. Like most Muslim women of my generation we had falsely assumed that all the practices and customs in our respective cultures

were sanctioned by Islam. It was only when I came to Canada in the mid-1970s and had the privilege to study my religion and specially the status of women in Shariah that I came to appreciate the concept of modesty as prescribed in the Qur'an and explained by the Prophet Muhammad.

In my decades of speaking on Islam the question that keeps coming up is the women's dress code. Some want to prove that Muslim women are forced to wear it, while others argue that Islam does not stipulate guidelines for how Muslim women should cover when in public. Still there are others who consider hijab a sign of fundamentalism and the Talibanization of Western Muslim women. Some have gone so far as to draw links between veils and radicalization or terrorism.

The majority of scholars agree that the verses of the

04



Qur'an that talk about the dress aspect of modesty offer guidelines and do not point to a specific style or cultural uniform that all Muslim women should wear. Islam is a universal faith for all people and all times. It would therefore make little sense if it had insisted on a particular style of dress.

Modesty is enjoined upon both Muslim men and Muslim women: "Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that will make for greater purity for them: and God is well acquainted with all that they do. And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; and they should not display beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof..." (Qur'an Surah 24: An-Nur: 30 and 31)

The following conclusions can be drawn on the basis of the above-cited verses. This Qur'anic injunction enjoining Muslims to lower their gaze and behave modestly applies to both Muslim men and women. Muslim women are enjoined to dress modestly so as not to display their beauty in public.

When I was struggling to wear the hijab (the modest garb including the headscarf) I knew that I would have to make major life changes not only in my appearance, but in my interaction with others and my whole outlook

on the social aspect of my life. What I was not prepared for was that my choice to follow my faith would meet such resistance from both inside and outside the Muslim community.

Over the years I have heard all kinds of explanations being offered to explain why Muslim women dress modestly.

Muslim women cover themselves in modest clothing in public because the Creator recommends it. God has revealed in the Qur'an (Chapter 59) "O Prophet! Tell your wives and daughters, and the believing women, that they should cast their outer garments over their persons (when in public): So that they are known (as such) and are not accosted."

When asked by one of his female companions what Allah meant by "cover their persons," the Prophet explained it meant to cover the body in loose, non-transparent clothing except for the hands and face.

The fact remains that there is a stated requirement of modesty in dress for Muslim women and men in the Qur'an and in the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad.

The only explanation that satisfies my soul and sits true with my spirit is that I dress according to Islamic stipulations because Allah has asked me to and for no

other reason. This is my submission to my Creator and all the other benefits are a result of this submission and not the reason. For truly if Allah did not require me to wear the hijab headscarf, would I?

Therefore, the choice to adorn the hijab for most North American Muslim women is well-informed and rooted in knowledge. We may differ in the extent of "cover" but we all observe it as a religious right.

So for those who value freedom of choice and respect diversity, please stand up for our rights and know that there are many Canadian Muslim women who would like to wear the hijab but do not because they are afraid that they will be ridiculed.

2

Rushing injustice through the Senate

Toronto Star - 02/13/08

Sameer Zuberi, CAIR-CAN with Maude Barlow, Council of Canadians and Roch Tassé, International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group

With the support of the Liberals, the Harper government is trying to rush a bill through the Senate that would put security certificates back into Canada's anti-

terror lexicon as a legitimate means of apprehending and deporting people suspected of being threats to national security.

The security certificate is a citizenship and immigration process that was deemed unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of Canada on Feb. 23, 2007, because it involves secret hearings and because it denies the suspects the ability to know and to meet the cases against them. At the time of the ruling, five Muslim men had been in detention, or under house arrest, without charge for a combined 26 years.

Considering the gross and numerous errors committed by the RCMP and CSIS now in the public domain, and the new CIA testimony that a full quarter of its Al-Qaeda-related human intelligence has been acquired through torture, it is particularly unfair to deny these five men the ability to fully defend themselves against potentially faulty intelligence conclusions.

The Conservative government's Bill C-3, which passed the House of Commons in a 196-71 vote last Wednesday and is currently being debated by a Senate anti-terrorism committee, re-introduces this perverse security certificate process virtually untouched beyond the inclusion into the hearings of a "special advocate" who would have access to the so-called evidence but who

would still not be allowed to share it with the suspect.

Although the "special advocates" would be able to challenge the intelligence report, they would not be able to cross-examine the source of this intelligence, for instance a detainee in a foreign jail or an agent from another government.

In other words, Bill C-3 sustains a two-tier justice system in Canada - with one set of rights for citizens and another, reduced set of rights for non-citizens. It also, strangely enough, sets up two different standards of proof with the weaker standard applied to what many people believe to be the more serious suspicion of terrorism.

Security certificate cases rely on a much lower standard of proof than do criminal prosecutions. A judge ruling on the case of a non-citizen subject of a security certificate only needs "reasonable grounds to believe" that they represent a risk as opposed to "proof beyond a reasonable doubt" in a criminal case.

Bill C-3 would maintain a process whereby, on intelligence conclusions from CSIS, individuals who are considered a risk to national security are deported to their countries of origin. The government refers to security certificate detainees as being held in prison cells with

three walls because, as they are told, they can leave the country whenever they choose.

It's a despicable approach considering that returning to their home country is not an option for many of these men, who would undoubtedly face torture or death at the hands of their governments.

But you also have to ask: Why, if these people are such threats, would we simply let them go free?

The most important flaw with C-3 and the "special advocate" system is that an identical process has already been tried in the United Kingdom and failed. The Joint Committee on Human Rights of the U.K. House of Commons and House of Lords wrote in its July 2007 report that it was, "not just offensive to the basic principles of adversarial justice in which lawyers are steeped, but it is very much against basic notions of fair play as the lay public would understand them."

And after questioning four senior special advocates, the committee wrote that, "We were left in no doubt by their evidence that proceedings involving special advocates, as currently conducted, fail to afford a 'substantial measure of procedural justice.'"

Not surprisingly, the Canadian Bar Association;

the Quebec Bar Association; the Federation of Law Societies of Canada; the Canadian Council on American-Islamic Relations; Warren Allmand, former Solicitor-General of Canada and spokesperson for the International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group; and Paul Cavalluzzo, former lead counsel of the Maher Arar inquiry, have all said that C-3 is very probably still unconstitutional and could be successfully challenged again at the Supreme Court.

The new security certificate of Bill C-3 is essentially identical to the old, unconstitutional process. It fractures our justice system along the flimsy line of citizenship. It takes questionable CSIS and CIA intelligence, some of it acquired through torture, as absolute truth. And at the end of the day, when it works, by the government's own logic, it frees potential terrorists into the world.

Our senators, at the request of the Conservative and Liberal party leaders, are rushing to pass a law that not only goes against the values and rights that are enshrined in our Charter but against the most basic common sense. They would do well to toss aside their party allegiances and offer Canadians the sober second thought they are supposed to offer when our Parliamentarians lose track of what is best for our country.

3

**Truly Muslim,
truly Canadian**

Winnipeg Free Press - March 29, 2008

Shahina Siddiqui, CAIR-CAN Board of Directors

At a recent invitation to speak on Islam and Muslims, I was confronted with what I thought at the time to be an odd question. A woman in the audience in tone off sheer impatience asked me, "Why can't you just be a Canadian?" A little confused I responded, "I am a Canadian." She retorted, "No you are not, you keep talking about being a Muslim."

Obviously the point was lost that I was invited to talk about Islam and issues around being a Canadian Muslim. So I posed a question of my own: Why can I not be a Canadian and a Muslim, just as there are Christians and Jews who are Canadians? She responded, "Well they don't call themselves Canadian Christians."

The exchange was really going nowhere as we kept talking in circles and I decided to end it with, "If you can tell me what is it that you find un-Canadian about me perhaps I can then respond more clearly." I was frustrated but at the same time bemused that she could not respond.

This woman had obviously articulated what many people think but are too polite to voice. It seems that in our world today we compartmentalize our life in to distinct and unconnected spheres and therefore the infusion of faith-based identity and a national identity is seen as incompatible. I am sure that if I had claimed to be a Canadian secularist it would not have posed a problem.

This forced dichotomy of church and state, while understandable at the governmental, civic and political level, makes little sense in the personal sphere of citizens' lives. My faith-based values direct my life and inform my decisions while my civic responsibilities tamper my faith observance in case of conflict.

Often missed

What is also often missed by old-time Canadians is the fact that they have not clearly articulated for us "new" Canadians what makes one a "real Canadian." If the fact that I pay my taxes, abide by the constitution, obey the law and stand on guard for Canada are not good enough reasons to be seen and accepted as a Canadian, then what is?

I strongly believe that to be a Canadian is to affirm all that I am with all the complexities and nuances it entails. However, if to be a Canadian means (as this

woman had implied) that I should reject who and whatever else I am, then there is surely a serious disconnect, especially since my faith is in total harmony with values enshrined in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. If acceptance will come at the cost of my inner peace and harmony and will be subjected to whatever the whim of the day may be, then I refuse to accept this as a Canadian value. Multiculturalism is more than Folklorama and freedom to practice religion is more than marking religious festivals.

I was recently asked by a reporter in Toronto if it bothers me that there are hyphenated Canadians and my response was if people would stop asking me where I am from, perhaps then we could stop being hyphenated Canadians. And even the question "Where I am from" does not always bother me because it depends in which context it is offered in, and who is doing the asking. For those who wish to assert my "otherness", I factiously respond that I am from Charleswood.

Today the social tide from certain elements in our society is trying to drown out the uniqueness of Canadian Muslims in terms of their values and lifestyle and experiences by forcing them to choose between their country and their faith, while neither is at odds with the other. Unfortunately, this is creating an environment where the loyalty and commitment of

"new" Canadians is suspect in the eyes of many who see diversity as a threat rather than a strength.

"O Human kind! Most certainly, it is God who has Created you all from a single (pair) of a male and a female. And it is We who have made you into Nations and tribes, that ye may recognize each other, and not that ye may despise each other. Verily, the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is one who is the most righteous of you." (Qur'an 49:13)

I obviously cannot change the colour of my skin and I am defiantly not going to renounce my faith (God willing). I am therefore appealing to the readers to help me with this one.

4

**Clear the air on
security inquiries**

The Ottawa Citizen - July 29, 2008

Sameer Zuberi, CAIR-CAN; Alex Neve, Amnesty International; Nehal Bhuta, Human Rights Watch; and, Warren Allmand, International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group

How time passes. For years Canadians have been waiting for answers concerning how four Canadian citizens

were being tortured in the same Syrian prison. Waiting while secrecy shrouded the truth.

How time passes. It has been almost six years since Maher Arar was forced aside at John F. Kennedy Airport, launching his year-long nightmare of torture and injustice, and almost two years since the public inquiry into his case issued its report. A flurry of government action followed, including an apology and compensation for Mr. Arar. But there has been no public reporting about government plans to adopt the bulk of important recommendations from the inquiry such as the need to overhaul the mechanisms for reviewing the RCMP's national security work. Once again, it appears, secrecy prevails.

How time passes. It has been at least four years since the arrests of Canadian citizens Ahmad El-Maati, Abdullah Al Malki and Muayyed Nureddin in Syria, and the beginning of their nightmares of torture and injustice. It has been 18 months since the government announced there would an inquiry into their cases. That inquiry, headed up by former Supreme Court Justice Frank Iacobucci, just concluded its very important work.

Lawyers for the three men, for the government and a handful of interested organizations all made lengthy final submissions at the end of June looking at Canada's approach to counterterrorism, protection against

torture, complicity in human-rights violations and co-operation with security agencies in countries with poor human-rights records. But very few Canadians have any awareness of that, because the government designed an inquiry meant to become one of Canada's best-kept secrets.

So much time passes, yet it is still difficult to get clear information and ensure public accountability concerning the human-rights concerns at the heart of all of these cases. When the government set the terms of reference for the Iacobucci inquiry, a deliberate decision was made to require the majority of the inquiry to be conducted in private. Only in exceptional circumstances was the commissioner allowed to consider holding public sessions -- something he has, for the most part, declined to do. That was the complete opposite of the Arar inquiry, which was presumed to be open to the public and only went behind closed doors when absolutely necessary.

Our groups expressed dismay at the time, highlighting how important it is to ensure that inquiries of this sort have a significant public dimension. These cases, involving disturbing allegations of Canadian complicity in human-rights violations abroad, have troubled Canadians and strained public trust in important institutions such as the RCMP and the CSIS. Secret proceedings do not restore that trust.

Throughout the course of the Iacobucci inquiry, we pressed for some of the process to be opened to the public. However with the exception of two days of hearings the commissioner allowed in early January to consider what legal standards should govern, the inquiry has remained secret.

The commissioner has not required a single witness to testify in public or be cross-examined by lawyers for the three men who are at the heart of the inquiry. Not one page of documentation has been released. This stands in stark contrast to the Arar inquiry.

It has been almost seven years now since the Sept. 11 attacks. Human rights have been under siege worldwide in a multitude of ways during that time. And as each year has passed -- with revelations about Guantanamo Bay, European complicity in extraordinary rendition flights, Mr. Arar's case and more -- it has become increasingly clear that public accountability, not secrecy, must be the hallmark of how justice systems respond to these concerns.

Secrecy takes a terrible toll. It erodes public confidence. It makes it more difficult to monitor human-rights protection. But perhaps most critically, it slowly destroys the psyche of individuals whose reputations and well-being are directly implicated by the proceed-

ings, but who are excluded from participating in any fair or meaningful manner.

This has most certainly been the case for Abdullah Almalki, Ahmad El-Maati and Muayyed Nureddin. Because of the secrecy of the process and rulings made by the commissioner, these three men have not even been able to read the three sets of lengthy written submissions their lawyers have recently prepared on their behalf. They have not been able to see how their own lawyers have defended them and have sought to protect their rights. It has left them feeling isolated, denigrated and in great despair.

Our organizations have joined lawyers for the three men this week in a last-ditch request to the commissioner to hold one final phase of the inquiry during which closing submissions could be made orally and in public. That would offer an opportunity for Canadians to understand the key issues at stake before the commissioner releases his report, expected in September. And it would offer the three men, whose cases triggered the inquiry in the first place, an opportunity to see the process conclude with a degree of seriousness. We are now awaiting the commissioner's ruling on that request.

Meanwhile, the government has an opportunity to demonstrate the sincerity of its commitment to

public accountability in these cases. It could agree to the request for a final public phase of closing submissions at the Iacobucci inquiry.

Time does pass. But it is not too late.

5 **A fresh start for Muslims**
Vancouver Sun - September 11, 2008

Sameer Zuberi, CAIR-CAN Communications and Human Rights Coordinator

For thousands of Canadian families, the first week of September was important. Students across the country went back to school and hit the books.

Many of us remember those good old days. I fondly recall lying in bed the night before the first day back. Day one always felt like a new beginning. Like many of my friends, I would make a resolution to get excellent grades and apply myself throughout the year.

This Sept. 2 I wasn't going back to school, but still, I had many of the same feelings. American President George W. Bush and Secretary of State for Multiculturalism Jason Kenney made statements -- the holy month of

Ramadan was starting. Just like students returning to school, the fasting month presents the chance for a fresh start. During daylight hours Muslims abstain from food, drink and sex. Fasting each day for a lunar month disciplines the mind, body and soul. Modern science tells us we can acquire new qualities and kick old habits through 21 to 29 days of continuous effort. But for observant Muslims, the reason to fast goes beyond empirical research, and rests on conviction and faith. "Oh you who believe, fasting has been prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may learn piety," the Holy Koran says in chapter 2 verse 183. To reach this lofty state, observant Muslims go beyond disciplining their appetites and seek to acquire praiseworthy qualities.

My Grade 4 teacher, Mr. Nanco, taught us that the Prophet Jesus, may peace be upon him, in Matthew, chapter 7 verse 12, is reported to have said, "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you." An equivalent prophetic tradition in Islam states: "None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself." "Brother" being interpreted widely as humankind by the classical Islamic scholar and jurist Imam Nawawi.

In the spirit of these sayings, Ramadan means a whole new experience. On the level of speech Muslims will

seek to fulfil their word, be truthful, and keep away from gossip, a pastime that destroys friendships. For the eyes, a fasting person will refrain from watching violent films or a lustful look. Inwardly, a worshipper will struggle to replace any ill feelings with love, care and mercy. Concretely, in social relationships, this will translate into taking time from a busy lifestyle to strengthen relationships with family, neighbours and friends. Ramadan is often characterized by early-morning family breakfasts and group dinners, called iftars.

Even though Ramadan is a time to become spiritually full, there can be a few exceptions. Take for example the "bellyaching Muslim." This person tends to be an incessant complainer year round, but now his or her hunger only accents this quality. You'll find this person's new line being how hungry they are. Also, once in a blue moon, you'll encounter the "short fuse Muslim." His behaviour is clearly in contrast to the spirit of Islam, and Ramadan.

More commonly though, you will find a co-worker or student who seems to be a little tired. This friend of yours spent an extra hour praying last night (maybe for you), and then woke up at 4 a.m. to have breakfast. Surprisingly, when you speak, they are cheerful and clearly having a great day. This person is very likely trying to inculcate the true colours of Ramadan.

WORK

Letter to the Editor

Although Opinion Editorials or “Op-Eds” are an important and vital part of communicating the perspective of Canadian Muslims, other methods for participating in the public narrative are important and can have an impact. One of these includes writing letters to the editor to communicate your views when you disagree with an opinion or article in order to point out what you feel may be weak arguments or faulty logic. Letters should also be written to express your appreciation for well written and thought provoking articles and to voice your support for the writer and publication. Writing a letter to the editor is also less time consuming since a letter typically involves a maximum of 150 words. We encourage you to use this tool to voice your thoughts and take advantage of our right to freedom of expression.

8 Steps to write a letter to the editor

1 Always always always be polite. Just to repeat: always be polite. It is a fundamental and unchanging guideline. Your goal is to make your point without using language that is crude or vulgar - no matter how good it might feel to “vent your feelings” or how much the person you are addressing may deserve it. Avoiding ad hominem (personally directed) attacks makes your argument the focus of the letter and increases your credibility and likelihood of having your letter printed.

2 Assume that the paper to whom you are writing is open to reasonable debate and discussion around the topic you are addressing.

3 Follow the letter submission guidelines provided by the newspaper - going over the maximum number of words decreases the likelihood of having your letter printed.

4 Time is of the essence. Try to submit your letter within 48 hours of the publication of the article to which you are responding. Any longer and it is highly unlikely the paper will print your letter. Submit your letter to both the print and online version of the paper.

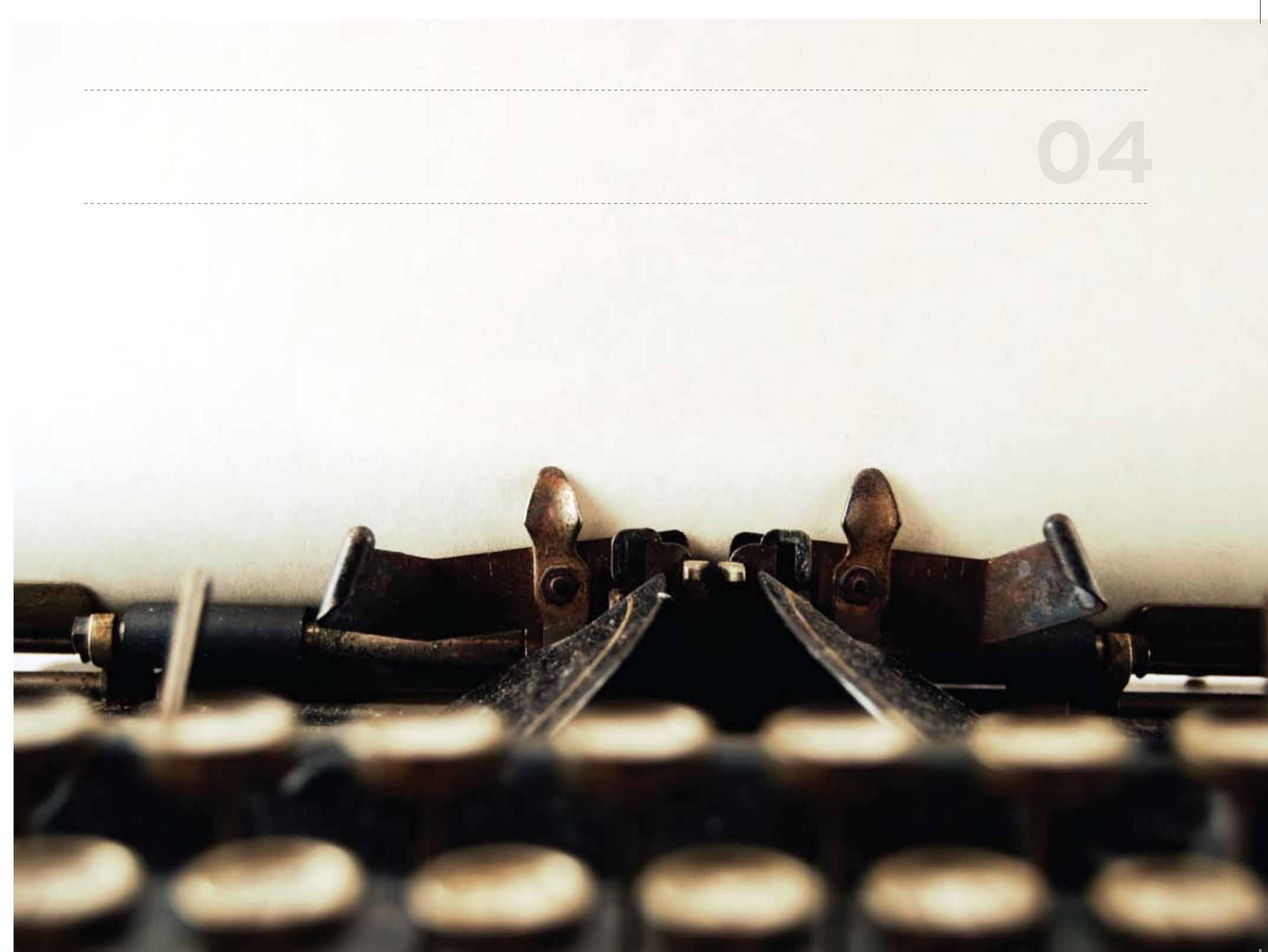
5 Deal with a single topic. Begin by referencing the argument you are addressing, followed by a statement of your own position. Then present your evidence using facts, figures and expert testimony whenever possible. This elevates your letter above the “he said, she said” class. Conclude with a short restatement of your position or a pithy comment.

6 Get someone you trust to proofread your letter to check for spelling and grammatical mistakes. Avoid using clichés or jargon. Wait before sending your letter. After sleeping on it you may spot errors in reasoning or awkward language.

7 Be sure to sign your letter with your full name and include your address and contact details. Most reputable newspapers will not print anonymous letters and they will usually call before printing your letter to verify that you wrote it.

8 Most importantly, write regularly and don’t worry about being perfect. With time and practice your letters will improve and your letter may just help to shift or influence public opinion. Start today!

04



The Ottawa Citizen
November 29, 2003

OTTAWA
CITIZEN

The Toronto Star
Tuesday, August 26, 2008

TORONTO STAR

Muslims are grateful for column’s simple truth
Re: Islam’s simple majestic beauty, Nov. 24

Assalamualaikum - Peace be upon Kelly Egan for his Citizen column. I greet him with the universal greeting of Muslims everywhere. I want to convey my deepest appreciation for his considerate, insightful and well-written article.

Having followed the news more carefully regarding articles about the Muslim faith since the terrible and tragic events of Sept. 11, I can honestly say that I have not seen many which outline the numerous positive benefits which the religion conveys to its believers.

Most have been orientalist in their perspective and written with an agenda that seems to convey that Muslims are an unwanted “fifth column” in Canadian and North American society - at best tolerated and at worst painted with the broad brush strokes of racist diatribe.

I hope that Mr. Egan’s column is the beginning of a reversal of this trend - one that will recognize that only by accepting and even celebrating our diversity can we truly lay claim to our common humanity. Many thanks on behalf of myself, my family and (if I may be so bold) a grateful community.

M. Ihsaan Gardee, Richmond Hill

Interfaith dialogue is alive and well in GTA

It is disheartening that the biasing of information persists in contemporary interfaith discourse. How else to explain the blanket depiction of Muslims as being apathetic or political in the realm of interfaith discussions?

Perhaps the writer is unaware of the plethora of grassroots initiatives seen throughout the GTA in local religious establishments and schools. Or the involvement of the community in one of North America’s largest spiritual advocacy organizations: the Ontario Multifaith Council.

Perhaps the most disappointing aspect of this article was the complete silence regarding the document “A Common Word” - a global call to join together under the common concepts of peace and love. Written by more than 160 Muslim world leaders, workers and scholars, this document has been openly discussed and endorsed by all levels of Christian and Judaic theologians and scholars worldwide, including the Chief Rabbis of Israel.

Selma Djukic, Oakville

The Toronto Star
Wednesday, January 9, 2008

TORONTO STAR

Fact or interpretation?

It is commendable that the Toronto school board has embarked on a discussion about genocide. One can only hope that such discourses with minds hungry for change will lead to greater awareness and a desire to ensure that “never again” is truly never repeated.

However, it is interesting that the regions selected for study are geographically far away, suggesting that perpetrators of genocide are not part of our history but someone else’s. Not including in the curriculum our own involvement in removing a culture - like that of the First Nations in Canada - risks producing a feeling of superiority over the “other,” thereby reducing our effectiveness in eliminating such evil.

Only by examining our own history, in parallel with others, can we create a global understanding of “genocide” and begin to change.

Selma Djukic, Oakville



EVENTS

CAIR-CAN Gala Dinner 2007

CAIR-CAN GALA DINNER, TORONTO, NOVEMBER 24TH, 2007

On November 24, 2007, CAIR-CAN held its first Gala dinner at the Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel. Almost 300 people, from different backgrounds and professions, attended the event in support of the organization's work.

Amongst the evening's attendees were representatives from the Canadian Unitarian Council, Halton Regional Police, and MPP Dr. Shafiq Quaadri who delivered a message on behalf of Premier Dalton McGuinty. Chairman Abdul-Basit Khan gave a brief presentation on the history of the organization, the work for the past 18 months and the need for continued support from the community.

The evening's highlight was the keynote speech delivered by renowned journalist and activist, Naomi Klein, author of *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. Her speech, which discussed highlights from her book, captivated the audience for an hour and received a standing ovation. The dinner was followed by a book signing.



Second Annual CAIR-CAN summer BBQ

As a way to reach out to all of our constituents and to thank them for their kindness, support, and generosity over the years, CAIR-CAN held its second annual free summer Toronto barbeque in July 2008. Well attended by local politicians, religious leaders, and members of different communities, the barbeque was a hit. Special thanks to our generous sponsors Maple Lodge Foods and Crescent Premium Food Inc. With hot dogs, burgers, beverages and several bouncy castles, a good time was had by all. See you again next year!



INDEX



Number of opinion pieces as of October 2008:	109
Worst Publication:	Maclean's and NP, now running neck and neck
Size of benefits package:	Personal Prayer Coverage
Approximate op-ed success ratio:	95% +
Français?	Bonjour, je m'appelle Khalid
Number of press releases from last November 2007 to October 2008:	22 and counting
Newest newly-weds	Congrats to Sameer and Nisa
Staff heritage:	Scottish, Pakistani, Swedish, South African
Best part of job:	No reasonable accommodation required
Worst part of the job:	ABK and Sajid, now running neck and neck
Latest fundraising idea canned:	CAIR-CAN golf tournament; not enough golf balls
Number of lawyers needed to start the barbeque:	Two, plus the starter



Canadian Council on American-Islamic Relations

Your Voice. Your Future.

P.O. Box 13219, Ottawa, ON, K2K 1X4

tel: 1.866.524.0004 fax: 613.254.9810 e-mail: info@caircan.ca

www.caircan.ca