

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO REFUGEE AND IMMIGRATION COALITION

December 7, 1987

Dear Friends:

The Canadian Government is currently pushing through two pieces of legislation dealing with refugees, Bills C-55 and C-84. The Bills are unfair, unjust, put the lives of refugees in danger and treat refugee support workers as criminals. At the University of Toronto three groups, OPIRG (the Ontario Public Interest Research Group), the Women's Centre and SCM (Student Christian Movement) have formed the U of T Refugee and Immigration Coalition in order to take a strong and active position against the Bills. We are members of the national Coalition for a Just Refugee and Immigration Policy.

We are doing important work but we need financial support to be able to continue.

In October, we held a public forum featuring activists Nancy Pocock, Carmencita Hernandez and Lorne Waldman among others. The forum served to foster informed public debate in the midst of government misinformation. Volunteers with the Coalition have participated in workshops on the root causes of refugees and recent developments in Canadian refugee policy, and are now preparing a brief to the Senate committee holding hearings on the Bills.

We are initiating a cross-Canada network of university and college groups, linking with those already active in raising awareness of refugee rights and encouraging others to become active. Our goal is to have Canada-wide endorsement by student groups of a protest statement on the Bills, to be submitted with the brief and to be used to attract media attention.

We also intend to hold a series of educational events next term at U of T: refugees giving testimony, films on the root causes of refugees, immigration lawyers explaining the Bills etc., culminating in a major public forum focussing on Women as Refugees.

We have a committed group of volunteers devoting their time, skills and energy to raising public awareness and pressuring government policy-makers to protect the human rights of refugees. Unfortunately, our wealth of human resources is matched by a lack of financial resources. We need funds to initiate the Canada-wide network and to make our events accessible to students and others wanting to attend.

If you are concerned about Canadian refugee policy but don't have the time to be active yourself, you can make a valuable contribution by making a donation to the U of T Refugee and Immigration Coalition. To make a tax-deductible donation, please make your cheque payable to OPIRG and note on the cheque that it is for U of T Refugee and Immigration Coalition. Send your cheque to OPIRG, 229 College St. #203, Toronto, M5T 1R4 and please include your address so that we can send you the tax receipt.

Thank-you for supporting this important work.

Yours for a fair refugee policy,

Ruth Beck

P.S. We cannot continue our activities without financial support.