



sanctuary
tools for action

inspired by hope, empowered to bring change

And you are to love those who are foreigners,
for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt.

- *Deuteronomy 10:19*

Tools for Challenging Bill C-31

1. Send an Email

We urge you at this time **to** send an email to your MP asking them to repeal this Bill. We have a sample email drafted below that you can use and your local MPs contact information here: <<http://www.parl.gc.ca/Parlinfo/Compilations/HouseOfCommons/MemberByPostalCode.aspx?Menu=HOC>><http://www.parl.gc.ca/Parlinfo/Compilations/HouseOfCommons/MemberByPostalCode.aspx>?

Dear _____,

As a constituent in your riding, I'm writing to you to express my serious concern about the changes to Canada's immigration system which were introduced last year through Bill C-31, also known as *the* 'Protecting Canada's Immigration System Act'. These changes are going to place vulnerable refugee claimants at serious risk, and I urge you to call for the bill's repeal.

The provisions contain very grave flaws that you must consider. A few of the most serious include:

The changes make Canada's refugee determination system unfair to refugees from designated "safe" countries of origin. Its strict timelines do not realistically allow time to obtain legal counsel or prepare for hearings and drastically limits rights of appeal.

The changes create unchecked ministerial powers to designate "safe" countries of origin, eliminating provisions for advice from independent experts. It renders ministerial decisions vulnerable to trade, military and diplomatic considerations. Those "safe" countries so far designated are simply those with which Canada has free trade agreements, making it clear that human rights are not being prioritized.

No account is taken of the situation of ethnic or religious minorities in these "safe" countries. There are already cases of ethnic minority claimants from designated "safe" countries being sent back to countries where they will face violence and possibly death.

The measures to 'curb human smuggling' will actually punish refugees. Certain refugee claimants, including some minors, may be subject to detention without judicial review. (Such detention has already been found by the Supreme Court to be illegal). They will also, even if granted status themselves, be unable to apply for permanent residency or sponsor relatives for five years or more. The designation of "irregular arrival" is, once again, entirely at ministerial discretion and without any consultation or transparency.

I am also appalled at the drastic cuts to the Interim Federal Health (IFH) program in Canada -- a program that provides health coverage to refugees and refugee claimants. The cuts include the elimination of essentially all health coverage for refugee claimants who have come from countries that the Federal Government will deem "safe", regardless of the individual circumstances that compel the individual or family to seek refuge in Canada.

The cuts also deny all refugee claimants and privately-sponsored refugees access to essential medicines and other services. These cuts are impacting the health status of those seeking refuge in Canada and represent a serious threat to everyone's health and safety.

This is only the beginning of the many problems introduced by Bill C-31. The problems are so many, and so systemic, that it is not possible to restore fairness simply by amending the bill. Instead, the provisions of Bill C-31 *should be repealed*, so that work on new and more fair legislation can begin.

I ask you to call for the bill's repeal and to insist that any legislation which replaces it must comply with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and Canada's international obligations.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

2. Sign a Petition

Please also sign a petition to Jason Kenney on behalf of the Pusuma family, who are currently living in sanctuary in a church in Toronto. The Pusuma family fled Hungary 2 years ago and came to Canada as refugees, after Jozsef began to receive death threats because of his human rights work, and was attacked outside his home. This family must be allowed to stay in Canada, and to live and work freely here.

Go here to sign the petition:

<http://www.change.org/en-CA/petitions/minister-jason-kenney-let-the-pusuma-family-stay-in-canada>

3. Visit Your MP

We also encourage you to visit your MP and speak to them in person about the Bill. You can contact us and a member of the Sanctuary Network could attend the meeting with you and your MP. You can contact us at sanctuaryincanada@gmail.com We need to build public support, to protect refugees against the enforcement of Bill C-31.

4. Educate Your Community and Consider Giving Sanctuary

If you are part of a faith-based community and would like us to speak to your congregation/ community about Sanctuary and protecting refugees, please send us an email . We hope to reach as many communities as possible in order to protect refugee claimants, and to build support for the repeal of Bill C-31.

5. Follow and Promote Our Events

Finally, please like our Facebook page to get updates and information on meetings, events, and actions by the Sanctuary Network.

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Canadian-Sanctuary-Network/312219235560600?ref=ts&fref=ts>

Thank you for your interest, please feel free to email us if you have any questions about how to support the work of Sanctuary and refugees in Canada.