

## **Federal Court grants organizations standing in legal challenge of Safe Third Country Agreement**

The Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR), Amnesty International (AI) and the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC) welcomed the order made yesterday by the Federal Court granting the organizations public interest standing, in the legal challenge of the designation of the United States as a safe third country for refugees.

The Court's order came in response to a motion by the federal government asking for the organizations to be removed as parties from the litigation. The Court rejected the motion, concluding that the organizations are well-placed to help advance access to justice for refugee claimants affected by the Safe Third Country Agreement and to assist the Court understand the impact on their rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

In July 2017, the three organizations joined an individual litigant and her children who are asking the Federal Court to strike down the Safe Third Country Agreement and allow her to make a refugee claim in Canada. The litigation is still in the preliminary stages, and the Court has not yet decided whether to grant leave.

Under the Safe Third Country Agreement refugees who present themselves at a Canada-US border post seeking to make a refugee claim in Canada are, with limited exceptions, denied access to the Canadian refugee system and immediately returned to the United States.

### **For further information:**

See background information at [ccrweb.ca/en/safe-third-country](http://ccrweb.ca/en/safe-third-country)

### **Contact:**

Colleen French, CCR Communication and Networking Coordinator, (514) 277-7223, ext. 1, (514) 602-2098 (cell), [media@ccrweb.ca](mailto:media@ccrweb.ca)

Elizabeth Berton-Hunter, Amnesty International Media and External Communications Officer, 416-363-9933 ext. 332, [BBerton-Hunter@amnesty.ca](mailto:BBerton-Hunter@amnesty.ca)

Kaeli Sweigard, CCC Communications Officer, 416-972-9494 ext. 45, [communications@councilofchurches.ca](mailto:communications@councilofchurches.ca)