



The Most Vulnerable

Part 2: Advocacy Groups

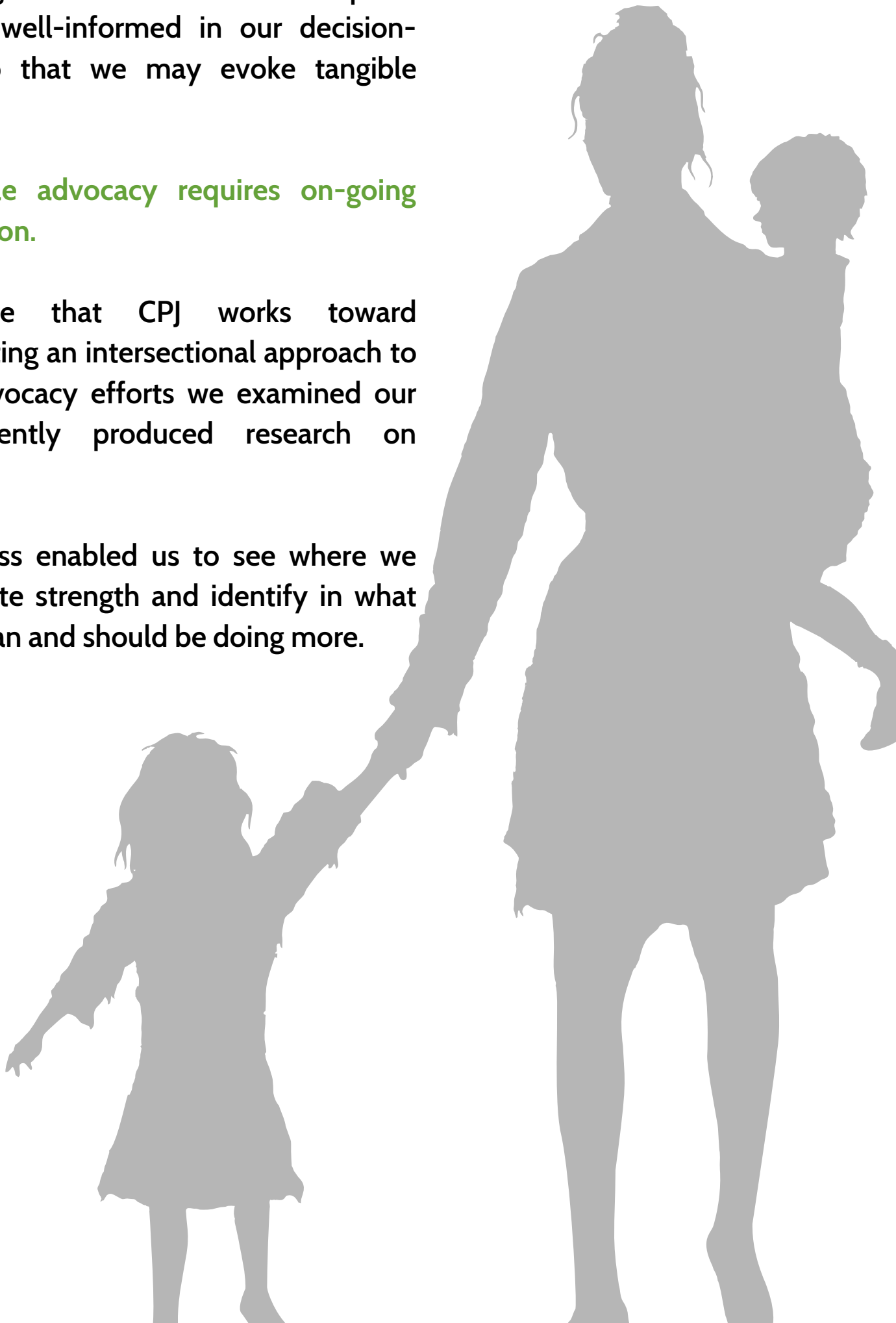
Taking an intersectional approach to
refugee advocacy efforts.

Advocating for the most vulnerable requires us to be well-informed in our decision-making so that we may evoke tangible change.

Responsible advocacy requires on-going introspection.

To ensure that CPJ works toward implementing an intersectional approach to all our advocacy efforts we examined our most recently produced research on refugees.

This process enabled us to see where we demonstrate strength and identify in what areas we can and should be doing more.



CPJ's New Commitment to Conducting Intersectional Refugee Advocacy

In April 2017, CPJ released *A Half Welcome*, a report highlighting some of the top concerns Sponsorship Agreement Holders faced with private sponsorship. The findings indicated that general wait times, wait times for non-Syrians, allocation limits, and travel loans were some of the most pressing issues in resettlement.



A HALF WELCOME

DELAYS, LIMITS, AND INEQUITIES IN CANADIAN REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP

April 2017

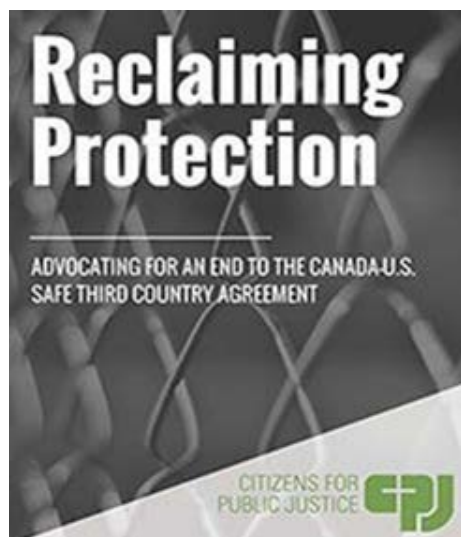
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Conducting an intersectional analysis of this report illustrates that these findings suggest clear issues of inequity. Concerns raised regarding the differentiating wait times between Syrian applications and other applications resulted in a hierarchy of prioritization, without necessarily meaning to. Advocacy in this case, called on government to commit to providing adequate resources to partner organizations for better management of application processing.

Advocacy with an Intersectional Approach:

In 2019, CPJ took a closer look at the issue of travel loans by conducting interviews with refugees currently in the process of repaying their loans. From this sample, those facing the most difficulty included womxn, single-parent families, and people with disabilities. This means that the most vulnerable groups were facing additional burdens. These layered burdens were recognized by taking an intersectional approach to conducting our research.

cont'd...Conducting Intersectional Refugee Advocacy



In 2018, CPJ's report *Reclaiming Protection* also demonstrated systemic inequities. This report called for an end to the Canada-U.S. Safe Third Country Agreement (STCA).

Included were highlights of some specific policy changes made in the United States that rendered it unsafe for refugees. One policy change disqualified gender-based violence as a reason for female-identifying persons to claim asylum. Under an intersectional analysis, this clearly demonstrates that the United States is not a safe place for womxn and girls seeking refuge based on gender persecution and discrimination.

Accompanying this research was a letter template to Immigration Minister Ahmed Hussen, and later to Bill Blair, Minister of Border Security, calling on each of them to recognize the violation of refugee rights in the United States and rescind the STCA.



This served as an opportunity for CPJ members to engage meaningfully with our advocacy efforts.

Advocacy with an Intersectional Approach:

Since the release of *Reclaiming Protection*, changes in leadership and in U.S. immigration have caused increased levels of overt xenophobia, racism, sexism, and religious discrimination. As a result, the United States is no longer a safe place for many refugees. With Canada actively moving to apply the STCA across the entire land border, we are positioning ourselves along the same lines.

From 2016-2018 claimants who crossed between ports of entry were predominantly from Nigeria and Haiti.



The framing of irregular border crossers in Canada, through the “Closing the Loophole in the STCA” narrative, actively uses anti-Blackness as a tool to criminalize those seeking to make a refugee claim.

The lack of discussion surrounding anti-Black racism in conversations about refugees is negligent and only adds to efforts aimed at vilifying certain claimants over others. There is a continual rejection of the oppression Black people face in both the United States and Canada. As such, the added layer of marginalization that they experience based on immigration status is also ignored.



There is a range of discrimination issues connected with the STCA, including religious persecution, gender-based violence and sexual violence.

Religious discrimination poses yet another threat to refugees in the United States.

President Trump’s “Muslim Ban” in 2017 targeted Muslim-majority countries, before issuing a broader travel ban on refugees. Some refugees from Central America are actively facing deportation, with those who identify as LGBTQIA+ being sent back to the gender-based and sexual violence they tried to escape from.

An intersectional analysis of these policies unequivocally demonstrates that the United States is not a safe country for the most vulnerable.

Recommendations

1

Continue to push for inclusion by identifying existing areas where additional support is needed to appropriately serve the most vulnerable. This support can include access to material resources, funding, or network capacity.

2

Ensure that advocacy campaigns are constructed in a manner that centres the diverse lived experiences of refugees.

Refugees and other vulnerable populations are not voiceless. Advocacy must steer away from the notion of “Giving Voices to the Voiceless” and move towards a mentality of “Nothing About Us, Without Us.”

This can be done by actively including refugees in research and work through consultation, organizational partnerships, and most efficiently, through staff hiring of those who have been refugees themselves.

Interested in more advocacy tools?
Check out our "Advocacy Toolkit" at:
www.cpj.ca/cpjs-advocacy-toolkit

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Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ) is a national organization of members inspired by faith to act for justice in Canadian public policy. CPJ shapes key public policy debates through research and analysis, publishing, and public dialogue. We encourage citizens, leaders in society, and governments to support policies and practices which reflect God's call for love, justice, and the flourishing of creation.

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Read the full report "**The Most Vulnerable**"
Available at: cpj.ca/most-vulnerable

Interested in having **CPJ** speak to your community?
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