



24 July 2020

The Honourable Bill Blair, M.P.
Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness
365 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 1L1

Email: ps.ministerofpublicsafety-ministredelasecuritepublique.sp@canada.ca; Bill.Blair@parl.gc.ca

Re: The US – Canada Safe Third Country Agreement

Dear Minister,

In May 2017 the Governing Board of The Canadian Council of Churches (CCC) decided to support the effort to challenge the US – Canada Safe Third Country Agreement (STCA) under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The CCC decided to join the court challenge because of the experiences of churches as refugee sponsors and a long history of support for including all people in the basic provisions to respect human rights in Canada.

We welcome the ruling because it could end the tragic, life-threatening experiences of refugee claimants which are familiar to many member churches and have been documented in the court case. We note that the testimony provided established gross disproportionality and is sufficient to “shock the conscience”.

In light of the documented reality faced by refugee claimants, we ask the Canadian government to carefully consider its interim actions and decision to comply with the ruling or not.

Today I am writing to ask:

1. Because of the overwhelming facts of the case, will the Government of Canada immediately stop sending people back to the United States under the STCA whether an appeal is deemed necessary for legal purposes or not?
2. Will you now accept this ruling and take the necessary steps to change federal policies that send people back to the United States under the STCA and so condemn them to violations of their right to liberty and security of the person?

3. Further, will you commit to not appeal the court's decision to strike down the agreement?

The Canadian Council of Churches is committed to the principles of equality and access to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms for all people in Canada. We urge you to take action accordingly to ensure that this is achieved.

The Canadian Council of Churches (CCC) is a broad and inclusive ecumenical body, now representing 26 member churches including Anglican; Eastern and Roman Catholic; Evangelical; Free Church; Eastern and Oriental Orthodox; and Historic Protestant traditions. Together these member churches include 13,500 worshipping communities in every province and territory and comprise 85% of the Christians across Canada. The Canadian Council of Churches was founded in 1944.

We would be pleased to meet with you about this issue in person or by video conference call.

Know that the members of The Canadian Council of Churches hold you and all your colleagues in the Government of Canada in prayer, that you will ever pursue the high call of justice for all.

We look forward to hearing from you.



Peter Noteboom
General Secretary

cc: Pierre Paul-Hus, MP, Conservative Party of Canada critic for Public Safety, Border Security and Emergency Preparedness

Jack Harris, MP, New Democratic Party critic for Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness

Kristina Michaud, MP, Bloc Québécois critic for Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness

Elizabeth May, MP, Leader of the Green Party of Canada