

# - EDITORIAL -

Written By: *Geetha Thurairajah* - President, Journalists for Human Rights Waterloo

In recent years, Canada's reputation as a leader in human rights advocacy has come under scrutiny, with its resistance to ratify the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People and the marginalization of at-risk communities in Vancouver due to the 2010 Winter Olympics.(News Reel, pg. 13-14)

It is widely contested that immigration policy has not developed in stride with the numbers or needs of immigrants flowing into the country in refuge or seeking better opportunities. Immigrants today are faced with some of the same devastating hurdles that existed decades ago.

Such is the case of seasonal migrant workers who surge into Canada every year to provide manual labour to construction, factory, and farming industries across the country (Silent Farmers, pg. 10-11). Their economic contribution to Canada is significant and yet their human rights as Canadian employees are scarce. In many cases workers are denied their Employment Insurance contributions, paid less than minimum wage and refused affordable health-care; a clear refusal by the current government to mend under-developed working conditions in a country that has a strict set principles and values for its own citizens defined by the Employment Standards Act.

Stories of immigrants landing in Canada from the "exotic" are treated lightly, their delicious foods, garments and women are introduced as part of the Canadian commodity-scape (Submissive and Exotic, pg. 8-9); an adopted institutional ignorance that disregards the deeper pressing issues that many immigrants are forced to combat in hopes of securing a perceived higher quality of life..

Recently, many of us watched and heard stories of Canadian citizens being denied re-entrance into Canada through the consequential practice of racial profiling (Forced Exile, pg.4). Apart from just hearing such narratives concerning human rights violations, many of us have engaged with person(s) of immigrant status who have survived the effects of a deceiving immigration process (Overcoming Barriers, pg.12); coming to Canada to offer their professional services and facing a harsh reality of life that threatens those who may not recognize English as their primary language, or culturally define themselves by a strict set of North American ethos (Making a Difference?, pg.5).

All of these human rights violations concerning immigration to Canada spark the question of how legal status is actualized in Canada and should be readdressed by questioning the status of all non-Indigenous persons. (Organizing Settlers, pg.6-7)

As journalists and human rights activists, we have composed this journal addressing immigration rights with the hope of mobilizing community members to recognize the human rights abuses that they themselves and others may encounter on a daily basis.

The current structure of JHR Laurier Waterloo was established in 2008 with the goal of spreading awareness throughout the student population and community regarding rights abuses occurring around the world and in our own backyards.

The Contributions of LSPIRG made this issue possible: Through community collaboration, research, and education, LSPIRG provides opportunities for its members to be agents of change. [www.lspirg.ca](http://www.lspirg.ca)  
Additional Thanks to WLU Student Publications.

Editors: Geetha Thurairajah, Dan Kellar

Contributors: Graham Engel, Winnie Small, Geetha Thurairajah, Luke Stewart, Mara Silvestri, Daniel Chen, Dan Kellar, Sterling Stutz, anonymous photographers, Cover Image: Kathy Page

Layout and Design: Dan Kellar, Veronika Zaretski, Geetha Thurairajah, Emily Slofstra

Contact: email - [laurier.waterloo.jhr@gmail.com](mailto:laurier.waterloo.jhr@gmail.com) website - [jhr.beingthechange.ca](http://jhr.beingthechange.ca)