

# KAIROS and Migrant Workers Issues in Canada

Global Ecumenical Network on Migration  
November 4 – 11, 2012  
Manila, Philippines

Alfredo Barahona  
Program Coordinator  
Migrant and Indigenous Rights  
KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives



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## Canadians less enthusiastic about immigrants, survey finds

THE CANADIAN PRESS OCTOBER 30, 2012

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Immigration Minister Jason Kenney is preparing to release government targets for the number of immigrants...

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## One side of the story...

"The rate of unemployment and underemployment amongst immigrants is too high, ... We're bringing a lot of newcomers here only to face unemployment or underemployment in an economy with skills shortages which doesn't make much sense." Immigration Minister Jason Kenney.

Since 2008, the Conservatives have carried out major reforms to immigration policy, eradicating backlogs, overhauling the federal skilled worker program and changing the refugee system, among others.

## The other side of the story...

"The government must promote positive newcomer contributions and avoid discourse that feeds misconceptions and prejudice against immigrants and refugees."  
Canadian Council for Refugees



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## Ottawa makes more room in immigration quota for fast-growing class

**STEVEN CHASE**

OTTAWA — The Globe and Mail

Published Tuesday, Oct. 30 2012, 10:00 PM EDT

Last updated Wednesday, Oct. 31 2012, 2:51 PM EDT

### Comments

218 
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Canada will hold immigration levels steady for the seventh year in a row in 2013, but will make more room within its quota for what's quickly become its fastest-growing category of newcomers.

The Canadian Experience Class, launched only a few years ago, represents the future of Canada's immigration system under the Harper government – where Ottawa places a hard-nosed emphasis on attracting the best and brightest skilled workers.

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The Canadian Experience Class, launched only a few years ago, represents the future of Canada's immigration system under the Harper government – where Ottawa places a hard-nosed emphasis on attracting the best and brightest skilled workers.

Canada plans to admit from 240,000 to 265,000 new permanent residents in 2013 – the same annual target range it's set for immigration since 2007.

The Globe and Mail - Published Tuesday, Oct. 30 2012



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# Kenney set to fast-track foreign students for immigration

Immigration minister wants qualified newcomers to integrate quickly

CBC News Posted: Oct 31, 2012 9:04 AM ET | Last Updated: Oct 31, 2012 3:12 PM ET 318



2013 immigration targets 22:11

Immigration Minister Jason Kenney announced Wednesday that he wants

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Flanked by young foreign students from Carleton and the University of Ottawa, and fronted by a large sign that said "Faster immigration," Kenney said he is expanding the number of admissions under the Canadian Experience Class,

which aims to recruit and retain international students who have studied and graduated in Canada as well as temporary foreign workers who speak one of Canada's official languages and already have Canadian work experience.

Up to 10,000 permanent residents will be accepted next year in the Canada Experience Class, up from 7,000 in 2012 and 2,500 in 2009.

I certainly don't mind immigration, I just wish that immigration Canada was a little more picky about who they let in.

Ideally it would restrict immigration only to people who actually have something to offer this country, and want to come here to become "Canadian",

and weed out those who simply come here to take advantage of our welfare and healthcare systems which seems to happen an awful lot.

More than 250,000 migrant workers come to Canada every year



In 2011 the number increased to over 300,000

# Canada

## Political Regions





**Migrant  
farm  
workers  
need  
public  
health  
care.**

The health and safety of these workers are amongst many concerns that must be addressed

There are no appropriate systems in place to monitor the working and living conditions of these workers



# Hampstead



In February, 10 migrant workers travelling in a 15 passenger vehicle died in a horrific traffic accident in Ontario

The Canadian driver of the truck they collided with also died.

Three workers survived the accident

Having a “temporary” migration status is a huge barrier to accessing support services such as long term disability , health coverage and workers compensation.

### Ontario crash survivor had just ended his first shift



The last thing Juan Ariza remembers was shielding himself with his hands and screaming, “Stop! Stop!”

Moments earlier, the Peruvian had finished his first shift at his new job at a chicken farm in Canada, climbing into a passenger van with 12 of his new-found friends. The migrant workers had discussed marking the moment by heading out for a celebration.

CANADA PRESS/CPA. Police and emergency crews investigate a multiple fatality motor vehicle accident near Homestead, Ont., Feb. 6, 2012. Police say 12 people died in the crash.  
Chris Chelley/The Canadian Press/Chris Chelley/The Canadian Press

They had barely made it past the stop sign at the first intersection when Mr. Ariza looked out the window. He recalls seeing a large truck bearing down on the side of the van, according to friends who have spoken with him.

Less than 48 hours later, Mr. Ariza was lying in a hospital bed Wednesday, marking his 36th birthday after surviving one of the worst car crashes in Ontario's history. Well-wishers from the local Latino community, many of whom he had never met before, told him that 10 of his co-workers did not survive the crash. Nor did the truck driver who collided with them.

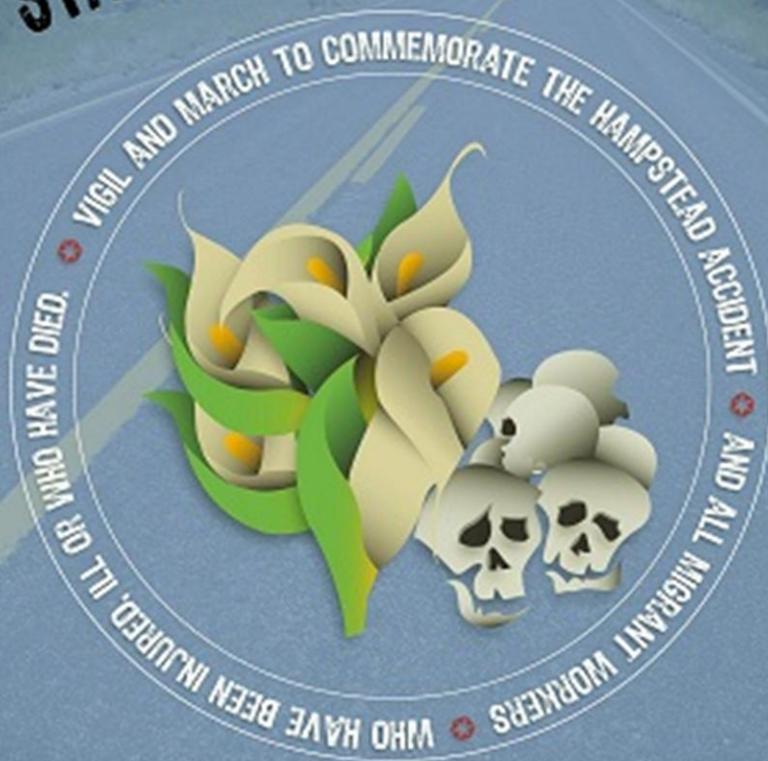
Ryerson Centre for Immigration and Settlement



**Lunch & Learn**  
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# REMEMBERING THE DEAD STANDING UP FOR THE LIVING



Sunday July 22nd

The bus & cars headed to the site will be departing from The Working Centre at 11:00 AM, and coming back to it for a reception at 2:00 PM.

58 Queen St. S. Kitchener, Ontario

For details: [j4mw.on@gmail.com](mailto:j4mw.on@gmail.com)

[www.justicia4migrantworkers.org](http://www.justicia4migrantworkers.org)



In July community, church, labour, human rights defenders and advocates gathered at the site of the accident to:

Celebrate the lives of those who died

Call on federal and provincial governments to ensure the safety of migrant workers by changing and enforcing policies and legislation





More than 20,000 agricultural migrants workers come to Ontario every year

Community organizations concerned about changes to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program - Mozilla Firefox

KAIROS joins migrant, labour and co... x Hill Dispatches: Lower migrant pay a... x Unions, NGOs say new migrant work... x +

Community rights/migrant-justice/kairos-joins-migrant-labour-and-community-organizations-concerned-about-changes-to-the-temporary-foreign-worker-prog

Suggested Sites Web Slice Gallery

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**KAIROS joins migrant, labour and community organizations concerned about changes to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program**

May 16, 2012 By KAIROS

KAIROS joined migrant, labour and community organizations at a press conference in Ottawa on May 15 to express concerns about the recently announced changes to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP). The changes will allow employers to pay migrant workers up to 15% less than the average wage and will fast track employer applications to bring migrant workers. We are concerned with the shifts in Canadian immigration policy which increasingly favour temporary migration. KAIROS supports an immigration model that contributes to Canada's nation-building through permanent residency and that treats migrants with fairness and equity.

Migrant Workers: Harvesting Justice

For more details please read:  
loads/2011/09/DR-HRT-migrants.jpg

In April 2012, Ottawa announced changes to the TFWP in a large omnibus budget bill pushed and rushed through Parliament

One of the most contested issues is allowing employers to pay temporary foreign workers up to 15 % than the average wage

tougher EI rules - pushing down wages | rabble.ca - Mozilla Firefox

KAIROS joins migrant, labour and co... x Hill Dispatches: Lower migrant pay a... x Unions, NGOs say new migrant work... x +

/karl-nerenberg/2012/05/hill-dispatches-lower-migrant-pay-and-tougher-ei-rules-pushing

Suggested Sites Web Slice Gallery

December (7)  
November (11)  
October (9)  
September (4)

**Hill Dispatches: Lower migrant pay and tougher EI rules - pushing down wages**

BY KARL NERENBERG | MAY 17, 2012

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The government's plans for Canadian workers, for Employment Insurance (EI) and for the tens of thousands of migrant workers who come here annually are murky and unclear.

Commenting on changes in EI announced, but not specified, in the Budget Omnibus Bill the Minister of Finance says "any job is a good job."

The Minister of Human Resources has a somewhat different story. She says that unemployed Canadians will only be required to take jobs for which they are qualified and in their own regions.

The Minister of Finance goes to Committee and, with a contemptuous pout, tells his colleagues that we'll all know what the EI rules are when the regulations are published. That will only be after Parliament passes the Budget Bill.

**TOP PICKS ON RABBLE**

The poor record of self-regulation by Canadian mining companies in the Congo | *Gerry Caplan*

Youth plan 'Toxic trick or treat' march on Parliament Hill today | *rabble staff*

Made on Haida Gwaii: Filmmaker and youth worker Kiefer Collison | *April Diamond Duthiel*

The big picture of Harper's assault on the Constitution | *Elizabeth May*

Briarpatch's second annual **CREATIVE WRITING CONTEST**

With award-winning writers Zoe Whittall and Carmen Amireau as our judges and \$750 in cash prizes to give away, this opportunity is not to be missed!

Deadline for entries is December 1, 2012

“Canada’s laws don’t support wage discrimination based on where you come from. Many people recognize the majority of migrant workers are people of colour and oppose wage discrimination based on race.”



Yasmeen Khan, with MIGRANTE Canada

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the Canadian Labour Congress website. The page features a navigation menu with links for Home, Careers, Regional Offices, Contact Us, and Français. A search bar is present. The main content area displays a news article with the following details:

- Article Title:** Unions, NGOs say new migrant worker program unfair: Employers can pay migrant workers less
- Posted:** Tuesday, 15 May 2012
- Engagement:** 16 Tweets, 42 Likes
- Image:** A photograph of Hassan Yussuff, Secretary-Treasurer of the Canadian Labour Congress, speaking at a news conference.
- Text:** "OTTAWA – A group of unions and non-government organizations say that recently announced changes to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) permitting employers to pay migrant workers up to 15% less and fast tracking employer applications for these workers is unfair and misguided." "Allowing employers faster access to migrant workers and paying them less for their labour sends a message that this government believes migrant workers are not equal," says Hassan Yussuff, Secretary-Treasurer of the Canadian Labour Congress. He was speaking at an Ottawa news conference attended by unions and NGOs.
- Additional Text:** Ottawa has announced changes, effective immediately, to the TFWP and has included those changes in a large omnibus budget bill that is being pushed through Parliament.
- Quote:** "Canada's laws don't support wage discrimination based on where you come from," says Yasmeen Khan, with Migrante Canada. "Many people recognize the majority of migrant workers are people of colour and oppose wage discrimination based on race."

“Rather than further skewing Canada’s Temporary Foreign Worker Program to unfairly serve employers’ interests, what is needed are stronger compliance, monitoring and enforcement measures to protect migrant workers’ rights.”

Naveen Mehta, General Counsel and Director of Human Rights, Equity and Diversity with the United Food and Commercial Workers

A KAIROS Op-Ed was published July 17, 2012

KAIROS in solidarity with migrant workers is opposed to the changes and the way they were introduced

Implement effective systems to monitor and ensure that labour and human rights of migrant workers are respected

Establish a path to permanent residence and citizenship for all workers

Ratify the UN International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families

The screenshot shows the homepage of thestar.com on October 29, 2012. The main article is titled "Migrant workers deserve to be treated with fairness and equity" and was published on Tuesday, July 17, 2012. The article includes a photograph of a group of migrant workers, including men and women, gathered at a local park near St. Michael's Church in Leamington, Ontario, on May 27, 2012. The photo shows many workers wearing backpacks and some holding balloons. The website's navigation bar includes sections for Home, News, GTA, Opinion, Business, Sports, Entertainment, Life, Travel, Columns, Blogs, More, Autos, Careers, Classifieds, Deaths, and Rentals. The "Opinion" section is currently selected. Other visible elements include a weather forecast for 4°C, a search bar, and various advertisements, including one for Wind Mobile's "\$0" smartphone business plan.

This September, 2012 report offers a number of recommendations to improve the working and living conditions of migrant workers across Canada

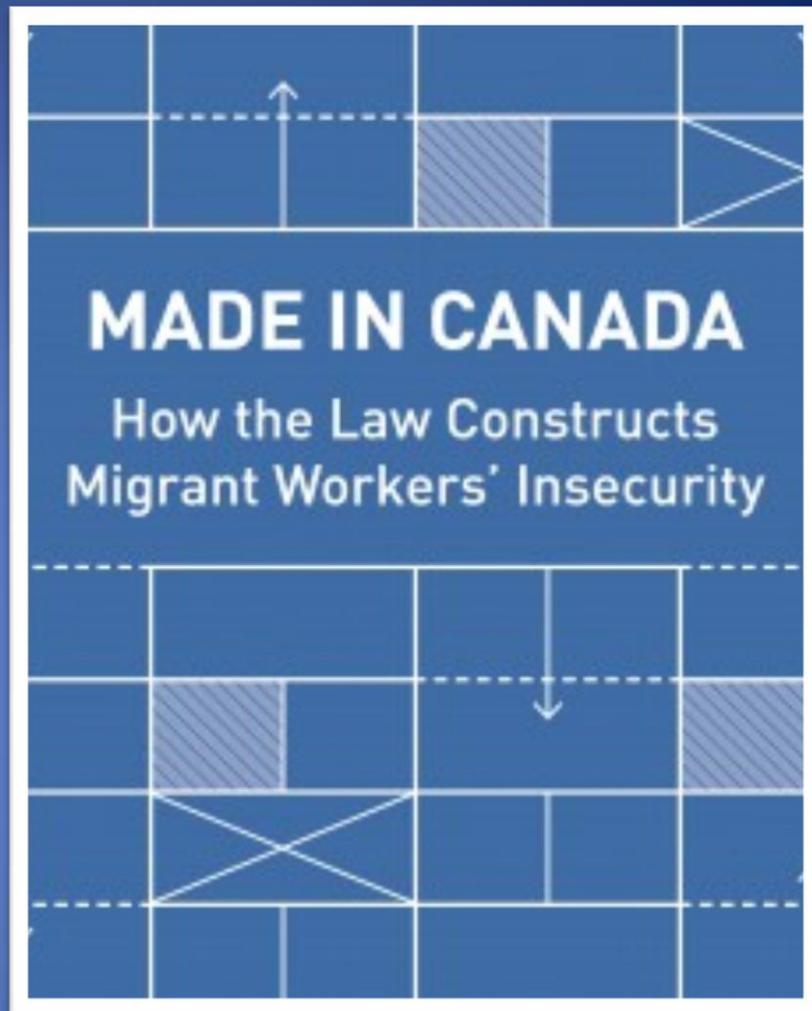
The number of temporary foreign workers in Canada has more than tripled in the past decade.

Low-wage migrant workers are brought into Canada on terms and conditions that leave them open to exploitation and that make it difficult to enforce their basic human rights.

The Metcalf foundation argues that these migrant workers are frequently underpaid, overworked, and denied fundamental rights, including rights to decent housing, health care and safe working conditions.

“Since migrant workers don’t enjoy the same legal status and protections as permanent residents, they are at higher risk of abuse by employers who take advantage of their vulnerability,” says the report’s author Fay Faraday, Metcalf Innovation Fellow, and respected constitutional, labour, and human rights lawyer.

<http://metcalffoundation.com/publications-resources/view/made-in-canada/>



# Shaping the Future: Canada's Rapidly Changing Immigration policies



Maytree Foundation Report, released October 4, 2012

Over the past four years the Canadian Government has introduced sweeping changes to Canada's immigration policies

There is a real short term focus to use immigration policy for immediate labour market purposes as opposed to for nation building

The screenshot shows the homepage of The Globe and Mail website. The main article is titled "Federal policies risk alienating potential immigrants: study" by Wency Leung. The article text reads: "Over the past four years, the federal government has introduced sweeping changes to Canada's immigration policy with unprecedented speed - and with serious consequences for the country's reputation, economy and nation-building goals, according to the Toronto think tank Maytree. In a report released on Thursday entitled 'Shaping the future: Canada's rapidly changing immigration policies,' authors Naomi Alboim and Karen Cohl warn that the rapid reforms could threaten how potential immigrants perceive the country, deterring the people who are needed the most." The page also features a "Comments" section with 56 comments, a "GLOBE UNLIMITED" sidebar, and a "TODAY'S MUST READS" section with several news items.

This block shows a blurred, semi-transparent version of the same website screenshot, appearing as a background or secondary view of the content above.

# MIGRANTE Canada Congress

There are 600,000 Philippine migrant workers in Canada

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## THE END OF IMMIGRATION?

A FILM BY

MARIE BOTI & MALCOLM GUY

**OCTOBER 29, 2012 | 7:00 PM**

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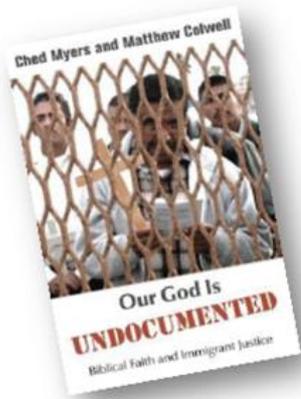
KAIROS met with Jose Sicajau of the Guatemalan Association United for Our Rights. Jose was barred from the Temporary Foreign Worker Program after supporting a co-worker he witnessed being verbally and physically abused.



Jose noted that the TFWP is being used to justify exclusion and discrimination. The Guatemalan Association United for Our Rights is advocating for the International Convention to Protect the Rights of Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.

# Our God Is **UNDOCUMENTED**

Biblical Activist Ched Myers  
In Dialogue with  
Migrant Activist Maru Maesa



*Maru and the gathered community will highlight current migrant and refugee issues in the Canadian context. Ched will engage these issues from his book, Our God is Undocumented, co-written with Matthew Colwell.*

**Wednesday, October 24, 2012**  
**6:30 Gathering**  
**7:00-9:00 Program**

Church of the Holy Trinity  
Trinity Square (behind the Eaton Centre)  
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KAIROS



The Student  
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Movement



The 2012 resource, is inspired by Mary and Joseph's search for shelter and based on Las Posadas, a Central American and Mexican tradition in which actors playing Mary and Joseph walk through town searching for shelter

Today, that search for shelter is a reality for many in our world, whether the shelter people seek is fair wages, land rights, or clean water.

A justice focus for each Sunday:

- 1 - Climate justice;
- 2 - Women of Courage;
- 3 - Migrant justice;
- 4 - Peace in Bethlehem



KAIROS:  
Canadian Ecumenical  
Justice Initiatives  
[www.kairoscanada.org/advent](http://www.kairoscanada.org/advent)

# Seeking Shelter:

ADVENT 2012 ECUMENICAL RESOURCE FOR JUSTICE SEEKERS



2013 -2015

Continue education, advocacy and networking work locally, regionally and internationally

Increase the links and solidarity between migrant communities and Indigenous peoples

Increase solidarity and cooperation among women human rights defenders in Canada and the global south and migrant women in Canada

Area of Focus

1. Education
2. Advocacy
3. Networking

## Churches Witnessing with Migrants

To create space where churches and migrants discuss issues of mission, justice, public witness and the impact of temporary migration on both the host and migrant workers communities.



KAIROS will continue working to highlight national and international Migrant Justice issues within member churches and the Canadian public