



# CANADA'S PERIODICAL ON REFUGEES REFUGE

Vol. 19 • No. 1

July 2000

## RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION AND BEYOND Religious Freedom On The Run

Kathryn Graham

According to Amnesty International "a new refugee is created every 21 seconds." Many of the world's 15 million asylum seekers flee their homes and countries to escape persecution because of their religious beliefs and practices. "It is estimated that over 75% of the world's population claim adherence to a religion and yet, 2.6 billion people are denied freedom of religion including one million religious prisoners."<sup>1</sup> These facts alone should draw particular attention to 'religious

freedom' as a human rights issue in need of greater public address.

Often, the question of 'religious persecution' is complex in terms of making a significant distinction between persons persecuted based on religion and other types of asylum seekers since the violence may be intertwined with issues of ethnicity race, nationality, political views and/or membership in a specific social group. Nonetheless, it is essential that human rights organizations

and foreign affairs departments not discriminate between groups of refugees based on their religious beliefs. The focus must be on confronting the problem itself. By campaigning against religious rights violations, issuing reports of abuse inflicted on explicit individuals and/or groups and helping to ensure protection for such displaced and vulnerable persons, the democratic mandate of moral and social responsibility is being fulfilled.

### CONTENTS

<b>Religious Persecution and Beyond: Religious Freedom On The Run</b> Kathryn Graham.....	1
<b>A Psychotherapist's Perspective on Victims of Religious Persecution:</b>	
<b>An Interview with Dr. Fern Waterman</b> Kathryn Graham.....	3
<b>The Bahá'ís Of Iran</b> Margaret Bremner.....	6
<b>The Importance Of Prioritizing The Issue of Religious Freedom</b> Elizabeth Batha.....	11
<b>Religious Persecution and Mass Displacements</b> Pedro C. Moreno.....	13
<b>Case Study: Mr. Gabriel Marshal Nylowa Yak</b> James A. Rice.....	15
<b>Restitution of Property and Religious Discrimination in Eastern Europe</b>	
<i>Maria Riegger</i> .....	20
<b>Security Issues and Refugees: Dilemmas, Crises, and Debates</b> Frances T. Pilch .....	25
<b>Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Britain: U.K. Immigration &amp; Asylum Act, 1999</b>	
<i>Anthony H. Richmond</i> .....	35

