

Canadian groups at United Nations conference express dismay with Canada's refusal to participate.

By [Global Research](#)

Global Research, April 22, 2009

Marketwire 22 April 2009

Region: [Canada](#)

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GENEVA, SWITZERLAND-(Marketwire - April 22, 2009) - The United Nations Durban Review Conference, taking place in Geneva April 20-24, is a follow-up to the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance held in Durban, South Africa in 2001.

Canada was a participant and a signatory to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action that came out of the 2001 Conference. However, Canada is one of only three countries not participating in the 2009 Durban Review Conference (DRC).

Racism remains a harsh everyday reality for Aboriginal and racialized communities in Canada who suffer disproportionate levels of poverty, social exclusion, access to decent employment, and social services such as education, housing and health care. Too many aboriginal peoples must struggle for the most basic of human and environmental rights.

The DRC is intended to assess United Nations member nations' progress to changing this long standing pattern of inequity. Member nations are drafting critical text that will guide them in their national task to eliminate racism and other forms of intolerance and discrimination. Critical issues include the impact of slavery, the rights of indigenous people, the impact of security and anti-terrorism legislation, migrants' rights, human trafficking and economic and social equality.

A group of Canadians are present and working to influence the text, and work with global allies.

"African-Canadians continue to struggle against colour-coded economic disparity, criminalization and racial profiling" said Margaret Parsons of the African Legal Clinic who is attending the UN Conference.

After 9/11, Arabs and Muslims became the main target for hate crimes, racial and religious profiling by overzealous security legislation.

"Arab Canadians like Mahar Arar and Abousfian Abdelrazik have been marooned in their birth countries by our government. They have been subjected to torture and horrific human rights violations because of flawed anti-terrorism measures and willful political negligence", added Mohamed Boudjenane from the Canadian Arab Federation.

Karl Flecker the Anti-Racism and Human Rights Director for the Canadian Labour Congress said "The Canadian government should have been a part of this process. We consider the

government's shameful withdrawal nothing less than a failure to conform to its UN obligations. Fortunately civil society groups are here to share with the international community inputs designed to eliminate the pernicious grip of racism."

(List of organizations)

Canadian Labour Congress

African Canadian Legal Clinic

Canadian Arab Federation

Metro Toronto Chinese and South East Asian Clinic

Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants

National Anti-Racism Council of Canada

Colour of Poverty

Karuna Community Services

Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (Canada)

The Canadian Labour Congress, the national voice of the labour movement, represents 3.2 million Canadian workers. The CLC brings together Canada's national and international unions along with the provincial and territorial federations of labour and 130 district labour councils. Web site: www.canadianlabour.ca

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