

# FPAVoices



***Momentum Builds as  
Canada Leads World  
on Refugee File***

***Carleton Hosts  
Global Collaboration***



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# Message from our Dean



Around the world, the number of people displaced by violence, conflict, persecution and natural disasters is at an all-time high. I'm very proud that many of our researchers and students in the Faculty of Public Affairs are devoting their time and energy to this important issue.

This was reflected in the recent *Visions for Canada 2042* conference (presented by the Faculty of Public Affairs in honour of Carleton University's 75th anniversary) where human migration was one of the main themes considered. In particular, a panel hosted by the Migration and Diaspora Studies Initiative discussed the leadership role that Canada has adopted on this issue. We share their story in this edition of *FPA Voices*.

At the same time, dozens of undergraduate and graduate students and faculty members collaborate on the Mobility & Politics Research Collective within the Faculty of Public Affairs. We've included the story of two students who are contributing to the research in this area.

Lastly, our Career Paths profile features one of our *75 for the 75th* alumni, named in honour of Carleton University's 75th anniversary. Abdulqafar Abdullahi is a senior macro fiscal economist at the World Bank Group who is helping to rebuild the financial system in his home country of Somalia. His story of immigrating to Canada after the collapse of his country, and then thriving, is inspiring.

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Front Cover: Refugees repatriate to Burundi after nearly 40 years of exile in Tanzania. Photo courtesy of J. Milner

These are the people who make the Faculty of Public Affairs a flourishing learning and research environment, which is contributing to improved governance and public policy, informed citizenship, and ultimately, better democracy and better societies.

We are just wrapping up our flagship event series: *FPA Research Month*, which features five weeks of panel discussions, research symposiums and public lectures. It is the highlight of our academic year and even more so this year, with the inclusion of the *Visions for Canada 2042* conference, which featured a keynote address by Climate Change and Environment Minister Catherine McKenna.

It was one of many events in 2017 in honour of Carleton University's 75th anniversary. I hope you will have a chance to join in the celebration this year!

Sincerely,



# Momentum Builds as Canada Leads World on Refugee File

*An estimated 65 million people—more than ever before—have been displaced from their homes worldwide.*

*The average time spent as a refugee is now 20 years.*

In the current debates about immigration, politics, borders and nationality, those facts can be forgotten.

But in Canada, says Political Science Professor James Milner, the focus has remained on resettlement and support for refugees, both at home and abroad.

“Canada has proven itself to be a moral authority, and an expert, in the global refugee regime,” says Dr. Milner, an expert in Migration and Diaspora Studies. “It began with a Canadian chairing the committee that drafted the 1951 Refugee Convention, and it continues today.”

Dr. Milner invited three experts to discuss “Canada in the Global Refugee Regime” as part of the recent *Visions for Canada 2042* conference at Carleton University. They included Heather Jeffrey, the Director General for International Humanitarian Assistance at Global Affairs Canada, who described the reaction she is hearing at international meetings.

“Prime Minister Trudeau’s name is used as an image of hope. But it’s the actions of Canadians themselves that have really caught the attention of the world,” she said. “People ask how we are doing it.”

However, she acknowledges that sense

of optimism masks the true scope of the problem.

“Protracted conflicts are placing a huge strain on the system and we are struggling to respond to the dire circumstances that people find themselves in,” she said. “We need human and organizational innovations to address this crisis.”

There is also a need for partnership among countries, which was reflected in the United Nations’ *New York Declaration Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants*, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2016. Jessie Thomson, the senior director for CARE Canada’s humanitarian assistance and emergency team, said the heaviest burden falls unfairly on neighbouring countries.

“We still have no mechanism to share the costs for refugees in countries like Jordan and Lebanon,” said Ms. Thomson. “We won’t be able to fix this without alleviating the pressure on those countries.”

Jean-Nicolas Beuze, the representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Canada, offered a different perspective.

“If we don’t address the root causes that lead to people fleeing, we’re stuck,” said Mr. Beuze, who worked in Lebanon before being posted to Canada. “The reality is that I’ve met refugees around the world and most of them just want to go home and live their normal lives again.”

One member of the audience, which included faculty members, students, practitioners and people from the community, asked what an average person could do. Jessie Thomson of CARE Canada was quick to respond.

“You can write to your MP and raise issues that are important to Canadians,” she said. “We need to be pro-active because we can’t take it for granted. If we don’t, the politicians may listen to more xenophobic perspectives.”





Photo courtesy of J. Milner



# What Will Canada Look like 25 Years from Now?

That was the question asked at the recent *Visions for Canada 2042* conference, hosted by the Faculty of Public Affairs.



For presenter Dr. Alex Wilner, Assistant Professor at the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs at Carleton University, the vision is one of a Canada that uses strategic foresight to explore creatively and systematically future environments, interactions, dynamics, challenges, and opportunities.

For Dr. Susan Braedley, Associate Professor in Carleton University's School of Social Work, the vision is of a Canada that is organized to provide exemplary care for the rapidly aging Canadian population.

For constitutional expert Dr. Kiera Ladner, who delivered the keynote speech on March 3rd, the vision is

one of a country that may finally acknowledge the treaty rights of Indigenous people through the reconciliation process.

For Minister of Climate Change and Environment Catherine McKenna, who spoke at the gala dinner on March 4th, the vision is one of Canadians taking the lead in establishing a more sustainable way to live.

Those are just a few of the many visions that emerged during the conference that took place March 2-4 on topics as varied as the media, activism, sexuality, health care, transportation and feminism.

"The *Visions for Canada 2042* conference presented an opportunity for faculty members, students, alumni and our community to discuss the future of Canadian society," said Dean André Plourde of the gathering, which was held in Richcraft Hall on the Carleton campus, followed by a gala dinner at the Shaw Centre. "We are exploring the ways innovative collaboration among researchers and the community may be the most effective response to Canada's future challenges."



Dean Plourde first proposed the conference one year ago, as the Faculty was making plans for Carleton's 75th anniversary. He asked Political Science Professor Fiona Robinson and Associate Dean (Research and International) Karen Schwartz to co-chair the event.

With the assistance of events coordinator Cassie Smith and research assistant Maggie Fitzgerald-Murphy, the organizers planned an event with 23 panel discussions, a gala dinner and a film premiere.

Co-chair Fiona Robinson says the screening of *"My Father's Land"*, a film by renowned Inuit filmmaker Zacharias Kunuk, and the speech by Dr. Kiera Ladner, were her highlights.

"We all know that Indigenous issues are hugely important in Canada, but the film and Kiera's talk made me think about these issues in ways I had not done before. I am so grateful to Zacharius and Kiera for sharing their messages with us," says Professor Robinson.

The organizers were also excited about the sheer number of participants. There was a noticeable 'buzz' in the Richcraft Hall Atrium in between panels.

"The crowd was so diverse. They represented faculty members, students, government, the community and even a high school. It was great to watch them talking and sharing," says Professor Robinson.

Research Assistant Maggie Fitzgerald-Murphy, who is a doctoral candidate in Political Science, appreciated the

challenging and exciting discussions that took place.

"This conference provided much to be hopeful about in terms of considering the future of Canada," she says. "It provided a space that did not depend on a linear notion of time, but rather gave us a more circular framework, in which our past, present, and future could be considered, celebrated, and explored together."

The *Visions for Canada 2042* conference is part of FPA Research Month, which features dozens of events including public lectures and graduate symposiums.

The presenting sponsor for *Visions for Canada 2042* was Manulife.

Other sponsors included Isuma, iPolitics Live, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and the Vice-President (Research and International) of Carleton University.



(left to right) James Milner, Heather Jeffrey, Jessie Thomson, and Jean-Nicolas Beuze



# Career Paths

Abdulqafar Abdullahi is a Senior Macro-Fiscal Economist at the World Bank Group in Geneva, Switzerland.

Master of Arts in Economics ('00)

*He is one of the Faculty of Public Affairs' 75 for the 75th.*

Unlike many of the students at Carleton University, Abdul Abdullahi's life path was not an easy one to follow. He grew up in Somalia and won a scholarship to study economics at a university in India, where he earned both bachelor's and master's degrees.

He was on his way back to Somalia in 1991 when he stopped to visit his brother in Dubai and learned that the Somali government had collapsed.

"We had been planning a business, but we were told it was too dangerous to go

back," recalls Mr. Abdullahi. "So I moved to Thailand, taught at a university, and applied to come to Canada."

When Mr. Abdullahi arrived in Canada in 1992, the unemployment rate was high and many other educated immigrants were forced to take manual jobs. He resisted.

"Once you get in that cycle, it's hard to get out, so I enrolled in government programs that would help me get a career in my field," he recalls. "I was lucky because I found people who wanted to help and they helped me find a placement within a company for three months."

The company was Addison-Wesley, a publisher of textbooks and academic books. Mr. Abdullahi ended up working for the company for nine years, eventually becoming an editorial assistant on economics, statistics and computer science textbooks. He would have preferred to





pursue a Canadian master's degree right away, but he says it wasn't feasible.

"When I arrived in Canada, Somalia was in turmoil and my family was scattered. I had to find a job that would support them," he recalls.

But after starting his master's degree, he quickly moved into his field.

"I landed a job in the Department of Finance, the premier place for an economist, before I even graduated," says Mr. Abdullahi. "I was hired by an alumnus who was part of a large network in Ottawa and in the federal government."

Throughout his time in Ottawa, Mr. Abdullahi was always involved in projects to help his home country.

"I grew up there and was educated. I felt I owed a lot to Somalia, but it was never safe to go back. Then in 2012, there was great promise with a permanent government," he says.

In 2013, he took a leave of absence and joined the many ex-pats who were returning

to rebuild Somalia.

"No economist could resist the temptation to build a bank from scratch, so I agreed to be the senior economic advisor to the Somali government," he says. "But the country wasn't ready and the situation was too dangerous, so many of us left."

Then a phone call came from the World Bank, offering him a job that allowed him to continue working on reconstituting Somalia's financial system.

"I'm leading the intergovernmental fiscal relations and providing technical support to the Somali government," he says. "We're sharing lessons learned from what other countries did, but the Somalis have to come up with their own model and system."

Throughout his career Mr. Abdullahi says he was driven by his desire to help his family and his home country. But he also attributes his success to hard work and luck.

"I met very good people who helped me along the way," he says.





# **Global Collaboration Begins at Carleton**

Many of us feel helpless as we watch millions of people fleeing their homes, only to face an uncertain future in other parts of the world.

But for the members of the [Mobility & Politics Collective](#), there's a strong sense of determination, and a dedication to working towards better outcomes for the migrants and displaced people they study.

The Mobility & Politics Collective was created in 2011 as a place for undergraduate and graduate students, as well as faculty members, to collaborate on research projects involving migration and refugee issues.

It regularly hosts live-streamed lectures on YouTube, as well as conferences and community events. Under the guidance of Assistant Professor Martin Geiger (Department of Political Science and Institute for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies), it has developed into a truly transnational endeavour, attracting more than 30 visiting students and scholars to Carleton from different parts of the world.

For Erin Newman-Grigg, a second-

year undergraduate student in Public Affairs and Policy Management (BPAPM), this has provided a like-minded research community.

"I've met so many interesting people with different viewpoints from different fields," says Erin. She recently gave her first academic talk at the Mobility & Politics conference *Managing Migration in World Society* at the end of March.

Erin's talk was focused on the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the role of remittances and migrant returns in the growing debate on migration and development.

Andrada Mihai, a Master's student in the Institute of European, Russian and Eurasian Studies with a background in environmental studies, presented on climate-induced migration.

"A growing number of researchers are studying the impact of climate change on human mobility, so it's an opportunity for me to do something really interesting," says Ms. Mihai, one of the collective's first members. "As students in Canada, we have the chance to contribute in a way that those less fortunate aren't able to."





(left to right) Andrada Mihai, a Master's student in the Institute of European, Russian and Eurasian Studies, and Erin Newman-Grigg, a second-year undergraduate student in Public Administration and Policy Management (BPAPM)



# Open Book



**The Book:** *Station Eleven* by Emily St. John Mandel

**The Reviewer:** Kyla Reid, Research Facilitator in the Faculty of Public Affairs

I've always been a fan of post-apocalyptic fiction, and lately, for reasons that are probably somewhat obvious, I've been even more drawn to this genre. My most recent book choice, *Station Eleven*, is no exception.

*Station Eleven* is written non-chronologically, with the narrative taking place before and after total societal collapse, which is brought on by a flu that kills 99% of the world's population. The story is told from the perspective of a variety of characters, including an aging movie star, a travelling band of Shakespearean actors and symphony musicians, and an organizational psychologist.

Unlike many other books in this genre, this novel doesn't exclusively focus on a central conflict between warring factions, the challenges of day-to-day survival in the immediate aftermath of the flu, or on using the post-apocalypse to comment on our real-life social, political or economic structures. Rather, the focus is on the role of art, beauty, and human connection after the end of the world as we know it.

The author develops individually interesting and multi-faceted characters, whose humanity is not overshadowed by the challenges of living in the world after the flu. There's one character who doesn't weave in as neatly as the others – I would have found it more satisfying to have these connections wrapped up nicely.

I enjoyed this book, but not for the usual reasons I like this genre. In fact, this novel left me with a sense of hope that what will have meaning at the collapse of civilization might not just be the practical stuff of day-to-day survival but also literature, theatre, and the arts. As one of the characters has tattooed on her arm, quoting from *Star Trek: Voyager*, "Survival is insufficient."



From the Foreign Service to foreign correspondents, FPA alumni lead fascinating and inspiring lives.

In honour of Carleton University's 75th anniversary in 2017, we're profiling 75 of the Faculty of Public Affairs' most inspiring alumni over the next year. We'll release five new names each month until June 2017.

[carleton.ca/fpa/75-75](http://carleton.ca/fpa/75-75)



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# Events

**Journalism:** “Reporting the Refugee Crisis” featuring Mark MacKinnon and Margaret Evans.  
**April 3 | [More information here](#)**

**Law:** “Courts Without Cases: The Law and Politics of Advisory Opinions” featuring Dr. Carissima Mathen.  
**April 3 | [More information here](#)**

**NPSIA:** “Peace Support Operations in the Middle East” featuring Major-General Denis Thompson.  
**April 4 | [More information here](#)**

**Journalism:** “The Harper Factor” Panel Discussion with Jennifer Ditchburn and Graham Fox.  
**April 5 | [More information here](#)**

**Economics:** Seminar Series: “The Determinants of Teachers’ Occupational Choice” featuring Kevin Lang of Boston University.  
**April 26 | [More information here](#)**





[Faculty units can submit  
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