

USA-Canada Cross Border Network

For Immediate Release

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Don't Seek Asylum in Canada Without FIRST Getting Legal Advice Canadian Border Closed Indefinitely to Most Asylum Seekers

Even as mass vaccination is being rolled out in Canada and the United States, **the border between the two countries remains closed to most asylum seekers**, due to the pandemic. Local agencies are seeing increased inquiries about crossing the border into Canada to claim refugee status. At this time however, most people seeking refuge are not permitted to enter Canada and are directed back to the United States immediately. **The border is likely to remain closed for the foreseeable future.**

Restrictions on who can enter Canada are in place both at official ports of entry and at unofficial crossings such as the one at Roxham Road, New York. There is still a significant risk that people directed back by Canadian border authorities will be detained and placed in removal proceedings by U.S. authorities. Other asylum seekers with little or no resources are getting stranded at the border after being directed back.

We strongly encourage people to get advice from a trusted refugee lawyer or support organization before making plans to cross the U.S.-Canada border. Unless asylum seekers meet the very narrow exceptions provided by the Safe Third Country Agreement, they will be directed back. More information about exceptions to the Safe Third Country Agreement can be found [HERE](#). Even if you believe you meet an exception to the Safe Third Country Agreement, you should still seek legal advice before attempting to cross the border at an official port of entry.

Contacts for Media

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Information for Asylum Seekers

Freedom House - Detroit, Michigan USA

Phone: 313- 964-4320

<https://freedomhousedetroit.org/need-help/>.

Bridges Not Borders - Créons des ponts, Québec, Canada

Email: bridgesnotborders.ca@gmail.com

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Email: viveinfo@jrhc.org

Website: jrhc.org/vive/information-for-asylum-seekers

For more information on the COVID border closures for asylum seekers:

<https://www.unhcr.ca/in-canada/making-refugee-claim/>

For more information on the Safe Third Country Agreement:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/refugee-protection/canada/processing-claims-protection-safe-third-country-agreement.html>

<https://ccrweb.ca/en/safe-third-country>

For more information on the STCA court proceedings in Canada:

<https://ccrweb.ca/en/media/federal-court-must-uphold-decision-STCA>

Sources:

USA - Canada Cross Border Network. C/O Canadian Sanctuary Network (<http://sanctuarycanada.ca>). A Network of NGOs and lawyers in Canada and the USA, helping asylum seekers, in particular those directed back to the US due to the STCA or the pandemic border closure.

Bridges Not Borders - Créons des ponts is a bilingual grassroots group in Quebec near Roxham Road, supporting and advocating for asylum seekers. www.bridgesnotborders.ca

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The Canadian Sanctuary Network advocates for the fair treatment for refugees and seeks remedies for refugees who face removal to a country where they are at risk.

<https://sanctuarycanada.ca>