



CENTRE FOR REFUGEE STUDIES

CRS Seminar

Legal Aid for Refugee Claimants

Wednesday September 11, 2019

2:30—4:00pm

Osgoode Hall Law School room 2002

Panelists:

- ♦ **John Norquay, Policy Counsel, Immigration and Refugee Law Services, Legal Aid Ontario**
- ♦ **Francisco Rico Martinez, Co-Director, FCJ Refugee Centre**
- ♦ **Maureen Silcoff, President, Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers**

Chair: Sean Rehaag, Director, Centre for Refugee Studies & Associate Professor, Osgoode Hall Law School

In April 2019, the Ontario government announced substantial cuts to legal aid. Included in these cuts were instructions to Legal Aid Ontario not to use any provincial funding for immigration and refugee services. In response, LAO eliminated several immigration and refugee law services, including legal representation at refugee hearings, as legal assistance involving Refugee Appeal Division and judicial review processes. In August 2019, the Federal government announced that it would fill the funding gap to allow immigration and refugee law services to return to their prior levels for one fiscal year – saying that further discussions were needed for longer term solutions. This panel will explore questions related to access to justice for refugees and other non-citizens in this context. It will examine how choices were made about where to put limited LAO resources. It will look at the impact that of those choices access to justice for refugee claimants and other non-citizens. It will explore advocacy efforts that resulted in the recent Federal announcement. And it will consider what comes next.

Co-Sponsored by the Centre for Refugee Studies, the Canadian Forum on Civil Justice & the Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers (Osgoode Students)