

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON
CANADA-ARAB RELATIONS
NCCAR

ANNUAL REPORT

2008



National Council on Canada-Arab Relations
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1.0 Executive Summary

It is a pleasure to present the 2007-2008 annual report to members of the National Council on Canada-Arab Relations. Our mission of contributing to understanding and cooperation between Canada and the Arab World is as relevant today as when NCCAR was founded as a charitable apolitical organization in 1985 – perhaps more so since we are continually made aware that prejudice, misunderstanding and lack of sound information often inform public and private decisions.

This past year has been one of challenge for NCCAR and for your Board, both in terms of internal organization and of the external environment. In consequence, this has been a year of re-building in which we have taken important steps towards a process of renewal that set the foundations for future expansion and success.

The key challenge that NCCAR had to address in 2007 was a serious financial situation with a debt that was unsustainable, built up over three years of operating deficits. NCCAR could not have continued to operate without addressing its serious financial shortfall. The Board had to take steps to drastically cut expenses and operated for much of the year with only volunteer staff or one office assistant. The loss of staff affected NCCAR as much of their tacit knowledge and experience was no longer immediately available.

I am very pleased to report that we have achieved our objective of putting NCCAR on a more solid financial footing since we have been able to operate with a considerable surplus and have paid down much of the debt. We are in a position now to be much more proactive in expanding our program outreach.

There still remain challenges in the process of strengthening NCCAR as we need now to employ an Executive Director and staff to expand NCCAR's programme. We need to generate a minimum of \$200,000 a year to maintain a strong organization. The support of members through memberships and donations is crucial in providing us with the leverage to operate other fund raising activities including project grants that allow us to help Canada, and Canadians interested in building bridges of understanding between Canada and the Arab World.

Certainly we are aware that NCCAR has a more important challenge to address.

We need to work harder and educate the Conservative government and the Official Opposition as to the Arab World and specifically the Palestinian issue. It is clear to us that the direction that this government has taken is different than the balanced approach Canada's government has always claimed to have. It will be important to remind our government of the international values of fairness, justice and respect of the rule of law. Our partners in the Arab World and in Canada are confused regarding the positions taken by the Canadian government. We need to strengthen NCCAR's ability to have a positive impact on the government in order to ensure that Canadian voices promoting a fair and balanced view of issues which impact on Canadian lives, including the Israel/Palestine conflict, are better heard.

We need also to continue educating and working with the media, challenging the negative portrayal of both Arabs and Arab Canadians and the misrepresentation of facts and issues relating to the Arab World.

With this as a background, I am happy to report major achievements over the last period.

As I mentioned we achieved a major milestone in improving the financial basis of the organization, though a major effort in increased fund-raising is still required; we have also put new mechanisms in place to ensure a continuity of good governance and administration, have created a document on the role of the Board, strengthened the transparency of the organization and its future reporting and have set the basis for a continued expansion of activities.

Discussions within the organization and outside on our mission and relationship to other organizations has led to greater clarity on our comparative advantage as a broad-based Canadian organization, but also on the opportunities for co-operation with others while safeguarding our autonomy.

We have reached out to the Government and the Official Opposition in order to ensure that they understand the needs and interests of Canadians wishing to strengthen collaboration between our country and the Arab world. We distribute Washington Report monthly to all MPs and Senators to provide them and their staff with a perspective on the Middle East that is missing in the mainstream media. We have met with the newly created Canada-Arab World Parliamentary Association and look forward to supporting them as well as continuing to work with the Canada-Palestine Parliamentary Association. At our annual dinner in April 2007, three ministers - the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Public Security and the Secretary of State participated - in addition to Members of Parliament from all political parties including the Leader of the Green Party. In November, the Leader of the Liberal Party addressed a Gala dinner in Montreal.

NCCAR has worked with government departments giving presentations to two groups of DFAIT officers, and to young Egyptian diplomats in Ottawa as part of the annual training program Canada carries out with Egypt. We contributed to the 19th DFAIT-NGO consultations on International Human Rights. We have continued to push for a direct air link between Montreal and Beirut, and also for an expanded service by Egypt Air between Canada and Egypt.

NCCAR has networked with other organizations and created linkages for on-going and future work, as in the case of Mines Action Committee and their work against cluster bombs and landmines.

We have issued 8 press releases and send letters to the Government and the Official Opposition. We have asked for documents under the Access of Information Act. We issued a background paper on Israel's disproportionate use of force and held a Press conference in Parliament Hill on this issue.

NCCAR's ED and President were interviewed and/or appeared on a TV or radio programs on over 20 occasions. We also had 3 op-eds as well as letters published in the Globe and Mail and in the Ottawa Citizen.

Mediawatch has been revised and expanded to include a greater range of news and views from the Arab world. Feedback over the past year has been overwhelmingly favourable and the number of subscribers continues to grow.

We also organized a number of public events bringing speakers to Canada such as Dr. Riyad Mansour, Palestinian Permanent Observer to the U.N., or Canadian experts, such as Dr. Adel Iskandar, Georgetown University, to speak about issues relating to the Middle East; we also held a panel discussion in Ottawa on Democratic Transition in collaboration with the Montreal Centre Rights and Democracy.

NCCAR brought the UNESCO Artist for Peace Marcel Khalife to a concert in Ottawa that launched his nation wide concert program. NCCAR also organized, in collaboration with The Ambassadors Online Magazine and the Chair of Arab Studies at the University of Ottawa, an exhibit by Egyptian artist Ahmad Toughan. The exhibit was opened by the artist as part of our "Portraits of the Arab World".

We raised funds to help bring Palestinians girls (grades 8, 10 and 11) from St. Joseph's school in Ramallah to participate in the Canadian International Model United Nations (CANIMUN) in Ottawa and are now running an Appeal to aid children in Gaza traumatized by violence.

We continued our effort to bring more young Arab Canadians into the political process sponsoring three young interns to work with MPs in 2007.

In sum, I am happy to report that your organization has had a productive year under adverse circumstances. Having weathered these difficulties, we look forward with keen anticipation and confidence to building on the solid foundations that have been set in place this year. It has been our privilege to work with committed individuals during this time of change. I would like to thank all those who have helped us - Annick, Essam, Samah, board members and other volunteers.

To take advantage of the opportunities and to respond to the needs that NCCAR sees, it will require a sustained effort to build the necessary financial, human and substantive resources. Such an effort is only possible with the involvement of all Board members, and the participation and support of the membership.

There has never been a more important time to make a contribution to better knowledge and understanding of the diversity and richness of Arab World and its peoples. With your help and continued support, NCCAR's voice will be stronger on the Canadian stage.

2.0 The Organization

2.1 Mission

NCCAR was established in 1985 by Canadians who believe that our national interest is best served through expanded knowledge about the Arab world as well as social, scientific and educational exchanges.

2.2 Objectives

NCCAR works with governments, the private sector and community organizations to promote and assist programs that increase Canadian awareness and knowledge about the Arab world, and to encourage the expansion of commercial, scientific, educational and cultural links between Canadian and Arab institutions.

2.2 NCCAR Fundamental Beliefs

NCCAR's objective is based on the following three beliefs:

- Canada and the Arab world share aspirations for world peace
- Canada and the Arab world have a common interest in increasing trade
- Canada and the Arab world desire expanded cultural and educational ties

2.3 Activities

- Promoting greater recognition of the social, economic, political and cultural contribution of Arab Canadians to Canada
- Providing information related to the Arab world to individuals, organizations, educational institutions, libraries, media, as well as Canadian provincial and federal governments
- Publishing a bi-weekly e-newsletter and a print Newsletter (Arabica) highlighting our achievements, current political issues relating to Canada-Arab relations and the Arab-Canadian community, educational programs, as well as upcoming events
- Promoting speakers that provide information on the Arab world
- Sponsoring study tours between Canada and the Arab world
- Sponsoring and coordinating the NCCAR Parliamentary Internship Program for Arab-Canadian university students
- Connecting Arab Canadians to work collectively at the municipal, provincial and national levels
- Supporting cultural exhibitions between Canada and the Arab world

2.4 Board of Directors

Bahija Réghaï (President) has extensive experience in the area of human rights, community development, and intercultural training. She has worked and traveled in Africa, Europe and North America. She brings over 20 years of community and NGO experience. She is a vice-president and founding member of the Arab Canadian Women's Association (ACWA) of Ottawa, first co-chair of Al-Awda-Canada, a member of the Advisory Council of the Across Boundaries Multifaith Institute (ABMI) Montreal, and former president of the Coalition of Arab Professionals and Community Associations (CAPCA) of Ottawa and a member of Potlucks for Peace, a Jewish-Arab dialogue group in Ottawa.

Hasan Al-Shawa (Vice-President) is active in the community as the President of the Abu-Baker S. Al-Shawa Charitable Foundation, a member of the Canadian Arab Federation, on the Board of Trustees of the Canadian Palestinian Foundation, board member for the Social Network for Arab Professionals, and board member for the Arab World Festival. He is President and CEO of Shawa Enterprises Canada, a Montreal-based private investment group. Mr. Shawa currently sits on the board of directors of several North American, European, and Middle Eastern companies, trusts, and organizations. Hasan has accumulated 20 years of experience in business development and real estate in the Middle East and North America.

Doug Daniels (Treasurer) has worked in the Department of External Affairs, IDRC, FAO and the Department of Cooperative Development in Uganda. He has been active on the Boards of both national and international organizations involved with international affairs and development. He has published three books and more than 80 articles and presentations. He has worked in every continent and region on development issues relating to education, health, agriculture, economics and research. He has been and/or is on the following boards: Advisory Board, Canadian Journal of Development Studies; Executive Committee of the International Board of Governors, Society for International Development; Vice-President, Board of Directors, International Book Bank (US); President, Ottawa Society for International Development; and CODE.

Samer Roumani (Secretary) is currently president of the Syrian Arab Association of Canada and vice-president of The Coalition of Arab Canadian Professionals and Community Associations (CAPCA). Mr. Roumani is currently the webmaster of 6 major Canadian websites dedicated to advocate and promote the Arab causes. He has supported and worked with NCCAR on many projects in the past. Some of these include the fundraising to send members of Canada's Parliament to the Occupied Territories, Syria and Lebanon (February 2005) and the Arab Film Festival. Mr. Roumani is married and has two children.

Zainab Amery is a sociology Ph.D. candidate at Carleton University and teaches at Algonquin College. Her areas of interest include gender, citizenship, international development, race/ethnic and migration studies, both globally and within the Middle Eastern context. She has been a consultant to both federal and provincial governments on issues of racism, multiculturalism, and immigrant integration policies. Ms. Amery has developed and directed a number of government-funded pilot projects and resources for community based organizations. She has worked extensively in several Arab countries as an international development consultant and educator.

Dany Assaf is a lawyer in Toronto with wide expertise in business law. He served as an advisor to NCCAR, CAF and a number of Canadian organizations with national and international focus. Mr. Assaf, plays a leading role in promoting enhanced business involvement with the Middle East and interaction with sister organizations, such as the Canada Arab Business Council.

Sine Chadi sat as a member of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta from 1993 to 1997 and represented his caucus on a number of the Legislature's economic development, public accounts and treasury committees. Mr. Chadi is the CEO and chairman of Imperial Equities Inc. He is also the founder and principal shareholder of North American Mortgage Corp., as well as of numerous other companies involved in the acquisition, redevelopment and disposition of real estate assets. Mr. Chadi is an active community leader and fundraiser for a number of community groups including the Boys and Girls Clubs and Crystal Kids. He received the Honorary Chinese Citizen Award for his philanthropic work with the Asian community in Edmonton.

Michel De Salaberry is a former Canadian Ambassador to Egypt, Iran and Jordan. Former Deputy Director, Middle East Division, Chief of Staff to the Minister for Constitutional Affairs, and Director, Middle East Relations Division at Foreign Affairs Canada. Since leaving the Foreign Service in January 2005, he has engaged in a number of civil society activities with IMPACS (an NGO that supports civil society and independent media in Canada), L'Arche communities of the mentally challenged in both Gatineau and Bethlehem-Azzarieh, Al Shehab Community Centre in the Cairo periphery, New Day Foundation for intercultural dialogue between Toronto, Canada and Tehran, Iran.

Safaa Fouda is a retired Chemical Engineering. She is an active member of the Arab community in Ottawa. She is co-founder and first president of the Egyptian Canadian cultural Association of Ottawa (ECCAO), past coordinator of the Christian-Muslim Dialogue, member of the Content Committee of the Conference "Diversity in Islam - Bridging the Gap" (June 2003). She sits on the Community Advisory committee for the RCMP, co-designed and co-delivered cultural awareness sessions for officers, and a member of COMPAC (Community Police Action Committee).

Ahmad Jawad is the President of Intellinet Technologies Inc. a technology outsourcing and consulting firm located in the Edmonton Research Park. He has a B.Sc. from the University of Alberta and an MBA from Athabasca University. Ahmad has served on many non profit boards as president of the Canadian Arab Professional and Business Club in Edmonton, currently he is on the board of the World Lebanese Cultural Union in Edmonton, and is the Vice President of the Alberta Association of Media Awareness. Ahmad is a strong supporter of NCCAR and believes that NCCAR plays a critical role in advocating and raising awareness on issues of importance to Arab Canadian.

Walid Madhoun has a diverse background in project management, including experience in international development in the education sector. He has been with the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) since March 2001 and served earlier with the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC) for more than five years, including three as a Senior Program Manager. At AUCC, Mr. Madhoun is the Director of the

Technical Cooperation Division, with direct work experience in Bangladesh, Egypt, Palestine, Lebanon, Jordan, and India. Mr. Madhoun began his career in international development at Medical Aid for Palestine-Canada in Montreal where he realigned the priorities of the organization to meet the emerging needs of Palestinian refugees throughout the Middle East.

3.0 Programs

3.1 Youth Parliamentary Internship Program

An important component of NCCAR's Educational Program is the Parliamentary Internship Program. Since 1996, the Council has facilitated a six-week placement from May to June with a Member of Parliament for 3 young Canadians of Arab origin enrolled in a Canadian post-secondary institution. The program is meant to encourage young Arab-Canadians to get involved, and to provide them with exposure to the Canadian political process and to the challenges and opportunities the Canadian Arab community faces in the Canadian political arena. The 2007 participants were:

- Lina Khatib – with MP Omar Alghabra (Liberal, Mississauga-Erindale)
- Christine Bro – with MP Alexa McDonough (NDP, Halifax)
- Elham Ismaeil - with Senator Marcel Prud'homme (Independent, Quebec)

“.... my experience did not make me a cynic, but rather inspired me to work harder and get involved on all levels, whether in the government or through grassroots organizing and for this, I truly appreciate and thoroughly enjoyed each moment of my internship experience.” Christine Bro

NCCAR recognizes the importance of participation by the Arab-Canadian community in the political process by creating solid ties with members of Parliament and staff. Programs such as these will also ensure a legacy of Arab-Canadian involvement in political affairs at the federal level.

3.2 Speakers' Bureau

The Speakers' Bureau activities were successful in bringing high-profile speakers to Canada to discuss Arab world issues and help educate Canadians as well as government officials. Speakers habitually give public lectures, take part in media interviews and meet with government officials, politicians and civil society. Through our wide network of contacts, NCCAR arranges these meetings and coordinates with other organizations to prepare their itineraries.

This year, NCCAR hosted and organized events for

- Karen Koning AbuZayd, Commissioner General, United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA),
- Dr. Rima Khalaf Hunaidi, chairperson of the Advisory Board of the Arab Human Development Report (AHDR),
- Dr. Adel Iskandar, visiting scholar at Georgetown University and an expert on Middle East media, and Dr. Riyad Mansour, Palestinian Permanent Observer to the United Nations

- Mr. Munir Nuseibah is a lecturer and Coordinator of the Human Rights Clinic at the Faculty of Law in Al-Quds University.
- Dr. Riyad Mansour, UN Palestinian Permanent Observer Ottawa
- Andrew Whitely, UNRWA New York Liaison Director

3.3 Roundtable on Democratic Transitions

NCCAR in collaboration with Rights & Democracy hosted a panel discussion on democratization in Muslim-majority countries in November. The discussion was moderated by Board member Zainab Amery, of Carleton University's Institute of Interdisciplinary Studies. Panel members were Professor/Researcher Rachida Afilal of the Institute for Scientific Research and Coordinator for the programme Leadership Féminin in Rabat, Ully Mulyandari, Assistant to Indonesian MP Nursyahbani, and Noômane Raboudi, invited researcher with the Canada Research Chair on Islam, Pluralism and Globalization at the University of Montreal.

3.4 Ontario Arab Communities Project

In July 2007, NCCAR obtained funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation for the creation of a network of organizations to serve the Arab-Canadian communities in Ontario. The network seeks:

- to improve awareness amongst Arab-Canadians of services available to them, of organizations that provide these services,
- to increase Arab-Canadian participation in these programs,
- to enable community organizations to build links, strengthen their bases, facilitate the flow of information amongst them and enhance their capabilities for better representation and greater visibility of Arab-Canadians within Ontario,
- to help Arab-Canadian communities build and strengthen bridges amongst their constitutive elements, regardless of their religious, political or social affiliation.

3.5 Palestinian Children in Model UN Assembly

NCCAR raised funds to allow Palestinian girls (grade 8, 10, and 11) from St. Joseph's school in Ramallah to participate in the Canadian International Model United Nations assembly in Ottawa in spring 2007.

3.6 Children of Gaza Appeal

NCCAR launched an appeal to raise funds for the "Mental Health of the Children of Gaza," an on-going program that is part of the services that the Gaza Community Mental Health Program (GCMHP) offers. The "Mental Health of the Children of Gaza" program is specifically designed to help children cope with the trauma and stress they experience on an ongoing basis as a result of living under occupation and under siege.

3.7 Peddling Pictures, a documentary

NCCAR is co-sponsoring this documentary on Arab Canadian Montrealer Ameen Lawand. The president attended the official presentation of the project and launch of its fundraising campaign in Montreal in May 2008.

3.8 Volunteers

Every year, NCCAR works with a number of volunteers who donate their time and energy in support of our mission. This year we received a large number of volunteers who worked in administrative support, policy research, coordinating conferences, and organizing meetings with government officials and parliamentarians. We are most grateful for their efforts and dedication. Our volunteer program also serves to educate the volunteers about NCCAR's activities and raise awareness about Canadian foreign policy and media issues. Thank you to Anna-Kristelle Carrier, Evan Daniels, Adam Dottridge, Youssef Masrieh, Khadija Matar, Sarah Mikhael, Hoda Mroue, Jumana Naser, Zeinab Naser, Nadia Nouri, and Julia Talib.

4.0 Media Bureau

NCCAR efforts at becoming a clearing house of information is recognized by the increased reliance of Canadian and international media on our Bureau. Over the year, we have been pro-active in promoting NCCAR's point of view through publishing opinion pieces, organizing interviews for experts, responding to media calls, and publishing news releases. The following is but a small list of the work of the Media Bureau:

4.1 Published

May 9, 2008 – Globe and mail - NCCAR's letter in response to an article about the Israeli Ambassador's remarks.

April 11, 2008 - Ottawa Citizen - Letter in response to an article written by David Matas, senior legal counsel of B'nai Brith Canada

April 13, 2007 – Globe and Mail – Op-Ed: Why the Arab peace initiative should not be rejected

June 4, 2007 – Globe and Mail – Op-Ed: This is not a civil war: it is a prison riot.

4.2 Press Conference

March 3, 2008 - News Conference on Parliament Hill about the dire situation in Gaza and Israel's grave breaches of international law.

4.3 Media Interviews

NCCAR board members and staff were widely quoted on numerous issues such as a shift in Canada's foreign policy shift, among other issues. These comments and interviews appeared at the national level, in print, radio and TV, including CBC-NewsWorld, Radio-Canada, RCI, and CTV.

We are working to expand our presence in French-language media and will strive to expand our network of spokespeople to ensure that more local media throughout Canada become aware of issues important to NCCAR.

- November 29, 2007 - panellist on TVO's The Agenda with Steve Paikin the topic was Israel and Palestine: 60 years on – could history have unfolded differently.
- June 19, 2007 - CBC Radio "The Current"
- June 18, 2007 - CTV News
- June 13, 2007 - CBC Radio "The Current" on Gaza's Civil War
- May 24, 2007 – Panel member - CFRA Radio "Lunch Bunch" to talk about the situation in Lebanon and in Gaza
- May 24 2007 - Panellist TVO's The Agenda
- May 23, 2007 - Nine consecutive in-depth interviews for CBC on Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon; the interviews were aired in Quebec City, Yellowknife, P. George, P. Rupert, Calgary, Victoria, Edmonton, Vancouver and Charlottetown
- April 29, 2007 - Ms. Sabawi was one of the keynote speakers in a discussion organized by Potlucks for Peace on the Role of Women in Peace Building
- March 21, 2007 – Panellist - Potlucks for Peace event on The Jewish Fear and the Right of Return
- March 21, 2007 - CBC's Ottawa Morning

4.4 News Releases and letters to Government and Opposition Parties

The following is a sample of some of the communiqués that NCCAR issued this year to raise awareness about foreign policy, media coverage issues, and major news stories:

- April 13, 2008 - Letter to Mr. Michael Ignatieff regarding his attendance at a Canadian Coalition for Democracies-sponsored event in Toronto
- March 28, 2008 - Letter to Minister Bernier re: Canada's recent vote at the United Nations Human Rights
- March 2008 – Gaza Background Paper - Israel's Disproportionate Use of Force in Gaza. This backgrounder was widely distributed, including to Members of Parliament and Senators. It counters a document that was distributed on Parliament Hill by the Israeli embassy.
- February 25, 2008 - Letter to NDP Leader Jack Layton regarding contradictory statements from NDP Members of Parliament regarding Canada's participation in the 2009 Durban II anti-racism Conference.
- February 22, 2008 - Letter to Trade Minister David Emerson, congratulating him on free trade negotiations with Jordan and encouraging consultations with Canadians of Arab origin and opening of free trade discussions with other Arab countries.
- January 14, 2008 – Letter welcoming the Canada-Arab World Parliamentary Association
- November 27, 2007 - Letter to Minister Bernier Regarding His Statement on Annapolis Conference
- November 13, 2007 - News Release: NCCAR Demands Transparency from the Harper Government on Proposed "Mutual Security Agreement" with Israel
- June 18, 2007 – News Release: NCCAR Deeply Concerned About Humanitarian and Political Crisis in Gaza

- May 28, 2007 - NCCAR Expresses Disappointment in Stéphane Dion's Statement
- May 23, 2007 - NCCAR Welcomes Ceasefire in Northern Lebanon; Calls for Increased Support of UNRWA
- May 18, 2007 - NCCAR Encouraged by Canada's Air Transport Agreement with Kuwait
- May 15, 2007 - NCCAR urges parliamentarians to refrain from taking part in "Jerusalem Day" celebrations
- April 5, 2007 - NCCAR welcomes new Canada-Palestine Parliamentary Association
- April 2007 - Policy Paper - Recommendations on Palestinian unity government
- March 30, 2007 - NCCAR dismayed by the Government's rejectionist attitude towards the Palestinian Unity Government

4.5 e-ArabiCa Bi-weekly Newsletter

NCCAR activities are publicized in a bi-weekly newsletter that is distributed by email to members as well as other parties interested in our work.

4.6 ArabiCa Quarterly Newsletter

ArabiCa is the tool NCCAR uses to promote our activities amongst our membership and with government officials. It is a well-designed document published four times a year. It includes NCCAR's main activities and serves to announce upcoming activities. We publish and distribute over 1500 copies on a quarterly basis to government, parliamentarians, NGOs, members and other interested groups and individuals.

5.0 Government Relations

5.1 Minister of Foreign Affairs

NCCAR held meetings with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Affairs officials and PMO to discuss the issues relating to Canadian policy in the Arab region, including the shift in Canadian policy at the expense of international law.

5.2 Official Opposition Leader

NCCAR met with the Leader of the Official Opposition, Mr. Stéphane Dion to discuss some of NCCAR concerns, especially on foreign policy.

6.0 Dinners

6.1 - March 19, 2007 - Ottawa - Dinner with Minister Mackay

Attended by approximately 150 people including ambassadors, Cabinet Ministers, Members of Parliament, government officials and community members. The NDP (Alexa McDonough), Bloc Quebecois (Francine Lalonde) and Liberal (Hon. Bryon Wilfert) House of Commons Foreign Affairs critics spoke before Foreign Affairs Minister, Hon. Peter MacKay delivered his speech. NCCAR honoured the Canadian Lebanese Chamber of Commerce for their fundraising efforts to the Lebanese people following the war of summer 2006, as well as Rev. Canon Bill Baldwin for his work in Palestine.

6.2 - November 23, 2007 - Montréal Gala with Stéphane Dion

This dinner was organized to give the Canadian communities in Montreal the opportunity to ask about and hear Mr. Dion's on the Liberal positions regarding issues relating to the Middle East, and to articulate NCCAR's position and insistence on international law informing Canadian policy in the Arab World. This event was attended by about 100 people, including head of organizations, community leaders, activists and Canadians interested in Canadian policy in the Arab World.

6.3 - October 1, 2007 – Private Dinner with artist Marcel Khalife

Attended by the Friends of NCCAR

7.0 Partnerships/Coalitions

7.1 Canadian Arab Federation

NCCAR held a meeting in Toronto with CAF president and CAF Executive Director, and explored together possible areas of collaboration.

7.2 Middle East Discussion Group

Members of the Middle East Discussion Group are retired Canadian ambassadors, academics, and former high level civil servants interested in Canadian foreign policy in the Middle East. Amongst the keynote speakers they invited are Prof. Mersheimer (The Israel Lobby), journalist Robert Fisk, former ambassador Michael Bell. NCCAR works with MEDG.

7.3 Mines Action Canada

International treaty to ban the use of cluster munitions

7.4 The Near East Cultural and Educational Foundation

NCCAR collaborated with NECEF (Media) for Dr. Ilan Pappé's Canadian Tour

8.0 On-going Files

8.1 Direct Flight Montreal-Beirut

8.2 Expansion of Egypt-Air routes and frequency of flights

8.3 Canada-Israel Security Agreement - Access of Information Request

9.0 Cultural Activities & Exchanges

9.1 Ahmed Toughan Exhibit

Ahmed Toughan is one of the most respected politico-social cartoonists in the Arab world. He has been the recipient of many awards including the Head of Arab Cartoonists (1987), Human Rights Award (1988), and Grand Medal of Fine Art (1997). Many of his finest works were on display from the 9th to the 11th of October in the University Centre of the University of Ottawa. This exhibit was done in collaboration with The Ambassadors Online Magazine and the Chair of Arab Studies at the University of Ottawa.

9.2 Marcel Khalife Ottawa Concert

About 600 people gathered at CentrepoinTE Theatre on October 2, 207 for an evening of great music by the charismatic UNESCO Artist for Peace Marcel Khalife.

“Khalife reflects in his songs the complexity of the struggles that Arabs are facing world wide in their pursuit for freedom and peace. Through a unique combination of Arabic and Western rhythms, Khalife reached across cultural boundaries to connect with the diverse audience that filled up the theatre.” Julia Tal