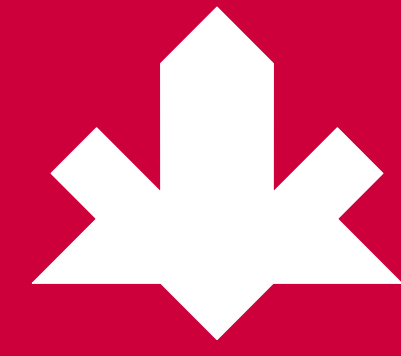




50 Years of Migration

Commemorating the progress and contributions of the Ismaili Muslim community in Canada, this grassroots exhibition honours our collective resilience and celebrates the colourful kaleidoscope that is our community. Using a vibrant collage of family photographs, timelines, maps, and historical documents, this touring exhibition tells the stories of members of the Ismaili Muslim community who have come from around the world to make this country their home and help build a stronger Canada.



Visit the exhibition website
to view all the panels and
read more!



For translated materials
Pour du contenu en français



BUILDING A STRONGER CANADA

*Celebrating the stories of
Immali migration to Canada*





In 1957, at the age of 20, His Highness the Aga Khan (Aga Khan IV) – called “Mawlana Hazar Imam” by Ismaili Muslims – succeeded his grandfather, Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah (Aga Khan III), as the 49th Imam of the Shi’a Nizari Ismaili Muslims worldwide.

Who are the Ismailis? A global context

The Ismaili Muslims are a culturally diverse community of approximately twelve to fifteen million living all over the world.



Ismailis live in over 25 countries, including Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, France, Germany, India, Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Republic of the Union of Myanmar (Burma), Pakistan, Portugal, Syria, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Uganda, United Kingdom, the United States of America and Yemen.

The community (or “Jamāt”) adheres to a 1,400 year tradition of Shi’a values that are expressed through a commitment to a search for knowledge for the betterment of self and society; embracing pluralism by building bridges of peace and understanding; and generously sharing of one’s time, talents, and material resources to improve the quality of life of the community and those among whom they live.

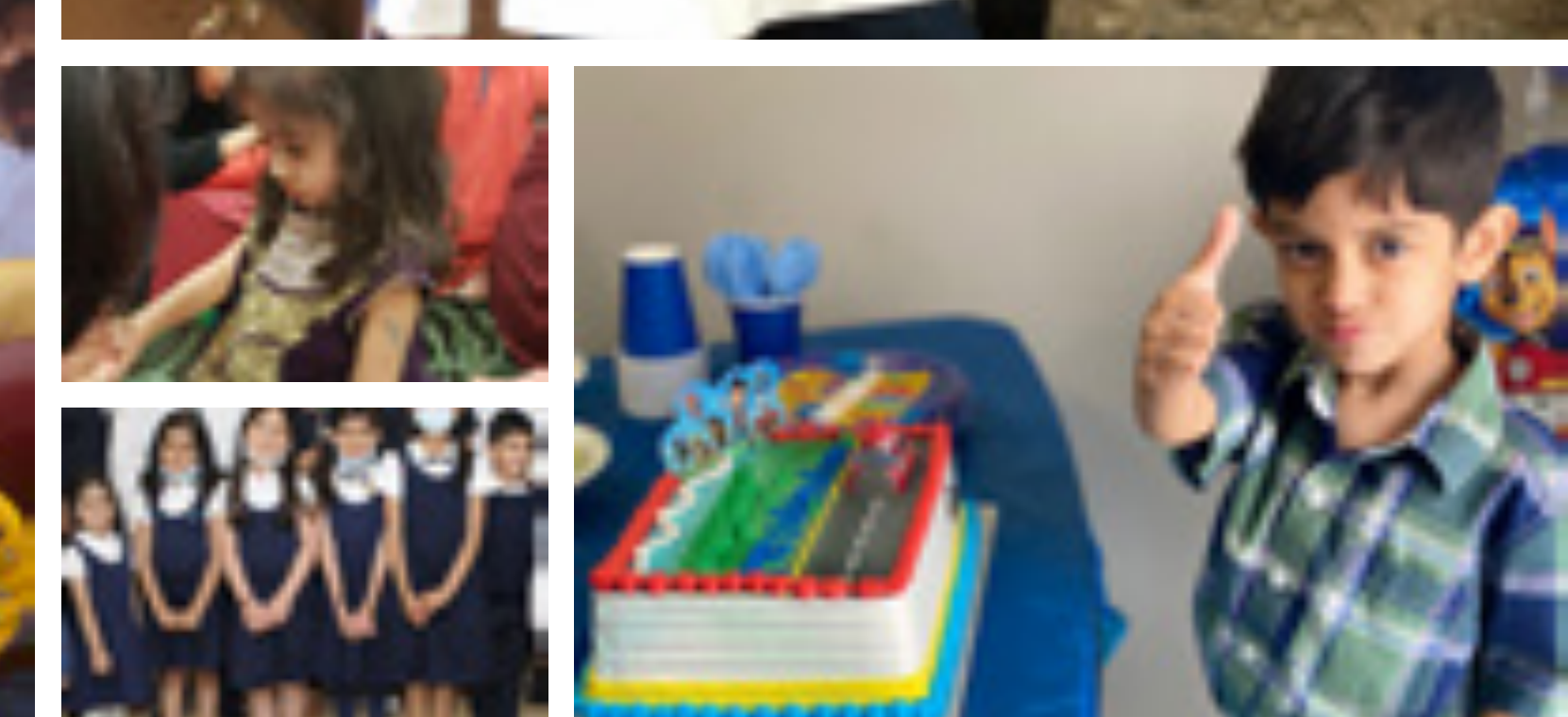
The Shi’a Imami Ismaili Muslims, generally known as the Ismailis, belong to the Shi’a branch of Islam. The Shi’a form one of the two major interpretations of Islam, the Sunni being the other. Throughout their 1,400 year history, the Ismailis have been led by a living, hereditary Imam. They trace the line of Imamāt in hereditary succession from Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of Prophet Muhammad (may peace be upon him). The followers of Ali, or Shi’a, already in existence during the lifetime of the Prophet, maintained that while the revelation ceased at the Prophet’s death, the need for spiritual and moral guidance of the community continued. The institution of Imamāt was to continue thereafter on a hereditary basis, succession being based on designation by the Imam of the Time.



2016

Mawlana Hazar Imam receives
the Adrienne Clarkson Award
for Global Citizenship.





My Country, My Home.
My CANADA True North and Strong.
My Story

By Azim AJ Hirji, Toronto, Ontario

- It is here we came with a dream in the 70's,
- It is here my Parents earned a living and made us a family with a purpose,
- It is here I studied and became a success in Canada, as did my brother, and my parents along with thousand just like us,
- It is here with great pride I can say that "I am a Canadian Ismaili Muslim",
- It is here where I have my friends, family, and business associates,
- It is here where many strangers became my close friends,
- It is here I continue to practice my faith,
- It is here I am free to enjoying my freedom,
- It is here I grew up and learned to dance and date,
- It is here where I fulfilled my dream jobs while travelling the whole world,
- It is here where I got to appreciate different cultures, and lifestyles,
- It is here where I got to pursue my true love of music, and with my dream jobs,
- It is here where I met my true love's,
- It is here where I proudly inherited my extended, and spirit family,
- It is here where I will continue to contribute for others to enjoy,
- It is here I buried my dad, mum, brother, and so many more,
- It is here I will be buried amongst the many I came with,
- It is here with great pride I am still alive to celebrate CANADA DAY and *روز کانادا*, in shi alihu many more.

Thank You Canada, with the fondest regards and memories.



*In the Name of God,
The Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful*

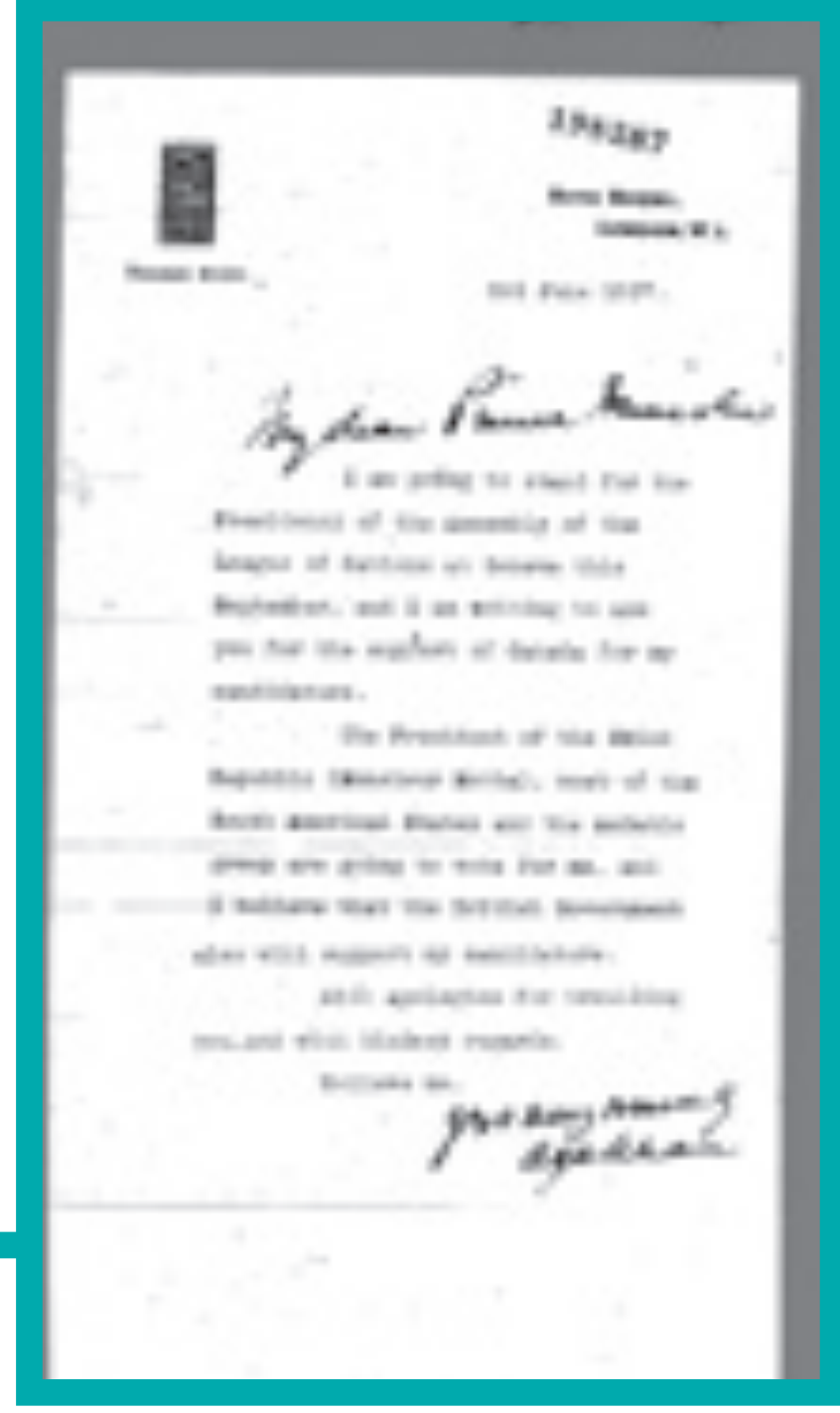
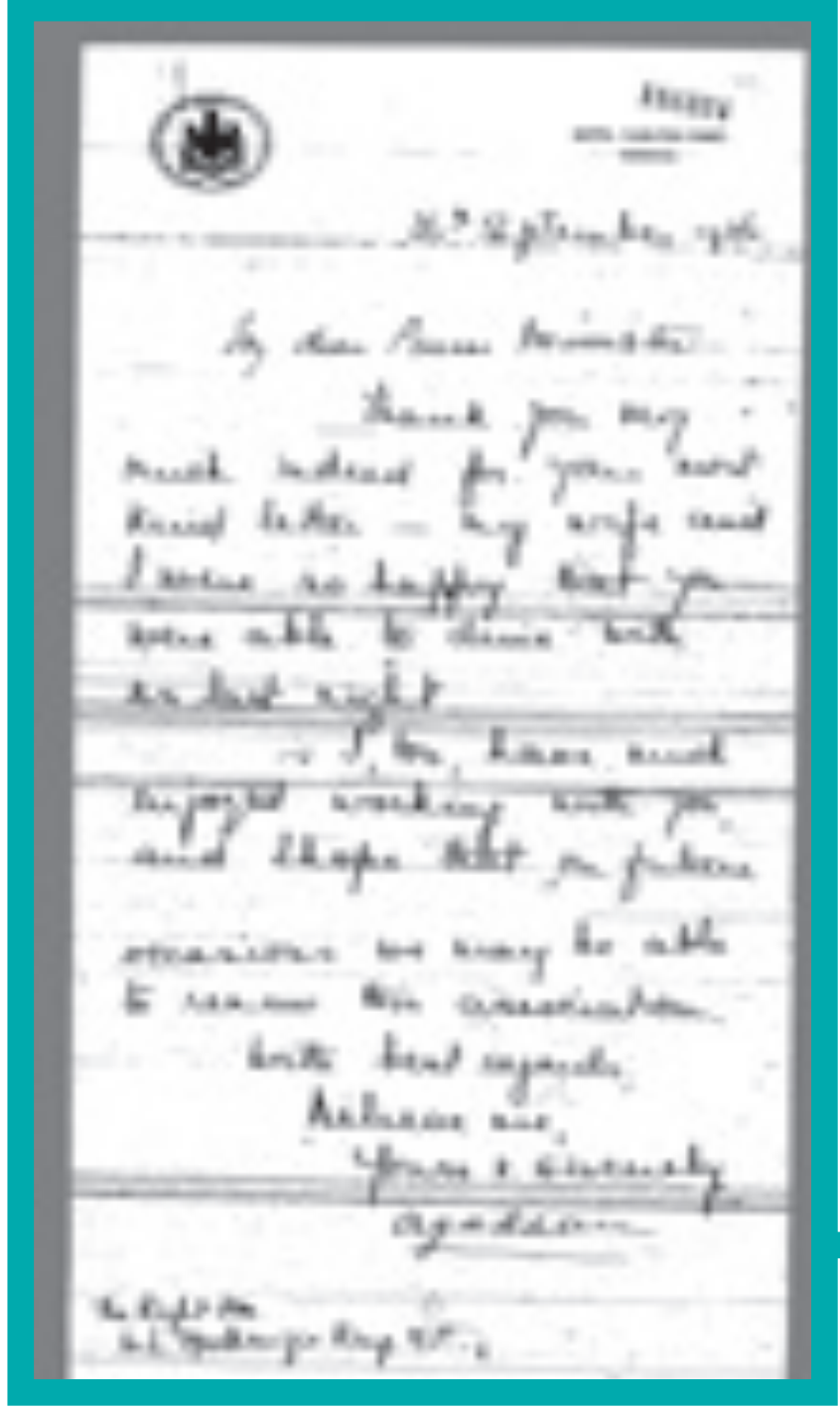
THE OTTAWA MUSLIM WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION
POSTHUMOUSLY HONOURS

MRS. MAUREEN ANN ISMAILI

For her service to the Ottawa Muslim Community from 1962 to 1971. She was the first lady elected to be the Vice President of the Ottawa Muslim Association in 1970. Mother of Yasmeen and Naureen. We honour her for her devoted service and shareable work. May Almighty God Bless her soul for her devotion to humanity.

Presented on Sunday May 8, 2005
- Halli Al-Awad 29, 1426 Elgin.
At the OMMWO's Annual FESTIVAL OF FRIENDSHIP DINNER.





1871

Canada's first census notes 13 "European Muslims" living in Canada, four years after confederation.

1936

Aga Khan III and Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King correspond about League of Nations presidency



1952

Safar Aly Ismaili from Pakistan is believed to be one of the first Ismailis recorded in Canada, settling in Ottawa, ON

1957



Prince Karim Aga Khan becomes 49th Imam of the Shi'a Nizari Ismaili Muslims (July 11, 1957)

1962

Milton Obote leads Uganda to independence from British colonial rule

1967-69

Major nationalization programs in Kenya and Tanzania result in many Ismailis leaving, some of whom are accepted in Canada



1972

One year after taking power in a coup d'état, Idi Amin expels Ugandan Asians, resulting in thousands of Ismailis and others of South Asian origin arriving in Canada

1973

The Council for Canada, the Grants Council, and the Ismaili Association for Canada are established



1978



Mawlana Hazar Imam makes his first Jamati visit to Canada and meets with Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau



1982

Mawlana Hazar Imam visits Canada to commemorate his Silver Jubilee. Foundation ceremony of Ismaili Centre, Vancouver in Mawlana Hazar Imam's presence; Mawlana Hazar Imam and Prime Minister Brian Mulroney officially open Ismaili Centre, Vancouver in 1985

1983



Mawlana Hazar Imam visits Canada during his Silver Jubilee

1985

First World Partnership Walk held in Vancouver; Iranian Ismailis flee Iran with some eventually settling in Canada

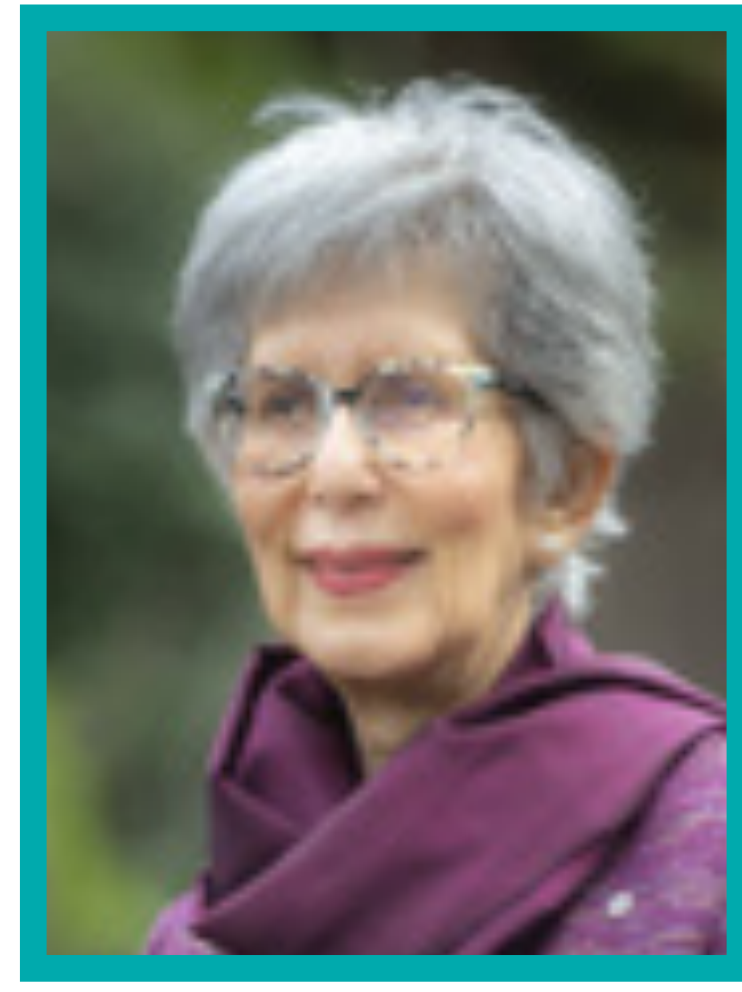
1987

Murad Velshi is elected as Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) of Ontario, the first Ismaili to be elected to a provincial legislature in Canada



1992

Mawlana Hazar Imam visits the Canadian Jamat in five major centres; The Council for Quebec and Maritime Provinces signs a protocol agreement with the Quebec Government to sponsor refugees from Central Asia



1993

Nurjehan Mawani of Ottawa is the first Ismaili and first Muslim to be invested as a Member of the Order of Canada

1994

Toronto Headquarters Jamatkhana is opened

Princess Zahra chairs the International Women's Forum in Toronto

1997

Rahim Jaffer becomes the first Ismaili to be elected as a Federal Member of Parliament (MP), representing the riding of Strathcona in Edmonton



2001

Prime Minister Jean Chrétien appoints Mobina Jaffer to the Senate, becoming the first Ismaili Senator in Canada

2002

Mawlana Hazar Imam visits Canada and announces the establishment of the Aga Khan Museum and the Global Centre for Pluralism

Mawlana Hazar Imam conferred Companion of the Order of Canada



2005

Foundation Ceremony of the Delegation of the Ismaili Imam takes place in Ottawa in the presence of Mawlana Hazar Imam and Governor General Adrienne Clarkson; [Mawlana Hazar Imam conducts Jamati visits in Vancouver and Toronto](#)

2008

Mawlana Hazar Imam and Prime Minister Stephen Harper inaugurate the Delegation of the Ismaili Imam in Ottawa; [Mawlana Hazar Imam visits Canada for his Golden Jubilee celebrations](#)



2010

Prime Minister Stephen Harper confers Honorary Canadian Citizenship upon Mawlana Hazar Imam; [Mawlana Hazar Imam performs foundation ceremony of the Ismaili Centre, Toronto and Aga Khan Museum](#)

Naheed Nenshi is elected in Calgary as the first Muslim mayor of a large North American city

2011

Syrian Ismailis fleeing civil war arrive in Canada

2014



Mawlana Hazar Imam makes historic speech to the Parliament of Canada; [Mawlana Hazar Imam opens the Aga Khan Museum and the Ismaili Centre, Toronto](#)



2015

Mawlana Hazar Imam inaugurates Aga Khan Park in Toronto

2017

Official opening of the Global Centre for Pluralism in Ottawa in the presence of Mawlana Hazar Imam; [Mawlana Hazar Imam visits Eastern Canada in commemoration of his Diamond Jubilee.](#)



2018

Mawlana Hazar Imam visits Western Canada in commemoration of his Diamond Jubilee; [Mawlana Hazar Imam inaugurates the Aga Khan Garden, Alberta](#)



2020

Salma Lakhani, in Alberta, becomes the first Muslim Lieutenant Governor in Canada

2022



Key to the City of Toronto awarded to Mawlana Hazar Imam, groundbreaking ceremony for Generations Toronto, and a segment of Wynford Drive in Toronto is ceremonially named "Aga Khan Boulevard"

2008

Mawlana Hazar Imam at the Inauguration of the Delegation of the Ismaili Imamate in Ottawa.





Top section: Archival photos and postcards of the construction of the railways in East Africa. Bottom left: A 1910 map of the Uganda Railway. Middle: Sunset in Serengeti, Tanzania. Top right: Early photographs of sailing Dhows, Kenya, c. 1900, Courtesy the Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies Winterton Collection, Northwestern University. Bottom right: Western Rift Valley. Amina Mohamed Photography.

Early migration to East Africa

“Your grandfathers crossed India to come to Africa. You have to cross right up to the Atlantic, and who knows? Later, I may send you to America.” – Aga Khan III to East African Jamat, 1951

“The principal waves of migration from the Indian subcontinent began in 1840. The second major group of migrants did not arrive until European colonization in 1840s, which required thousands of labourers to construct both Kenya and Uganda’s railway systems. **This group of indentured labourers who chose to remain in East Africa form the basis of the central myth that all South Asians living in Uganda at the time of the expulsion were descendants of the railway workers “who forgot to go home.”** – Shezan Muhammedi

“While their roots may have indeed been in the Indian subcontinent, those now deemed “Asian” had in fact been living in Uganda and across the region long before the exodus.” – Taushif Kara

“The Allidina brothers arrived as merchants in Uganda in 1896 from Kutch, following the guidance of Mawlana Sultan Mohamed Shah. Varas Rahemtulla Allidina was our grandfather.” – Yasmin Allidina





In search of something bigger

Shaneela Jivraj: In July of 1961 in Hyderabad, Pakistan, young Nazarali Faqirmohamed Shallwani decided he wanted something bigger for his life. To realize his vision, he put in place a plan to study at McGill University with the help of the Ismaili Association in Pakistan. After graduating in 1965, Nazar decided to settle in Canada with his bride Perveen Peerwani who he married in Pakistan upon his graduation.

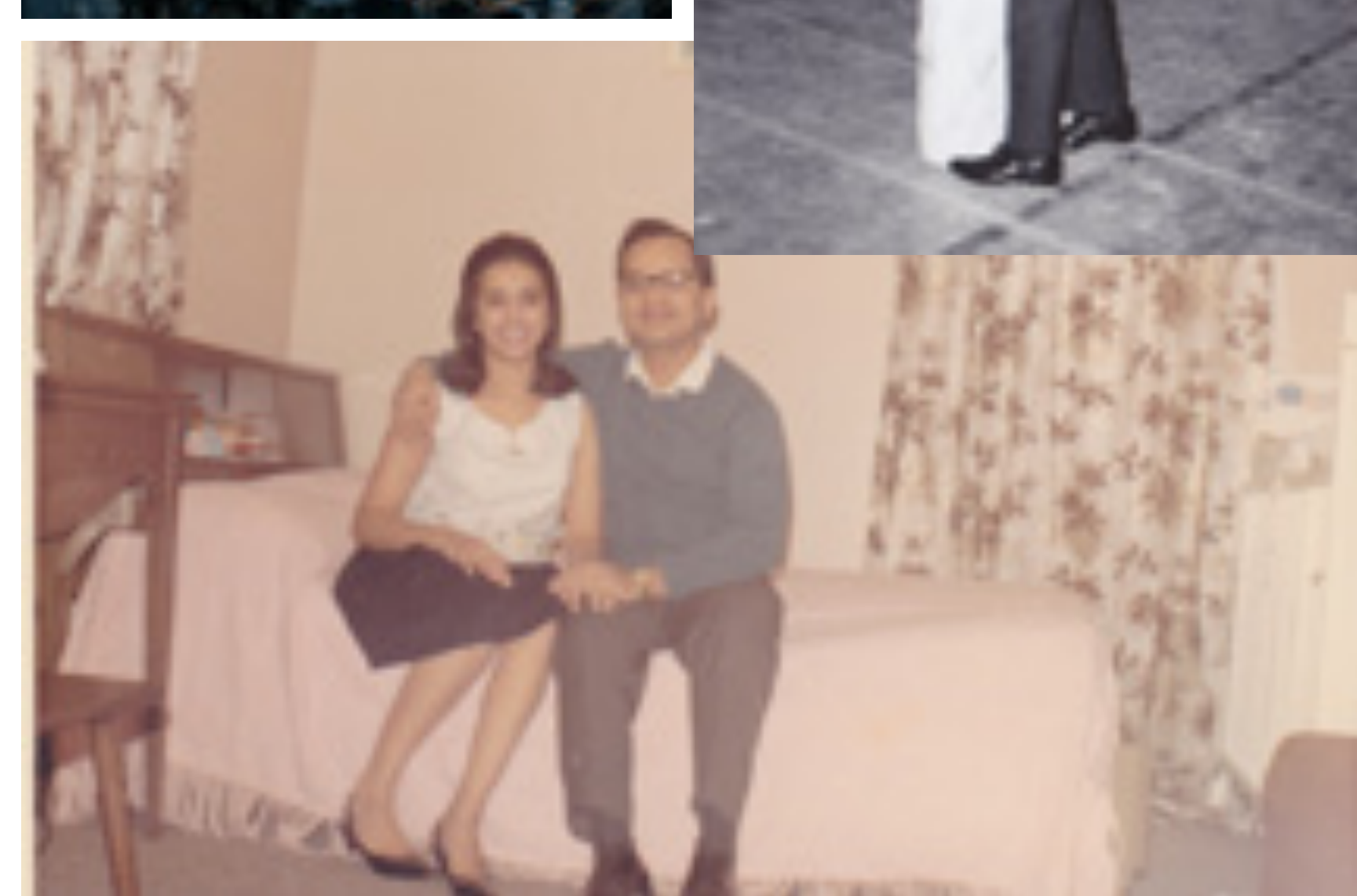
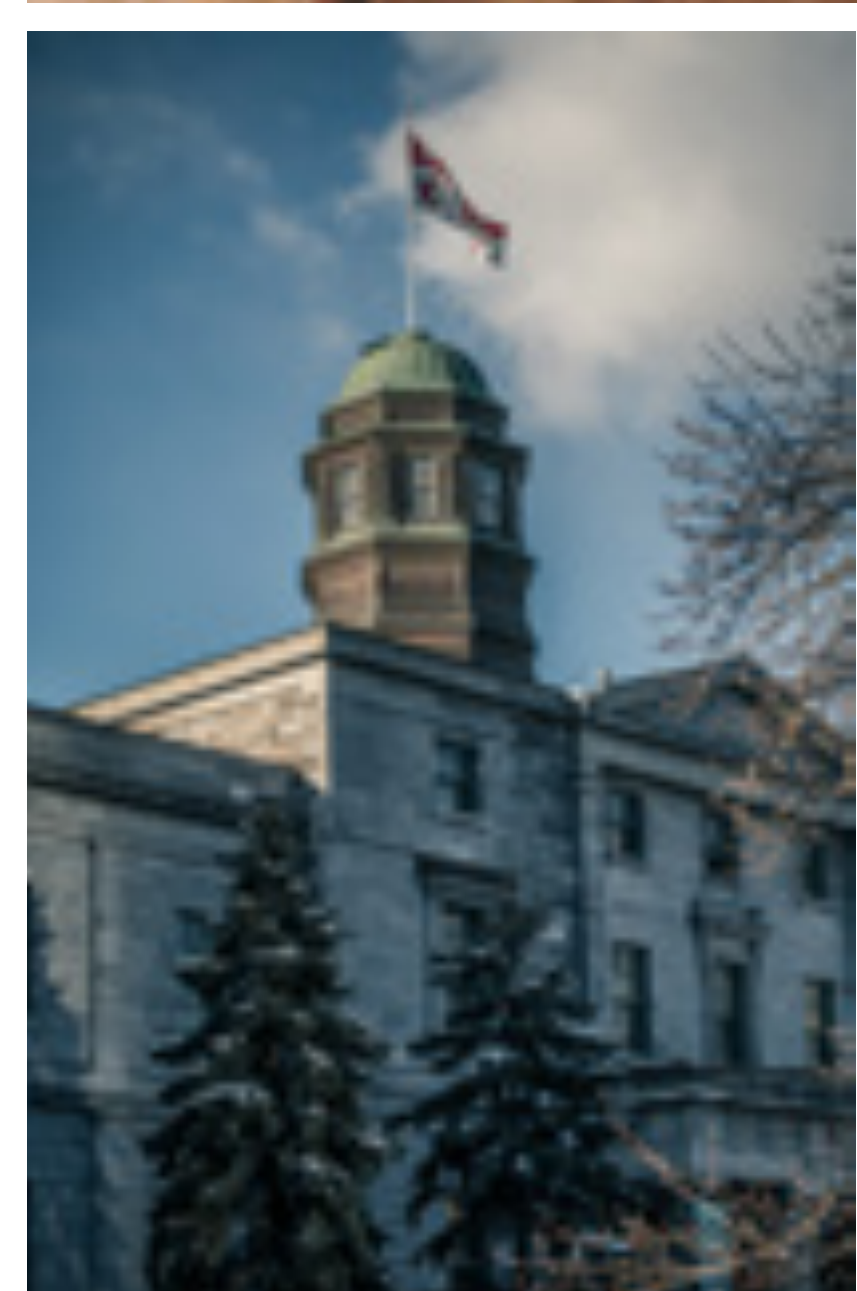
His willingness to relocate to the remote town of Cochrane, Ontario as a high school math and science teacher landed him a job and relatively high salary. The newlyweds settled in Cochrane for the next 11 years of their life where they had four children, Shaneela, Salmaan, Samina and Nousheen. The Shallwani family remained in Cochrane until 1976 when they moved to Toronto. Nazar, currently at the age of 85, lives near the Ismaili Centre, Toronto where he enjoys spending time with his brothers, sisters and eleven grandchildren.

Toronto: A happy home

Amiruddin (Amir) Gilani came to Toronto in 1970 from Mumbai (Bombay) with his brothers, Aladin and Ahmed, immigrating before him in the late 1960s. Aladin had a "pen pal" in Toronto for a very long time. He got a chance to immigrate to London, England in 1964 and, from there, his pen pal sponsored him.

There were only a handful of Ismailis living in Toronto and the small Jamat met every Sunday at Mukhi Jethwani's home. That was the Jamatkhana then. In 1971, there was a first big Navroz khushiali (Persian New Year) in a rented church hall somewhere on Yonge Street. The Jamat enjoyed delicious home-made food and danced that night. For Amir, "This is how our life began in Toronto, Ontario, Canada."

Aladin did not know if there were any Ismailis living in Toronto at the time. One day, he was window shopping and saw a photo of Hazar Imam. The shop was closed, so he wrote his name and phone number on a piece of paper and put it in the store. This is how he met the Ismaili Jamat.





Top right: Ismaili Volunteers in Kampala, 1970. The youth had their own representative, with their own special uniform (as worn by team Captain Nizar Kassamali Rahemtulla) standing, second from left. Submitted by Yasmin Allidina. All other photographs: A mix of family photos and post-expulsion trip images taken in beautiful Uganda by Amina Mohamed Photography.

I am a fourth-generation African

“I am a fourth-generation African, but I wasn’t accepted. We did not have the right colour.”
– Muslim Harji

“We had a very simple childhood. We used to go get beads and thread them into necklaces, and then go and sell them in the market.” – Sul Virani

“Whatever country you choose to live in, work for it, mix with its people, achieve its outlook. [...] In Africa, the day will come when the people of that vast continent will want to know who the foreigners are and it is the people who have made the country their home who are going to have the best opportunities in that country. I don’t like the idea of calling yourselves Asians in Africa.” – Aga Khan III, 1951

“What we all had in common was [...] we bustled cheerfully along, stopping in clusters to gossip with our friends and relatives.” – Nazlin Rahemtulla

“Before Amin, Uganda had such a great government – the best civil service in Africa, the best health care. I’ll tell you straight: at least Asians, by and large, we escaped. The Black Ugandans who stayed paid with their lives. It was a really troubling time.”
– John Nazareth

“Uganda’s Asian community had initially been relieved when Amin overthrew Milton Obote’s civilian government in 1971, Switlo recalls. But the dark side to this new government became apparent to [Umeeda] Switlo’s family when Amin set up a concentration camp directly opposite their home.”
– Tara Carman, Vancouver Sun





Top section: Amina Mohamed's family and friends in Uganda.
Bottom: A sunset in Kampala, Uganda, on a return trip decades later.
Photos: Amina Mohamed Photography.



“Growing up, I always felt that Uganda was home.”
– Amina Mohamed





Uganda to oust British Asians

KAMPALA, Uganda (Center) — President Idi Amin was expected to summon British High Commissioner Richard Slater today to tell him officially about the decision to expel thousands of Ugandan Asians holding British passports.

The high commission said it has not yet been officially informed of Amin's intention — which he announced in a speech to Ugandan troops Friday — to clear all 40,000 to 80,000 British Asians out of the country within three months.

In another speech Sunday night, Amin said his decision was final. He also suggested that restrictions might be applied to people of other nationalities who were not Ugandan citizens.

A statement on this will be issued today, he said, but he did not indicate what it would contain.

The president has accused Asians of sabotaging the economy and of profiteering, currency frauds and refusing to help Ugandans get established in business and agriculture.

"They milked the cow but did not feed it to yield more milk," he said.

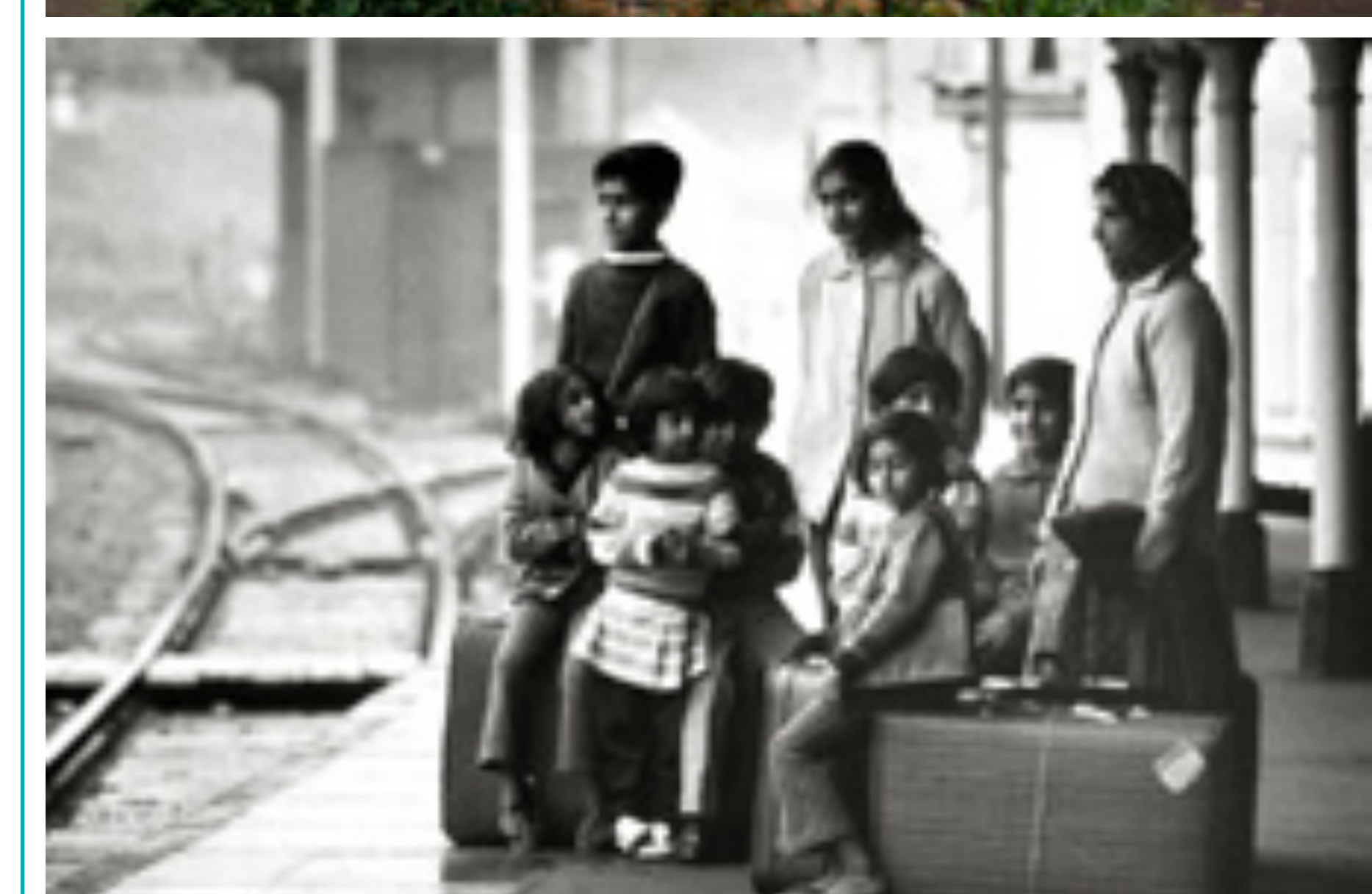
Meanwhile, for most of the Asians here it has been business-as-usual. Many of those holding British passports have told reporters they did not believe it would be physically possible to expel so many people from the country within three months.

Officials in London said the British government's view is that present arrangements for a quota permitting phased entry had been working well, and that Amin's statements had come as a surprise.

The president said when he made his push-up and go announcements that British Asians in Uganda numbered 80,000. Diplomatic sources thought this figure represented Asians as a whole, and those holding British passports were nearer 40,000.

The Ugandan foreign minister, Wanume Kibedi, said in London Sunday that any Asians left in the country after the expiration of the deadline would be "dealt with by Ugandan law." He added before flying to Guyana: "If they still remain they will soon see what happens to them."

The Asians were British citizens, and it was the British who did not want them he said.



Top left: Given their place in the "colonial sandwich," Ugandan Asians were both unwelcome in certain parts of the UK amid concerns of "stealing British jobs" and also seen by many Black Africans as "colonial collaborators." Bottom and right: Personal and journalist archives of Idi Amin's expulsion.

90 days to leave

"These Asians with British passports are sabotaging the economy of the country, and do not have the welfare of Uganda at heart [...] I want to see that the whole Kampala Street is not full of Indians." — Idi Amin

"At that time, it was a very horrific experience, but we made it." — Karmali Satani

"Vivid memories remain of that evening of August 5, 1972, when General Idi Amin Dada pushed the TV anchorman out of his chair and announced: "All British Asians numbering about 80,000 will have to be repatriated to Britain. They must leave within 90 days." — Salma Tejpar-Dang

"Contrary to Idi Amin's sweeping accusations about Asians, our family like many others, was loyal to Uganda. Idi Amin's dream in which God told him to get rid of the Asians became our nightmare." — Azeem Motani

"There were lot of Ugandan citizens who had to go identify themselves and get their citizenship reviewed. Some of the soldiers who were checking destroyed their birth certificates and passports and made them stateless." — Mani Khan

"Word soon got around that the country would not be safe for anyone who looked Asian, regardless of their citizenship. [...] For the African Ugandans who ran afoul of Amin, the story had no such happy ending." — Tara Carman



Roll No.	Name	Grade	Maths	Science	History	Geography	English	Physical Education	Art	Musical Education	Total	Average
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1957, Kampala: Takht Nashini – [Azeem's] father translating



1968, Kampala



1965, Lira



Sharing the ageless cultures of India

Gary Sloomweg: This is a heart-warming story of two Indian classical dancers who first met in Vancouver in the 1970's. Alka Goel-Stevens was born in New Brunswick, Canada as the daughter of two Hindu parents, Devendra and Prem Goel, who came to Canada in 1952. Shelina Virani arrived from Uganda in 1972. Her Ismaili parents, Johnny and Roshan, were well-known business people in the Vancouver and owners of Roshan Saree Centre located in the Punjabi Market.

The parents of both families worked tirelessly to instill the essential values of the Indian way of life – including the religions, dress, food, music, and dances of India – in their children. The four parents would soon become lifelong friends.

Wanting to give back, they started the Kavital Dance School of Bharata Natyam and Kathak in Burnaby in 1987. Today, the students there range from age 5 to 73 years old. Some of their former students are now teachers (Didis) of Indian classical dance. Alka and Shelina have succeeded in their goal to perpetuate the ancient dance styles of Bharata Natyam and Kathak, empowering others to discover the ageless culture of India.

Alka, 17, and Shelina, 10, first met at the VHP Hindu Temple in Burnaby in 1974 where they came to learn India's oldest classical dance form called Bharata Natyam from the talented Ms. Nimmi Bali. As they got older, they continued their study of classical Indian dance, receiving certifications and travelling to India to learn from the masters.

From Expulsion to Refuge, Hope and Honour

Azeem Motani: I was born in 1951 in Kampala. My family story in Uganda began in 1913 when my grandfather Pirbhai Lalji Motani – born in 1895 in Vandaliya in Kathiawar, Gujarat – left India at the age of 18 and arrived in Gulu in Northern Uganda. My grandfather worked hard to achieve his successes and ventured into several different businesses, including textile and cotton ginneries in various towns in Northern Uganda and a flour mill in Kampala.

Following the Ugandan expulsion, I left for the UK, but subsequently decided to study in Canada as my parents had settled in Smiths Falls, Ontario. I reunited with them in December 1972 and we decided to settle in Ottawa where I enrolled in the Certified General Accountants (CGA) Study Program. Our first Jamatkhana was at a high school in downtown Ottawa.

Although dispossessed, arriving in Canada at age 52 with his entire life's possessions in one suitcase, my father, Abdulalli P.L. Motani, remained a determined man who went on to become one of the top agents of a major Canadian life insurance company.

In October 1978, I received the T.H. Frankling Gold Medal for attaining the highest average marks in Ontario in the final year National Certified General Accountants exams. I was chosen Class Valedictorian and during my Valedictory address, on a lighter note, I expressed thanks to Idi Amin: "If it was not for his very physically-moving expulsion order, it is highly unlikely that I would have been masochistic enough to trade the warm and pleasant temperatures of Uganda for the long and cold winters of Canada."



1974, Quebec: With Nev, my first Canadian friend



1994, Kampala: Reunited with our chef William



1978, Toronto: CGA Valedictory Speech





Urban and rural scenes from Tanzania and Kenya.

Elsewhere in Africa, “the writing was on the wall”

“Many hundreds of Ismailis from Tanzania – if not [more] – had already arrived and settled in Canada well before the Ugandan exodus in October 1972.”

– Sadru Meghji

“Ismailis from French-speaking Zaire also left. Many, including my own family, settled in Quebec.”

– Amin Jivraj

In April 1971, the Tanzanian government announced – pursuant to the 1967 Arusha Declaration – the imminent nationalization of banks, major businesses, insurance companies, farms, and schools. While “Asians” in Tanzania, Kenya, Madagascar and Zaire were never explicitly “expelled,” the stresses on their livelihoods and the rising anti-Asian sentiment prompted many to migrate proactively.

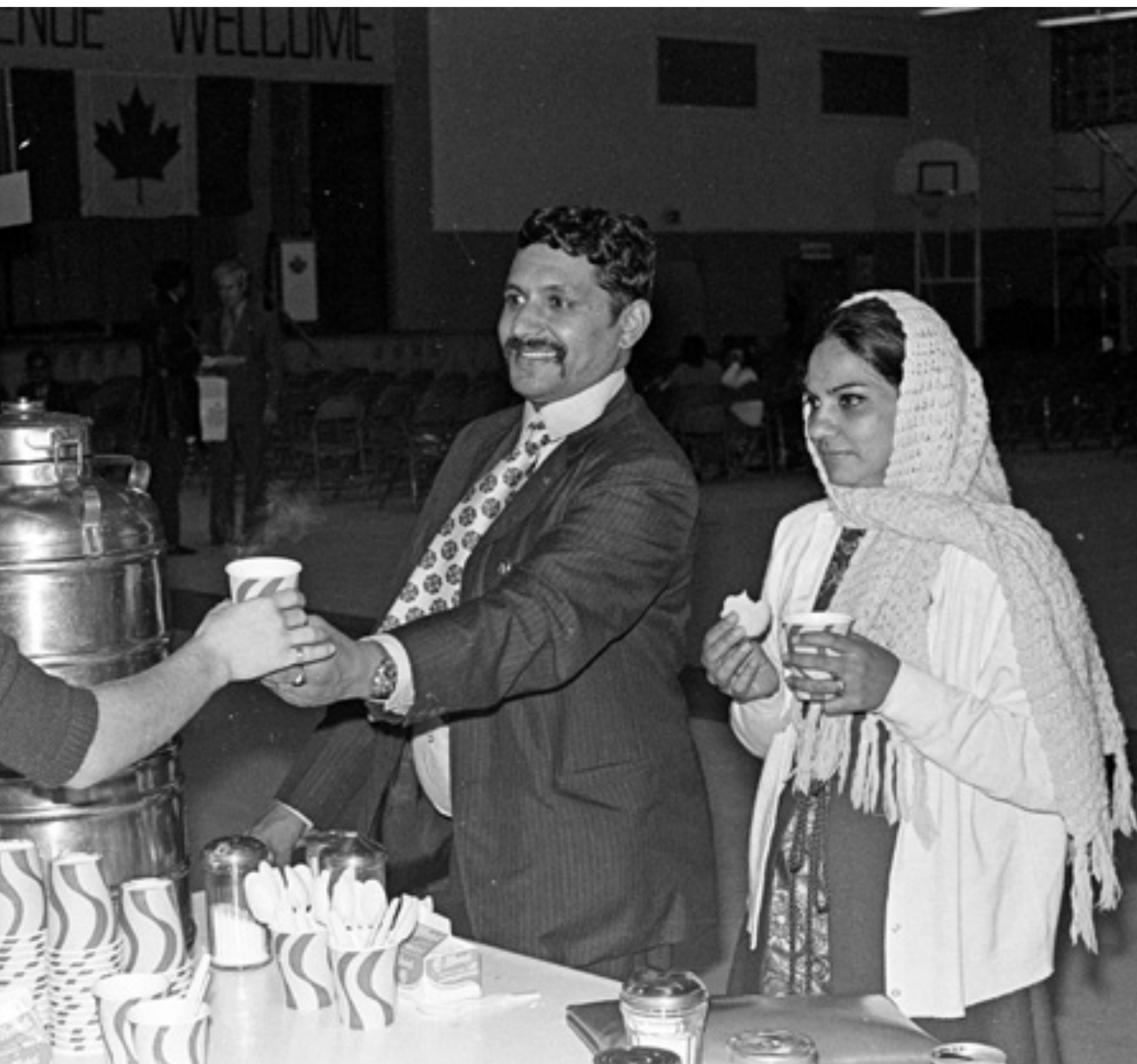
“So when they ask me, ‘Where are you from,’ or, ‘What are you?’ I say, “Listen, this is where my parents were. They have Indian ancestry. The Portuguese colonized Goa. Then they came to East Africa because of the British colonies, and that’s where we were born. So we have Indian ancestry, mainly Portuguese with some Indian culture or background, Catholic-based religion and British upbringing. I explain it to them in that way.” – Errol Francis

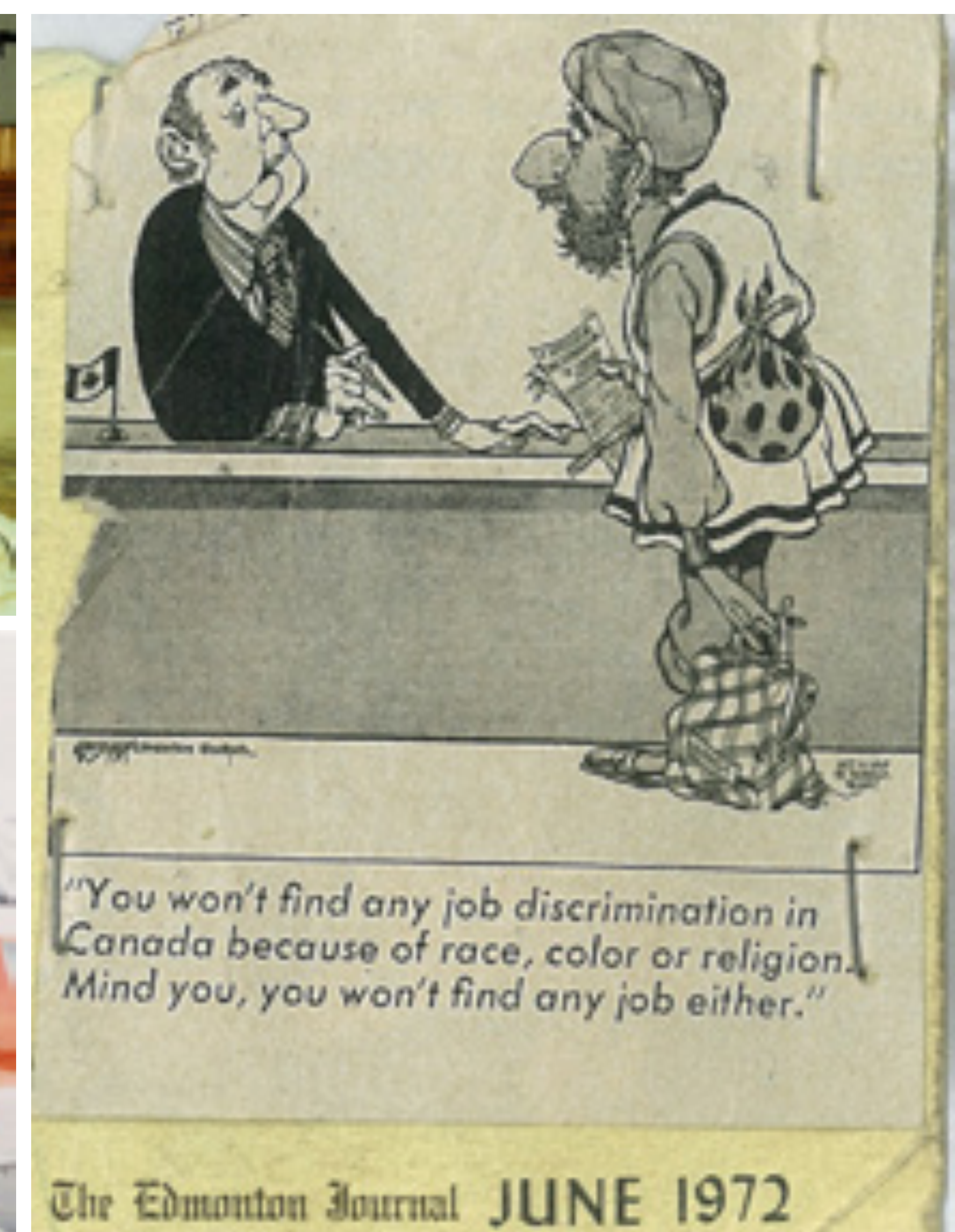




1972

Scenes from Longue Pointe, Quebec as Ugandan Asians arrive in 1972. Photos: Library and Archives Canada.





An honourable place in Canada

“We are prepared to offer an honourable place in Canadian life to those Ugandan Asians who come to Canada.” – Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Prime Minister

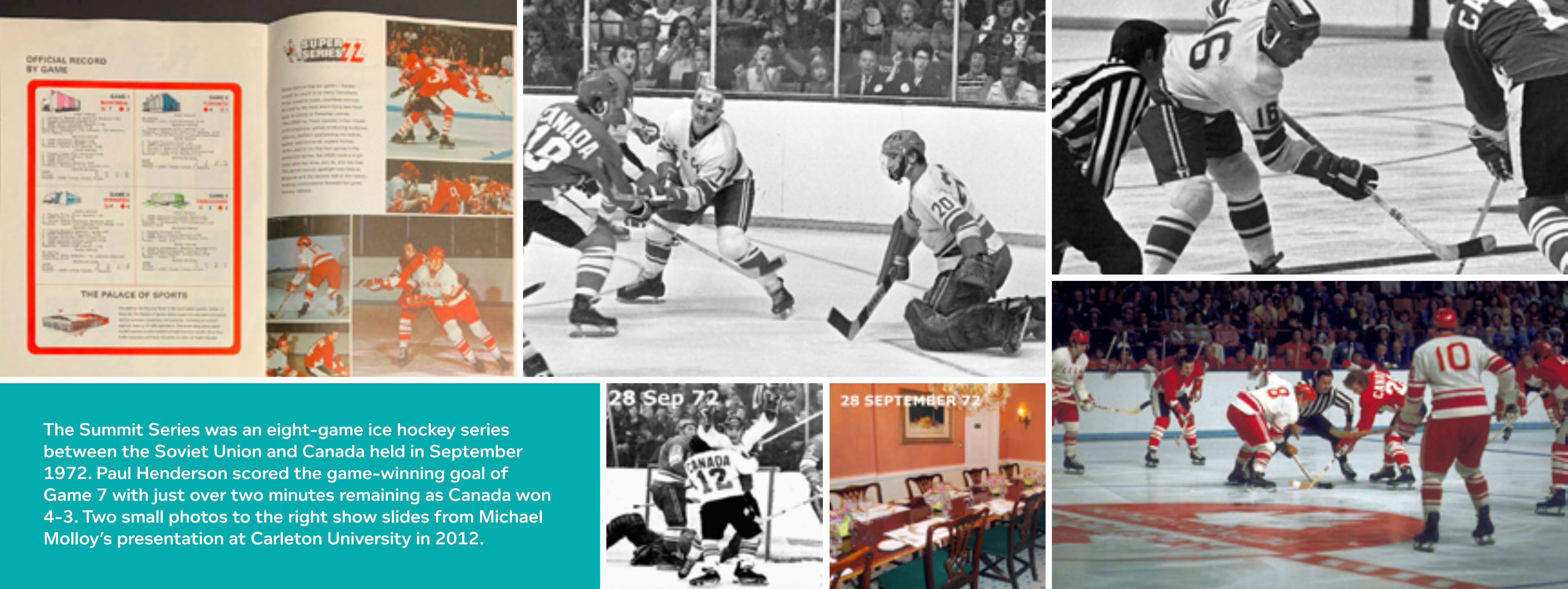
“Ismailism has survived because it has always been fluid. Rigidity is contrary to our whole way of life and outlook.” – Aga Khan III

“I arrived at Entebbe Airport in Uganda on September 5. [...] The office was a large space [that] had been vacant when Roger [St. Vincent, my boss, had] arrived a few days before. I had barely come through the door when I heard Roger shout from across the room, ‘Hey Molloy! Did you come to look or to work?’ He told me we were opening to the public the next morning, September 6. Then he handed me a hand-drawn floor plan [and] told me to get the office set up right away.” – Michael Molloy, Canadian immigration official

“We lost our Ugandan citizenship and we lost our British rights, so we became stateless in Uganda. Canada said that whoever was stateless would be given first priority.” – Aba Mohamed

“Our families are now split into 3 continents (Canada, United Kingdom and Australia) after having left Uganda. [...] We are very fortunate to be a part of community that supported each other in this new environment as we all started off from scratch together.” – Yasmin Allidina





The Summit Series was an eight-game ice hockey series between the Soviet Union and Canada held in September 1972. Paul Henderson scored the game-winning goal of Game 7 with just over two minutes remaining as Canada won 4-3. Two small photos to the right show slides from Michael Molloy's presentation at Carleton University in 2012.

Michael Molloy tells "the hockey story"

Shezan Muhammedi: Michael Molloy was one of the Canadian immigration officials who assisted in the 1972 Asian expulsion from Uganda. Working under the direction of Roger St. Vincent, Molloy was second-in-command at the Kampala office during the time of the expulsion.

As the government refrained from specifically identifying the exact number of Ugandan Asians that would be admitted into Canada, the legend asserts that the final number of 6,000 refugees is linked to the 1972 Summit Series.

[His Highness the] Aga Khan's visit coincided with game seven of the 1972 Summit Series match between Canada and the Soviet Union. James Cross, a senior Canadian government official, hosted the Aga Khan at lunch at the Governor General's estate with four colleagues. At the lunch, they inquired from the maître d'hôtel if they could subtly communicate the score to the Canadian representatives during the lunch [with Russia's score on his left hand and Canada's score on his right].

As Michael Molloy recalled, once the Canadians had tied the game at three, the Aga Khan asked a very pertinent question:

Michael Molloy: So at a certain stage, with the score [3-3], the cumulative score comes up to six points, and [my spouse] and I have gone through the game and we've got it written down ... the Aga Khan says, 'so tell me, Mr. Cross, how many are you going to admit?' And it's at that minute that the maître-D flashes 6 fingers from the door. And Cross, as far as I can tell, he's very excited, and puts 6 fingers on that table and looks at his friends [to signal the score]. And the Aga Khan looks at the fingers and he says, 'you mean 6,000? That's splendid, well, of course.'

The events described in the 'hockey story' coincided with the change in cabinet documents in early October 1972 which specified the numerical limit being increased to 6,000. Furthermore, Roger St. Vincent verified a similar account of events at York University during the twenty-fifth anniversary celebrations of the Ugandan Asian refugee resettlement in Canada.





YOUNGEST UGANDAN in Canada with parents Mr. and Mrs. Ashalkali Hassam who arrived in Prince George from Kampala Monday night. Citizen photo by Rick Hull.

Refugee family in P.G.

Youngest Ugandan here

By Gerry Soroka
Citizen Staff Reporter

She is the youngest Ugandan in Canada.

Ten days ago, when she was born, Nargis Hassam was stateless.

Monday evening when she was carried off a plane at Prince George airport, the infant Ugandan refugee and her parents were no longer homeless.

Mr. and Mrs. Ashalkali Hassam are two of thousands of Ugandan Asians expelled from the country of their birth. The young couple were the last of the "quota" of the refugees for Prince George.

The young girl is believed to be the youngest to come to Canada among an estimated 5,000 placed in communities throughout the country.

Manpower official Jack Bond said today there are now 41 former Ugandans in Prince George and that no more new arrivals are expected although some relatives may join those already here.

Hassam joined his brother Sadrudin in Prince George after arriving at Montreal

Saturday. He came here only days after his child was born in Kampala where the 26-year-old, slightly-built Asian was a sales manager. The brother arrived here Thursday.

When the young father left the capital of the East African country it was raining and when he arrived at Montreal International Airport, snow lay on the ground.

It was the first snow he had seen. Hassam said he was told that the snow and the cold in Canada "in the beginning would not be so tough, but after some weeks it would be cold."

"But we will get used to it," he said in fluent English.

Both brothers were in sales in Kampala; Ashalkali the sales manager of a bicycle parts outlet and Sadrudin in the grocery sales business.

They both feel they have a reasonably good chance to get back into their fields as they start a new life in Canada, but they are determined to do anything to get established.

"I'll try to get a sales manager's position for any pro-

duct," Ashalkali said in an interview at a local motel today, "but if I don't, I'll take any kind of job."

Sadrudin expressed interest in the big grocery store chains, but just as firmly declared he'll work anywhere to get both feet planted securely on Canadian soil.

Manpower's Bond said counsellors are interviewing the Asians and already one man has been placed in a job. Robert DeSouza who is skilled as a heavy duty mechanic started work this week at International Harvester Co. of Canada Ltd.

Bond said that many of the immigrants were businessmen or had clerical-type positions in Uganda and Manpower would strive to help them get similar jobs here although he noted they have expressed eagerness to work at anything.

The Hassams are reluctant to talk about the actions of Ugandan President Idi Amin in expelling those Asians holding British passports and those declared "stateless" as were these families. They said they fear reprisals against those Asians still in Uganda if the government is criticized.

One of their greatest concerns is being able to worship.

The Hassams, who are Moslems, are aware there is no mosque here and they seem anxious to learn whether enough people of their faith eventually will live in Prince George to establish one.

now hear this . . .

Top: An article published in the Prince George Citizen in British Columbia, titled "Youngest Ugandan here." Bottom: A partial extract of an article published one year after the above article, titled "Ugandans discover peace of mind." Submitted by Narmin Hassam-Clark. She writes, "My sister was one of the youngest Ugandans in Canada in 1972. My parents and my one-week old sister were likely among the last to leave Uganda, just before Idi Amin's 90-day deadline expired."

ONE YEAR IN PRINCE GEORGE

Ugandans discover peace of mind

By Tony Kant
Citizen Staff Reporter

It was just over a year ago that Ashalkali Hassam, his wife Koshi and their 10-day-old daughter Nargis crossed high above the snow-capped peaks of the Rockies headed for Prince George with their homeland of Uganda fresh in their minds.

A year in Canada has dulled the pain of being ousted from their homes and separated from families. There is no bitterness, only a deep sense of gratitude towards the Canadian government who took them and 5,657 countrymen under its wing. Sixty-six were located in Prince George.

"The Canadian government picked us up from hell and brought us to Heaven," said the 27-year-old Hassam in fluent English as his wife listened attentively and his daughter, now one year old, played on the carpet.

Heaven for the Hassam family at the moment is a neat two bedroom apartment, sparsely furnished but comfortable. It's a job at Woodward's as a maintenance man and knowing that Nargis will get a good education. It's knowing that the family has security and a future in Canada.

The three were penniless when they stepped off the flight from Kampala via Montreal on Nov. 6, 1972. But Hassam says it was better to leave the country with no money rather than stay in Uganda living in fear of a hostile government.

"Money is not so important. If you get a peaceful sleep and have a peaceful mind then everything is with you."

In Uganda, the Hassams had two servants.

Hassam and his family enjoyed the good life in Kampala — the capital of Uganda — before General Idi Amin ordered all British passport holders out of the country within 90 days. For the past eight years, Hassam had worked as head salesman for a company which distributed Raleigh bicycles throughout the country.

He said that in Uganda he would be considered slightly above middle-class. He owned his own house in the city as well as a family automobile. A note of sadness comes to his voice as he describes family outings in the new Fiat 124 Special that was left behind.

The family has no car now. They have remained in Prince George except for a few day trips into the surrounding countryside in cars belonging to obliging friends.

Hassam walks the two miles to his job each day and says that in this country, a car is necessary. Maybe next year when the bank book looks better.

For the most part, life in a Ugandan city is not much different from that of cities in North America. There's the theatre, cars, television with American programming and most of the amenities found here for those who could afford it.

Hassam said there were about 60,000 Asians living in Uganda at the time of the order to leave the country. About 10,000 held Ugandan citizenship and the rest were holding passports from other countries, including Britain. Most of the Asians were middle-class merchants and some had the foresight to invest their money out of the country. Hassam's money was in Ugandan currency when he was ordered to leave.

He said that when the original order for all non-Ugandan passport holders to leave the country came, he had thoughts of leaving also but felt there was nothing to fear as he held a Ugandan passport and citizenship as he was born there.

On Oct. 10, less than a month away from the deadline, Amin ordered that non-Africans should also leave the country. He later said that Asians with Ugandan passports could stay, but had to come forward to have their passports verified.

Hassam went to a government office to have his passport checked and it was taken away from him. He and his family were then stateless.

The family was grateful when they learned they would be admitted to Canada. Their air fare and initial expenses here were paid by the Canadian government. When they left the Kampala airport they were given \$25 to cover any incidental expenses they might have enroute here.

Hassam thinks he was lucky to come to Prince George instead of a larger centre such as Vancouver where 1,400 Ugandan Asians settled. "Vancouver is one of the biggest cities and I think we would have had a hard time settling there."



HASSAM FAMILY. . . a new home in Prince George

The Citizen

Prince George, Tuesday, December 4, 1973 — 13

Valani visited the Canadian High Commission in Kampala, filled out the proper forms and later was told his family would be accepted to enter Canada.

The family arrived a bit better off than many Ugandans. Vallani had secured a small nest egg in a Swiss bank and although it took him six months to get the money back, he had enough to purchase a used car and some furniture for a start here.

He was without a job in Prince George for the first six months except for a brief stint in one of the pulp mills. He says the work in the mill was too strenuous for him. He wasn't used to doing physical labor and had to quit.

He now works as an express clerk.

Valani said he had some difficulty in finding employment.

"You see in the paper there is a vacancy. You got to the place and tell them you will work for any wages they offer but they won't give you a job." He said that many prospective employers demand "Canadian experience."

The initial prospects of setting up a business in Canada are discouraging to Valani as he doesn't have a lot of capital. "In Uganda you don't need a lot of money to go into business. There you just need a good reputation and good credit."

He has already travelled to Edmonton, Calgary and Kamloops but is undecided about where he will finally settle. "I think I will just work here for a couple of years to get used to the Canadian ways and the Canadian people."

Like the Hassams, the Valanis also miss the religious and social life they enjoyed in Kampala. Valani said he also misses being able to go to the market to buy fresh fruit and vegetables and fish for very low prices. "Everything you buy is frozen here."

Valani said there are three things that have convinced him that coming to Canada was a move he'll never regret: good schooling for his children, good medical care and most important, peace of mind.

Nasim Khamisa was separated from her parents.

For Nasim Khamisa, leaving Uganda to come to Canada was probably a bit more traumatic than for most. It was the first time she had ever been separated from her parents.

She was the only member of her family picked to go to Canada. The rest of the family was sent to a refugee camp in Italy, however, when she arrived in Prince George she filled out forms to sponsor their entrance to Canada.

In April, her parents and a 20-year-old brother arrived in Prince George. Later, two other brothers and a sister were sponsored and are now living in Toronto.

Nasim is working in an office now and like most of her compatriots, she was glad to be able to come to Canada. She misses her daily trips to worship in the mosque and admits she is drifting away from the strong religious life experienced in Uganda.

As far as the department of Manpower and Immigration is concerned, the Ugandans who came to Prince George are one big success story. Immigration officer Jack Bond said that of the 40 Ugandans eligible for work here, only two are now between jobs. The remainder work at a variety of occupations including bank and hotel clerks, auto mechanics in transportation and the logging industry.

According to national statistics, of the 2,500 who arrived looking for work, fewer than 400 are said to be still jobless.

The government spent close to \$4 million on the move and settlement of the Ugandans. The largest expense was the chartered flights from Kampala. Other costs were inland transportation from Quebec to other centres, hotel accommodations and living expenses while the Ugandans looked for jobs and housing.

The Ugandans are expected to pay back the cost of their transportation between Quebec and their final destinations, however, this is not being pressed.

Bond said that although many of the Ugandans are skilled and have tradis, Canadian standards seem to be higher. He gave the example of one man who landed a job in a local garage as an auto mechanic but had never seen a pneumatic hoist before.

Bond said the Ugandans are an extremely courteous people and employer response has been most encouraging. "They seem to be a different type of people — quite westernized. They have a good attitude and seem to fit into our society very well."



Left: Arrival of refugees at Longue Pointe, Quebec, 1972. Middle top: Family archives of Goan Ugandan Tina Athaide. Middle bottom: Kampala Field Hockey Team, 1967. Top right: Shree Sanatan Dharma Mandal temple, Kampala, Uganda; Uganda Argus newspaper clipping. Bottom right: Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Kampala, Uganda.

The diversity of “Ugandan Asians”

“Even when the term ‘Asian’ was used by mid-century researchers, it was deployed begrudgingly [with] a caveat that it was very difficult to group these diverse communities together in the first place.” – Taushif Kara

“There were significant Asian communities in in Uganda. These included Gujarati Hindus (50 percent) and Ismaili Muslims (30 percent), as well as smaller communities of Sikhs, Goans, Punjabi Hindus, Ithnasharis, Boas, and Parsis.” – Michael Molloy, Canadian immigration official

“The Ismaili community used to have sport competitions with the Hindus, or the Sikh community, or the Punjabis, all of South Asian background – essentially all friends.”
– Bashir Lalani

“We had Hindu people working there [at the export company Liverpool Uganda] and they treated me like their daughter.” – Azina Lalani

“It was important I capture this history that showed what the community had nurtured through the years with connections from Goa over generations in Uganda. Our [family’s] ties to Uganda date back to around 1927.” – Tina Athaide





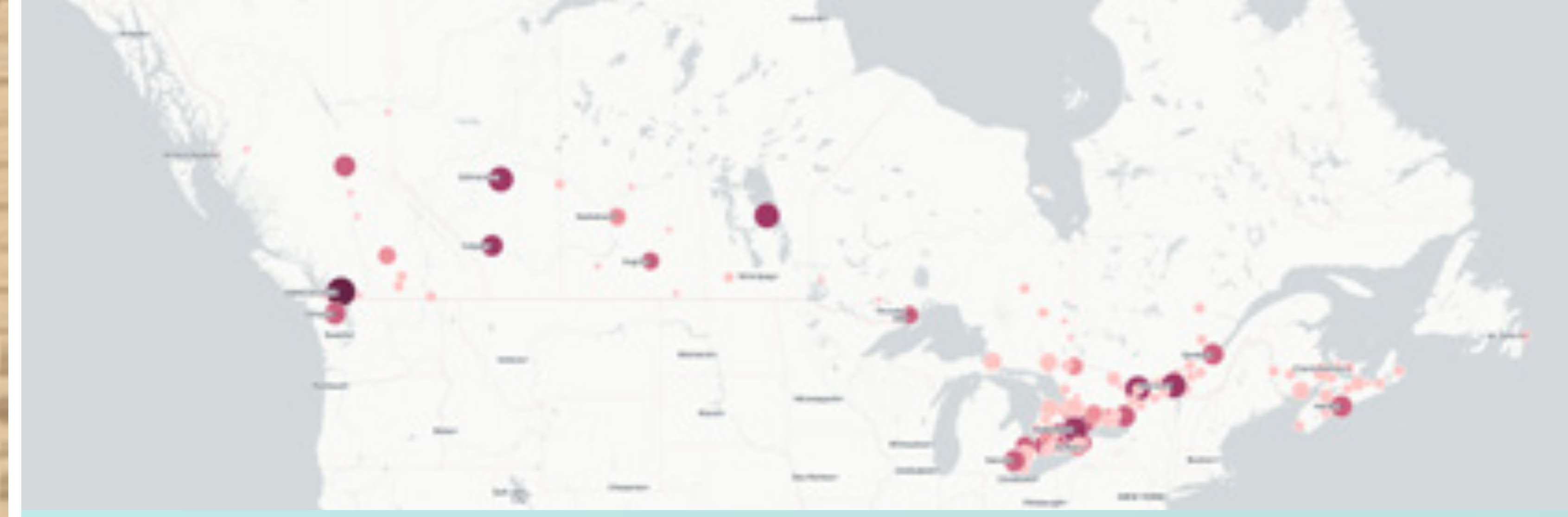
1978 Mawlana Hazar Imam makes his first Jamati visit to Canada.





Circa 1970

Above: My family in 1973 consisted of my father (Late Huzur Mukhi Aladin Jivraj), my mother (Late Huzur Mukhiani Sakina Kara-Hassan), my late maternal grandmother Salima Namvano binti Barwani (of African descent), my six siblings (4 brothers and 2 sisters), a sister-in-law and two nieces. Below: I was 15 years old. I went to public primary and secondary schools in Goma, intermingling with local classmates.



Mapping the resettlement

Carleton University's Uganda Collection: Based on the log book donated by Chief Warrant Officer Randall of the Canadian Armed Forces, Archives and Special Collections designed three maps that display information on 4,467 Ugandan Asian refugees who flew into the Montreal-Dorval International Airport and were transported to a reception centre at Longue-Pointe, Canadian Forces Base Montreal. The first map [above] shows where Ugandan Asian refugees were resettled across Canada. The five largest resettlement cities were: Vancouver (1,034), Montreal (480), Toronto (440), Winnipeg (205), and Ottawa (124).



Zaire's Ismailis

Amin Aladin Jivraj: In 1973, in the former Zaire in Central Africa (now, Democratic Republic of the Congo), the government under President Mobutu introduced a form of "disguised nationalization" of business and immovable assets of peoples it considered as "foreigners" (which included Ismailis), canceling their trade licenses. Known in French as "Remise - Reprise," this meant that foreigners were forced to "hand over" their businesses to certain local individuals selected by the government without any form of compensation. While the government did not expel the foreigners like in Uganda, we saw no future for ourselves under the circumstances. Based on advice received from their institutions, Ismailis left with the majority resettling in Canada.

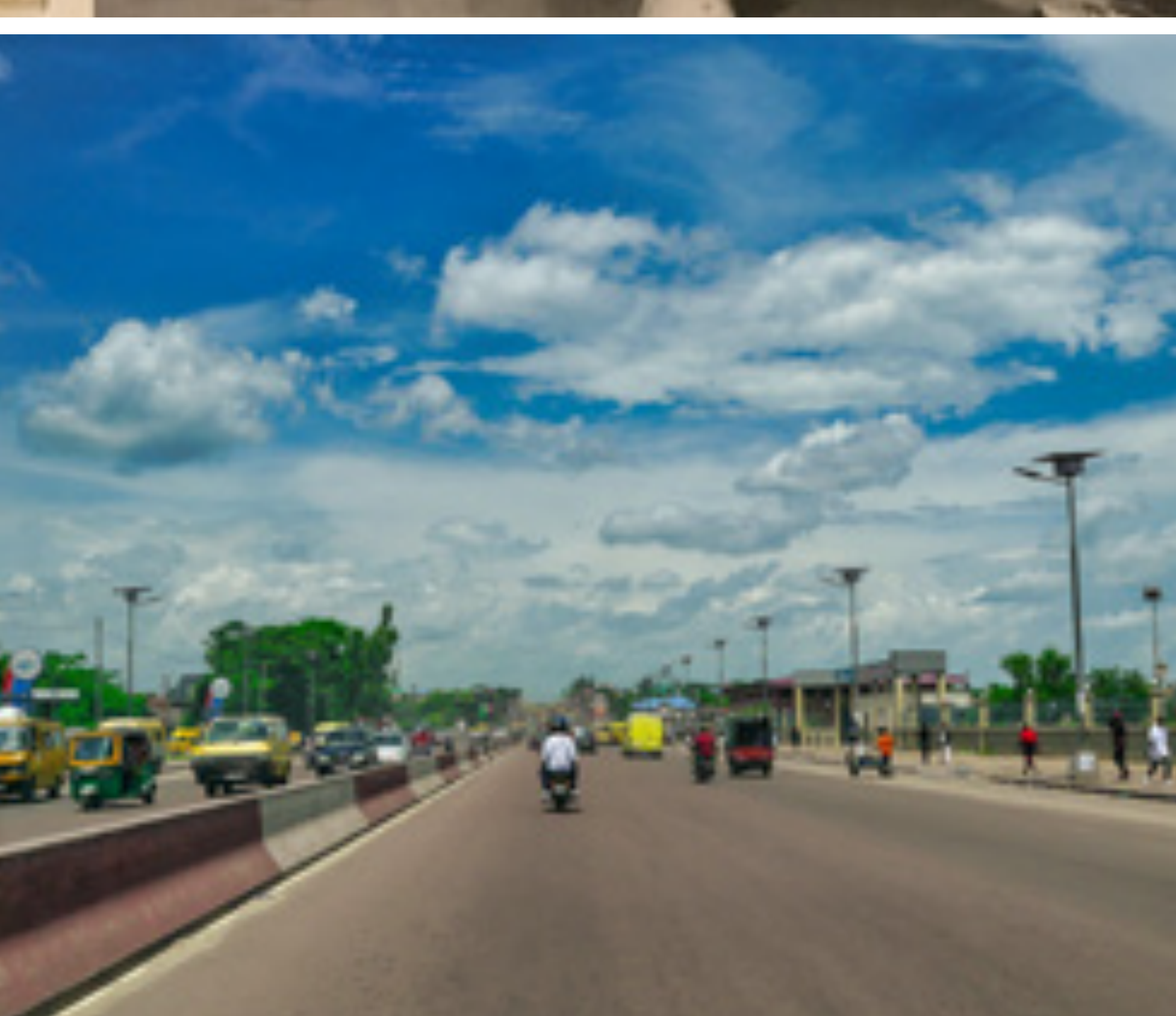
Many, including my own family, settled in Quebec, which was seen as a place that would allow an easy transition and integration based on our knowledge of French as Zaire's official language. The settlement process went smoothly with many members of the Jamat finding jobs. I, for one, benefited greatly being the first in the family to complete a university education in 1981.

After a short stay in Montreal, the family settled on the south shore in Longueuil where I, along with my younger brother and sister, went to public schools. We are so fortunate and grateful to Canada.

The dream is possible

Malika Ladha: Jahangir Hassanpoor remembers how when he first arrived in Canada, his friend's mother had asked him to purchase ten pounds of potatoes. He returned with ten pounds of tomatoes. Hassanpoor laughs, recalling his struggle with the new language. Born and raised in Mashhad, Iran, it was there that Hassanpoor first met Tanzanian Ismaili students who were studying medicine at Pahlavi University. Hassanpoor was 16 at the time of the 1979 revolution which was followed by the eight-year Iran-Iraq war. After two years in the army, "it felt like there was no hope, no future," he says. "I was at an adventurous age so I decided to leave the country."

Hassanpoor embarked on a risky solo journey to Pakistan in 1983 and was en route to Canada within three months. "Since I knew [the Ismaili medical students], I felt I had a connection to make a home in Canada." Once he had acquired refugee status, Mirshahi and other Iranian Ismailis were sponsored by Ismailis in Canada. Settling in Montreal, he balanced a full-time job with learning English as a second language and completing high school. When Hassanpoor's family in Mashhad received a letter with a picture of Jahangir at Niagara Falls, they shared it with his 17-year-old cousin, Amir Reza Mirshahi. "Jahangir showed me that the dream is possible."





Mawlana Hazar Imam visits the Canadian Jamat during his Silver Jubilee celebrations (1982) and his Golden Jubilee festivities (2008), celebrating 25 years and 50 years respectively of his Imamat. The visits reflect developing and deepening relationships with the Government of Canada resulting in strengthened Shia Ismaili identity in Canada and positive contributions to the social, political and economic makeup of the country.





Our journey upstream

In 2021, 36 families from the Ottawa and Kingston Ismaili community created a mural that depicts fish swimming upstream, representing the Ismaili community's past and ongoing journey to and in Canada. The mural, entitled "Journey Upstream," was presented to Generations, a long-term care facility in Calgary that houses an early childhood development centre to encourage intergenerational interactions. The mural was inspired by a gift of a jade salmon carving Canadian Ismailis gave to His Highness the Aga Khan in 1978.

I immigrated to Canada to pursue my dreams

Ziaulhaq Amiri: Leaving my home country, Afghanistan, at an early age was not an easy decision, but the most important one. As a young refugee holding nothing but a pen, I now had to work in physically-demanding jobs under extreme conditions. I am grateful for those experiences that taught me life skills and made my life adventurous. Deep down in my heart, I knew all these struggles would eventually come to an end, and they did when I immigrated to Canada to pursue my dreams.

After a year of struggle in a foreign country (Pakistan), I arrived in Sherbrooke, Quebec. Relocating to a new country exacerbated the challenges associated with adjusting and adapting to new norms and customs while preserving our ancestral culture. My academic career had to be relaunched. I returned to high school in order to excel in college, then attended university. Now, I'm enrolled in the Institute of Ismaili Studies. As a youth mentor for the Canadian Council for Refugees (Youth Network), I have decided to give back what this beautiful country has given: a second chance to rebuild the future that I was unable to envision in Afghanistan. I'm immensely grateful to my family for the provided support, unwavering love, and trust.



Unpacking our Ismaili Canadian identity

As this past year's artist-in-residence at the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, Aquil Virani (aquil.ca) is an award-winning visual artist, graphic designer and filmmaker. This suitcase painting, part of a larger series funded by the Ontario Arts Council, depicts an Ismaili man from Tanzania, overlooking a romanticized "Canadian landscape."



Mazar-e Sharif, Afghanistan, 2009



**"The elephant inspires us to persevere."
– Narmin Kassam**

"Dear Canada: You paved the way to a better future. Je vous en remercie!" – Ziaulhaq Amiri

Aleem's Elephant

This acrylic painting by Narmin Kassam is titled "Aleem's Elephant," dedicated to the artist's son to mark his birth. Painted in an impressionist style with the colours of the African landscape, the elephant pays tribute to the artist's Indian and African roots. As an animal of peace, the elephant is neither prey nor predator. The strength, stability and honour represented by this majestic mammal with its large footprint remind us of our ancestors' efforts to empower their community and aspire toward continuous movement. The elephant always remembers its past, yet walks toward the future.





Top and left: From the photography series, "The Diverse Faces of the Montreal Jamat," by Muslim Harji Images. Bottom right: Stills from "Beyond Borders," created by a team of Ismaili filmmakers from Montreal and directed by Ali Shaan Khemani.



We are Afghan and Canadian too

« Je suis fière d'être afghane. Je suis fière d'être canadienne-québécoise. »
– Benafsha Amiri

"I am grateful for the unity, support and kindness of the global Ismaili community."
– Ayub Nazari

"My father decided that we would go to Pakistan [first]. It was not easy because the infrastructure was not there. Any means of travelling was improvised. There were a lot of challenges. People were being robbed on their way. People were being helped by strangers. We had to ask ourselves: 'Who do you trust?'" – Mansur Qaderi

"In September 1992, the Government of Quebec and the Ismaili Council signed a unique protocol agreement which laid the foundation for the collaborative work that resulted in the settlement and integration of the first 350 Afghan Ismaili refugees." – CTV News

"When we left Qundoz, we walked through mountains for 17 days to finally reach Pakistan. [...] A person who leaves their own country to come to another country will obviously have tensions."
– Bozorg Shah Qaderi

« O Allah! Le plus clément / Le plus miséricordieux / Le seigneur du jugement dernier / Votre lumière nous éclaire / Nous permet de voir / Le bon côté des choses. » – Barin Habibi (une fille afghane de 12 ans à Sherbrooke, Québec en 1999)





Photos: From the lens of Muslim Harji Images





The land of opportunities

Fady Almessayy: My name is Fady Almessayy, and I am a Syrian Ismaili. My family is rooted in Salamieh and migrated to the cities Damascus, Aleppo, and Homes in the 1960s because of the severe drought and lack of livelihood opportunities.

Our journey to Canada started with Lebanon, then UAE, and then Jordan with difficulties faced throughout in obtaining work permits and business visas.

Settling in Canada was very challenging and required clear planning, hard work and dedication. I started as a general worker at a grocery store and, at the same time, I applied for a master's degree at McGill University. I obtained my degree in 2019 and started a job as a business analyst with TD. Canada is our new home and it is the land of opportunities.

After the war erupted in Syria in 2011, most Ismailis experienced deep difficulties with regards to their safety, financial situation, and being able to access health care and education. In Damascus, I lost my house and job in 2012, and Salamieh was the best shelter that we could seek. Fortunately, my parents had already moved there following their retirement, and I joined them when I lost my house. Then I left the country with my wife and daughter with a clear plan to migrate to a safe place and build a peaceful life.

It started with a package of soap "made in Canada"

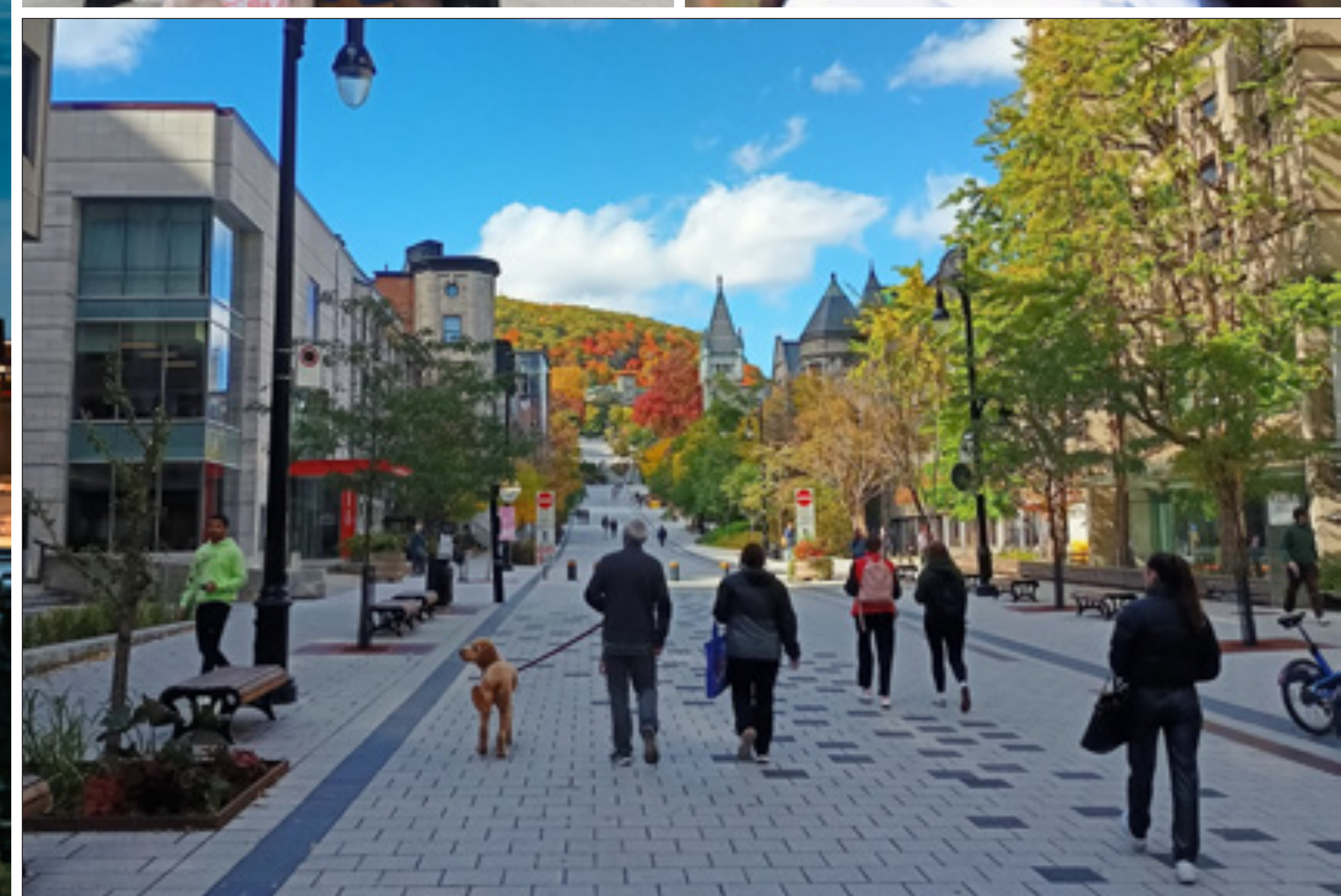
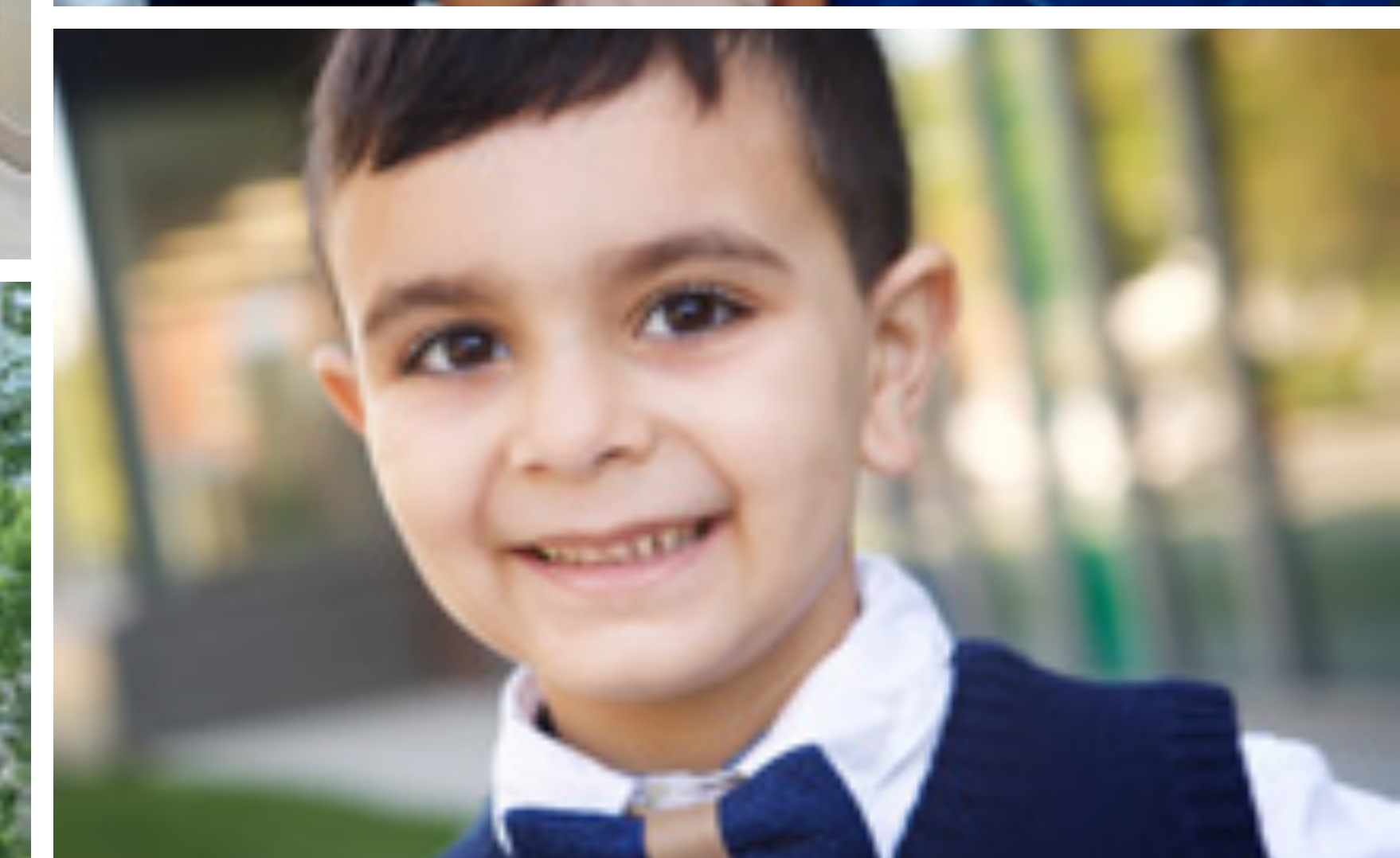
Ayub Nazari fled from war-torn Afghanistan in 1994 with his entire family, parents, 6 brothers, one sister and their families, making a dangerous trip across the border to Rawalpindi, Pakistan from Kabul during a short-lived ceasefire. It was difficult emotionally for Ayub to leave a country where his ancestors had helped build the first Jamatkhana in Kabul.

Giving back to the Ismaili community through seva was a core value for Ayub. As a second-degree black belt, he started a youth Taekwondo club where he offered free classes to local children on the rooftop of his apartment building.

His discovery of Canada came by chance; as his English improved, he read the packaging on a bar of soap one day which indicated "Made in Canada." He quickly learned about this country – Ismailis were living there too! He made it his dream to immigrate to Canada for a better life. Along with his family's application to immigrate, he volunteered full-time for nearly 2 months to help 43 other Ismaili families do the same. He insisted he would not leave for Canada until everyone was approved and he kept true to his word.

In December 2000, Ayub, his wife, son, daughter and extended family, arrived in Edmonton, Alberta.

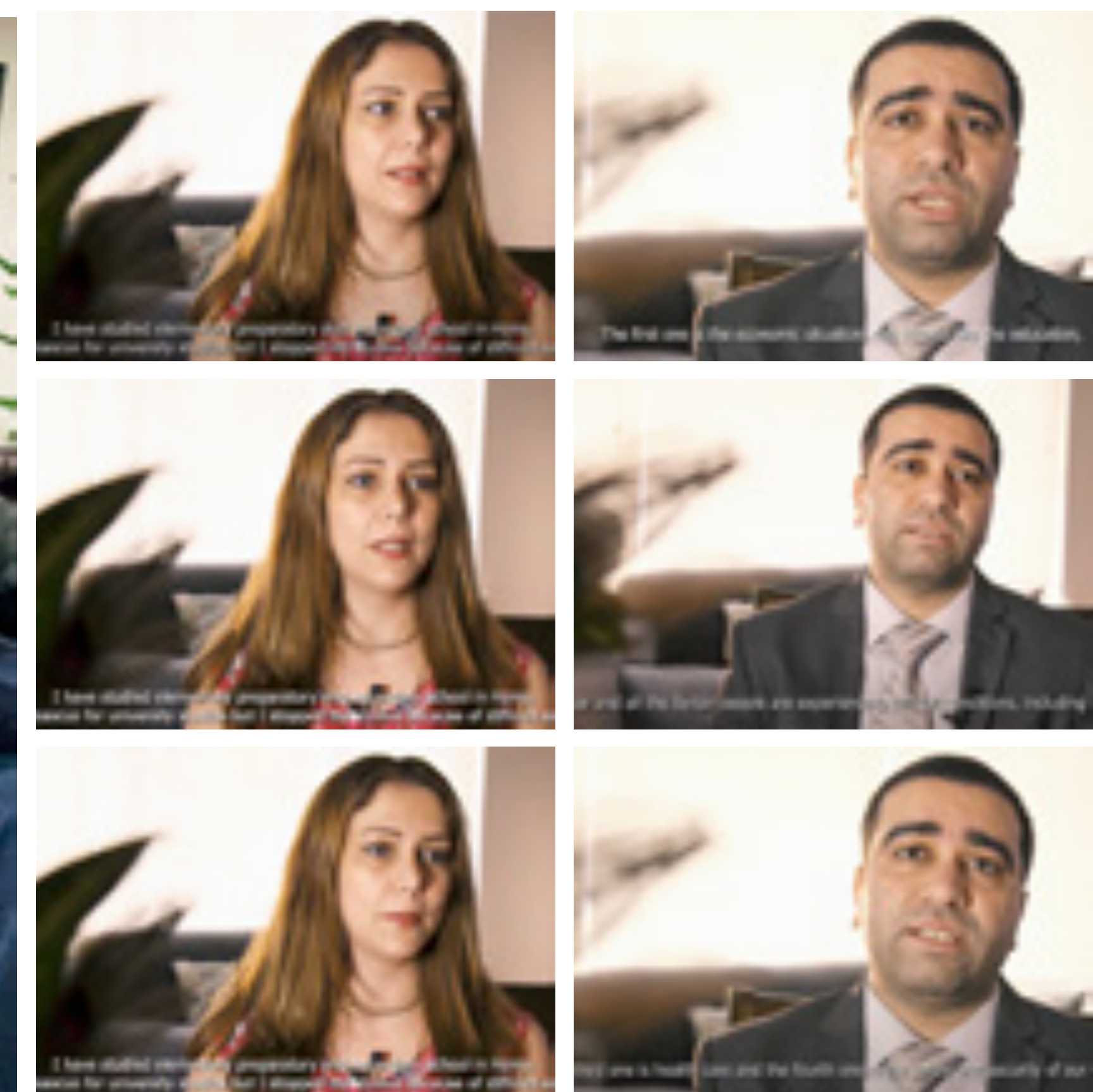
"After everything he's been through, 'proud' is just a small word. I'm more than 'proud' of him." – Diyala, Fady's sister





2014 Mawlana Hazar Imam addresses Canadian Parliament in the presence of Prime Minister Stephen Harper in 2014.





Left: From the lens of Muslim Harji images. Top middle: Dr. Rana Mustafa with her two kids. Top right: Syrian-Canadian children play hockey. Bottom middle: Photo submitted by Mazen Kasim. Bottom right: Stills from "Beyond Borders," created by a team of Ismaili filmmakers from Montreal and directed by Ali Shaan Khemani.

Syria to Canada

"After the war erupted, most of us experienced deep difficulties with regards to our safety, financial situation, and access to health care and education."
– Fady Almessyaty

"In 2011, protests against President Bashar Al-Assad's regime escalated into a civil war that has since levelled cities, devastated Syria's economy and, according to the United Nations, caused 5.6 million people, to flee. Canada promised to resettle 25,000 Syrian refugees by the end of 2015. Since then, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada says over 73,000 of them have settled in this country." – CBC News

"I came from Salamieh, Syria. I studied elementary and secondary school in Homes. I went to Damascus for university, but I stopped my studies because of difficult war conditions."
 – Ghenwa Masyati

"I came to Canada in 2016 fleeing the war in Syria. I am proud to say I am becoming a Canadian citizen this year. There was no future in Syria and it was no longer safe for my children to grow up in. My family made Saskatoon our home, after I obtained work as a researcher at the University of Saskatoon with my academic PhD background in Food Processing and Biotechnology. [...] **Canada is a place of inclusivity and acceptance of all cultures.**"
 - Dr. Rana Mustafa

"Because I already had a couple of cousins and some friends in Edmonton, I settled there. Although I had worked with international companies in Saudi, my work experience was not recognized in Canada initially. I had to start again from the bottom and rebuild my way up. I am Syrian. And I am Canadian. And I am proud to be both." – Mazen Kasim





Top: Mawlana Hazar Imam receives an honorary degree from the University of British Columbia. Bottom: Mawlana Hazar Imam receiving honorary degrees from the University of Toronto, the University of Alberta, the University of Calgary, McMaster University, the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies (PIMS), McGill University, University of Ottawa, Trinity College and Simon Fraser University.





Canada was now my new home

Karmali Valibhai Satani: My family and I – all 6 of us – arrived in Canada on October 22, 1972. At that time, [Idi Amin's expulsion] was a very horrific experience, but we made it! This was the first taste of a cold harsh winter compared to the mild weather of Uganda where I had lived for 20 years as a teacher. Canada was now my new home, so I decided to face it and brave the cold.

I am originally from India, then moved to Pakistan, thereafter to Uganda, and finally to Canada. After my job search for about a year, on September 1, 1973, I secured a job with the Aga Khan Council for Ontario as Administrative Officer, where I worked until my retirement in Toronto.

There are many ways to be resilient, no matter what age you are. As for me, I am always ready to offer my seva, to serve our community, to work hard, to be sincere, and to share smiles with friends and family.

This passion of mine brought me to Canada

Dr. Shela Hirani: I migrated to Canada from Pakistan in 2015. Being a nurse-academician, lactation consultant and researcher, I came to Canada to pursue my PhD in Nursing from the University of Alberta, studying 'Breastfeeding barriers and facilitators of mothers living in disaster relief camps in Pakistan'. I want to make a difference in the lives of displaced women. During my doctoral studies I travelled to Chitral, Pakistan where natural disasters were ongoing and many families were displaced. I undertook my research in collaboration with the Aga Khan Agency for Habitat,

Pakistan (formerly known as Focus Pakistan). In Canada, my doctoral work was supported by the Government of Canada's Vanier Graduate Doctoral Award, Izaak and Dorothy Killam Award, Aga Khan Foundation-ISP Award, International Development Research Centre research award, and various other university-based awards.

Since 2019, I have worked as an Associate Professor at the University of Regina. I am a proud Ismaili and I am proud to call Canada my home.

"There are many ways to be resilient, no matter what age you are." – Karmali Satani

"I am proud to call Canada my home." – Dr. Shela Hirani



AN ODE FOR MR. SATANI

Mr. Satani, is a man of quality, an example of true integrity; Always smiling at all Council meetings, recognized for his unmistakable greetings.

Mr. Satani, has shown true dedication, working quietly, needing no sensation; No task for him was large or small, in all situations he answered to everyone's call.

Mr. Satani, is a fine volunteer, an example to all his peers; You could hear his linguistic talent, in Gujarati announcements it was quite apparent.

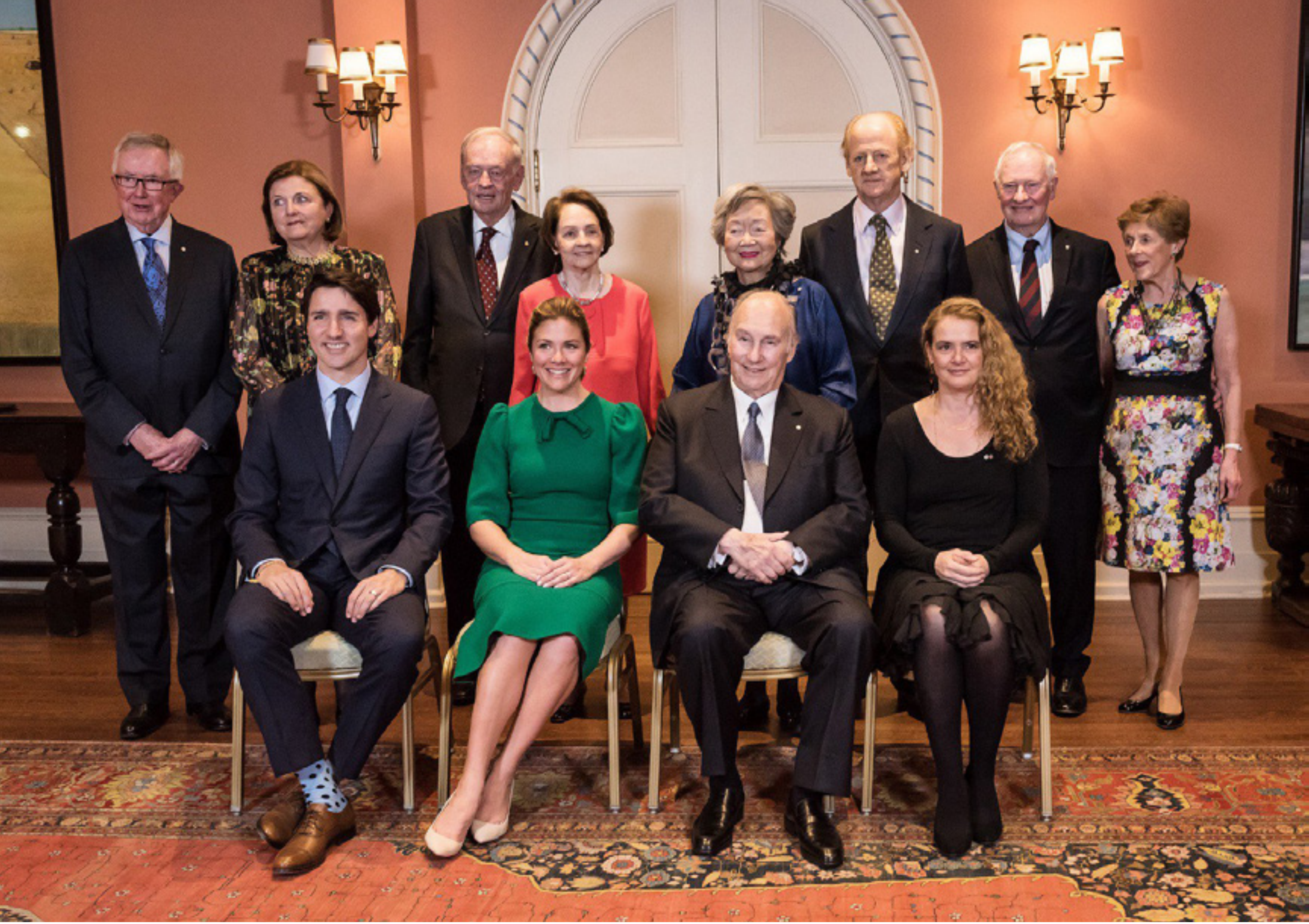
Mr. Satani, the full time Council Officer, saw the Jamat in Uganda prosper; Then came to Canada during Jamati movement, to sow the seeds of strong Institutions and Jamati settlement.

Mr. Satani, we register our appreciation, for your 44 years of dedication; Your service to our Imam and Jamat we remember, as well as your diplomacy and candor.

Mr. Satani, we warmly wish for your happiness, may the future bring you joy and gladness; May Allah's blessings shower your every day, this ardently we all pray.

WITH BEST WISHES FROM PRESIDENT & MEMBERS COUNCIL FOR ONTARIO - 1987 TO 1990





2018 Mawlana Hazar Imam visits the Canadian Jamat during Diamond Jubilee celebrations of his Imamat in 2017 (eastern Canada) and 2018 (western Canada) along with prominent Canadian politicians. The visits reflect the long-standing partnership between the Ismaili Imamat and Canada to help to improve the quality of life for people around the world.





Left and top: The faces of the Montreal Ismaili community from the lens of Muslim Harji Images. Middle right: Garba choreographed by Julie Charania. Bottom right: A group of Ismaili performing artists representing Canada at Jubilee Arts International.

Ismailis in Canada: A global constellation

“Ultimately, a community’s history is made of all these stories – the individual and the familial, the told and the untold.” – Rizwan Mawani

“I’m happy to live here. I’m proud to be Tajik-Canadian.” – Shamsiya Hamir

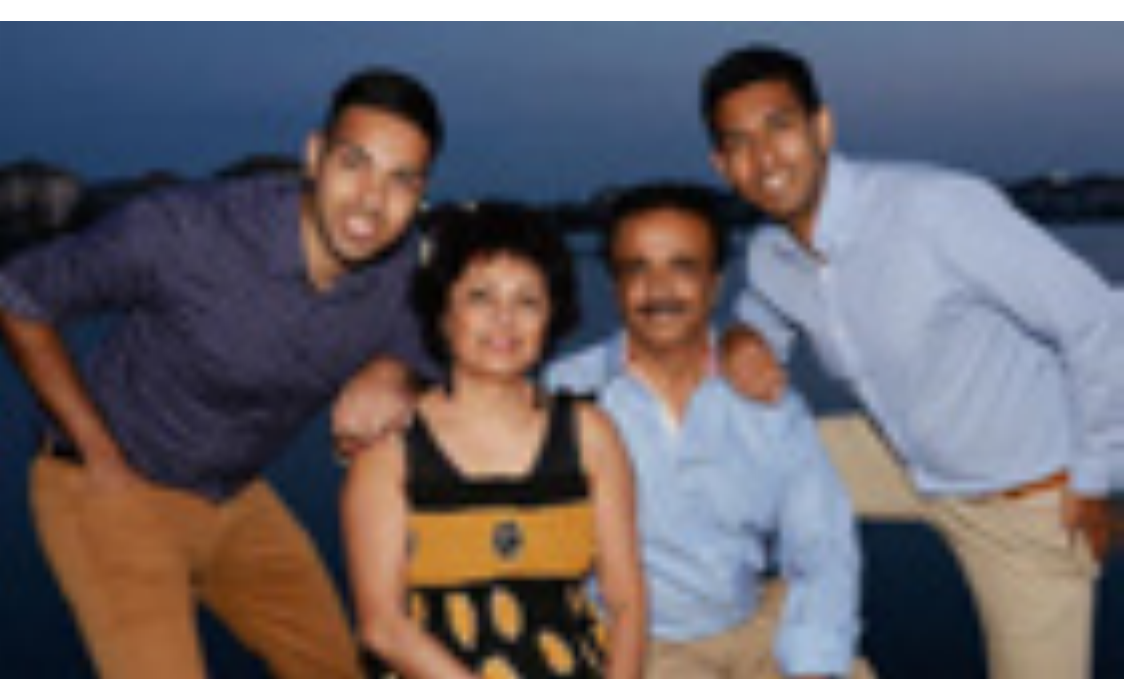
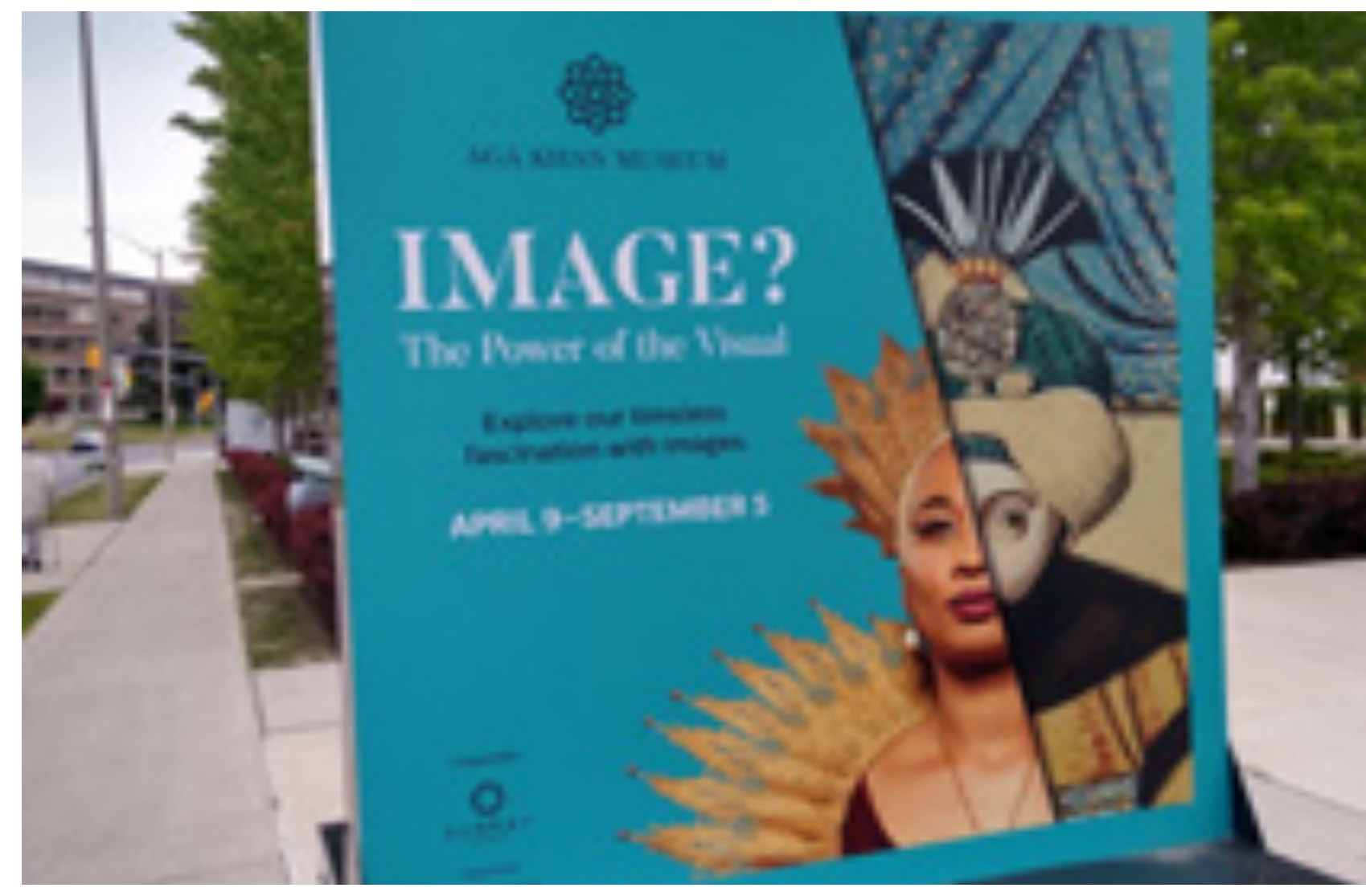
“One of the first recorded Ismailis to arrive in Canada was Safar Ali Ismaili from Pakistan, who arrived in 1952 with one suitcase and \$100.”
– Uzma Rajan and Farah Merchant-Vellani

« Il était toute-à-fait normale de m’installer au Quebec parce que quand je suis arrivé au Canada [de Belgique], je ne parlais pas l’anglais. In Quebec, you could easily find jobs if you only spoke French. » – Mobina Fakhirani

“Many Ismaili immigrants settled in the Prairies. Many had no idea where they were headed; they were told by Immigration Canada that these smaller cities offered plentiful jobs and a lower cost of living.” – Farzana Logan

“I originally come from Aden, Yemen. Mawlana Hazar Imam visited the Aden Jamat in 1957. Since there was no established Jamatkhana, the visit happened at the airport. **It is important we as a global Jamat should be made aware that the Imam’s murids (followers) are all over this globe.** I migrated with my parents in 1981 and settled in Calgary, Alberta.” – Anar Janmohamed





*Tajikistan, Switzerland,
Mozambique, and
then Canada!*

Shamsiya MH: My name is Shamsiya and I'm originally from Tajikistan. I have been in Canada for just under a decade. I am from the Badakshan region. My journey has led me to three different continents – from Tajikistan to Geneva, Switzerland, then to Maputo, Mozambique, and finally to Canada. I speak Pamiri, Tajik, Russian and French as well as a bit of Portuguese from my time in Mozambique. In Tajikistan, I was trained as a medical doctor, but when I moved to Europe in my twenties, I decided not to pursue further certification in medicine. I work now as a program manager at a community health centre in Ottawa, managing a team of over 20 staff. My parents are very proud of what I've achieved. I am proud to be Canadian, but I want to make sure I maintain my connection to Tajikistan – for me and for my daughter. It's important that she continues to understand my culture and my roots.

**"I want my daughter to speak at least one of the languages in Tajikistan so she's able to connect with people there."
– Shamsiya MH**





2022

Prince Ayn Aga Khan, Princess Zahra Aga Khan and Prince Rahim Aga Khan attend several events across Canada in 2022, on behalf of Mawlana Hazar Imam, marking 50 years of the significant presence of the Ismaili Muslim community in Canada.

Top: Toronto Mayor John Tory bestows the Key to the City to Mawlana Hazar Imam and a portion of Wynford Drive is ceremonially named Aga Khan Boulevard.

Middle: A groundbreaking ceremony for Generations Toronto is attended by Toronto Mayor John Tory, Prince Ayn Aga Khan, and Ontario Premier Doug Ford, among others.

Bottom Left: Inauguration of the Diwan pavilion at the Aga Khan Garden housed at the University of Alberta Botanic Garden, presided over by Lieutenant Governor Salma Lakhani, Alberta Premier Jason Kenney and University of Alberta President Bill Flanagan.

Bottom Right: The Ismaili Imamat and the Province of British Columbia sign an Agreement of Cooperation committing to advance joint efforts for development work in B.C. and around the world.



Acknowledgements



Aquil Virani (Exhibition Director): Aquil Virani is an award-winning visual artist, graphic designer and filmmaker, newly based in Toronto. As this past year's artist-in-residence at the Canadian Museum of Immigration, his work has been supported financially by the Canada Council for the Arts, the Government of Canada, the Ontario Arts Council, the Toronto Arts Council, the City of Ottawa, the Silk Road Institute, and the Michaelle Jean Foundation among others. He'd like to thank his father Shiraz, mother Dominique, Auntie Navin, Uncle Alnoor (Bunju), and his community in Surrey, BC, for raising him. Learn more about his work online at aquil.ca.

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We acknowledge the unceded lands on which we live and the treaties that govern these territories. Our exhibition team members currently live in Ottawa, on the unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabe, in Toronto, on the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples, and in Vancouver, on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

We also acknowledge that there are too many important stories in our community to fit on these panels. You may not see your name printed or find a photo of your grandmother among these panels, but please know that this is your story. **All opinions expressed by the exhibition team and project participants do not necessarily reflect the views of the Aga Khan Council for Canada or any other affiliated institutions. We also would like to acknowledge funding support from the Ontario Arts Council, an agency of the Government of Ontario, for some of the artworks included in this exhibition.**

