



Operation Parasol—25th Anniversary 1999–2024

This special edition of the Bulletin celebrates the 25th anniversary of the 1999 evacuation to Canada of Kosovars who had been displaced by armed conflict in their homeland. Canada, along with other nations, offered temporary sanctuary to just over 5,000 Kosovars as well as some 2,300 Kosovars joining families here. All had the option of staying or repatriating. In the end, some 7,251 Kosovars came to Canada, of whom some 4,800 stayed.

The success of this operation rested on the close collaboration between officials from the then department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), the Department of National Defence (DND), the Canadian Red Cross, and businesses, community organizations, and individuals across Canada. Representatives of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) also played key roles.



Throughout this Bulletin, the phrase “Pier 21” refers to the [Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21](#), in Halifax. All photos and graphics, unless otherwise noted, are used with permission and are from the [Collection at Pier 21](#). Many of these pictures were originally donated to the museum by CIHS.

The Canadian Forces bases in these pictures are CFB Gagetown in New Brunswick; CFB Aldershot in Nova Scotia; and CFB Trenton, CFB Borden, CFB Kingston, and CFB Mountain View, all in Ontario.

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A Pier 21 Overview of the Evacuation

A team at the Canadian Museum of Immigration History at Pier 21, led by historian Dr. Jan Raska, wrote an overview of the Kosovars' evacuation to Canada, which he updated in July 2020. It discusses the lead role played by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the policy issues behind the evacuation decision, transport from the region, initial shelter arrangements at National Defence bases in Canada, a few of the logistical issues that involved the Canadian Red Cross, arranging for private sponsorships by community groups of Kosovars who wanted to stay in Canada, and arrangements for repatriation. Dr. Raska recently provided CIHS with the following new introduction in commemoration of the movement's 25th anniversary of coming to Canada.

Dr. Raska's New Introduction for CIHS Bulletin Readers

This year marks the 25th anniversary of Canada's resettlement and repatriation of 7,000 Kosovar refugees. In February 1998, widespread ethnic tensions led to an outbreak of armed conflict between the forces of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) and the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). Some 350,000 Kosovars fled to neighbouring countries in search of safe haven. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) appealed to the international community to provide these refugees with temporary protection until they could return home. In 1999, over 5,000 Kosovar refugees arrived under Canada's emergency humanitarian evacuation program, Operation Parasol, while a further 2,000 came via a family reunification program. In 2024, the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 will open a temporary exhibition highlighting this important anniversary in Canadian immigration history.

The full overview can be found, along with photos, at <https://pier21.ca/research/immigration-history/kosovar-refugees>.



Application processing site (before Kosovars' departure for Canada).



Screening before departure to Canada

An Assessment of the Movement to Canada

Introduction by Gerry Maffre

In early summer 2023, PhD candidate Krenare Recaj contacted CIHS seeking our assistance in her thesis research on the movement of Kosovars to Canada. She is studying at Carleton University and exploring the settlement experiences of the evacuees, of whom she was one. She wanted to interview immigration personnel who had been involved. We connected her with a number of retired officials who worked at immigration headquarters, in refugee camps in Europe, and at the reception and sustainment bases in Canada.

The Waterloo News permitted CIHS to use the following article, a portion of which is excerpted. It details Krenare's earlier academic experiences. The location of Krenare's photo within the article below has been changed. Krenare has also provided us [this link](#) to a Government of Canada video on the movement.

Uncovering Your Own Past Through Digital Archives

When History MA graduate Krenare Recaj (photo) found a photograph of herself as a young refugee in a museum's archival collection, her master's research path was set.

By Kaitlin O'Brien, Faculty of Arts
Waterloo News

When students conduct research, they expect to encounter a wide range of documents, theories and perspectives to support their critical inquiry, but what they probably don't expect to encounter is an historical image of themselves.

This is what happened to Krenare Recaj, who is graduating this week with her MA in History. Looking through the online archives of Pier 21 Museum of Immigration in 2019, she stumbled upon a photo of herself, her sisters, and a stranger. The photo was labelled, "Photograph of Kosovar refugees at C, 1999," but no other information was provided.



While Krenare's mother was unaware that the photo even existed, she remembered the events surrounding the photograph, and was able to provide context: it had been taken at Canadian Forces Base Trenton, not Borden, and the booklets held up by Krenare and her sisters in the photo contained their fingerprints. Krenare's mother then located a box within her home with the exact fingerprint booklets that served to identify the young girls as refugees.



Krenare Recaj (far right) and her sisters, Qendresa and Gresa, arriving at Canadian Forces Base Trenton from Kosovo in 1999.

In the spring of 1999, Krenare was one of 7,291 Kosovars that lived on military bases across Canada after the United Nations High Commission for Refugees sent out an urgent request for countries to support.

For Krenare, this experience of finding the photo reinforced her desire to study and write about the history of Canada and Kosovo and the settlement of refugees. "I firmly believe that overlooked events are often underestimated in importance," she says. "Not everyone will find a photo of themselves at the Pier 21 Museum in Halifax, but everyone can bring attention to overlooked aspects of history."

Her research explores the history of Canadian foreign affairs and its relationship to Kosovo. Her master's thesis, titled "Sovereignty Sensitivity and Diaspora Discontent,"

looks at how domestic concerns influenced Canadian foreign policy towards Kosovo in 1999. A key component of her master's and future doctoral research is the involvement of oral history. "By exploring both the experiences of Kosovars in Canada and the effect their settlement had on Canada's history and international relations, my research bridges social, cultural, and political history," she explains.

From Refugee to Researcher: The Immigration Community's Response to Research on Kosovar Refugees

Krenare Recaj

At the Outset

In 1999, Kosovar refugees such as myself were moved by the unexpected level of generosity shown by Canadian immigration officials, diplomats, and politicians. It is remarkable to me that 25 years later, these very individuals—some of whom I very likely crossed paths with in 1999—are once again showing remarkable generosity with their time, memories, and keepsakes. This time, however, I come to them as a researcher, not a refugee,

When I first reached out to CIHS for assistance with my research, I expected to connect with a few immigration officials for interviews and then move on to other aspects of my work. Looking back, I had no idea what I was in for.

I had tea and a fascinating discussion with an interviewee and his wife in Nova Scotia.

I sat in a living room in Quebec, being deeply moved as an interviewee showed me a home video of Kosovar refugees at CFB Kingston.

I sat across from another interviewee while he showed me a bomb casing from Kosovo—a tangible reminder of the need to protect the vulnerable.

Another interviewee and his wife showed me warm hospitality at their home and then gave me a tour of CFB Borden, the military base where my family and I lived. It was an experience I will never forget.

After my interview with one interviewee, I got a tour of her art studio.

My very first interviewee has become a contact with whom I share coffee and discuss my research.

Many others welcomed me into their homes and shared photographs and documents they have safeguarded for 25 years. Countless others have spent hours with me—in their homes, in cafes, on zoom, and over the phone—answering my questions and recounting their experiences with the settlement of Kosovar refugees.

When I began this process, I had no idea that I would interview those involved “on the ground” in both Europe and Canada, individuals who were involved at the policy and planning levels, as well as people involved at the political and diplomatic level. Through these encounters, I have gained more than just information for my research; I have obtained a deeper understanding of the human experiences behind immigration policies and the unwavering compassion and dedication of immigration officials at all levels. I owe a special debt of gratitude to CIHS, particularly Gerry Maffre, for facilitating these connections and assisting me in myriad other ways throughout my research journey.

What Lies Ahead?

When I contacted CIHS last year, I could not have imagined the developments that have since unfolded. I never anticipated that I would be organizing a large symposium (to be held in Toronto in November 2024) to commemorate the 25th anniversary of Operation Parasol and the arrival of Kosovar refugees in Canada. Likewise, I did not expect that my research would lead to a collaboration with Carleton University's Archives and Special Collections to establish the first archive in Canada dedicated to the Kosovar refugee movement. I also did not imagine the extent of the relevance this topic would have in 2024's global geopolitical climate. Over the past two years, Canada has opened its doors on a temporary basis to two groups of people displaced by the ravages of war—Ukrainians and Palestinians in Gaza with Canadian relatives. These two movements share striking similarities with the airlift of Kosovar refugees who were brought to Canada as “temporary emergency evacuees” in 1999, making research into Operation Parasol timely and important.

In the coming year, I will be focusing on these two projects, preparing for upcoming presentations and speeches I will be making both nationally and internationally, continuing interviews and archival research, and diligently working on my dissertation.

Reflections

In the course of her research, Krenare Recaj spoke with many people who were closely involved in this humanitarian operation. Those conversations elicited many expressions of pride in what had been accomplished.

Here are some of those reflections.

That Night in Trenton, 1999

Michel Dorais

Michel Dorais is a former deputy minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada. He was the co-chair of Operation Parasol.

It was a late and dark night at the Canadian Forces Base in Trenton, Ontario. For weeks officials from Citizenship and Immigration Canada, National Defence, and the Red Cross had worked non-stop to secure the arrival of the very first flight from Kosovo.

“They will arrive and they are all sick” we had assumed. I was standing beside the honourable Lucienne Robillard, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration at that time. The press was far away, parked on a flatbed. Everyone stood still in anticipation. This was not a time for words.



Kosovars arriving at CFB Trenton in 1999.

Weeks earlier, the government had responded to Canadians who felt that we just couldn't sit and do nothing in light of what was going on in Kosovo. We just had to do something! The suffering reported by various media appealed to the very fabric that makes us Canadians—compassion and care. So, directed by our prime minister at the time, the Right Honourable Jean Chretien, we did something. “We will take 5,000!” was the message I received on the eve of Easter 1999. And we all moved into action.

Late that night, awaiting that very first flight, I stood there with the incredible feeling that we had just done something instead of simply watching it happen. Times change, and today who knows what we would have done. Nevertheless, at that time it took political courage but also an enormous

amount of dedication from civil servants and volunteers who made it all happen. Our folks flew to Macedonia and Albania, in a war zone, to select refugees who would come to Canada days later. Others left their families to live on army bases for weeks. The pressure on all of us was enormous, the stakes were high.

In a matter of days, thanks to the incredible effectiveness of our Canadian Forces at Trenton, a hospital was built, accommodation was secured, and in no time we were ready to welcome thousands of people in need of protection at Trenton and other bases.

I remember standing there; I will always remember. The plane landed and the doors opened. We held our breath. This was the moment we were all waiting for. Despite the hundreds present, you could hear a pin drop. The first refugees disembarked from the plane. Women, children and men, all shocked and disoriented finding themselves so far from home, happy to leave a land of horrors but also sad to have been forced to flee so far away.

Suddenly, as if a magic wand had been waved, hundreds of doctors, nurses, employees and volunteers, perfectly coordinated, moved into action hoping to contribute to what they felt was the right thing to do at that time. It was very moving, not only for the Kosovars but for all of us who pulled together and decided to help.

As I stood there besides the Minister, I felt pride, pride to live in this country, pride in our political leaders, pride in every civil servant and volunteer who embarked in this amazing operation. It is a moment I will never forget. For a brief moment, we realized that regardless of where we come from, we are all human and we should care for one another.

I Was the Mayor of Kosovo Town

Jim Crowther

Jim Crowther is a retired Canadian immigration foreign service officer.

I was the “Mayor of Kosovo Town”! I was blessed with this title by some of the Citizenship and Immigration Canada (or CIC as the government department was then known) staff at the Canada Forces Base Borden Sustainment site in Ontario. And a town we were, or rather a series of communities: CIC, Red Cross, National Defence, interpreters, psychotherapists, volunteers, the outside world and, not least, the Kosovar families.

The families displayed the expected uncertainty and anxiety when we first met them and were very tired from their car/plane/bus journeys. However, once settled and recovered, they wanted to explore, although they had been told politely that it wasn't quite possible yet. Nevertheless, once the younger ones had received donated bikes, it was hard to hold them back. They found fishing holes, travelled local roads, went to find others of their age at local schools, and more.

An entertaining highlight during my time at Borden was the visit by Prime Minister Chrétien and his basketball game with several Kosovars. The PM scored some baskets and held his own until he crash-landed on the tarmac trying to make a three-pointer! His fellow players were thankful that he escaped with only a few scrapes. Once he was gone, all staff went back to making sure that the health clinic functioned, the mosque was set up, the food services contracts were signed, interactions occurred with members of the public, our role was understood by media and local police—and, oh yes, doing what was needed to get the Kosovars' paperwork processed and arrival documented.

During that time, I was also asked to speak at a fundraising dinner organized by the Vietnamese Association of Toronto. This community wanted to give back financially to the new arrivals as a show of appreciation for the aid provided to them decades before. It was a well-attended event and heartwarming to see the level of support and to imagine many young Kosovars making their mark in Canada as had the Vietnamese.



Newly-arrived Kosovars at CFB Borden.



Clothing depot, Mountainview, CFB Borden, Ontario.



The first Kosovar refugee baby born in Canada at CFB Aldershot, May 1999



Kosovar children playing at CFB Trenton, Ontario.

Kosovo Refugee Collection

This year, the MacOdrum Library at Carleton University will be establishing a Kosovar Refugee collection to preserve documents, pictures and oral histories from Operation Parasol and the settlement of Kosovar refugees in Canada. The library's Archives and Special Collections is the home to two other refugee collections: the "Uganda Collection", which consists of documents from the arrival of Ugandan Asian refugees to Canada in 1972, and the "Hearts of Freedom Collection", which consists of documents from the arrival of more than 120,000 refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos who came to Canada between 1975 and 1990.

Fitness to Fly Exams and More for Operation Parasol

Dr. Marilyn Cooper

Dr. Cooper is a retired medical officer (MOF) with the Government of Canada who served overseas in Vienna and Singapore. Prior to joining the federal government, she undertook medical locums in Saskatchewan for several months every year before returning to her husband on his postings in India, Jamaica, and the Philippines. Given her interest in becoming a radiologist during her medical studies, she feels she found the perfect employment (often reviewing over 100 chest X-rays a day), while at the same time having the opportunity to live abroad.

In the spring of 1999 when I heard that Canada was considering bringing Kosovars to Canada through a family reunification program, I thought there would be an increased need for medical officers in Ottawa, and I had experience with Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) in a medical capacity. I alerted Dr. George Giovinazzo, the medical director in Ottawa, that I was ready to help. He responded almost immediately, "Yes, we need you", and asked if I was willing to go to Skopje, in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) to assist with the medical exams being done there. Little did I realise that replying in the affirmative was going to change the trajectory of my life.....but more on that later.

At the start of my time in Skopje, I had to manage the medical exams of Kosovars who had been forced from their homes in Kosovo and now lived in FYR Macedonia. The International Organization for Migration (IOM), which was assisting with aspects of the medical immigration process, had organised rooms at the local hospital for conducting medical exams and chest X-rays (CXR). After the medical exams were done by a local physician, and I had reviewed them and the CXRs, the final medical classification was passed on to my CIC colleagues working in the local temporary office.

A month or so later, in April, Canada announced Operation Parasol as a humanitarian evacuation program. The focus changed to Fitness-to-Fly (FTF) exams of the refugees living in camps, rather than full medical screening. The FTF exams were done by local IOM physicians, while my part was to see only the refugees that IOM considered a concern regarding FTF. This process was undertaken in a military field tent and was limited in scope due to lack of privacy. During most of the month this was being done, there was a second physician from Health Canada helping with the review, along with a translator.

Once the refugees were aboard buses and on their way to the airport, the Health Canada Medical Officer and I would record and fax the names and medical coding of the 300 or so persons on the flight. The medical coding was a colour-coded identifier (red, yellow, or green) along with the medical condition, to provide a short heads up to the medical personnel at the military bases in Canada receiving the planeload of refugees.

To the best of my memory, for the over 5,000 FTF exams that took place, only two people were not allowed to board a flight to Canada, both for severe pulmonary conditions.

I was still in Skopje in early July continuing the family reunification medical exams when hostilities ended, and the first flight of Kosovars being repatriated to Kosovo landed in Skopje. It was a bittersweet moment to be at the airport and to recognize several people on their journey home after having interacted with them during their departure.

I mentioned earlier that my offer to participate in this event changed the direction of my life. My medical officer work for CIC in the past had always been as a desk officer, with limited interaction with the immigration foreign service officers. This was my first field work, and I was struck by the professionalism, teamwork, and long hours the immigration officers were willing to put in to get the job done. I also, for the first time, met with persons living in a refugee camp and came to fully appreciate what refugee status meant. These factors so influenced me that I decided that I would love to continue this type of work. Fortunately, this turned out for me, and I worked as a medical officer for the next 10 years in Ottawa, Vienna, and Singapore. This last overseas posting allowed me to continue working with refugees in Thailand (Karen), Bangladesh (Rohingyas), and Nepal (Bhutanese).....A wonderful experience and way to end my career.

Reflections from the Kosovo Operation

Dr. Brian Gushulak

Dr. Gushulak joined the Medical Services Branch of the Department of National Health and Welfare in 1984. He completed overseas postings as an Immigration Medical Officer in India, Jamaica and The Philippines. In Canada he held several positions in the health and immigration departments, retiring as the director general of CIC's Health Management Branch in 2004. From 1996 to 2001 he was the director of medical services for the International Organization for Migration in Geneva.

The photos in this article are courtesy of the International Organization for Migration's Medical Services.

Twenty-five years ago, in 1999, during the conflict in Kosovo and the subsequent population displacements, I was the director of medical services for the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Then, as now, IOM was often engaged in humanitarian and refugee movements. IOM's medical operations frequently dealt with the immigration-related medical assessments required by some nations accepting or providing safe haven to the displaced. Adhering to a long-standing principle that headquarters people should stay out of the way in operations, I only made one visit to Skopje, so my memories reflect the view from a distance. The story below does, however, provide an example of how diverse partners come together to assist in common challenges.

In the movements of people from what was then the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), some nations just required brief medical assessments to ensure that those travelling were sufficiently healthy enough for the journey: "Fit to Fly" screening. Complete medical exams for those people were carried out once they arrived in sanctuary nations. The legislative requirements of other nations required more involved health screening in order to allow the landing of foreign nationals, even for a temporary duration. At the time, Canada was an example of the former, while the U.S. was one of the latter.

Screening for tuberculosis (TB) through chest X-rays was one of the basic requirements at the time and was routine for older children and adults. A quarter century ago, most X-rays involved the production of a physical celluloid X-ray film.

There were X-ray machines at local facilities in FYROM, but the security and logistical issues in transporting large numbers of people from closed camps to and from these institutions were significant. Additionally, the impact that large number of screenings would have on local hospital functions and the associated costs made rapid, high-volume screening in local medical facilities impractical. The most expedient process would involve a temporary screening facility much nearer the camps that would be totally devoted to the relocation program.



IOM, being very used to operating in sub-optimal conditions, came up with a novel and expedient solution. IOM staff located an unused barn that had in a previous life housed swine.

Modifying the structure required oxy-acetylene cutting torches and physical removal of some partitions and walls. Data recording, physical examination, and other tests just required space and privacy, but accommodating the radiology function was more challenging.



First, one needed an X-ray machine. What you do in these situations (I think the quiz show analogy is "Call a Friend") is try to find someone who has the contacts. I called an old colleague and mentor, the late Dr. Earl Hershfield, Director of Tuberculosis Control in Manitoba and a long-time advisor to the Canadian health and immigration departments on tuberculosis. As luck would have it, they had a small X-ray machine that could be easily disassembled and transported by aircraft as small as a Twin Otter which they used for TB screening in the rural north. IOM received the X-ray machine and had it airlifted to Europe. From there, the unit was transported to and from Skopje in a large-body aircraft.

My memory is that the machine was lent at a nominal fee and Manitoba TB Control also provided a radiological technician whose salary was reimbursed by IOM. In a very few days, the X-ray equipment and technician were on the ground in FYROM. At the old swine barn, the technician joined the renovation crew with a sledgehammer, and in another couple of days the installation was functional. I have to admit that I am unable to remember the name of the talented technician, but he is looking over his left shoulder in the photo. The screening facility began operation and continued throughout the relocation program.



One of the lessons from the sourcing and provision of screening services during the Kosovo situation was the importance of having access to mobile technical services. While a borrowed X-ray machine in the swine barn served for this event, it might not be possible to repeat that process in the future. To that end, with donor support, IOM acquired an X-ray unit built by a Dutch electronics firm in a mobile shipping container sized to the cargo bay dimensions of a Hercules transport aircraft. The Royal Dutch Air Force delivered it, overcoming the loading challenge of a container with only minimal clearance between it and the aircraft.

Once in place, this Dutch unit replaced the portable from Manitoba which was safely returned to Canada. The unit served IOM in many locations after the Kosovo event. I last saw it in Kenya in the early 2000s, and my understanding is that it was used in other areas of the Middle East after that.

Telling the Evacuation Story

Gerry Maffre

Gerry Maffre is a former director general, Public Affairs, Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

On Easter weekend 1999, Gerry Van Kessel, the director general of Refugee Policy at CIC, called me about the decision to evacuate 5,000 Kosovars. We probably had a very brief discussion about its communications implications.

When I was back in the office with the branch managers, we began our planning. We knew that accurate and timely public communication of the numbers of evacuees going through each processing stage would be crucial. We assumed there would be Canadian media looking for comments in and around the Canadian overseas processing sites. The department's website would be used, and our always-busy media relations officers would face greater demands. Major public moments would have to be planned—like arrivals of the Kosovars and first repatriation flights—and a role for ministers in those events.



CFB Aldershot preparing for arrival.

We also had to give consideration to corporate (internal) communications. With an immigration response of this magnitude, it was important that CIC staff understand how the department was responding.

As well, we had to manage communications with partners at the sustainment sites, the locations at CFB bases where the evacuees were initially provided shelter and support. Who would be the spokespersons, and how would that work be coordinated between CIC, the Red Cross, and National Defence nationally and at its various bases in Canada? Finally, there was the need to support the daily Ottawa press briefings on the war and Canada's response and position.

It was, then, a very intense period of communications work, involving lots of internal and interdepartmental coordination that included assigning departmental communications personnel to the

bases as the CIC spokespersons. The federal communications community's cohesiveness and the development of a new partnership with the Red Cross strengthened this work.

I look back on this period with great satisfaction. There were a few bumps that made headlines, but generally the media coverage of Canada's response was positive, given the public understanding of the plight of the Kosovars. There was little criticism of how CIC and its partners managed the program. At the sustainment sites, the Kosovars selected their own media representatives to speak about their experiences at home and in Canada.

And is so often the case in immigration work, we had a sense of proximity to the Kosovars who had accepted Canada's offer of temporary and permanent shelter. We knew we had done the right thing and done it well. On top of that, for me, it was also an experience that fostered lasting relationships with immigration colleagues upon whom I could call to share their first-hand experiences with Ph.D. candidate Krenare Recaj in her research.

It was the kind of work and experience that sticks with one and shows what the public service can achieve.



Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lucienne Robillard, welcomes new arrivals at CFB Borden.



CFB Gagetown New Brunswick: Red Cross Hospital



CFB Aldershot, Nova Scotia: Kosovars eating at the base.

Additional Resources

The CIHS Website

- 1) Speaking notes for remarks on the Kosovar refugee movement that were delivered at a conference in 2002 on Middle East refugees, pages 7-12 of Bulletin 48: <https://cihs-shic.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Bulletin-48-April-2006.pdf> ;
- 2) Short report of a presentation to immigration staff at page 7 of Bulletin 71: <https://cihs-shic.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Bulletin-71-Final.pdf> ;
- 3) A brief mention of the movement's administrative issues in Europe at page 13 of this article in Bulletin 86: <https://cihs-shic.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Bulletin-86-e-final.pdf>; and
- 4) Celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the evacuation was reported on page 14 of Bulletin 90: <https://cihs-shic.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/CIHS-Bulletin-90.pdf> .

Research on the Kosovar Movement

The Library Services collection in the Strategic Policy Sector at Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada holds many titles germane to the evacuation of Kosovars to Canada and to the general situation in Kosovo at the time. In collaboration with CIHS, the Library provides this link to their holdings:

https://primo-tc-na01.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primo-explore/search?query=any,contains,kosovo&tab=default_tab&search_scope=CIC&vid=FAIT&offset=0

Use the search word “Kosovo” or “Kosovar” and contact Library Services at research-recherche@cic.gc.ca to request titles of interest. Material that does not indicate “online access” is commercial and would have to be borrowed from a library.

We particularly draw readers' attention to the first publication listed: *Memories of Kosovo*. This CIC publication contains a wealth of material. There are reflections by people involved in the evacuation, children's letters to the young Kosovars, pictures, speeches and press releases, news clippings, various organizations' documents—including from the Red Cross—and material on the general situation. As it is not available readily online, we will explore posting the whole document on the CIHS website.

Other Sources

- A brief video of Kosovars and CIC staff sharing their thoughts.
- A short profile (second item) about Remzi Caj, where this former evacuee talks about his move to and settlement in Canada.
- The Department of National Defence website provides this summary of its crucial role in “Operation Parasol”.

Were You Involved?

CIHS would be happy to hear from readers who were personally involved in, or who came to Canada through “Operation Parasol”. Please indicate if we can share your contact with Krenare Recaj for her research work. You can contact us at info@cihs-shic.ca.



CFB Trenton Clothing Supply

Event Announcement—Operation Parasol: 25th Anniversary of Canada’s Response to the Kosovo Crisis

Date: Saturday, 11 May 2024
Time: 5:30 p.m.
Location: In-person event at the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21
Language: Presented in English
Cost: FREE

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the resettlement and repatriation of Kosovar refugees. Approximately 7,000 Kosovar refugees fled the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1999. Thousands of Kosovar refugees found a safe haven in Canada through Operation Parasol, a quick and effective collaboration between the Canadian government and humanitarian groups.

The exhibition reception will include speakers from the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, representatives of government, including dignitaries representing Albania and Kosovo, as well as the Canadian Red Cross and the Canadian Armed Forces, who were instrumental in executing Operation Parasol.

Remarks will be followed by a dance performance and an opportunity to explore the exhibition. Light refreshments will be provided. To attend the event, please register here.

Symposium Marking the 25th Anniversary of Kosovar Albanians’ Arrival in Canada

The 25th anniversary of the arrival of Kosovar Albanians to Canada and Canada’s military and diplomatic involvement in Kosovo presents a special opportunity to revisit Canada’s unique humanitarian undertaking in 1999. To commemorate this event, a one-day symposium will be held to bring together academics, current and retired immigration officials, policy makers, politicians, private citizens, representatives from aid organizations, as well as Kosovar Albanian refugees themselves.

This event, *Memory, Politics, and Precedent: Canada and the Kosovar Refugee Diaspora 25 Years On*, is being planned by faculty and students at Carleton University, the University of Toronto, the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, the Canadian Immigration Historical Society, and representatives from the Kosovar Albanian refugee community.

The symposium will take place on 2 November 2024 at the Bill Graham Centre for Contemporary International History (University of Toronto). More information will be publicized in the following weeks. The conference website has now been created (April 2024), and organizers can be reached at Kosovo25years@gmail.com.

CIHS thanks its corporate members - IRCC and Pier 21 - for their significant support as well as its life and annual members. All these contributions allow us to pursue our objectives and activities.

<p>The Canadian Immigration Historical Society (www.CIHS-SHIC.ca) is a non-profit corporation registered as a charitable organization under the Income Tax Act.</p>	<p>The society’s goals are: - to support, encourage and promote research into the history of Canadian immigration and to foster the collection and dissemination of that history, and - to stimulate interest in and further the appreciation and understanding of the influence of immigration on Canada’s development and position in the world.</p>	<p>President – Dawn Edlund; Vice-President – Anne Arnott; Treasurer – Don Cochrane; Secretary – Robert Orr; Editor – Diane Burrows; Past-President – Michael Molloy; Members at large – Brian Casey, Charlene Elgee, Raphael Girard, Kurt Jensen, Gerry Maffre and Ian Rankin. Member emeritus – J.B. “Joe” Bisset IRCC Representative – Paula Pincombe Webmaster: Winnerjit Rathor; Translations: Sylvie Doucet</p>
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