

August 2026

45 years of sisterhood, solidarity and struggle

We acknowledge that we are on non-ceded lands of the First Nations

Our Annual General Meeting was held on June 13, 2026. As always, it is an occasion where we learn about the work that SAWCC through the Centre team does throughout the year. It is very impressive that so much is accomplished. This is always the consensual opinion voiced by attendees. The AGM is also an occasion to welcome new people and renew friendships of many years. The rooms are filled with the exchanges between attendees over lunch. This is not all. Important discussions are held at the meeting and actions are proposed in keeping with SAWCC's ethos to continue to struggle for sisterhood and solidarity.

At the AGM two motions were presented and unanimously passed by the assembly.

SAWCC MOTION ON THE ATTACK ON THE SCHOOL IN IRAN ON 28 FEBRUARY 2026

Background information was provided to the AGM about the attack by the United States of America and Israel on Iran in violation of international law. On the first day of the attack 168 children aged 12 years and below were killed in a primary school in Minab, Iran. This has been condemned by the UN, UNESCO, Amnesty International and others. The conventions of war stipulate that civilian institutions cannot be targeted. To date no culpability has been claimed. What is known is that the strike was by a US manufactured Tomahawk missile, used by the US and its allies. Also, that the precision of the attack indicates that it was a preplanned targeted hit.

The Motion

Whereas we in the South Asian Women's Community Centre are mothers with primary school children, daughters, sons, sisters and grandmothers.

Whereas we were witness via TV to the long line of white draped coffins laid out for burial in Minab.

Whereas we wish to express our sorrow and solidarity with the 168 families who will now only have memories and pictures to recall their beloved children and that we are keenly aware that this is not enough.

BE IT RESOLVED therefore, that the members of the South Asian Women's Community Centre, assembled at its Annual General Meeting, June 13, 2026, condemn this illegal war of choice and the Minab massacre in the strongest terms possible.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED that as Canada holds a respected position in the international community we send the following demands for action to the government of Canada:

- That there be guaranteed respect for civilian institutions and infrastructure, in keeping with the international conventions of war.
- That there be accountability by the perpetrators for this most heinous act.
- That reparation be made to the families who are suffering this great tragedy, part of which will happen when the crime is acknowledged.
- That this war crime be brought to the International Court of Justice.

Moved by: Jennifer Chew

Seconded by: Sema Burney

Unanimously approved.

SAWCC MOTION – END WAR ON LEBANON

GIVEN THAT well over 1000 people have died and over one million have been displaced in the current Israeli bombardment of Lebanon

GIVEN THAT the Israeli Defense Minister has stated that southern Lebanon will face the same fate as Gaza

GIVEN THAT a special United Nations Commission, genocide scholars and international human rights organizations have stated Israel is committing genocide in Gaza

The South Asian Women's Community Centre in their Annual General Meeting of June 13, 2026 strongly condemns the current war in the sovereign state of Lebanon and demands that the Canadian government act to ensure a ceasefire in Lebanon, the withdrawal of Israeli forces and the implementation of diplomatic negotiations.

Moved by: Jennifer Chew

Seconded by: Diane Shea

Unanimously approved.

SUMMER

When schools close, parents and children sigh with happiness. School closing brings a certain level of liberty. And in summer, at SAWCC, we have a great tradition of our Annual Picnic, looked forward to by at least 200 attendees with families. It has always been an occasion to investigate the neighbouring regions not accessible without transportation. Usually, it is near a beach such as Long Sault or the Oka Beach. SAWCC has always rented buses that carry the picnickers to these beaches or parks. However, many of the sites will no longer take buses. The SAWCC team is working to continue this tradition by investigating alternative sites. The date will be announced by the SAWCC team when more information is available.

FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association)

These World Cup matches have absorbed our screens and attention since they began in June. The final match on Sunday, July 19, 2026, ended in Spain winning the title against Argentina. Many of us have probably sat and watched some match in the series, whether because we are fans of a certain country or because our children are keen to watch.

The attendees at the matches, those who can afford the exorbitantly priced tickets, seated in tiered seats that reach the sky, garbed in the jerseys of their choice team, all contribute to this very profitable enterprise.

We have seen children with no money to afford a soccer ball honing their skills kicking stones and tin cans around with excitement and enthusiasm. A number of players have said that they learned their soccer skills in refugee camps.

FIFA uses these events to popularize the game. Perhaps the sponsors of the games are donors to soccer clubs that encourage the young enthusiasts and we need something that unites in a world that is plagued by war and destruction and genocide, but it would be fitting if some of the profits were publicly dedicated to transformation in our world.

JUNE IS INDIGENOUS HISTORY MONTH

In 2009, the House of Commons designated June National Aboriginal History Month. The name was changed to National Indigenous History Month in 2017.

National Chief Cindy Woodhouse Nepinak marked National Indigenous Peoples Day by honouring the cultures, languages, histories, and contributions of First Nations Peoples, and calling on Canada to move beyond symbolic gestures to action by fulfilling its commitments to reconciliation and First Nations self-determination.

“National Indigenous Peoples Day is a celebration of our Peoples, cultures, and Nations, but it must also be a day of accountability,” said National Chief Woodhouse Nepinak. “Reconciliation cannot be accomplished by announcements

and promises. It is achieved through quality schools for First Nations children, safe housing for First Nations families, clean drinking water for First Nations communities, and First Nations exercising their inherent rights to govern their lands, waters, and futures. When we see these changes from coast to coast to coast, we will know we are making progress.”

Looking ahead, **September 30** of each year is **Orange Shirt Day**.

This day is inspired by Phyllis (Jack) Webstad’s story of her first day at residential school at the age of six, when her new orange shirt, bought by her grandmother, was taken from her. Her bright orange shirt symbolized love, excitement, and belonging. This act of deprivation represents how the system tried to strip away identity and culture. Phyllis’ story led to the creation of Orange Shirt Day and today all across Canada orange is the colour on September 30. This is an opportunity for non-Indigenous people to learn this history and work to acknowledge the dark history and harmful legacy of the Indian Residential School system, honour the survivors and work towards decolonizing.

The Orange Shirt Society was established in 2015 to:

- Support Indian residential school reconciliation
- Create awareness of the individual, family and community intergenerational impacts of Indian residential schools through Orange Shirt Society activities
- Create awareness of the concept of “Every Child Matters”

Don’t forget to wear your orange shirt on September 30, 2026.

SAWCC IS 45 YEARS

When the nine founding members sat on the floor of an apartment and discussed a vision based on the needs of the community of South Asian women, immediate action was the priority. At that moment we did not dream of 45 years down the road. Gradually we began to look to the future and this year we celebrate our evolution. SAWCC has always been based on sisterhood, solidarity and struggle. Originally our aim was to bring our sisters out of the isolation of their homes. Left to take care of home life with the husbands at work and the school age children at school, this wave of immigrant women was coping with a new way of life. SAWCC created a space where women could meet, make friends, exchange interests and discuss needs and problems. SAWCC organized outings for the women to learn about the new city in which they were living, how to navigate a strange city particularly when even the language is new. From providing language classes with daycare, to accompaniment to hospital appointments, to attending meetings with the parents in schools, SAWCC is now a voice for women and their families and a presence in the Montreal community. The SAWCC logo is very visible on the bus shelters in the city. SAWCC is allied to many organizations in Montreal working for the same causes as itself. We all have reason to be proud of SAWCC.

OUR ARCHIVING PROJECT

SAWCC has been taking notes, writing grants, producing bulletins, accumulating annual reports, recording all manner of material, for forty-five years. Reams and tomes of paper documentation have grown, particularly prior to the current digitizing process. Even the digitized files grow. Suddenly, we have written history that needs TLC.

Dolores Chew, an historian herself, a founding member of SAWCC, has repeatedly raised the need that all our documents requiring archiving. Finally, Dolores, mandated by the Executive Council, worked on finding a person who would be able to bring the sprawl of information into order for the purpose of archiving. Varda Nisar, who is a SAWCC member, and had served on the SAWCC Executive Council was hired for the archiving project. With her newly-minted Ph.D. in Art History and extensive earlier work in archives Varda began the work in Fall ’25 and proved invaluable with her vision and execution of the project. This summer she and her family returned to Pakistan. Varda has been succeeded by Arwa Hussain in whom SAWCC is again very fortunate to have someone with excellent background and expertise in archiving and oral history and research, to some extent coming out of her Ph.D. work and is proving extremely capable in continuing the work begun by Varda. Arwa has also become a SAWCC member. Arwa, Varda and Dolores meet regularly, either in person or virtually with Varda, who continues to contribute to the project. SAWCC greatly appreciates Varda’s generosity in this regard.

The project has multiple aspects to it. There is collection and review and classifying of the documents that are at SAWCC. It also involved finding a home for the archive where it will be accessible to researchers and historians and

other interested parties. Varda was instrumental in working with Concordia University and finding this space for our documentation. There is an oral history aspect and Arwa is conducting interviews as well.

We acknowledge the important role Varda and Arwa, our archivists, have played in making this possible. Dolores has contributed since inception.

BOOK LAUNCH – THE DREAM OF A COMMON MOVEMENT by Urvashi Vaid

Held at SAWCC on Monday, July 13, 2026, the book is a collection of essays, interviews, speeches by the late feminist and civil rights activist (1958-2022) whose pioneering writing and organizing over the course of four decades fundamentally shaped the LGBTQ+ movement. We wish she was still with us raising awareness through her speeches and advocating tirelessly. However, we have the next best alternative, her words, in this compilation by Jyotsna Vaid and Amy Hoffman. The book is available from Duke University Press, dukeupress.edu.

The evening was very special because Urvashi's sister, Jyotsna, and her nephew, Alok Vaid Menon, were the speakers at the launch. Their presentations were relevant and eloquent and brought Urvashi into our midst. Jyotsna, who lives in Texas, was a founding member of SAWCC and always connects with SAWCC sisters whenever she visits Montreal.

WHEN THE WORLD SLEEPS by Francesca Albanese

This anthology of writings compiled by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Francesca Albanese, "conveys the spirit of a people through ten unforgettable stories of resilience and humanity" as the publisher describes. It goes on to say that she is "the most lucid voice that has been heard around the world when it comes to speaking the truth about the Palestinian genocide."

We see the devastation on TV, the destruction and the horror and reel with shock. Francesca Albanese, in her book, brings to our attention what life is in Gaza and the constant destruction of Palestine. We hear the children speak in her research. As she noted to the children she spoke to, she wanted the world to hear what they, the children had to say. Daily there are deaths of children and she notes that some of the children may not be alive now. However, perhaps with the example of these children whose childhood has been robbed and who speak with a mature, unchildlike analysis, there are moments in the book that are bright with hope. Above all, for the children with the example of the generations of Palestinians before them, this is their home. As we have heard repeatedly from Palestinians, "we will return". It is an important text for all.

CELEBRATION OF LIFE FOR MADHU NAMBIAR – SATURDAY, JUNE 27, 2026

Family and friends brought joy and memories to all of us attending with music loved by Madhu and memories of her life. When Madhu came to Montreal, her daughter, Gleema Nambiar, a SAWCC member, introduced her to SAWCC. Madhu took her place with us and was the first Senior Representative on the SAWCC Executive Council. SAWCC recognized the changing demographic of its members and added this post to its Executive Council. Madhu having worked as a social worker was a welcome addition. She also gave training sessions to the SAWCC community workers, so useful for our work. For those who want to know more about Madhu, on you tube can be found "Madhu's Saris", a documentary made by RECAA (Ressources Ethnoculturelles Contre l'Abus envers les ainé(e)s) where using the motif of her myriad saris, Madhu shares her story in her own words.

CARP (Canadian Association of Retirees and Pensioners)

In 1952, OAS (Old Age Security) was introduced so that no senior would face old age in poverty. Now this lifeline is under threat. This is not new as first mention was in 2012. It is not keeping up with the cost of living, growing income disparity and outdated policies. Canada is failing its seniors. Canada is not keeping the promise made in 1952 to ensure that no senior would face old age in poverty.

At this time the threat to OAS is very real. Canada has a deficit. The government has increased its spending particularly on armaments such as 90 armoured vehicles and the purchase of submarines from Germany and is supporting its European allies particularly in Ukraine's war with Russia. OAS now has the biggest target on its back. It is the first place that the government will look to use savings to compensate for spending.

CARP advises that a senior specific poverty measurement that reflects the true cost of aging – healthcare, housing and care giving be established. CARP also urges the end to discriminatory practices such as increasing OAS levels only for seniors at age 75. That leaves many seniors for ten years without increases as needed from OAS payments. Financial pressures are the same whether 65 or 75.

In this time, many workers are without pension plans from employers. OAS is the single lifeline to keep seniors out of poverty and ensure a life with dignity. More details on this alert can be accessed at the website:

<https://www.carp.ca/2025/04/02/old-age-security-a-lifeline-under-threat/>

UPGRADING CANADA'S ARMAMENTS

The Canadian government is spending liberally, committing to contracts for years into the future, by purchasing a dozen German submarines equipped with cruise missiles. For the past three decades Canada has managed its security with four such vessels. Upgrading the aged vessels is different from purchasing a fleet. Another part of this spending is to cover the cost of 90 armoured vehicles. Further, there is commitment to support NATO.

In the meanwhile, the average Canadian household faces rising increases in cost of living. Many households are struggling with food costs. A pittance of a few hundred dollars is promised to a selection of Canadians to help with these rising costs.

Along with these struggles, there is a shortage of housing across Canada. How many houses could be made available with a portion of the \$100 billion dedicated to arms manufacture? Our public healthcare system is in great need of monetary and human resources. Many Canadians are without a family doctor. Our Emergency Room professionals are working beyond capacity.

Yes, Canada must remain strong. However, building a Canada strong must be balanced with support for the needs of our safety net. It is not as if we need to arm ourselves for war. We need to be strong against the rhetoric coming from the South. Our country must preserve the policies, such as Tommy Douglas' lasting legacy of a public health care system.

VOTING IS ONLY THE FIRST STEP

We hear that the real work for citizens begins after an election. It seems true at this time. The Liberals won an "almost" majority when, led by Mark Carney, in April 2025, the population came together in response to his call for "elbows up".

Prime Minister Carney has travelled widely during the year to find new economic partners. This appears justifiable as the United States may not honour its CUSMA agreements. However, on September 14–15, Mark Carney will host what he describes as "[the world's largest investors](#)" at a conference in Toronto. Leading capitalists, financial institutions and investment funds will gather for the first-ever Canada Investment Summit. Presented as a strategy to attract investment, it will also further open public property to capitalist interests. The *Financial Post* quoted an executive director of Australia's \$250 billion IFM Investors fund, Gian-Carlo Peressutti, saying he expected the Toronto summit would be where Carney lays out his roadmap to privatize Canada's major airports.

In response, there will be a number of counter forums and rallies. **Carney's wealth-concentrating agenda must be resisted.** "The Canada Investment Summit provides an opportunity for environmental, labour, Indigenous, housing, peace and social justice movements to come together in opposition to the government's pro-corporate, militarist and anti-ecological agenda as stated in "Confront Carney's CEO Summit". A letter is circulating, signed by a number of activists, including David Suzuki, Ellen Gabriel, Yan Martel, Eric Shragge, and we are being asked to sign. If you are interested in doing so please go on the internet to the site, Capitalism Can't be Fixed, and find the form.

CALL OUT BY MIGRANT RIGHTS NETWORK ON SEPTEMBER 20, 2026

(As reported on Migrant Rights Network)

On September 20, migrants and supporters are taking to the streets across the country. The march is for permanent status for all and for every family's right to be together.

On July 15, the Carney government paused the Parents and Grandparents Program “until further notice.”

Tens of thousands of people have had their hopes dashed.

Immigration Canada has not accepted a single new request to sponsor a parent or grandparent since October 2020, when the application window opened for just three weeks. **Not one.**

More than 200,000 people submitted interest forms at that time, and every invitation since has come from that same pool. Tens of thousands were never invited. Those allowed to apply still wait years. And if you missed that three-week window, you are out of luck, no matter how sick or alone your loved ones are.

We refuse to accept a system that keeps families apart

Refugee families separated

People who claim asylum in Canada cannot sponsor their spouses or children while waiting for a decision. Even after they are accepted as refugees, permanent residence and family processing can take years. Spouses and children remain trapped in war zones, refugee camps and other unsafe situations.

Families jailed and broken apart by force

Canada carried out more than 23,000 enforced removals in 2025. In many cases, children and elderly people are detained before deportation. Canadian citizen children have also been held in detention facilities with their parents. Sometimes one parent is deported while spouses, children and other loved ones remain in Canada, or vice versa.

Canada restricts who counts as family

You generally cannot sponsor adult siblings. International adoptions must fit complex legal requirements. Chosen family and relationships that do not fit the government’s narrow spouse, partner and dependent categories are excluded. Even the United States has a much more family-based permanent immigration system than Canada.

Cross Country Day of Action for Migrants Rights, September 20, 2026

Bring your family. Join the fight to keep all families together.

This is why we are taking to the streets on September 20. Find an action near you on the Migrant Rights Network.

THE FUTURE OF THE SAWCC BULLETIN

The plan is to have a quarterly publication of our bulletin. This is the first one in that plan.

Thank you to Dolores Chew for review, to Indu Krishnamurthy for translation into French and for the team transmitting to the membership.

Jennifer Chew, Publications Secretary