



Press Release

Somali-Jewish Mentorship Project Information Session

The Canadian Somali Congress and the Canadian International Peace Project recently invited mentees from the Somali community in Toronto to be part of an informational session on an important mentorship project between the Somali and Jewish communities. Canadian Somali university and college students as well as young professionals attended this event in order to learn about this project. Those that were interested filled application forms in order to join this initiative and will be matched with mentors from the Canadian Jewish community who will assist them in successfully pursuing their respective professions.

The National President of Canadian Somali Congress, Ahmed Hussen, and Mark Persaud who is the honorary patron of the organization both spoke about the importance of providing mentoring to the Somali community. Ahmed Hussen spoke at length about the fact that even though the Canadian Somali community is the largest African Diaspora community and one of the largest Muslim communities in Canada, it lacks a critical mass of professionals that can mentor Somali university, college and young professionals. This necessitated the need to reach out to other communities in order to fulfill this need. Mark Persaud then spoke about the goal of the Jewish-Somali mentorship project being to aid in the creation of a successful cadre of Canadian-Somali professionals, who can then assume greater leadership roles to assist with the development of their own community as well as contribute to Canadian society at large.







The lawyer for the Canadian Somali Congress, Mr. James Morton, spoke at length to the assembled members of the community and provided two examples of mentors that had a positive impact on his life. He indicated that mentors do not just bring along a mentee into their profession but can also intervene at critical times to protect and guide a mentee in difficult times.

Mr. Saeed Mohamud, who is a community member and volunteer for the Canadian Somali Congress, was the last speaker of the evening. Saeed spoke about the importance of having a national advocacy organization for the Canadian Somali community. He cited examples of the work carried out by the organization both on its own and in conjunction with other organizations. These examples include work on the Bashir Makhtal case, the Anab Issa Ilgiir case, working with the Edmonton Somali community on advocacy issues related to youth violence, media outreach to highlight the problem of illegal fishing and the dumping of toxic waste off the Somali coast, and hosting a legal and business conference. Saeed expressed the organization's willingness to work with any community or mainstream organization in order to address the challenges facing the Somali community in Canada.

The session ended with a meet and greet between the Canadian Somali university and college students as well as young professionals. The Canadian Somali Congress in partnership with the Canadian International Peace Project intend to extend this project to other Canadian cities that have a substantial Somali population.

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The Canadian Somali Congress is a non-partisan non-governmental Canadian organization dedicated to addressing issues of importance to Canadians of Somali heritage. The Congress works collaboratively with governmental, non-governmental organizations and individuals to facilitate the integration of Canadians of Somali heritage and to promote Canadian values.