

Security is everyone's concern

Calgary, Alberta – March 18, 2006

Member report

As part of the Roundtable's goal of reaching out to diverse communities, I organized a symposium in Calgary to bring together Calgarians of different backgrounds with members of the security agencies like RCMP, CSIS and CBSA to engage in an open and frank dialogue as to how best implement the new security measures.

The members of the security agencies had the opportunity to present to the audience the nature of the work undertaken by them and the challenges they face in this regard. Thereafter they participated in a question and answer session. Not surprisingly, the audience brought up issues such as racial profiling, security certificates and possible abuse of power by the authorities. It was heartening to see members of the security agencies explain to what extent they strive to prevent such abuses and invite the audience to contact them in case of such occurrences. Some of the important initiatives undertaken by the agencies to prevent abuse are to provide cultural sensitivity to its members and to recruit more members from different cultural groups as to reflect our diversity.

The symposium ended on a high note with all participants agreeing that there is a need to build trust and understanding between the different communities and the security agencies and foster more cooperation because security is a concern for all Canadians. It was also agreed that to achieve this, the dialogue should be ongoing.

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