

# San Diego Refugee Forum

General Meeting Minutes – August 19, 2008

*I. Call to order at 10:40 am*

*Hamse Warfa*

Present: Ralph Achenbach, Diana Ross, Hilda Chan, Kathi Anderson, Mike McKay, Dung Le, Brent Freeman, Deka Abdi, Nura Ahmed, Ed Whitmore, Jacob Gatknath, Besma Coda, Payla Lloyd, Bonnie Copland, Lisa Julianne Bright, Shanunte Dittmar, Ana Quinonez, Lejla Voloder, Jennifer Tracy, Benny Garcia, Hamse Warfa..

*II. Introductions*

- No new members or potential members were present.

*III. Minutes and Announcements*

- Ralph Achenbach referred members to the Forum website for minutes from previous meetings: [www.SDRefugeeForum.org](http://www.SDRefugeeForum.org)
- There were no announcements.

*IV. Financial Report*

- Lejla Voloder reported the current account balance as \$1,421.00. Transactions since the last meeting were limited to water and refreshment purchases. No member fees have been received, and membership solicitations will be sent out shortly.

*V. Convening*

- Diana Ross reported on behalf of the advocacy committee that Samantha Hua and Jen Tracey joined the committee as new members, while Dena Lewerke had to resign from the committee. Most recently, Bob Montgomery of the IRC presented to the committee on the difference between advocacy and lobbying, and the committee will create an advocacy plan based on existing advocacy models.
- Mike McKay reported on behalf of the outreach and education committee that there has been no meeting since the last Forum general meeting and recapped on the recommendations the committee has made previously regarding extending personal invitations to potential new members, new member spotlights at the beginning of each meeting, and the addition of a Forum membership application form to the website.

*VI. Focus: SDG&E Programs & Services, Ed Whitmore*

*VII. Provider and State Advisory Reports*

- Hamse Warfa commented on the increased number of asylum seekers from Africa, the mandatory requirement for medical evaluations which Survivors of Torture can and has been providing, and the increased length of detention of asylum seekers on account of their increased number.
- Lejla Voloder noted that the situation in Africa concerning DNA testing is still unresolved and that new arrivals can be expected from the Bhutanese in Nepal soon.
- Mike McKay reported from a Wilson Fish national workshop that the large numbers of family reunifications and SIVs from Afghanistan and Iraq put strains on the program and that ORR is to discuss with the County at the upcoming state summit whether to refer eligible cases straight to the TANF program.
- Brent Freeman noted that the State Advisory Committee has not met recently, as it is planning for the summit.

*VIII. Adjournment at 11:50 am*

*IX. Next Meeting: September 16<sup>th</sup>, 10:30 am*