



SAHs yet to Receive their Allocation

Usually by the end of February of each year, the Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) provides to Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs), of which ORAT is one, the number of refugees that it can submit sponsorship applications for during that calendar year. This number is referred to as a SAH's allocation.

At the time of the writing of this newsletter, IRCC has still not provided to SAHs their 2022 allocation. As we approach the halfway mark of the year, and recognizing that the window for us to submit applications is closing quickly, the SAH Council, which represents the majority of SAHs, wrote a letter to Minister Sean Fraser, asking that there be an immediate release of the 2022 allocation to SAHs. We are currently waiting for a response from the Minister.

To make matters worse, SAHs were prevented in large measure from submitting cases to IRCC. We understand how frustrating this is for the many cosponsors that we have worked with since late 2021.

For those that have begun the refugee sponsorship process with ORAT, we ask that you continue to exercise patience, and that you monitor our website for further updates.

Unfortunately, until IRCC begins processing 2022 cases, our office will not be able to provide any further information on these cases.

Many Come to Thank Cardinal Collins

Hundreds came together from various communities, including Chaldean, Ge'ez Rite, Melkite Catholic, Syriac Catholic, Syriac Orthodox, Coptic Orthodox, Latin Rite and others to thank Cardinal Collins for his support of refugees. Since 2009, the Office for Refugees from the Archdiocese of Toronto has worked under the leadership of Cardinal Collins to resettle thousands of refugees to Canada.

Mass was celebrated by His Eminence at the Good Shepherd, Chaldean Cathedral. In attendance were bishops, priests, religious and the faithful from various faith communities. A reception followed, with over 400 in attendance.



Table of Contents

SAHs yet to Receive Allocation.....	Page	1
Many Thank Cardinal Collins.....	Page	1
International Persecution, Local Supression.....	Page	2
Appeal to Host Ukrainian Nationals.....	Page	3
Sponsors for Thank You Event	Page	4
Refugee Story.....	Page	5

Life and Death Persecution Internationally, Suppression Locally

Article by Priscilla Pajdo, Published in *Corriere Canadese* June 19, 2022

Christians (in particular Catholics practicing their faith in several of their Rites) are numerically the most persecuted in the world. They represent the largest demographic prone to seek refuge from their native soil.

There are few safe spaces for them when military turmoil, religious intolerance, caste systems or political upheaval upsets the delicate balance of social peace. The results are common: assault, sexual assault, extra judicial killings, murder, pillaging etcetera.

The Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto has earned a reputation for proactively “rescuing” families and individuals from such conditions and locating them in an environment where they can begin to refashion their lives according to the Catholic ethic.

It has a history of such activism. In the mid eighteenth hundreds when Toronto was a mere colonial outpost of 26,000 residents, the diocese welcomed and accommodated close to 40,000 Irish refugees many of them sick with typhus and other diseases.

Saturday evening started off with a procession headed by members of the Eritrean Church. They chanted a greeting which shows respect for church leaders. Some 450 Catholic refugees displaced by war and human induced famines from countries in the Greater Middle East and Africa convened to thank Thomas Cardinal Collins for his commitment to their integration in a world where they might be free to pursue a future of their own making.

It was an overwhelming display of thanks by Catholics, Coptic, Chaldeans, Melkite, Syriac Orthodox, members of the Eritrean Chaplaincy for the Archdiocese’s work on their behalf. Equally impressive was the number of prelates, priests and parish organizers, including Archbishop Emeritus Lawrence Saldanha, Bishop Mina, Fr. Yousif Al Banna, Fr. Manhal Abboush Habash, Fr. Keflemariam and the Reverend Msgr. Makarios Wehbi, who joined His Grace Archbishop Ivan Jurkovic, the Papal Nuncio to Canada, in their expressions of gratitude.



For his part, Cardinal Collins was humble, brief and to the point in his wrap up. We do what we must to be examples of our faith for which we are persecuted internationally. But “locally”, even in countries where peace prevails, we need to be wary of “suppression” in all of its manifestations.

“People should be able to stay in their homeland instead of being persecuted and driven from their homes”, said His Eminence. He also emphasized that the danger here is “not YET persecution”, but rather “complacency and suppression of our Faith”. He also suggested that Canada’s “calm and polite” ways must be followed “with an iron fist”.

Deacon Rudy Ovcjak, Director of the Office of Refugees – Archdiocese of Toronto (ORAT), also acknowledged the tremendous efforts by members of the community, which help refugees who have suffered terrible persecution and violence.

According to ORAT, since 2009, the organization has helped resettle 6,800 refugees of which 5,500 have already arrived in Canada. “Lives that have been changed for the better”, said Deacon Rudy. He also acknowledged the momentous undertaking extends to those who suffer from outside of the Christian Faith. With the crisis in Ukraine, he also extended an invitation to those interested in helping host some of the 500,000 refugees expected in the coming months.

An Appeal to Host Ukrainian Nationals (Food and Lodging)

While the Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) has not established a refugee resettlement pathway for Ukrainians, they have created the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET) program for Ukrainian nationals and their family members. They are able to apply for a temporary resident visa to travel to and to stay in Canada. This temporary visa can be extended for up to three years.

Many Ukrainian nationals have already taken advantage of the CUAET program, with over 51k having already arrived to Canada, a further 137k having been approved for travel to Canada, and an additional 313k whose applications are currently in process.

Arrived to Canada: 51,383
Applications Approved 136,877
Applications Received 312,548

With these large numbers, there is an urgent need for those able to host those arriving under this program. While some of those arriving have family or friends in Canada that are able to host, many are arriving without any links to those in Canada, and as a result are vulnerable to human trafficking and exploitation.

ORAT has already received a number of inquiries from those who would like to host a Ukrainian family. But more hosts are needed. We would ask those that are interested in hosting a family to email the completed host information form to oratrefugeeoffice@archtoronto.org. Please include "Ukrainian Crisis" in the subject line. Please click [here](#) to access the form.

Volunteering Opportunity: Programmer

If you are a Programmer and have a desire to volunteer with the Office for Refugees, this may be an opportunity to apply your skills in furthering our mission.



ORAT is building a MS Access database to track its sponsorship applications. To do this, we are looking for a talented and dedicated software developer that is experienced in both MS SQL Server database design, TSQL programming; and Microsoft Access, VBA programming. The project entails:

1. Building and customizing an SQL Server database;
2. Building an Access application; and
3. Importing existing data into the application.

We would like to begin this project as soon as possible and we are hoping to have it completed within 12 months.

If you are interested, please send your resume to this email address: Halgebraeel@archtoronto.org

Sponsors of the Thank You Event for Cardinal Collins

Platinum Sponsor



Construction Services:

- Excavation
- Demolition
- Concrete work
- Asphalt work
- Road Construction
- Sidewalk & Bridge work
- Landscaping
- Sewer and Water
- Waste Management
- High-Rise Buildings
- Construction Management
- Land Development

RAFAT
GENERAL CONTRACTOR INC

905-951-1063 905-951-9686

8850 George Bolton Parkway Caledon, Ontario, Canada L7E 2Y4

Gold Sponsor



**ZAYOUNA
LAW FIRM**

PERSONAL INJURY
COMMERCIAL LITIGATION

Joseph Zayouna - BBA, LLB
E. jzayouna@zaylaw.com
T. 416-622-0003 ext. 246
www.zaylaw.com

Refugee Story – Marcus John

Currently being settled by Our Lady of Lourdes Parish

My name is Marcus and I am from Afghanistan. I fled Afghanistan for many reasons, including the war that was raging there at the time, the suicide bombers, and the many other dangerous things that were taking place in my country. My family is still in Afghanistan and living under Taliban rule, where my sisters are no longer allowed to go to school. I often think of my family.

As the situation in Afghanistan got worse with the Taliban, I decided to flee and eventually ended up in Sweden before being resettled to Canada. It was a long and dangerous journey. My friends and I paid a smuggler to take us to Iran. We escaped by car but sometimes had to walk long distances to avoid authorities. When we arrived in Iran, we got help from another smuggler, who we paid to take us to Turkey. While in Turkey, we met other human smugglers; we paid them money to help us get to our next destination. We left by boat from Turkey to Greece. It was very difficult for us all because it was such a small boat with 60 people squeezed into it. We sailed all night in heavy seas. I had no choice but to accept whatever would happen, as it was the only way to escape authorities. I had heard stories of other refugees who drowned in the sea. But I remembered what we had escaped from, and so I put my trust in God.

When we reached Greece, we decided to find our way by ourselves; we no longer needed smugglers since it was easy to travel between European countries. We simply had to buy a ticket and then go on to the next country. When I arrived in Germany, I was told by others about Sweden, that it is a good country. It was then that I decided to go to Sweden.

I arrived in Sweden in 2015, and there I lived with a Catholic family. As a Muslim, I was struck by how they lived their lives, with real faith and great love. This was at odds with what I had been taught by the imams back in Afghanistan. The Swedish family even offered to take me to the mosque where I could speak with God. This love challenged my understanding of Christianity. I became curious about Christianity as I witnessed how my adopted family lived. I was introduced to Fr. Thomas, who over the course of the next year and half, taught me about Jesus and about what it means to be a Christian. In 2018, I was baptised and entered into the Church. But that is not where the story ends. Despite my conversion and the danger that I would face if I was forced to return to Afghanistan, the Swedish authorities rejected my refugee case. Never giving up, my adopted family reached out for help.

Thankfully, I received help from a Catholic church and from the Office for Refugees in Toronto (ORAT) and was sponsored to come to Canada. I arrived to Canada two months ago, and a month later, I got a job at a restaurant and also I acquired my G1 Driver's licence about a week ago. My dream is to have my own hotel in the future. I have many dreams and many plans.

Many thanks to the people who helped me and sponsored me to come to Canada and achieve my dreams.

The Office for Refugees is Supported by

 **ShareLife**



ORAT
Office for Refugees
Archdiocese of Toronto
830 Bathurst Street, Suite 104
Toronto, ON M5R 3G1
e: oratrefugeeoffice@archtoronto.org
w: www.orat.ca