Media Release

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The Canadian public wants to help refugees who are running for, and losing their lives. Canadians have been contacting Sponsorship Agreement Holders in record numbers asking how they can contribute to a sponsorship enabling Syrian refugees to find a safe home in Canada.

The Council of the Canadian Refugee Sponsorship Agreement Holders Association (SAH Council) represents the organizations in Canada that sponsor refugees under the Private Sponsorship program. The SAH Council understands that refugee resettlement is not the whole solution to the Syrian crisis, but it is definitely an important part of it.  Ever since Canadians resettled 60,000 Southeast Asian refugees 30 years ago, Canada has been recognized as a leader in its ability to respond to a crisis of huge magnitude by bringing desperate families to safety in Canada.

The following are issues Canada must address or it will lose its role as a leader in resettlement:

* More Government resources and staff are needed in Canada and at visa posts to keep up with the sponsorship applications and reduce very long processing times.
* Refugee resettlement is about the urgent need for protection. Sponsorship procedures need to be fast and efficient so that lives are not lost in the current situation of endless red tape.
* Barriers to the private sponsorship of refugees must be reduced. This includes removing restrictions on Group of Five sponsorships and providing exemptions which will expedite family reunification.
* The Government of Canada needs to quickly resettle many more Syrian refugees, and not at the expense of its resettlement commitments in other places around the world.
* The Government’s commitment must be funded by the Government. All private sponsorships should be in addition to the Government’s commitment.

For more information, please contact the members of the SAH Council:

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