

## Yazidi Refugees in Canada: What can the EMCC do to help?

In February 2017, the Trudeau government announced its plan to provide safe haven to 1,200 Yazidi refugees by the end of 2017. Some of these refugees have already arrived in Canada and due to their special settlement needs, have been categorized as requiring Joint Assistance Sponsorship. The next set of refugees are scheduled to arrive by the end of May. The government is planning to resettle them in five (5) major cities based on the availability of settlement services and a local Yazidi community. The cities are: Toronto, Halifax, Winnipeg, Calgary and London. The expectation is that between 20-40 families will be resettled in each city.

Through the government's plans, EMCC churches in the five cities identified above have a chance to be a part of reaching the Yazidi people and sharing the love of Jesus with them, right here in Canada through the Joint Assistance Sponsorship Program.

## What is a Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS)?

JAS is a joint refugee resettlement undertaking by a Canadian sponsoring group (a SAH and/or their CG) and the Government of Canada (Citizenship and Immigration Canada). The JAS program has been created to enable the resettlement of vulnerable refugees who require special assistance and whose admissibility to Canada depends on the additional support of a sponsor. Refugees sponsored under the JAS program are identified as having special needs that will likely result in a longer or more difficult period of integration in Canada due to:

- trauma from violence or torture
- medical disabilities
- effects of systemic discrimination, or
- large family unit (i.e.: higher number of family members).

Sponsorship under the JAS program means giving refugees a welcoming environment, helping them integrate, helping them access services for their needs and giving moral and emotional support. Under a JAS, the government provides financial assistance to the refugee while sponsoring groups provide community and emotional support and orientation, and ensure access to appropriate services.

## Frequently Asked Questions about JAS:

### *Who can sponsor refugees under JAS?*

Sponsorship Agreement Holders and their Constituent Groups. EMCC is working with the C&MA in Canada, our Sponsorship Agreement Holder. Our churches are our Constituent Groups.

### *Who qualifies for JAS?*

Someone who is a Convention Refugee Abroad or a member of the Country of Asylum class AND is expected to require greater settlement assistance due to the serious nature of personal circumstances such as large/unusual family configuration, trauma due to violence or torture, medical disability, and/or effects of systemic discrimination. The person has to be

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referred to the JAS program by either Canadian visa office abroad or a RAP Service Provider Organization in Canada.

### *How are JAS cases identified?*

The visa officer determines during the eligibility interview which refugee applicants require a JAS. Sponsoring groups cannot designate cases to the program. However, with the special intervention on behalf of Yazidi refugees, sponsors can refer Yazidi cases that they know of, to UNHCR via IRCC. UNHCR will screen them and then refer them to the local Canadian Visa Office. The visa officer sends the details of JAS cases to the Resettlement Operations Centre, which transfers these to RSTP who send out emails with the profiles to Sponsorship Agreement Holders and local IRCC. Alternatively, refugees resettled under the Government-Assisted Refugee (GAR) program to Canada, can be identified and referred to a SAH by the RAP organization.

### *How long is the processing time?*

Refugees under the JAS program who are still overseas arrive on average within 12 weeks of the sponsorship approval date.

### *How long are JAS refugees supported?*

Most refugees under the JAS program are provided support for 12 to 24 months after arrival, depending on the individual circumstances and needs. For the Yazidi refugees intervention, families will be sponsored for a minimum of 24 months.

### *Who are the major players in JAS?*

Since sponsorship under JAS is a joint endeavour, SAHs and their CGs must work closely with the local IRCC office, the Resettlement Assistance Service Provider Organization (RAP SPO), settlement and other community agencies to meet the needs of the newcomers.

### *What is the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP)?*

RAP provides income support and immediate essential services to Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs) and humanitarian cases for which the federal government has undertaken a financial commitment. Financial entitlements under RAP are based on prevailing social services rates.

### *How can our group find a JAS case to sponsor?*

As a Constituent Group, contact your SAH Representative for information on how to access available JAS profiles.

### *We want to commit to a JAS case; what now?*

#### **1. Contact your SAH representative**

Please contact the refugee sponsorship program secretary at the C&MA's National Ministry Centre for more information:

**Hannatu Ogunnaiké** phone: 416-674-7878 ext. 356 email:

[refugeesponsorship@cmacan.org](mailto:refugeesponsorship@cmacan.org) (Please cc Lou Geense, [lgeense@emcc.ca](mailto:lgeense@emcc.ca))

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## **2. Complete the sponsorship undertaking paperwork:**

Once you have received and reviewed the profile of a JAS case, your SAH representative will explain how to complete the following documents, which will need to be submitted by the SAH to the Resettlement Operations Centre in Ottawa:

- IMM1324 - Undertaking / Application for a Joint Assistance Sponsorship
- IMM5492 - Sponsor Assessment form
- IMM5494 - Settlement Plan – Joint Assistance Sponsorship
- IMM5495 - Document Checklist

All forms can be downloaded from:

[www.IRCC.gc.ca/english/information/applications/ref-joint.asp](http://www.IRCC.gc.ca/english/information/applications/ref-joint.asp)

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