



The Canadian Refugee Sponsorship Agreement Holders Association

4 April 2016

Dear Minister McCallum,

Happy Refugee Rights Day!

The SAH Council has received your letter of March 30, 2016 and we wish to express our sincere appreciation. We are very happy with this letter and the positive response you have made to our specific requests, namely to:

- Exclude the privately sponsored refugee applications for Syrians submitted between January 1 and March 31, 2016 from the global cap of 10,500; and
- To create an operational plan and communicate progress towards reducing inventories of applications and backlogs by mission and globally.

This along with the significant increase in the private sponsorship landing targets indicate your desire to not just respond to the Syrian crisis but to make refugee resettlement an important part of Canada's immigration plan. We also applaud the reinstatement of the Interim Federal Health Program for Privately Sponsored Refugees at the beginning of this month. This is a welcome change for sponsors who worried about the impact that a catastrophic illness could have on their sponsorships.

Your letter of March 30 has also reassured us in these respects:

- Your commitment to expeditious processing of Syrian applications but not at the expense of drawing down the inventory of non-Syrians applications. This will be challenging we know.
- Your agreement that the current backlogs for privately sponsored refugees are unacceptable and that your government is committed to doing better.
- The support you have provided to increase sponsorship through the extremely popular BVOR stream and your continued efforts to respond to the hundreds of Canadians who really want to be involved.

In conclusion, we are heartened by the efforts of you and the Department to consult with and listen to the SAH Council. We bring to you, from the front lines, the voices of thousands of Canadians who are actively engaged, or clamouring to be engaged, with the Canadian Government in upholding Canada's humanitarian tradition by bringing needy refugees to safety in Canada. We look forward to continuing our productive dialogue.

We are off to a good start.

Sincerely,

Brian Dyck

Aslam Daud

Tom Denton

Ellen Erickson

Paulette Johnson

Scott McLeod

Susan Nye-Brothers

Rebecca Walker