



2024 General Public Registration

Each year, ORAT hosts a unique program aimed at assisting members of the General Public residing within the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) who aspire to sponsor family members overseas seeking refugee resettlement.



In preparation for the 2024 submission period, ORAT launched an online registration platform, which remained open from October 23,

2023, to October 30, 2023.

During that period, we received a remarkable 322 applications, representing 1121 refugees. The following table provides detailed registration statistics based on the refugees' Country of Origin/Citizenship.

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IRCC Launches Digital Portal



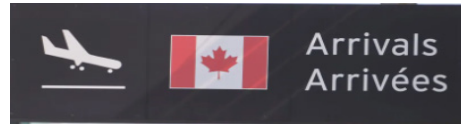
In a significant move towards modernizing the application process, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) is adopting an online digital tool for the submission of

Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) applications. IRCC has announced that the portal will be open to Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) on November 1st, 2023. As of January 1, 2024, all PSR applications must be exclusively submitted through the portal, marking the end of the email submission method.

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Post Arrival Document by IRCC

On August 31, 2023, the Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) issued a document titled "Post Arrival Requirements for Private Sponsorship."



The document serves as a comprehensive reference for all refugee sponsors. It is an amalgamation of various guidelines, providing clarity on existing requirements found in previously established post-arrival documents. Essentially, it is designed as a one-stop resource for all post-arrival obligations.

The key highlight of this document is the division of settlement tasks into specific timelines for cosponsors, Constituent Groups (CGs), and sponsoring groups. These timelines will be incorporated into the updated settlement plan form (IMM5440) set to be released by IRCC on November 1st, 2023.

Here is a summary of the tasks divided by their respective timelines. Please note that this is just a concise overview, and the document itself contains detailed information about the support required.

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IRCC Launches Digital Portal

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The IRCC Permanent Residence Portal, which has been in operation since 2021, is not new to the immigration landscape. It has successfully received applications for various immigration categories, including economic and family class applications. Its effectiveness in managing application intake securely and efficiently has been well-established. Now, this digital gateway is expanding to include refugee resettlement categories, streamlining the application process for PSR applicants

The advantages of submitting PSR applications through the portal are manifold. Notably, this approach will result in the quicker creation of files in the IRCC system, expediting the processing of applications. Principal applicants will have the convenience of providing electronic signatures and declarations directly through the portal, enhancing the security of sensitive client information sharing. The portal also offers a user-friendly dashboard, allowing organizations to monitor the status of all their applications in one place. Moreover, both sponsors and principal applicants can directly upload supporting documents and forms, making the process more efficient and convenient.

While a preliminary session was conducted to provide an overview of IRCC's digital intake portal, SAHs were not directly involved in testing this new tool. As we embrace this transition, we anticipate more updates and further information as the launch date approaches. Stay tuned for the latest developments in this exciting evolution of the PSR application process.

In preparation for this transition, ORAT will be revising the steps involved in the submission of a sponsorship application through our office. We are currently awaiting the launch of the portal before we can finalize these changes. Once we have the necessary information, we will promptly communicate these changes and update our educational resources. Your patience and understanding during this process are greatly appreciated

Post Arrival Document by IRCC

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Arrival to the first 3 weeks: During this period, sponsors are responsible for receiving and welcoming refugees, and assisting with their immediate and essential needs. This includes tasks such as:

- Meeting newcomers at the airport and providing transportation to temporary or permanent housing.
- Assessing any urgent health needs that require immediate attention.
- Updating contact information with IRCC for the principal applicant (PA) and other family members on the file number (G#) through the online portal or by calling IRCC directly.
- Ensuring newcomers have suitable, safe, and clean housing, as well as essential household items and food.
- Helping newcomers with clothing for different seasons, teaching them to use phones and the internet, and ensuring they know how to contact emergency services.
- Familiarizing newcomers with their sponsor's role and local area, including public transportation and where to buy groceries.
- Assisting with the application for essential federal and provincial programs and services, such as IFHP, SIN, CCB, GST/HST credits, school registration, and vaccinations for school-aged children, as well as healthcare services.

Months 1-3: Settlement support continues to address early settlement needs, including orientation, finding permanent housing, and updating contact information with IRCC.

Months 4-6: Settlement support during this period focuses on language classes, education, employment, and helping newcomers apply for the One-Year Window of Opportunity (OYW) if applicable.

Months 7-9: Sponsors are tasked with identifying unmet settlement needs, addressing service gaps, and preparing newcomers for the transition to independent living at the end of the sponsorship period.

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109th World Day of Migrants and Refugees

Together with the community of Jesus the King Melkite Greek Catholic Church, the Archdiocese of Toronto commemorated the 109th World Day of Migrants and Refugees at a special Mass that was celebrated at the Cathedral of the Transfiguration in Markham, Ontario. Monsignor Makarios Wehbi presided at the Mass with His Excellency Bishop John Boissonneau, Senior Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Toronto, giving the homily.

In his homily, Bishop Boissonneau gave an insight on how the Catholic Church was the forerunner in advocating for the betterment of migrants and refugees. “Others recognize World Refugee Day, which was held globally for the first time on June 20, 2001, remembering the 50th anniversary of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees...The Church has been celebrating World Day of Refugees and Migrants since 1914.” The suffering of migrants and refugees has always been a matter of great concern for the Church, he added.

Following the Mass, a short program unfolded. Pierre Poilievre, the leader of the Conservative Party, shared his appreciation for the Mass and its hosts. In a written message, Poilievre stood in solidarity with the people who were forced to leave their homes. “Along their journeys, many of these people have come to the message of hope, found in the Gospel of Christ. In moments of hardships, they have taken cover in God’s steadfast faithfulness and found healing and fellowship in the Catholic Church, and all Christian churches,” he said. “Today and every day we pray for all those who embark on an uncertain journey of rebuilding their lives in an unfamiliar country.”

Please click [here](#) to see the Mass and program.



Post Arrival Document

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Months 10-12: Sponsors ensure newcomers have the necessary documents, access to financial support, and are comfortable managing their finances. They also provide information on Canadian citizenship and provincial social assistance where needed.

ORAT will be updating its resources and educational materials in the coming weeks to align with the information provided in the post-arrival document. Please monitor our website for updated versions of any resources you may require (www.orat.ca). In the meantime, you can access the full post-arrival document [here](#).

2024 General Public Registration

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Given the substantial demand for this program and the expected limited allocation from Immigration Canada, we will employ a randomized selection process for all eligible registrants. This means that all eligible cosponsors will have an equal opportunity to be chosen and progress further with their application at ORAT. Those selected will receive an exclusive invitation from ORAT to participate in the virtual Introduction to Resettlement information session. It's important to note that this session is mandatory for cosponsors and serves as the initial step in the refugee sponsorship process through ORAT.

This program, inspired by the words of St. Paul who wrote, "as we have opportunity, let us do good to all men..." (Gal 6:10), is intended to demonstrate God's love for all those who stand outside of the Church.

We wish to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all registrants for their active participation in this program.

Public Registration Table

Country of Origin	# of Cases	# of Refugees
Afghanistan	86	455
Syria	100	343
Eritrea	83	183
Iraq	17	52
Palestine	11	40
Yemen	7	16
DRC	2	10
Pakistan	6	9
Ethiopia	3	3
Sudan	1	3
Uganda	3	3
Indonesia	2	2
Sri Lanka	1	2
Grand Total	322	1121

EDUCATION CORNER

Report on the Central African Republic

The Central African Republic (CAR), located in the heart of the African continent, is a landlocked country surrounded by several nations, and is positioned along the equator. Despite its stunning natural beauty, the CAR is grappling with political instability, armed conflicts, and widespread human rights abuses. Faced with a lack of security and opportunities, many CAR citizens are compelled to seek refuge in neighboring countries or even farther afield.

Historical Context: The roots of CAR's current challenges trace back to the colonial era when European powers embarked on expeditions to explore the interior of Africa. The French, in particular, established contact with various indigenous communities in what is now the CAR. As they expanded their presence, the French entered into unequal treaties with local leaders, granting them control over land and resources.

By the late 19th century, the European powers engaged in



the infamous "Scramble for Africa," claiming African territories for themselves. In 1894, French explorer Joseph Shanguoué established a military

presence in what would later become the capital of CAR, Bangui.

The mid-20th century witnessed a wave of anti-colonial movements across Africa, and CAR was no exception. The people of CAR, like many others on the continent, resisted French rule, leading to a series of protests and confrontations. On August 13, 1960, the CAR successfully declared its independence from colonial rule.

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Liliane's Inspiring Journey

EDUCATION CORNER

I'm Liliane Safi, born in the picturesque city of Bukavu in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo. My father was a dedicated nurse who cared for the disabled, and my mother, a loving homemaker, took care of our large family. I have many siblings, and our home was always filled with warmth and laughter. My pursuit of knowledge led me to Kinshasa, where I worked diligently to earn my Information Technology Degree.

Congo, our beloved homeland, is a treasure trove of natural resources, including gold, cobalt, and diamonds. It's a land of abundant water, graced with serene lakes and numerous rivers. Conservation parks teem with a rich diversity of wildlife, among them the majestic mountain gorillas. The climate is predominantly warm, but in the mountains, a refreshing coolness prevails. We experience two distinct seasons: the dry season and the rainy season. Our fertile soil yields bountiful harvests without the need for fertilizers, allowing everything to flourish naturally.

Tragically, the course of our lives took a dark turn when war descended upon our homeland. Homes were reduced to ashes, lives were lost, and countless



people were forced to flee, leaving behind the places they cherished. The anguish of my people continues to this day. During those turbulent times, some of my siblings and I were separated, and we haven't seen each other for more than two decades. Regrettably, some of them remain in a refugee camp in Malawi. Fearing for our safety, my daughter and I embarked on a journey to Thailand, seeking refuge, a journey that would change our lives forever.

Report on the Central African Republic

Religious Landscape: In the CAR, Christianity is the dominant faith. Among the Christian population, Protestants form the majority, followed closely by a significant Catholic presence. Muslims and adherents of traditional indigenous beliefs constitute a smaller portion of the population, with roughly equal proportions.

Refugee Crisis: In December 2020, President Faustin Archange Touadera engaged a Russian paramilitary group known as the Wagner Group to help combat rebel forces advancing on the capital. This move drew the ire of the French government, which expressed its disapproval of Russian military involvement. The United Nations has documented numerous reports of this paramilitary group engaging in resource looting and committing crimes against the civilian population.

Ida Sawyer, an expert, noted, "There is compelling evidence that Russian-identified forces supporting the Central African Republic's government have committed grave abuses against civilians with complete impunity."

As of today, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimates that there are 762,700 CAR refugees living abroad, while an additional 515,700 are internally displaced within the country. Most of these refugees find shelter in neighboring nations such as Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Chad, the Republic of the Congo, and Sudan. For many of them, Europe and North America represent the ultimate destination. Unfortunately, like many African refugees, those fleeing the CAR often resort to perilous journeys across the Mediterranean Sea in their quest for safety and a better life

ORAT's Response: ORAT has conducted several mission trips to Ghana, where some of the refugees from the Central African Republic have fled to. Through these missions, we have sponsored 35 refugees in total from CAR. 18 of the 35 have already arrived, with most completing their settlement period. The remaining 17 are currently in process.

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Liliane's Inspiring Journey

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It was in Thailand that I first crossed paths with ORAT. Our connection began when we warmly received the Cardinal of Bangkok in our church, St. Mark's in Pathum Thani. I dedicated my time to the service of the church, keeping it clean, while my daughter's education was supported by Father Adriano Pelosin. During the Cardinal's pastoral visit, our priest introduced our Congolese community, which consisted of three families. It was then that we penned a heartfelt letter, inspired by my research on the internet that Catholic Churches in Canada were offering support to refugees. In my letter, I made a specific request to the Cardinal: to recommend us to the Archbishop of Toronto, establishing a direct connection for us. The Cardinal, touched by our plea, reached out to the Pope's representative, the Apostolic Nuncio, who, in turn, relayed our request to the Archbishop of Toronto.



With ORAT's assistance, the journey to Canada was set in motion. We shared our story once more and submitted our application, which was then forwarded to Immigration Canada. A group of ORAT officials visited us in Thailand in December 2022, organizing a meeting with us on December 6th, 2022, where I had the privilege of meeting Deacon Rudy, Simolen, and Ildy. This meeting was designed to prepare us for interviews with the Embassy and Immigration Canada to secure a visa.

Our long-awaited arrival in Canada occurred on July 6th, 2023, at Toronto Pearson Airport. The warm embrace of a dedicated newcomer committee greeted us with a fully furnished home and generously stocked cupboards. Our rent was covered, and financial support from St. Vincent de Paul provided us with the means for food, transportation, and other essential needs. They introduced us to fellow parishioners, community organizations, and vital services such as Service Canada and Service Ontario. My daughter was enrolled in school, and I was connected with Agilec for employment support.

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EDUCATION CORNER

Family Reunification Options

Anyone that meets [IRCC's definition of a family](#) is eligible to be reunited with the Principal Applicant (PA) in Canada via the One-Year Window of Opportunity Provision (OYW).

To be eligible for the OYW, the PA must list their family members on the application forms as accompanying or non-accompanying dependents or declare them to IRCC before they travel to Canada. For more information on the definition of a family used by IRCC, and the difference between accompanying and non-accompanying family members, please [click here](#).

The PA has one year after their date of arrival in Canada to submit the OYW application for any family members that were non-accompanying. OYW applications for non-accompanying family members can still be submitted even if the family members are in their home country.



For more information on what forms and supporting documents are required for an OYW application, please [click here](#).

Sponsors are responsible for providing financial and settlement support to all the PA's accompanying and non-accompanying family members (including newborn children born after the application is submitted to IRCC and new spouses/common-law partners that are added to the application), even though they may not arrive in Canada at the same time and may even arrive after the PA's sponsorship period has come to an end.

For information on the level of financial support that sponsors must provide to non-accompanying family members arriving under the OYW, please click [here](#) and [here](#).

Liliane's Inspiring Journey

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Most importantly, our sponsor continued to check in on us, ensuring that our needs were met. Their unwavering support has left an indelible mark on my heart. In just one month, we've achieved so much, and I feel remarkably comfortable. I see a promising future ahead, and I consider it a series of blessings, each coming in its own time according to God's plan. I feel truly fortunate to be here, even as I know there is still much to achieve.

As I reflect on my journey, I am deeply moved by the incredible work ORAT is doing to help refugees around the world. The plight of refugees is undeniably challenging, and their removal from such dire circumstances is a profound relief and liberation. I extend my deepest gratitude to ORAT, which acted as the bridge that led me to my new community at Guardian Angel's parish. I wish you all good health and pray for God's blessings upon you and your families. Countless individuals contributed to my journey, and though I may not know them all, I carry each of you in my heart. Even before I set foot in Canada, I thought of you and your kindness. When Father Prasanth came to bless my new home, I offered him a bottle of sacramental wine, a symbol of my hope that God will bless each and every one of you during Mass. I can hardly express the depth of my gratitude for all that has been done for us, and I am overwhelmed with a sense of thankfulness.

Refugee Committees Wanted



Throughout the years, ORAT has embarked on numerous overseas mission trips, during which we identify refugees enduring dire circumstances and facing limited prospects for resettlement in safe countries. These selected refugees are then thoughtfully matched with parishes and like-minded communities that have dedicated themselves to the noble mission of welcoming and supporting refugee families in their journey to start anew in Canada.

We are currently on the lookout for church groups and organizations that do not currently have an active refugee committee but may be eager to establish one. If you or your organization holds an interest in forming a refugee committee within your parish or group, we invite you to get in touch with Luciano Moro, ORAT's Resettlement Educator & CG Animator. Luciano can provide you with further insights and information regarding this deeply rewarding ministry.

You can reach out to Luciano via email at orateducator@archtoronto.org or by phone at (437) 290-9333.

In embracing this cause, you have the opportunity to extend a compassionate hand to our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, offering them the chance to escape persecution and build a new life here in Canada.

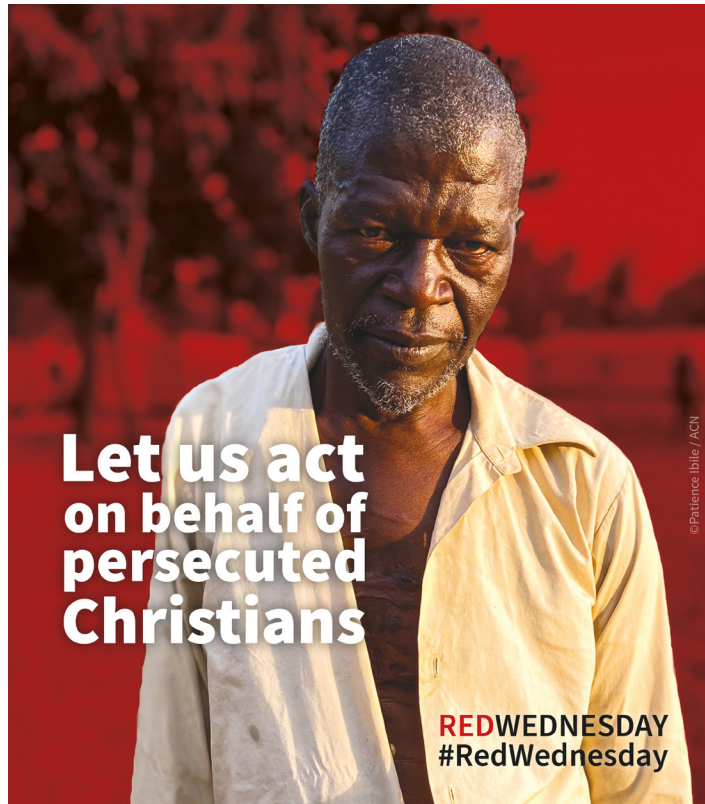
Your involvement can make an enduring impact.

Red Wednesday 2023

You are invited!

On Wednesday, November 15, Aid to the Church in Need Canada invites you to take part in Red Wednesday, an international event to raise awareness of the persecution of Christians and to promote religious freedom. Organize an activity in your parish, light up a building in red (alternatively, wear red), or attend the Mass to be celebrated by Archbishop Francis Leo at 5 p.m. at St. Michael's Cathedral Basilica in Toronto. For more information on this not-to-be-missed event and how you can show your support, please visit <https://acn-canada.org/rw/>.

Let us stand in solidarity with persecuted Christians!



November 15th, 2023 | 5 pm EST
Mass for Persecuted Christians
at St. Michael's Cathedral Basilica
(65 Bond Street, Toronto, ON, M5B 1X1)

Come and pray with us.
All are welcome.



acn-canada.org/rw

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