



## ORAT’S CG Handbook Now Available

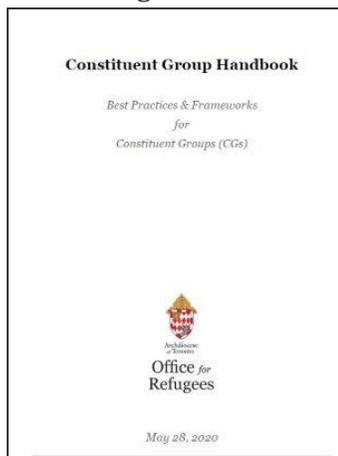
In an effort to help current and future sponsors, we have developed the Constituent Group (CG) Handbook. In a special way, this resource has been developed to assist CG’s who are making use of donated funds and who are sponsoring refugees that ORAT has named through its overseas missions (i.e., Project Hope cases). At the same time, we believe that it will be a helpful resource for Cosponsors who have named their own refugee.

The handbook provides CGs with a framework, principles, best practices and over-arching information on various aspects of refugee sponsorship. It provides CGs with an approach that helps the refugee achieve the best possible outcome and helps to ensure for the long-term sustainability of the Private Sponsorship of Refugees program. Best practices have been gathered from CGs throughout the Archdioceses and from our own experience, having seen what has worked and what has not worked.

To obtain the document, click on the following link and select the “Resources” tab on ORAT’s website:

<https://www.archtoronto.org/refugee/>

The CG Handbook is a searchable pdf document, and is designed to be as accessible as possible. By



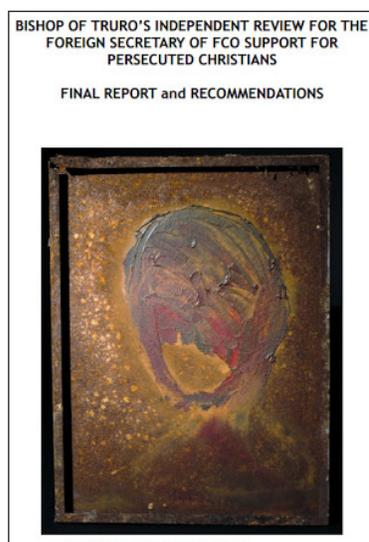
clicking on the relevant subject matter in the table of contents, users are automatically brought to the corresponding section in the handbook.

It is our hope that this document will be a help for CGs and Cosponsors alike, assisting them in the work of refugee resettlement. Please let us know if you have any feedback and/

or suggestions on how to improve the document. You can contact us at (416) 934-3400 x804 or by email at [oratoutreach@archtoronto.org](mailto:oratoutreach@archtoronto.org).

## ORAT’s General Public Registration

In the backdrop of the systemic persecution of the Christian community in many parts of the world, and the lack of any adequate response from Western Governments to assist this suffering community, our office has focused much of its efforts to aid this community. The scope of this persecution is well documented in a recent report commissioned



by the former UK Foreign Secretary, Jeremy Hunt. I would encourage you to click on the link below and read the “Final Report”, which begins with the following quote from a Times editorial: “Across the globe, in the Middle East, Asia and Africa, Christians are being bullied, arrested, jailed, expelled and executed. Christianity is by most calculations the most

persecuted religion of modern times. Yet Western politicians until now have been reluctant to speak out in support of Christians in peril.”

<https://christianpersecutionreview.org.uk/>

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## ORAT's General Public Registration

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Yet at the same time, our office recognizes the importance of coming to the aid of those who stand outside of the Church, and who may stand outside of the Christian faith. At the beginning of May, we announced that registration was open for members of the General Public who wished to sponsor family members who were in need of refugee resettlement. Over the course of the 5-day registration period, we received almost 1,700 applications, representing almost 4,000 refugees.

The vast majority of the applications (71%) were to sponsor refugees from Eritrea. A breakdown on the number of cases and refugees, by Country of Origin is presented in the following table:

Country of Origin	Cases		Refugees	
	Count	% of Total	Count	% of Total
Afghanistan	24	1.4%	108	2.7%
Eritrea	1,200	71.0%	2,438	61.4%
Ethiopia	25	1.5%	59	1.5%
Iran	4	0.2%	12	0.3%
Iraq	124	7.3%	384	9.7%
Other	76	4.5%	184	4.6%
Somalia	3	0.2%	5	0.1%
Syria	224	13.3%	759	19.1%
Yemen	9	0.5%	20	0.5%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,689</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,969</b>	<b>100%</b>

Given Immigration Canada's restriction on the number of refugees that can be sponsored through organizations like ORAT, we were unable to assist all those who registered. To manage this and to be as fair as possible, a random draw was held. Selected registrants were invited to attend an on-line information session entitled "Introduction to Resettlement".

For those who were not fortunate enough to be invited to this Information Session, we encouraged them to explore other immigration options that may be available, and / or to reach out to other Sponsorship Agreement Holders in their community to see if they are able to assist them with their application.

## Immigration Canada Update on COVID-19

Immigration Canada has recently provided an update to Private Sponsors regarding COVID-19. To access this update entitled "COVID-19 Economic Response Plan FAQs", please click on the following link and select the "Resources" tab:

<https://www.archtoronto.org/refugee/>

The information provided is intended to assist sponsors who have refugee cases in process, so that they have clear understanding of how in-process refugee cases are affected by the current pandemic.

For sponsors whose refugee family is already in Canada, the communique provides them with information regarding how they can continue to fulfill their sponsorship role while also addressing the unique settlement needs of sponsored refugees during this difficult time.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, several Canadian embassies and consulates, and International Organization for Migration (IOM) offices abroad have either reduced their operations or closed their offices temporarily. Sponsors are encouraged to limit their communications to these offices during this time.

Migration offices currently have differing levels of capacity to process immigration applications, including PSR applications. Interviews are not taking place at this time to ensure the safety and wellbeing of applicants and staff. Applicants will be invited for their interview once it is possible to do so.

Due to the current disruption to normal operations, there may be delays in the processing of applications, regardless of type/category. Specific information on processing times is currently unavailable due to the quickly evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic. IRCC will contact sponsors and refugees once further information related to their application(s) is available.

Because of the temporary travel restrictions, IRCC and IOM have cancelled all refugee arrivals until further notice. Information on when travel to Canada may resume is not currently available. IRCC will contact sponsors and refugees with further information once travel arrangements can be made.

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## Immigration Canada Update on COVID-19

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Updated information on how COVID-19 is affecting refugee sponsorship to Canada and other immigration programs can be found on IRCC's website at the links below:

- English: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/coronavirus-covid19.html>
- French: <https://www.canada.ca/fr/immigration-refugies-citoyennete/services/coronavirus-covid19.html>

Please contact ORAT by phone (416) 943-3400 x804 or by email [oratrefugeeoffice@archtoronto.org](mailto:oratrefugeeoffice@archtoronto.org) if you have questions about your case.

### Get to Meet ORAT's Volunteer

My name is Hasnaa Al-Hakim. I'm Syrian. I lived and worked in Saudi Arabia for eighteen years. I'm married and have two children, Anas and Karen.



At the beginning of the civil war in my country, deep down, I felt so sorry for the terrible consequences of the war: killing, bombing, displacing people, starving, and spoiling children's futures.

When the war started, and during that period of time, feeling sorry for such effects was not enough, so I volunteered at several charities to support the displaced people. Of course, my volunteering was not as I like it to be because I was away from my country.

When I came to Canada, I was lucky in finding an opportunity to volunteer at the Archdiocese of Toronto's Office of Refugees (ORAT). ORAT facilitates the sponsorship of refugees to Canada and assists them with their settlement to Canada.

Once I started volunteering there, I actually experienced their kindness, respect, and the responsibility which the staff there happily carry towards people seeking help.

I respect every single member of ORAT for their true feelings and honesty in working.

*By: Hasnaa Al-Hakim*

### Volunteering Opportunities at ORAT

Refugee resettlement work is not possible without our many dedicated volunteers who assist with administration, reception, event coordination, interpretation, translation, information sessions and case management. Volunteers at ORAT develop useful skills while contributing to our world in a meaningful way. There will be more volunteer opportunities opening up at ORAT shortly. If you are interested in becoming part of our volunteer team, please contact Hazem at: [orateducator@archtoronto.org](mailto:orateducator@archtoronto.org)



## Education Update

In light of the present situation unfolding before us regarding COVID-19, the Office for Refugees at the Archdiocese of Toronto has moved all its information sessions to an on-line format. Until further notice, the office will not be holding any in-person information session.

The on-line webinar format is a live virtual event. It is an educational session that includes audio and visual communication between the speaker and the attendees.

Registration for the various session will take place ORAT's <http://orat.eventbrite.com/> page. Once registered, registrants will be provided with a link to the webinar 48 hours before the webinar begin.



## Your Input is Welcome

If you would like to contribute an article to ORAT's newsletter, have any feedback on past articles, or have suggestions for future articles, please email us at: [orateducator@archtoronto.org](mailto:orateducator@archtoronto.org)

## ORAT's Website

Please visit ORAT's website to access the many resources that we have made available, including, forms, information session materials, on-line tutorials and various other resources. Simply click on the following link to access our site:

<https://www.archtoronto.org/refugee/>

## Join us on Facebook

Become a member of the ORAT Facebook Page to get the latest news and updates on resettlement issues.

[https://www.facebook.com/ORAT-Office-for-Refugees-Archdiocese-of-Toronto-324051570821/?view\\_public\\_for=324051570821](https://www.facebook.com/ORAT-Office-for-Refugees-Archdiocese-of-Toronto-324051570821/?view_public_for=324051570821)

The Office for Refugees is Supported by



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