



Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!



On behalf of the entire ORAT team, we would like to extend our warmest greetings and heartfelt wishes to you and your family for a truly Blessed Christmas and a joy-filled New Year.

We are deeply grateful for the countless volunteers who have so generously shared their time, talents

and resources to welcome and support refugees as they begin their new life in Canada.

As we celebrate the birth of our Savior, we are reminded that Christ Jesus, the true Light of the world, has come to dispel the darkness of sin, and to bring hope, healing, and peace to all mankind. This is a season of radiant joy for every heart that welcomes Him.

May the love, hope, and light of this sacred season fill your homes and remain with you throughout the coming year.

We would like to share with you Cardinal Leo's Christmas message. Click [here](#) to read his message.

IRCC's 2026 Levels Plan & Global Cap

Each year, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) releases its immigration levels plan, outlining target numbers for Permanent Residents (PR) across each PR immigration stream.

The recently released 2026–2028 Immigration Levels Plan maintains annual PR admissions at 380,000 for all three years, while significantly reducing temporary-resident entries to 385,000 in 2026 and 370,000 in 2027–2028.

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Important: RAP Rate Increase

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) recently announced a substantial increase to minimum financial support requirements as outlined in the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP). Both Monthly RAP Rates and Start-Up Costs have increased significantly. These changes, which come into effect on January 26, 2026, are intended to better align with provincial social assistance rates and reflect the real cost of living across Canada. Unfortunately, the magnitude of this increase far exceeds normal inflation and the premium we routinely build into our cost tables.

Regrettably, this change, which is entirely outside of our control, must be implemented in order for us to meet our obligations to our sponsored refugees, as outlined by IRCC.

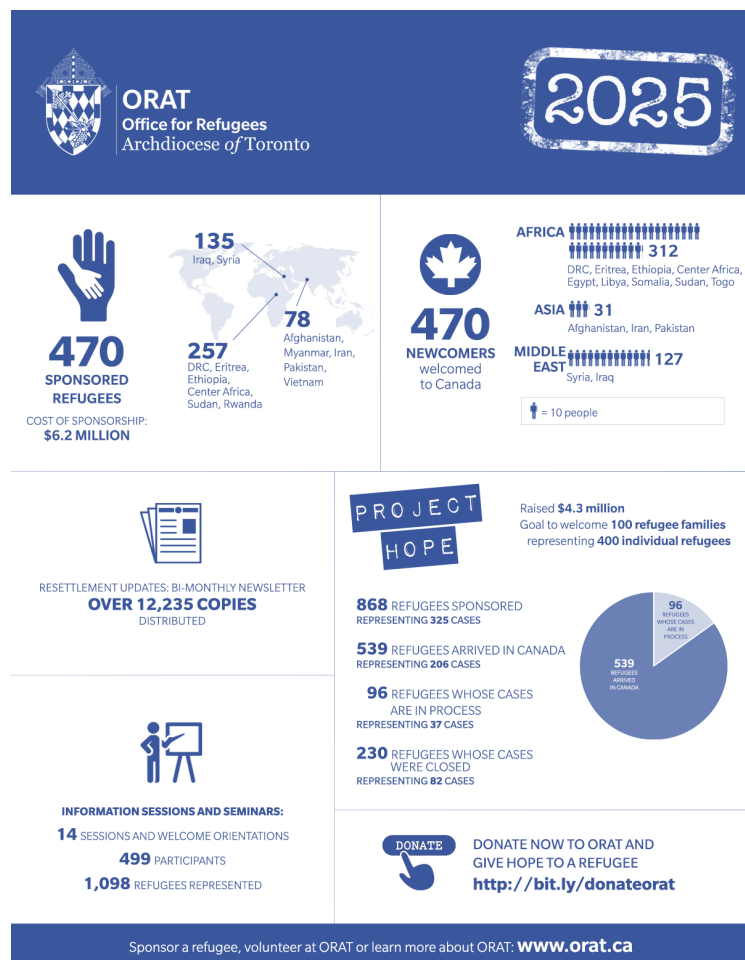
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What We've Accomplished Together



With the support of our CG Partner Organizations, parishes, and cosponsors, ORAT proudly **welcomed over 470 refugees** to Canada in 2025, providing them with safety, hope, and the chance to rebuild their lives. In addition, we **initiated resettlement applications for 470 additional refugees**, laying the groundwork for their eventual arrival and the opportunity to live in freedom. These accomplishments reflect the power of collaboration and the call to live out Christ's teaching: "I was a stranger, and you welcomed Me."

We are deeply grateful for the generosity of the faithful across the Archdiocese of Toronto, who contributed **\$4.3 million to the Project Hope Initiative**, launched in 2015 with the goal of resettling 100 refugee families. Thanks to this support, **539 refugees have now arrived in Canada**, and in total, 868 refugees have benefited from the time, talent, and treasure shared by donors and volunteers alike. While the numbers are meaningful, the true impact lies in the transformed lives and renewed hope of those we serve.

As the Project Hope fund nears its end, we invite the faithful to continue supporting this life-changing work. Donations can be made online by clicking

[here](#), or by cheque, made payable to ORAT, and mailed to 830 Bathurst St., Toronto, ON M5R 3G1. While there are legitimate concerns about high immigration levels and integration, our focus remains on resettling Christian refugees, who have been abandoned by many western nations.

The infographic of our 2025 achievements, which is presented above is also available on our website at www.orat.ca.

Aid to the Church in Need Report

Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) released its biennial Religious Freedom in the World Report 2025 on October 21, 2025, in Rome, revealing a troubling global landscape where nearly 5.4 billion people live in countries with serious or severe violations of religious freedom. The report identifies authoritarian regimes as the primary threat in 52 nations, alongside rising jihadism, religious nationalism, armed conflicts, and organized crime fueling persecution and discrimination. Covering 196 countries from January 2023 to December 2024, ACN classified 24 nations as experiencing outright persecution and 38 with discrimination, underscoring the urgent need for greater protection of this fundamental right.

Click [here](#) to download the full Executive Summary (PDF) or click [here](#) to explore the interactive report.



IRCC's Levels Plan & Global Cap

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The Plan reflects IRCC's shift toward "sustainable" immigration growth, putting stronger emphasis on economic pathways and aiming to bring the temporary-resident population down to under 5% of Canada's total population by the end of 2027. Despite these adjustments, the Plan maintains commitments to family reunification, humanitarian admissions, and Francophone immigration, though at more modest levels than in previous years.

For the Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) program, however, the impact is far more severe. IRCC has announced a 2026 SAH Global Cap of just 5,000 persons, representing a 54% reduction from the 2025 cap of 10,800, which itself had already been cut by 20% from 2024. In practical terms, this means available PSR "spots" for all SAHs combined have fallen from 13,500 (2024) to 5,000 (2026) — a dramatic contraction with major operational consequences for sponsoring organizations across Canada.

ORAT is deeply disappointed by this unprecedented reduction and recognizes the significant challenges it poses for SAHs and refugees alike. We have actively advocated for more equitable allocations in the past, and we continue to press for meaningful changes to ensure sponsorship capacity aligns with both community demand and refugee needs.

Pause on New G5 & CS Applications

On November 21, 2025, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) announced an extension of the temporary pause on **new** Groups of Five (G5) and Community Sponsorship (CS) applications. The moratorium has been extended to December 31, 2026. Originally implemented in November 2024 to manage high demand and reduce processing backlogs, this measure allows IRCC to continue processing existing applications while welcoming refugees in line with the 2026–2028 Immigration Levels Plan. IRCC acknowledges the impact on sponsors and partners and commits to ongoing collaboration for program improvements.

Click [here](#) to read the full IRCC announcement.

2026 Registration & Allocation

ORAT has now successfully completed registration of all cases from our Constituent Group Partner Organizations (CGPOs) for 2026 submission.

Due to a significant reduction in the 2026 Global Cap (the total number of refugees all SAHs can sponsor), and the high volume of cases already registered, we have made the difficult decision to continue the suspension of the **General Public Program** until 2027.

While the Global Cap has been announced, SAHs are awaiting their individual allocation, which is expected to be released by March, 2026. With a 54% reduction on top of last year's 20% decrease, ORAT anticipates a much smaller allocation than originally planned. This may require further adjustments to cases currently in our inventory.

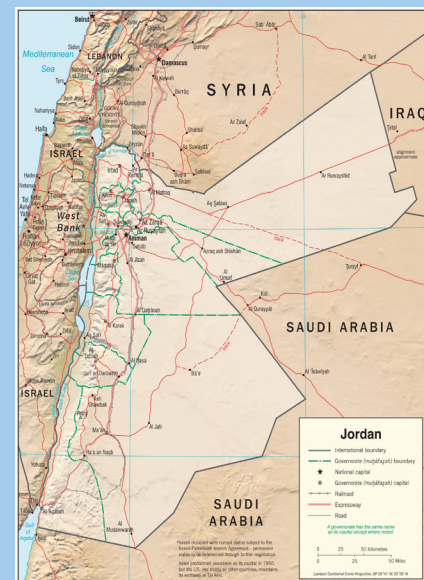
We will continue to provide updates as soon as more information is available.

Thank you for your understanding and continued support.

EDUCATION CORNER

Jordan: Country of Asylum Report

Jordan is a country located in the heart of the Middle East, bordered by several key nations. It shares borders with Saudi Arabia to the south and southeast, Iraq to the northeast, Syria to the north, Israel and the Palestinian territories (West Bank) to the west. Its western border also includes a small stretch of coastline along the Gulf of Aqaba, providing limited access to the Red Sea through the port city of Aqaba. Jordan's central location makes it a crossroads between Asia, Africa, and Europe, giving it regional importance both historically and politically.



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Jordan: Country of Asylum Report

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The country's geography is diverse, ranging from arid deserts in the east to mountainous regions in the west. The Jordan Rift Valley, which includes the Jordan River and the Dead Sea, marks the western edge of the country and serves as a natural border with Israel and the West Bank. The capital city, Amman, is in the northwestern part of the country and serves as the political, economic, and cultural hub of Jordan. Despite being landlocked aside from its Red Sea outlet, Jordan has historically played a central role in regional trade and diplomacy due to its stable governance and strategic position.

Jordan's Geo-historical: Jordan's history is deeply intertwined with the broader story of the ancient Near East, with its land serving as a crucial link between empires and civilizations for millennia. The area now known as Jordan was once home to several ancient kingdoms, including the Edomites, Moabites, and Ammonites, all frequently referenced in biblical texts. Later, the influential Nabataean Kingdom, famous for its rock-carved city of Petra, gained prominence by controlling key trade routes across the Arabian Peninsula. Jordan's position along the King's Highway—a major ancient trade route—made it an essential corridor for commerce, culture, and military movements stretching from Egypt to Mesopotamia.

Over the centuries, Jordan became part of various empires such as the Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic Caliphates, each leaving a lasting impact on the region's architecture, religion, and infrastructure. Following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in the early 20th century, the modern state of Jordan was established under British mandate and achieved full independence in 1946 as the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Its history reflects a rich blend of cultures and ongoing strategic significance, positioned at the crossroads of the Levant, the Arabian Desert, and the Fertile Crescent—often regarded as the birthplace of civilization.

Religious Affiliation & Impact on Religious Minorities: Jordan is a predominantly Muslim

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Important: RAP Rate Increase

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We recognize that this will deeply affect our cosponsors, many of whom are recent immigrants themselves. We share their disappointment and understand how difficult this will be for many.

What This Means for Our Cosponsors

In addition to publishing our updated 2026 Sponsorship Cost Table — which now reflects the new IRCC RAP rates plus a 10% contingency premium to help protect against future increases — we are taking the following proactive steps to ensure every sponsored family has sufficient funds upon arrival:

- **Submitted Cases (But not Arrived):** We are reviewing all in-process and not-yet-arrived cases and are contacting cosponsors to request the additional deposit required under the new rates.
- **Arrived Cases (Within Settlement Period):** We are reviewing all currently arrived cases still within the 12-month sponsorship period and requesting top-ups where a funding gap now exists.
- **Cases Pending Submission:** We are requiring the full updated amount (new RAP + 10% contingency) for every new submission moving forward.

Updated Resources

To support sponsors and ensure clarity, we have updated the following tools on our website to reflect the new RAP amounts:

- The [Sponsorship Cost Table](#) provides the cost of sponsorship by family size. This is a projected cost.
- The [Sponsorship Cost Calculator](#) allows accurate calculation of cost of sponsorship based on family composition. This is a projected cost.
- The [RAP Calculator and Budget Workbook](#) provides an accurate picture current RAP Rates for arrived refugees.

These measures, while difficult, are necessary to remain in full compliance with our legal obligations to the refugees and to IRCC and help ensure that arriving refugees have the financial support they need to settle. If you have questions about how these changes may impact your case, our office is here to help.

Israel: Country of Asylum Report

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country, with Islam playing a central role in its cultural and political life. About 95% of the population adheres to Sunni Islam, while a small percentage practices Shi'a Islam. The Hashemite monarchy, which rules Jordan, claims direct descent from the Prophet Muhammad and positions itself as a guardian of Islamic sites, particularly in Jerusalem. Islam is the state religion, and Sharia (Islamic law) influences the legal system, particularly in matters of personal status such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance.



Jordan is generally known for its religious tolerance compared to many of its neighbors. Christians make up roughly 4–5% of the population, including Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and various Protestant communities. They are allowed to worship freely, operate schools and institutions, and are represented in parliament through reserved seats. However, religious minorities, including Christians and smaller groups like Baha'is and Druze, may face limitations in areas such as religious conversion, building new places of worship, or equal treatment in family law. While overt persecution is rare, social pressures and legal restrictions can affect freedom of belief and religious expression, particularly for those converting from Islam.

Challenges for Refugees in Jordan: Refugees in Jordan face a range of challenges that affect nearly every aspect of their lives. The country hosts a large refugee population, primarily Syrians, but also Iraqis, Yemenis, Sudanese, and others. Many live in crowded camps or urban areas with limited access to stable employment, adequate housing, and healthcare. While Jordan has maintained relative stability and safety for refugees, economic pressures have grown in recent years.

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Malik's Journey of Faith & Freedom

My name is Malik, and I come from Herat Province in Afghanistan—a place where the mere act of believing differently can put your life at risk.



In 2014, my life took a profound and unexpected turn when I came to know Jesus through Facebook. What began as curiosity quickly turned into deep conviction. I embraced Christianity with all my heart. But in Afghanistan, this decision came at a heavy price. My own family and relatives turned against me. They gave me an ultimatum: renounce my new faith or face the authorities. They warned me that if I did not return to Islam, I would be charged with apostasy—a crime punishable by death.

Living under such pressure, fear, and isolation, I knew I had no choice. In 2015, I fled Afghanistan and sought refuge in India, hoping to find safety and the freedom to follow my faith. There, I found what I had longed for—a church community, the chance to get baptized, and the opportunity to begin studying in Bible college. It was the beginning of a new spiritual journey, but sadly, not the end of my struggles. Even in India, I was not safe.

As an Afghan Christian convert, I continued to face discrimination, hostility, and threats. The Afghan Christian community lived in constant fear. Despite being recognized as a refugee by the UNHCR, I was told bluntly by their office in India that my chances of resettlement were less than 1%. I was devastated. All I wanted was a place to live in peace and safety was that too much to ask? But then came a miracle.

In April 2022, I was sponsored to come to Canada

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Israel: Country of Asylum Report

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As international aid has decreased, basic necessities such as food, education, and medical care have become harder to access, pushing many refugee families deeper into poverty and forcing them to rely on harmful coping mechanisms like reducing meals or taking on debt.

The situation is even more difficult for non-Syrian refugees. In recent years, Jordan has restricted asylum registration for people from countries like Yemen and Sudan, which means many of them live without legal status or access to vital services. These refugees often cannot work legally, attend school, or access public healthcare. On top of these legal and economic challenges, many refugees live in poor housing conditions that make them vulnerable to harsh weather and environmental hazards. While Jordan continues to offer refuge to people fleeing conflict, the lack of long-term solutions and declining international support have created a humanitarian strain that affects both refugees and host communities alike.

ORAT's Support: Since 2008, ORAT has been honored to support 1,082 sponsorship applications on behalf of 2,434 refugees seeking asylum in Jordan. These individuals come from a variety of countries, including Iraq, Iran, Syria, Sudan, and Somalia. Through ORAT's steadfast commitment, these individuals have been granted a crucial opportunity to find protection, restore their dignity, and embark on a journey toward a fresh start.

To date, 663 of these applications have led to successful resettlement, enabling 1,487 refugees to begin new lives with access to essential services, supportive communities, and legal protection. An additional 191 applications representing 370 refugees are still in process with Immigration Canada. ORAT remains committed to supporting each refugee throughout their journey, offering practical help as well as a sense of support, community, and hope for a better future.

Malik's Journey of Faith & Freedom

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through the Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) Program, supported by the Office for Refugees, Archdiocese of Toronto (ORAT), a Christian SAH and church. In July 2023, I landed in Canada—a moment I will never forget. I felt like I could finally breathe again.

This sponsorship didn't just change my life—it saved my life.

It gave me hope when I had none. It gave me a new beginning when I had lost everything. It gave me a new country to call home—a place where I am no longer a refugee, but a resident. A place where I am free to believe, to worship, and to live with dignity.

The Refugee Sponsorship Program is truly lifesaving and life-transforming. For refugees like me—whose lives are threatened because of their faith, and who continue to suffer in countries of asylum—this program is often the only light in the darkness. It is not just a program; it is a lifeline, a doorway to freedom, and a chance to start over.

I am forever thankful to ORAT and other SAHs who open their hearts to sponsor people like me. You are more than just sponsors. You are hope-givers. You are lifesavers. You are the hands and feet of compassion. You help us move from danger to safety, from fear to freedom, from despair to a future.

Today, I am doing my part to give back. I now help other refugees and newcomers in the same situation I once was in. I support them in small but meaningful ways—by filling out immigration forms, guiding them through the settlement process, and volunteering with organizations that help newcomers feel welcomed and supported. Canada is now my home, and I serve it with pride, love, and gratitude. I am committed to being a faithful, fruitful, and contributing member of this society.

To those who support the PSR Program—Thank You for blessing lives like mine in practical and powerful ways. Thank you for giving us not just a ticket to safety, but a path to purpose. You are the reason people like me now have a future to look forward to.





Supporting ORAT

Our work is supported by the generosity of the Archdiocese of Toronto, ShareLife, various collaborating organizations and the faithful. If you would like to donate to support the work of this office, please click the donate button.

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