



## NEWS RELEASE

### NEW INITIATIVE TO SPONSOR 100 SYRIAN BVOR REFUGEES

**TORONTO, ONTARIO. September 20, 2018.** An additional 100 Syrian refugees will be resettled in Canada under the BVOR program before the end of this year, under a new initiative to be announced today by Jean-Nicolas Beuze of UNHCR, the UN refugee agency.

Thanks to a donation of nearly \$500,000 from the Lifeline Syria Fund (hosted at the Toronto Foundation), sponsorship groups across Canada will be able to sponsor more UN-referred Syrian refugees to Canada. Lifeline Syria funds have been donated by generous Canadians from all backgrounds.

The Syrian refugees will be sponsored under a special Government of Canada program called the Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) program. The BVOR program matches Canadian sponsorship groups with refugees who have been selected overseas by the UNHCR. They have been approved by the Canadian government and will arrive within 4 to 12 weeks. Settlement costs are normally shared between the Government of Canada and private sponsors.

Through the Lifeline Syria initiative, the start-up settlement costs and half of the first year of the newcomers' income support will be covered by the Lifeline Syria Fund donation. The Government of Canada will provide the other 6 months of income support for the sponsored Syrian newcomers under the BVOR program. Private sponsor groups provide up to one year of social, emotional and logistical settlement support.

Lifeline Syria has helped private sponsorship of more than 1,100 Syrian refugees to settle as permanent residents in the Greater Toronto Area since its inception in June 2015, and has played a major role in mobilizing Canadians to sponsor Syrian refugees.

In support of this initiative, the Honorable Ahmed Hussen, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada stated: *"Our Government has proven to be a global leader in welcoming refugees fleeing persecution, terror and war. Our efforts to support the world's most vulnerable is in thanks to groups like Lifeline Syria. They have taken a leading role in supporting refugees. Thank you to Lifeline Syria for working to make a difference for Syrian Refugees."*

Speakers at the announcement will be Jean-Nicolas Beuze, UNHCR Representative to Canada, Mohammad Al Zaibak, Founding Member and President of Lifeline Syria and Yosief Araya, Director of RSTP.

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### **Organizational profiles**

**UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency** was established in 1950 by the UN General Assembly. It has a two-part mandate – to provide protection for refugees and seek solutions to their problems. The 1951 Refugee Convention sets out a supervisory role for UNHCR regarding how each State applies the Convention. In 1976, UNHCR Representation opened its doors in Canada to fulfil these roles.

<http://www.unhcr.ca/>

<http://www.unhcr.org/>

<https://www.unhcr.ca/sponsoring-refugees-for-resettlement-in-canada/>

**Lifeline Syria** was launched in June of 2015 and incorporated as a not-for-profit in September of 2015 in response to the ongoing humanitarian refugee crisis. Lifeline Syria helps sponsor groups welcome and resettle Syrian refugees as permanent residents in the GTA and are committed to helping Syrian refugees settle in Canada.

[www.lifelinesyria.ca](http://www.lifelinesyria.ca)

### **The Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP) at Catholic Crosscultural Services**

provides training, support and information on the private sponsorship of refugees in Canada. RSTP also matches sponsors with refugees through the Blended Visa Office-Referred program.

<http://www.rstp.ca/en/>

<http://www.rstp.ca/en/special-initiatives/how-can-i-sponsor-a-refugee-to-canada/>

**DATE:** Thursday, September 20, 2018

**TIME:** 9:30 AM (doors open at 9:15 AM)

**LOCATION:** CIBC/COT boardroom  
Rotman School of Management  
105 St. George Street,  
Toronto, ON M5S 3E6