

FACT SHEET - "RESPONDING TO THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS"

THE SITUATION

- SYRIA - Syria's complex and cruel civil war has been compounded by the Islamic State (ISIS) and 4 million people have left their nation. Millions more are displaced internally.
- LEBANON - 1.3 million Syrian refugees, 300,000 Palestinian and 100,000 Iraqi refugees. 25% of Lebanon's population are now refugees. The situation is tense and untenable.
- CANADA - The UN has called on developed countries to alleviate this strain. Canada has pledged to receive 3,000 Iraqi and 10,000 Syrian refugees over the next one and three years respectively.
- LEBANESE BAPTISTS - Lebanese Baptists (32 mostly small, struggling churches) have been caring for 20,000 Syrian refugees. Lives have been transformed by Christ's love.

OUR RESPONSE

- **"Sponsoring and Settling 50 refugee Families in Atlantic Canada."**
- This is one of the most significant missional undertakings we have attempted. Currently the CABC sponsors about one family a year. 50 in 3 years is huge! We can do this together.

SPONSORSHIP

- Only Canada has a private sponsorship program and the CABC is one of only a few Sponsorship Agreement Holder organizations in Atlantic Canada.
- Sponsoring churches apply for, welcome and provide refugees with 12 months of settlement support, including housing, food and clothing. They are the refugees' first community in Canada.
- Sponsorship allows refugees to land as Permanent Residents and to build new lives.

PARTNERSHIPS

- Partnerships will be the key.
- Our commitment is part of larger undertaking by CBM, the other Canadian Baptist Conventions, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, and over a dozen more denominations in Canada.
- Citizenship and Immigration are aware of our intentions and have pledged their support in expediting processing.
- Some churches will be able to sponsor a family by themselves, but dynamic partnerships are better: several CABC churches in both rural and urban settings, churches of different denominations, churches and community groups.
- We can serve our neighbours by giving them the opportunity to positively respond to this crisis.

MOTIVATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

- **Remember you were slaves in Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you from there. That is why I command you to do this.** Deut. 24:18
- Nothing determines sponsorship success more than our motivations and expectations.
- We sponsor refugees because it is the right thing to do.
- We sponsor refugees to benefit Christ and others.
- **We mostly sponsor refugees out of thankfulness!** We were husbandless, fatherless and homeless foreigners (enemies even) and God, in Christ, brought us into his family.
- The people we bring are people with their own histories and dreams. They land as permanent residents with full volitional rights.
- Sponsoring rescues people from dangerous and hopeless situations. It brings people to Canada. It offers the opportunity of a new life and gives dreams a chance.
- Sponsoring enlarges our hearts and worlds for it takes us into God's heart and world.

FAQs

What are the steps? (not necessarily in this order)

1. Affirmation by the congregation to pursue sponsorship
2. Identify core committee that would be tasked with leading
3. Identify partners: other Baptist churches, other churches in your area, community groups, etc.
4. One or two people take the on-line Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (optional)
5. Coordinate with CABC in identifying and applying for refugees.
6. Prepare for arrival.
7. Work towards settlement and integration.

What are the channels or sponsorship tracks? Through Citizenship and immigration Canada, CABC can participate in 3 sponsorship programs:

Joint Assisted Sponsorships

- Refugees identified by CIC (very limited choice for the sponsor)
- Refugees have exceptionally high resettlement needs (physical or psychological health issues.)
- CIC covers 100% of basic costs
- Refugees are travel ready and can arrive within months.

The Blended Visa Office Referral Program

- Refugees identified by CIC (somewhat limited choice for the sponsor)
- CIC covers 50% of costs
- Refugees are travel ready and can arrive within months.

Full Private Sponsorship

- Refugees identified by the sponsoring group.
- Sponsor covers all costs.
- Refugees arrive in about a year of application (longer from locations other than Lebanon)

What does it cost?

- A full private sponsorship for a family of 4 costs about \$27,000. Up to 40% of this can come from in-kind donations like (housing, furniture and clothing). Additional dependents @ about \$2500.

RESOURCES

- Stats and news
<http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14703995>
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/canada-to-resettle-10-000-more-syrian-refugees-over-3-years-1.2892652>
- **Best site for info on Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program**
<http://www.rstp.ca/en/>
- Info on the Blended Visa Office Referred Program
http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Blended-VOR-FAQ_2014.pdf

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