

**SPECIAL GROUP RESETTLEMENT OF YAZIDI WOMEN IN NEED**  
**A Proposal**  
**Updated June 30, 2016**

**Background**

At present in the Middle East, a long standing crisis revealed new atrocities and horrendous war crimes.

To date it is one of the most horrific occurrences of events for the world to hear.

In Iraq, countless Yazidi girls and women have been captured, tortured and forced into sex slavery. The torture these vulnerable girls and women have faced is beyond one's capacity to imagine.

The Yazidis are a religious minority who have experienced severe trauma due to unforeseen circumstances. We are thus proposing to provide assistance to these groups of girls and women who were able to escape from the horrible captivity.

Kurdistan, which is in the northern part of Iraq, has numerous internally displaced persons seeking refuge. Among the most vulnerable and in desperate need of help are the Yazidi girls and women who have been able to escape from their captors in ISIS/ISIL (also known as "Islamic State").

The focus of this project therefore is solely based on the premise of aiding these tortured victims of severe abuse. According to community resources on the ground, there are about 400 girls and women (from the age of 8) who underwent ill treatment and torture in Iraq. They have been and continue to be kidnapped, raped, tortured and sold for sex work. If they manage to escape they are viewed as infidels because of what they have experienced and the torture they have experienced is so horrendous some have lost the ability to communicate by speaking. They are an extremely neglected and abandoned special group of people with extra needs. These girls and women are currently residing in IDP (Internally Displaced People) camps in Kurdistan. Due to the conditions that arise if they do escape their captivity, these people have no means of any kind to find a durable solution through local integration. Also, voluntary repatriation is not possible for them.

**Follow up to meeting on June 17, 2016**

Please find below a summary of our response to the questions and concerns raised by your office during our meeting on June 17, 2016.

We have divided the points raised under the following headings. We are addressing each point below in the updated "Methodology" section.

1. Process for Identifying Candidates for Resettlement

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2. Screening Process to Identify the Approximately 400 Dossiers Presented to IRCC
3. Preparation of Dossiers and Files for Referral
4. Processing Assistance and Support for IRCC Officers
5. Resettlement Plan

### **Updated Proposal**

With the assistance of community organization and referral agencies we will identify, interview, and refer these **400 women** along with their family members to IRCC for processing. It is recommended they be placed in the **JAS (Joint Assistance Sponsorship)** program upon arrival after arrival to Canada they would need special attention and extra care. When considering all of these factors the **estimated total number of individuals to be resettled arises to approximately 1,600 people.**

### **UPDATED METHODOLOGY:**

#### **Process for Identifying Candidates for Resettlement**

1. Building on previous missions to the region, in July 2016 a delegation led by One Free World International (“OFWI”) and ORAT with the help of the Yazidi community in Canada (approximately 50 families), will travel to northern Iraq. ORAT (“Office for Refugees Archdiocese of Toronto”) representing the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto and linked with other resettlement agencies, will represent the civic sponsors who are willing to assist in the process [See Budget Item “A”]. This mission will further the process of **identifying** the pool of potential resettlement candidates, prioritizing those most in need within the parameters identified above.

#### **Screening Process to Identify the Approximately 400 Dossiers Presented to IRCC**

2. The **selection and screening** process (to narrow down the pool to the final dossiers that will be presented to IRCC) will begin with a delegation of Yazidi community members, domestic abuse counsellors, and staff from ORAT travelling to the refugee camps. The selection mission trip will identify potential clients for the program and will provide initial counselling and assessment.
3. As noted during the June 17, 2016 meeting, due to legal difficulties associated with guardianship and custody, we will not be including unaccompanied minors in the initial cohort of dossiers. We acknowledge that some of these persons are among the most vulnerable. We will be providing local protection and accommodation to these persons on the ground until a long-term solution can be found.

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4. Due to security concerns, we are also not including unaccompanied male Yazidi victims at this time. Once again, we recognize that some of the most vulnerable will be males. However, in order to expedite security screening and alleviate security concerns, we will prioritize vulnerable women and girls (with their families) – who are far less likely to pose a security risk.
5. That said, we are committed to make this program fully inclusive. Therefore, should we identify vulnerable boys, members of the LGBTQ community, or other vulnerable persons among the Yazidi community they will be duly considered for inclusion in accordance with the principles outlined herein. Our aim is not to exclude any group of persons. Our goal is to prioritize those who are most vulnerable and whose processing can be expedited to the greatest extent.

#### Preparation of Dossiers and Files for Referral

6. A group led by ORAT, with assistance of **IOM** (International Organization for Migration) and/or **ICMC** (International Catholic Migration Commission), will conduct detailed interviews in the refugee camps. During these interviews, the necessary forms will be completed. The project would require at least 3 English speaking Yazidi community members to participate in this process. ORAT has a stringent methodology to screen potential candidates. ORAT has developed sophisticated methods to screen applicants (eligibility, admissibility, credibility and adaptability). The interviews and forms help to filter out cases where security concerns might arise. Also, in order to promote successful integration, ORAT conducts a “managing expectations” review which includes mapping of relations for potential secondary migration. **For your reference, we have attached the following template forms that illustrate ORAT’s methodology and process:**
  - i. Annex A: ORAT Interview form;
  - ii. Annex B: ORAT – Interviews with refugees – Report Writing Notes;
  - iii. Annex C: ORAT – Interview Question Prompts;
  - iv. Annex D: ORAT – Refugee Registration Form.
7. ORAT, with the assistance of IOM, ICMC, volunteer Yazidi community members, and Canadian immigration lawyers as needed, will prepare and compile the final dossiers for presentation to IRCC. These dossiers will be standardized and organized to include:
  - i. Duly signed and reviewed immigration forms; and
  - ii. Organized copies of all relevant identity documents.

We are suggesting that IRCC provide the team with any additional questionnaires and/or information sheets that can be filled in advance in order to assist the processing officers in conducting their background checks. We will ensure that all relevant information and documents are organized and ready for the officer to review so as to minimize processing times and the administrative burden on IRCC staff.

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## Processing Assistance and Support for IRCC Officers

8. Once the dossiers are completed and checked with UNHCR, IOM, or local refugee agencies, IRCC would assign one or two **temporary duty visa officers**. We are proposing that the processing of the cases take place in Erbil. This would ensure that the officers would not be exposed to the risks involved in traveling to the refugee camps. We are suggesting that IRCC follow the model employed in processing the Syrian refugee population in centres like Beirut – where temporary processing centres were set up in secure hotels.
9. We are proposing to arrange for the transport of small groups of 10-15 refugees at one time from the camps to Erbil. The refugees will be housed in temporary accommodations in Erbil, and will be able to travel in small groups to the temporary processing centre. The small scale of the group size will reduce the chance that the increased Canadian presence will draw unwanted attention. While in Erbil, we will arrange to have each person complete their medical with one of the panel physicians operating there. Once the interview and medical has been conducted, we will transport the individuals back to the camp. We will also arrange for transportation back to Erbil for visa issuance and travel to Canada.
10. The girls and women in question will need to be given waivers on humanitarian and compassionate (H&C) grounds from the following statutory requirements:
  - i. The requirement for the individuals in question to be outside their country of residence;
  - ii. The requirement for the individuals in question to have registered with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (“UNHCR”) – which they are unable to do as they are unable to leave Iraq

## Resettlement Plan

11. Prior to travel to Canada, each applicant would be matched with a sponsor. As noted below, ORAT will be coordinating the resettlement to ensure that no fewer than 20 individuals are placed in any given community. Arrangements will be in place to provide moral, emotional and logistics support by way of pre-arranged referrals to settlement agencies, reception centers and **domestic violence counselors** (Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture, Catholic Family Services, and others).
12. As a significant number of the applicants may be pregnant, the process should be **expedited** and upon arrival all women and girls should receive full choice counseling to ensure they make an informed and voluntary decision related to the pregnancy. Provincial government health services should provide counseling and refer clients based on their need and decision to different healthcare facilities and agencies. Neither ORAT nor any other sponsor will be permitted to exert any influence or pressure on moral or religious issues – save those issues that are dictated by Canadian law. The involvement

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of any religious counseling agencies will be at the choice of the individual, and will in no way be a requirement.

13. Most of the cases are expected to be settled in the GTA, Ottawa, London area. However, this project is a **national** project. ORAT has been in contact with potential sponsoring groups across the country, from B.C. to Nova Scotia. ORAT's experience is that if we settle at least 20 community members together, then they can successfully form a new community and secondary migration is dramatically reduced. In the same way, ORAT works hard to train and prepare the sponsors so as to reduce drop out/break down numbers. ORAT uses detailed profiles in the matching process to ensure a good match between refugee and sponsor. The estimated term for this phase is 8-10 weeks. [See Budget item "C"]

In order to ensure a successful program and resettlement of these targeted individuals, we will develop a system to record the progress and/or setbacks that have transpired. Thus it is recommended that every quarter year stakeholders and participants should have **evaluation meetings** and acquire updates about the program.

As these Iraqi citizens are still considered to be in their country of origin according to international law (as Kurdistan is still part of the Republic of Iraq), **this program would require that the Minister of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship approve this community for special processing under ministerial priority (temporary designation of source country).**

As noted above, Kurdistan is within the Iraqi state. However, the women in question are not able to leave to a safe third country to initiate the refugee process. **Therefore, as noted above, IRCC would have to exercise its humanitarian and compassionate (H&C) discretion under s. 25 of the IRPA to waive the following statutory requirements:**

1. The requirement for the individuals in question to be outside their country of residence;
2. The requirement for the individuals in question to have registered with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees ("UNHCR") – which they are unable to do as they are unable to leave Iraq.

### **Revised Estimated Budget**

- A. Fact Finding (Preparatory) Mission by OFWI & ORAT: (for 2 ppl: cca **\$9,000**)
  1. Travel preparations (visa, photos, medical, etc.): \$200
  2. Travel: \$1700
  3. Accommodation for 5 nights: \$600
  4. Local transport: \$500
  5. Per diem: \$560
  6. Communication, documentation: \$300
  7. Volunteers, interpreters, cost: \$600
- B. Processing – cost of service, 5 people for two months (ca **\$55,000**)

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1. Travel preparations (visa, photos, medical, etc.): \$200
  2. Travel: \$1700
  3. Accommodation for 1 month at camp: \$700
  4. Local transport: \$500
  5. Food, miscellaneous: \$1,000
  6. Communication, documentation: \$300
  7. Volunteers, interpreters, cost: \$1,100
- C. Specialized integration and settlement services, domestic violence and trauma counselors on the ground in Iraq while processing concludes and in Canada. Additional housing and employment services (\$100,000).
- D. Facilitating the project, matching cases, coordinating sponsors and stakeholders in a 2 and a half year term (\$15,000).
- E. Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) funding for an estimated 1,600 people RAP support
- F. PR education and training for diverse Resettlement Groups and service providers (\$40,000).

With these things considered it is clear that there is a great need to help this severely abused population of girls and women. We believe this solution provides a targeted and realistic means to assist women and girls who have been exposed to the traumatic inhumane experiences that were forced upon them. The purpose of the selection will be to provide the best and safest environment for those affected.

We have endeavoured in this proposal to reduce the processing and resettlement burden on the Canadian government as much as possible by leveraging the resources of experienced agencies like ORAT.

All of which is respectfully submitted by:

**Dr. Martin Mark**

Director, Officer for Refugees of the Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto (ORAT)



**Rev. Majed El Shafie**

President and Founder, One Free World International



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