

Dear Sponsoring Parishes,

Below is an email from the Deputy Minister of Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada asking private sponsors to delay submitting applications for refugee sponsorships until a plan is put in place. However, they will continue to accept applications for Syrian refugees. Please see full email below.

I would like to thank you and the entire sponsorship community for your dedication to the refugee sponsorship program. Time and again the sponsorship community has responded generously to the plight of refugees. You are doing so now for Syrian refugees, you did so recently for Iraqi refugees, and you have done so for a broad spectrum of refugees since the program's inception in 1979.

As you can appreciate, the arrival of a new Government in November, coupled with the commitment to resettle a large number of Syrian refugees, and our existing commitments to resettle privately sponsored refugees from other parts of the world, has resulted in the need to adjust our usual timeline for the development of the Department's annual Immigration Levels Plan. The annual Immigration Levels Plan informs the process of setting annual caps on sponsorship applications. The plan is usually presented to Cabinet early in the fall and tabled in Parliament later in November. With no government in place until late this Fall, the Immigration Levels Plan will now be presented to Parliament early in 2016, with the announcement of caps on sponsorship applications to follow shortly afterwards.

Due to this delay I am asking that the SAH community delay sponsorship application submissions in 2016 until planning for the Immigration Levels Plan is finalized. During this period, Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada will continue to accept applications submitted for Syrian refugees.

Establishing caps on new applications continues to be a necessary tool as it ensures that resources are matched to the intake of new applications, and that backlogs of applications are managed effectively. I am sure you agree that backlogs do not serve the best interests of either sponsors or refugee applicants.

The Department is committed to continuing to reduce application backlogs and processing times, and to ensuring that our Syrian commitments do not displace or diminish the processing of other privately sponsored refugees.

The Private Sponsorship of Refugees program continues to play a key role in meeting Canada's varied refugee commitments, and I look forward to your continued contribution to those commitments and to working with you to ensure the program works as effectively as possible in serving its humanitarian objectives.

Sincerely,

Anita Biguzs

Deputy Minister | Sous-ministre

NHQ - Deputy Minister | AC - Sous-ministre

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