



## Ukrainian Crisis

In response to the unfolding crisis in the Ukraine, the Archdiocese of Toronto has launched a humanitarian relief effort to help the Ukrainian people. Funds raised will be directed to ORAT (Office for Refugees, Archdiocese of Toronto) and CNEWA (Catholic Near East Welfare Association). Please click [here](#) for further information about this appeal, and to learn how you can help.



Similar to other refugee crises, Ukrainian refugees fall under the 1951 Geneva Convention, which provides refugees with short-term and long-term solutions based on the local laws of a hosting country. Currently, hosting countries include Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Moldova, and Romania. While we hope that the situation in Ukraine does not escalate further, ORAT is preparing for an emergency response to the refugee crisis in Europe. We are hopeful that a refugee pathway for Ukrainian nationals may be soon be made available by the Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), providing them with an avenue to obtain permanent status in Canada.

*All Ukrainians who come to Canada as part of these measures will be eligible to apply for open work permits, making it easier for employers to quickly hire Ukrainian nationals. As previously announced, IRCC will issue open work permits to Ukrainian visitors, workers and students who are currently in Canada and cannot safely go home.”*

IRCC has established “a dedicated service channel for Ukraine enquiries that will be available for clients both in Canada and abroad at 613-321-4243, with collect calls accepted. In addition, clients can now add the keyword “Ukraine2022” to the IRCC Web form with their enquiry and their email will be prioritized.”

In recent news releases, IRCC has announced that Canada will be assisting those fleeing the war in Ukraine. IRCC is introducing new immigration streams for Ukrainians who want to come to Canada temporarily or permanently.

For the further details on IRCC’s programs, please click [here](#) and [here](#).

*“For Ukrainians who want to come to Canada temporarily, we will create a Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel, available for individuals fleeing Ukraine. There will be no limit to the number of Ukrainians who can apply. This is the fastest, safest, and most efficient way for Ukrainians to come to Canada and eliminates many of the normal visa requirements. All Ukrainian nationals will be able to apply through this new path, and, pending background check and security screening, their stay in Canada could be extended by at least 2 years....*

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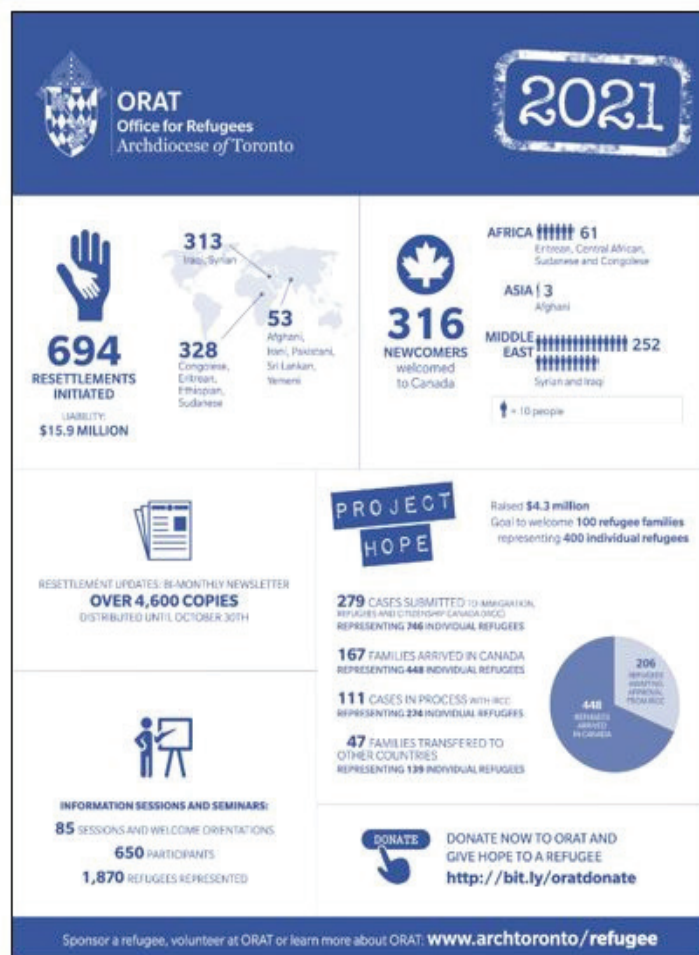
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## What We've Accomplished Together in 2021

The pandemic has had a profound impact upon us all. For many refugees, it has meant a lengthy delay in their resettlement to Canada.

During the past 2 years, ORAT, along with other private sponsors have continued to submit refugee sponsorship applications to Immigration Canada. During that time, we submitted applications to sponsor over 1,350 refugees, with 694 being submitted in 2021 alone. Immigration Canada during that time implemented pandemic related restrictions on its overseas visa offices, resulting in a sharp reduction in the number of cases being processed. The result was a marked decrease in arrivals. In 2020, we were only able to welcome 165 refugees to Canada. Thankfully, late last year Immigration Canada's overseas offices resumed near-normal processing of applications. The effect of this was a marked increase in the number of refugees arriving to Canada. In the September to December period of 2021, we welcomed 288 refugees to Canada, as compared to only 21 refugees in the preceding 8-month period. We are grateful, along with the many parish volunteers, and cosponsors, that we have been able to welcome 316 refugees to Canada in 2021.

Despite the impact of COVID-19, we continue to stand amazed by the marvelous collaboration between ORAT, and the many others involved in the resettlement process. Together, we have initiated the resettlement application to assist 694 refugees, paving the way for their eventual arrival to Canada. Here, they will live in freedom. This is a testimony to what we are able to accomplish together as we respond to the Lord's invitation "I was a stranger and you welcomed Me". The infographic, included on this page, and which is available on our website, summarizes the many accomplishments of 2021 that we can celebrate together.



With the help of the Lord and through the generosity of Catholics throughout the Archdiocese, we have been able to raise over \$4.3 MM to assist in the resettlement of refugees from many corners of the world. Since the inception of the Project Hope initiative, we have already been able to welcome over 167 families (448 individuals) to Canada. We await the arrival of an additional 111 families (274 individuals) who are currently in process. We are grateful for the generosity of so many who have given of their time, talent and treasure to respond to this urgent need of our time. It is indeed a testimony of the love of God's people for suffering humanity.

## A Newcomer's Story

When BJ, his wife and young son stepped off the plane and onto Canadian soil, it was a welcome relief for the family of three after a long and tiring 9-hour flight. Their sponsorship group was waiting to greet them in person for the first time, having only known them virtually for the past almost 2 years. The young family was met by a fellow newcomer who had arrived some months ahead of them and another newcomer family who had arrived almost 5 years ago. It was autumn in Canada and the children of this family had decorated a "Welcome to Canada" poster with some beautiful fallen multicolored maple leaves. Even in the middle of a COVID-19 crises, it was a happy time for this sponsorship group, immigrants themselves, to welcome BJ's family as newcomers to Canada. The family's dream of arriving in Canada had finally been realized.



BJ's journey started some 8+ years prior when a tribal war between government forces and the villagers in BJ's village broke out. BJ was injured and escaped to a neighboring country in the Middle East. He was now a displaced refugee in this foreign country with no rights, no job and no services. Life was rough. Very soon after his arrival he made a connection with a local Catholic Jesuit community. With the priests' help he was able to study English and he managed to find an underground job. He reconnected with his future wife and they married. The Jesuit priests reached out to ORAT and presented his case.

They asked ORAT to sponsor BJ, his wife and their first born to Canada. ORAT agreed and in turn asked our church to become a co-sponsor.

Now, comfortably settled in a small Ontario city, the family's new life has begun. Their cozy apartment was presented to them furnished tastefully and fully outfitted with all the things they would need in the busy days ahead. The kitchen was stocked with food and essentials. Their little son has his own crib and toys to keep him occupied. Fortunately, BJ and his wife had received their first two doses of the COVID vaccine before their arrival, which meant they would not need to quarantine for the usual 14 days. This allowed them to go for lovely walks around their new neighborhood and familiarize themselves with their surroundings.

The next weeks were busy. Bank accounts needed to be set up, a budget was worked out and a lease had to be signed. There were visits to Service Ontario for OHIP cards and to Service Canada for social insurance numbers. They needed to take English tests online and enroll in English classes. They met with Settlement workers at the local YMCA Immigrant Services who assisted them in filling out the myriad of necessary government forms. Winter was coming too, so warm clothes, winter boots, hats and gloves needed to be arranged for. All these things were provided with the help of the local Catholic Church and the volunteers who made up the interfaith refugee committee at the church. Appointments were made with the dentist for BJ and with the doctor for his wife who would be delivering their second baby early in 2022. A bicycle was provided for BJ to cycle to the local grocery store when needed. There were parks nearby that their young son could play in. They liked their new home and the new friends they were making.

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BJ's wife is an excellent cook and takes good care of the family. She is working hard to improve her English by attending English classes at the YMCA. It is a busy household. BJ was very keen to begin working and because his English was already pretty good and he was a skilled electrician, the job hunt was started. First, an updated resume needed to be prepared and then the applications to be sent out. The church put the word out to the parishioners to assist. Fairly quickly a positive response arrived through a connection with a parishioner. An interview was set up and BJ was asked to join a small electrical company. This meant he first had to complete some safety courses. He is kept busy not only with his online English classes but now also with the courses required for his new job. He had never been to a Catholic Church service and asked if he could attend a Mass and bring his family. Father L was very welcoming and this was arranged. His family was introduced to the congregation and welcomed warmly. Many came up after Mass to say hello and extend greetings and offer support.

Next week, almost 4 months since arriving in Canada, BJ will start his new job. He is now working to get his Canadian driver's license which will be an asset for his work. He and his wife will welcome very soon their new baby boy to be born in Canada. Their future is bright.

This is a quick summary of the history of this newcomer family, how they came to Canada and how they have managed in just a few months to settle into a new community in their new chosen country. The immigrant family who greeted them at the airport have just this past week become new Canadian citizens themselves. They have also become good friends and helpers to BJ's family.

This really is a triumphant success story and portrays how Canada is recognized as the most multicultural country in the world. The church and its sponsorship group in conjunction with the Office for Refugees, Archdiocese of Toronto (ORAT) are cosponsors to BJ's family.



## Update on 2022 Submissions

In the fall of each year, ORAT begins its work to register cases for the upcoming submission year. In the past several years, Immigration Canada has allowed Private Sponsors to start submitting cases as early as January 1st. Unfortunately, this is not the case this year. Immigration Canada is currently not accepting refugee sponsorship applications from Private Sponsors. We are waiting on Immigration Canada to announce to Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAH) when they can begin to submit applications.

For those that have begun the process with ORAT in late 2021, we ask that they continue to exercise patience. We will announce on our website and Facebook page when Immigration Canada begins accepting applications.

We encourage both cosponsors and Constituent Groups alike to continue to monitor our website for further updates.

It is also important to note that Immigration Canada is currently experiencing a 12 week delay in processing cases (i.e., cases that were submitted in 2021). Under normal circumstances, Immigration Canada issues Approval Letters and G Numbers 1-2 weeks after receiving the application. This is now taking up to 12 weeks.

## Public Registration & Operation Afghan Safety

The online registration for the General Public and Operation Afghan Safety (OAS) programs, which took place simultaneously from January 3, 2022 to January 9, 2022, has closed. A total of 439 eligible applications were received, representing 1,414 refugees. The following table provides the registration statistics based on the refugee's Country of Origin/Citizenship.

Given the high volume of demand for these programs, and the limited allocation provided to us by Immigration Canada, we will conduct a random draw for both programs. All cosponsors will have an equal chance to be selected to move on with their application with ORAT. Those selected will be invited by ORAT to attend the virtual Introduction to Resettlement information session. This is a mandatory session for cosponsors, and marks the first step in sponsoring a refugee through ORAT.

We are currently waiting on Immigration Canada to provide us with further information on the **Operation Afghan Safety** (OAS) program. Once we have received this information we will proceed with the draw.

We would like to thank all registrants for their continued patience, as we await further information from Immigration Canada.

We will provide a further update when we are able to proceed with the draw.

Country of Origin	# of Cases	# of Refugees
Afghanistan	102	480
Congo	1	1
Eritrea	165	346
Ethiopia	5	8
Iran	1	2
Iraq	64	203
Palestine	4	7
Somalia	1	1
Sudan	6	6
Syria	89	354
Yemen	1	6
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>1414</b>

### Your input is welcome

If you would like to contribute an article to ORAT's newsletter, have any feedback on past articles, or have suggestions for future articles, please email us at: [orateducator@archtoronto.org](mailto:orateducator@archtoronto.org)

### ORAT Website

Please visit ORAT's website to find details about our mandate, goals, and policies, as well as to obtain immigration forms and info session materials. <http://www.orat.ca>

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