



Exciting News!

ORAT Partners with Canada’s EMPP



We are thrilled to announce a significant milestone for ORAT! On June 18th, Archbishop Frank Leo signed a groundbreaking agreement with Immigration Canada, marking ORAT’s official role as a Trusted Partner in IRCC’s Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot (EMPP). This new role opens up exciting opportunities for expanding our refugee resettlement efforts and enhancing our impact.

Launched in 2023, the EMPP aims to address Canada’s labour market needs by resettling skilled refugees with English proficiency. These individuals are matched with Canadian employers offering one-year employment contracts. The initiative has garnered strong support, with the Minister of Immigration publicly committing to its permanent status.

Our Role as a Trusted Partner:

- Identify & assess eligible refugees who possess required skills and English proficiency.
- Identify employers willing to offer a one-year employment contract to eligible refugees.
- Facilitate the matching of eligible refugees with employers.
- Oversee the completion and submission of required forms to IRCC.

Program Highlights:

- The EMPP helps fulfill Canada’s labour market needs while supporting its international humanitarian obligations.
- Expedited Processing: IRCC has committed to processing EMPP applications within 6-months, which is significantly faster than the 3 to 4 years for Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSRs).

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World Day of Migrants & Refugees

The theme selected by His Holiness Pope Francis for the 110th World Day of Migrants and Refugees is “God Walks with His People.” To read Pope Francis’ complete message click [here](#).

This occasion will be commemorated with a Mass on Sunday, September 29, 2024, at 11:30 AM at St. Catherine of Siena Parish, located at 2340 Hurontario Street in Mississauga. Bishop Ivan Camilleri will preside and deliver the homily. All are warmly invited to attend.

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RAP Rate Increase

RAP Overview: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) establishes the minimum financial support that sponsors must provide to sponsored refugees during their first year in Canada. This support is outlined in the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) Rates, which vary depending on family size, composition, and the province of settlement.

RAP income support is comprised of two main components:

- Start-Up Costs: This is a one-time payment, which is standardized across all provinces.

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ORAT Partners with Canada's EMPP!

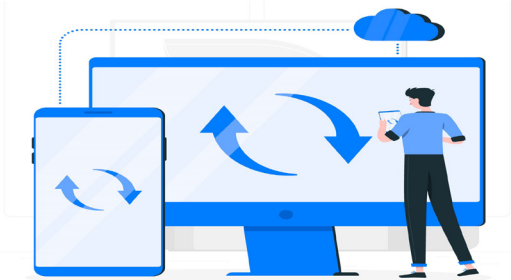
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- **No Sponsorship Funds Required:** Unlike the costly PSR program, the EMPP's "Job Offer" stream does not require sponsorship funds.

Funding and Sustainability: Employers will be asked for a participation fee to cover program costs and support services.

We are excited about the expanded outreach and potential benefits this partnership will bring to our community and those we serve. We ask for your prayerful support as we embark on this new chapter with the EMPP!

Applications Returned by ROC-O



This year, following a brief grace period, Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) transitioned from submitting applications to Resettlement Operations Centre-Ottawa (ROC-O) via email to using the Permanent Resident (PR) Portal. While this online platform was already in use for several other immigration processes, adapting it for submissions under the Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) program presented certain challenges.

Unfortunately, some applications were returned to SAHs by ROC-O for minor corrections. When this happens, ROC-O sends a return email and copies all relevant parties in Canada, including the SAH, the Constituent Group (CG), and the cosponsor. These emails typically provide only a generic description of the issues, without specifying the exact problems. This has affected a number of our submitted applications.

Our Case Processing team is handling the situation and resubmitting the amended application in a timely manner. In most cases, the returns were due to the use of an outdated ORAT email address in the Undertaking form. Please note that there is no need for cosponsors to take any action if they have received one of these emails. Our Case Processing team will contact cosponsors if some action is required on their part.

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RAP Rate Increase

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- **Monthly Income Support:** This ongoing support provided monthly varies by province.

Sponsors are required to meet or exceed the prevailing RAP rates for the community where the refugees will be settled and to adhere to RAP policy. The policy includes:

- Dependent children aged 18 or older at the time of arrival must be supported at the same level as a single adult.
- Adults aged 65 or older at the time of their arrival must receive a higher level of support.
- Special allowances for maternity, newborns, dietary needs, etc.

RAP Rate Increase: IRCC has announced updated RAP Rates effective September 1, 2024.

Unfortunately, IRCC does not provide SAHs with a future view to RAP Rates that will be in effect for the arrival of specific refugee cohorts. This presents a challenge for SAHs, given the average processing time of 3-4 years.

To address this uncertainty, ORAT projects future RAP Rates to ensure that the deposited funds at the time of submission will adequately cover anticipated RAP rates at the time of arrival. As a result, the funds requested by ORAT are higher than the current RAP Rates.

SAHs that do not forecast future RAP Rates at the time of submission face a greater risk of default with Immigration Canada. This could result in the SAH requesting additional funds from cosponsors upon the refugee's arrival. In cases where the cosponsor is unable or unwilling to provide the required funds, the SAH must cover the shortfall or risk potential suspension— a challenge recently experienced by several large SAHs, leading to their suspension.



Country Report: Ethiopia

Ethiopia is located in the Horn of Africa, a region in the northeastern part of the continent. It is a landlocked country, bordered by Eritrea to the north, Djibouti and Somalia to the east, Kenya to the south, and Sudan and South Sudan to the west. Its strategic position near the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden has historically made it a crossroads of trade and cultural exchange between Africa, the Middle East, and beyond. Ethiopia's location has also contributed to its unique and diverse geography, as well as its rich cultural and historical legacy.



As a Country of Origin: Ethiopia, as a country of origin, holds significant importance due to its deep historical roots, cultural richness, and the complexities of migration patterns. It is one of Africa's most populous nations, with a diverse population comprising over 80 ethnic groups, each with distinct languages, traditions, and cultural identities. However, Ethiopia has also faced challenges that have led to significant emigration, including political instability, economic hardship, and conflicts, such as those in the Tigray region.

Ethiopia, particularly in the context of the Tigray region, has faced complex challenges as a country of asylum due to the recent conflict that began in November 2020.

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World Day of Migrants & Refugees

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The Archdiocese of Toronto together with the parish community of St. Catherine of Siena invites you to a special Mass on the occasion of the 110th

World Day of Migrants and Refugees

Sunday, September 29, 2024
11:30 AM

at St. Catherine of Siena Parish
2340 Hurontario St, Mississauga, Ontario

Celebrant & Homilist:

Most Reverend Ivan Camilleri

Co-Celebrant:

Reverend Jose Gabriel Forero Martinez c.s.

RECEPTION TO FOLLOW

"You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God."
LEVITICUS 19:34



You can access a digital copy of the event poster by clicking [here](#).

We encourage you to mark this day in your parish. Included below are some suggestions for the day:

1. Refer to the day and incorporate prayers for migrants and refugees in the Prayers of the Faithful.
2. Acknowledge any refugee families your parish has sponsored in recent years. And,
3. Recognize the efforts of your parish refugee committee in supporting refugees in need.

As God's children, let us join together on that day to pray for those forced to flee their homes.



Country Report: Ethiopia

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The conflict between the Ethiopian federal government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) led to widespread violence, displacement, and a humanitarian crisis. As a result, many people from the Tigray region became internally displaced, while others fled to neighboring countries like Sudan in search of safety. Ethiopia, traditionally a host to refugees, faced the dual burden of managing the influx of asylum seekers from other countries while also addressing the needs of its own displaced citizens. The conflict in Tigray has strained Ethiopia's resources and highlighted the challenges of providing adequate protection and support to all affected populations, both internally and those seeking asylum from outside its borders.

Many Ethiopians have sought refuge or economic opportunities abroad, contributing to a global diaspora that maintains strong ties to their homeland. Despite these challenges, Ethiopia remains a nation with a profound cultural heritage, a strong sense of national identity, and an enduring influence on its citizens and those of Ethiopian descent around the world.

As a Country of Asylum: Ethiopia has long been a significant country of asylum, playing a crucial role in hosting refugees from across the Horn of Africa and beyond. As one of the largest refugee-hosting nations in Africa, Ethiopia provides shelter to hundreds of thousands of refugees from neighboring countries such as South Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea, and Sudan, driven by conflicts, political instability, and natural disasters. The country's refugee policy is notably progressive, allowing refugees to live outside camps, access education, and engage in economic activities. Despite its own economic and social challenges, Ethiopia's commitment to providing asylum reflects its deep-rooted tradition of hospitality and its strategic role in regional stability and humanitarian efforts.

Religious Composition: Religious affiliation in Ethiopia is deeply woven into the fabric of the nation, with Christianity and Islam being the predominant religions. The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church,

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Exit permits (EP) in Ethiopia are being facilitated via the new blank bulk exit permit issuance process where Refugees and Returnees Service (RRS) reviews a list of EP applications for clearance.

- All departing refugees must undertake an exit interview with the Ethiopian authorities for the purpose of receiving an exit permit. An exit interview is scheduled based on the availability of the Ethiopian authorities and takes place in person in Addis Ababa.
- The International Organization for Migration (IOM) provides support to refugee clients to access and be scheduled for an exit interview and advise the clients on the requirements for the interview and exit permit process. IOM does not have control over the timeliness of the exit permit process, including the interview schedule.
- In order to receive an interview appointment, refugees must already be registered with UNHCR and with the Ethiopian authorities. The registration of new asylum seekers with the Ethiopian authorities has been on hold since the beginning of the conflict in the Tigray region, presenting a challenge for future departures. However, efforts are underway to restart the registration procedures.
- In order to attend an exit interview in Addis Ababa, refugees who are outside of Addis Ababa require a travel permit issued by the Ethiopian authorities to travel to the capital for the purpose of the interview. IOM facilitate the travel permit application on behalf of the registered refugees, while the timeliness/decision to issue the travel permit lies with the Ethiopian authorities.
- The decision to issue an exit permit to the refugee, following the exit interview, is solely the remit of the Ethiopian authorities.

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Country Report: Ethiopia

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one of the oldest Christian denominations in the world, has a significant influence, particularly in the highlands, while Islam is more prevalent in the eastern and southern regions. Ethiopia is known for its religious tolerance, with a history of peaceful coexistence among different faiths. However, religious minorities, including Protestants, Catholics, and indigenous faith practitioners, sometimes face challenges such as discrimination or societal pressure. Tensions can arise, particularly in regions where religious identities overlap with ethnic ones, leading to localized conflicts or social friction. Despite these issues, Ethiopia's diverse religious landscape generally fosters a rich cultural heritage, with religious institutions playing a key role in community life and national identity.

ORAT's Support: Since 2014, ORAT has sponsored 12 applications for 25 refugees from Ethiopia. To date, 6 of these refugees have successfully arrived in Canada, while the remaining 19 are at various stages of the immigration process.

As previously mentioned, Ethiopia's role as a host country for refugees is significant. This is clearly reflected in ORAT's sponsorship history. Over the years, ORAT has sponsored 332 refugees who fled to Ethiopia, most of whom are originally from Eritrea. To date, 100 of these refugees have successfully resettled in Canada, while 232 are still navigating through the immigration process.

All refugees are subject to Ethiopian immigration laws, rules and regulations. The capacity of the Ethiopian authorities to issue travel permits, interview refugees, and issue exit permits, is not under the control of the Government of Canada.

- Potential refugee applicants should be reminded that a durable solution exists in Ethiopia for clients married to an Ethiopian male husband, as Ethiopian law / legislation does allow for the naturalization of the foreign spouse in this instance.”

Journey of Eight Years to Canada

My name is Robina. I am a resettled newcomer (refugee) originally from Pakistan.

In my search of a place to call home since 2016, our journey as refugees has been full of challenges. It took eight years before our freedom could be realized for Canada to be our new home. This is most in part thanks to the generosity of Fr. William Mbugua, members of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish community and the Office for Refugee, Archdiocese of Toronto (ORAT).



Applications Returned by ROC-O

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Immigration Canada has indicated that they will record the submission date of the amended application on the date that it is received by them. In some cases, due to lengthy in-Canada processing by IRCC, this has resulted in a submission date that is 5-6 months later than the date that the application was originally submitted to IRCC. Recent updates from IRCC indicate that the in-Canada processing delay has been reduced to standard 1-month.

To learn more about what to do after your case has been submitted, please listen to our [Pre-Recorded IRCC Processing Time Webinar](#).

I am a single mother, with two beautiful children. My challenges began with the breakdown of my marriage to a South African man, leaving me and my children displaced. Initially, when our children were rejected by their father, it was very painful for my children. This complicated our wellbeing and ability to continue to live legally in South Africa.

I decided to return home to Pakistan in 2016, with my two children and start a new life. We lived at my mother's place, along with my two brothers and their families.

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Journey of Eight Years to Canada

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This was intended to enable me to establish myself initially before we could find our own place. My son was only six months old at that time. I couldn't work, so I stayed home to look after my son and my mother, who was unwell. Ten months later, my mother passed away. It was a very sad and difficult time for us. My mother's death left a big void. She was the person I depended upon to be strong, who provided me with unconditional support.

As time went on, my children grew and began school. It was critical that I secured a job to take care of my children. I tried everything possible to get a job, despite my limited education. Fortunately, I was hired in a school as a volunteer and my children started to attend the same school tuition free. While in school, my children started to face persistent discrimination because of their African heritage. This made my children feel like outsiders. We also faced racism and persecution for being Christians in Pakistan. It became clear that we were not accepted in Pakistan society.

In school, I was isolated due to my religion, and my children were targeted for being African and black. This was especially sad for my daughter, who faced racism from her peers at school for being of African descent. The experience of persecuted Christians in Pakistan in every aspect of life is a constant; I too experienced this following my return from South Africa. This was a serious threat for me and my children. I was very scared and terrified of the threats to our family. It was obvious that I, along with my children and my siblings' families would get harmed. The authorities provided no basic protections for human rights, let alone respect for one's religion.

In October 2018, our situation had gotten worse. It was no longer safe for us to live in Pakistan. We were targeted for being Christian and after death threats were made, I decided to escape with my children to Azerbaijan, where we sought asylum. Fortunately, I was accepted as a refugee with both my children. We felt safe again that nobody could discriminate against us because of being Christians or my children's race.

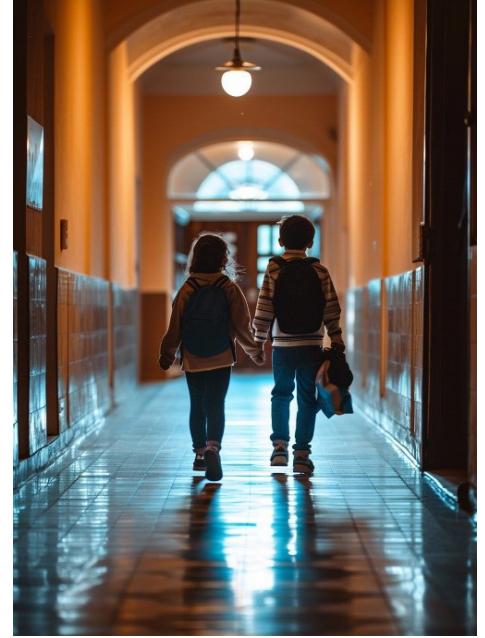
I was now safe in Azerbaijan with my children, but there were other challenges that we faced.

As a single parent, it was hard to support and provide for my two children's needs, including their education. Throughout this time, I had faith that God was always there for me and my children. My children stayed alone at home in our one bedroom for two and half years, while I worked all day (morning to evening) as a house worker for an Azerbaijan family. They didn't attend school or participate in any other related activities, except church. Through our church, I met Father Renato, a member of a Missionary religious community, who became the person I talked to and with whom I shared all my problems, along with Deacon Rudy.

My case was referred by Fr. Renato to the Archdiocese of Toronto, the Office for Refugees, who accepted to sponsor me and my children for resettlement to Canada. I was happy that at least we will live life with many opportunities, especially my children will have a good education. I was so excited at the idea that one day my children would join school again. Now the problem was money needed for the sponsorship process. However, God had His plans already for us. The family I worked for in Azerbaijan decided to help donate some of the money. The rest of the funds were contributed from Australia with the generosity of people that sacrificed for us. With the help of Deacon Rudy at ORAT, our application was filed for sponsorship to Immigration Canada.

The immigration process took nearly two (2) years. In the two years of processing my resettlement application, I was jobless. It was a very trying time, as I had no money.

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Journey of Eight Years to Canada

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When I received news that our sponsorship to Canada had been accepted by Immigration Canada, and we would leave Azerbaijan for Canada soon, I was became emotional and cried with tears of joy. I thanked God for the people who helped us to be resettled to a new country. We were going to be safe and treated with respect and dignity, something that we had not experienced for a long time in our journey of seeking refuge.

In April 2023, I departed Azerbaijan for Canada, with my two children. We arrived in Toronto and were warmly welcomed by our sponsor group, volunteers from Our Lady of Lourdes Parish. They had organized and arranged everything that we needed to start a normal life in Canada. We felt human again and welcomed in our new community.

With their support, I navigated access to government services and applied for Provincial & Federal government issued documents and enrolled my children in school, while also pursuing courses in security and office management for myself.

I love my church where I have found many friends who make me feel welcome. At last, I found a place that I can call home permanent where I live peacefully and freely.



ORAT Benefactors



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