

Private Sponsorship and Public Policy:

Political barriers to church-connected refugee resettlement in Canada

September 2014

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Canada has traditionally been known for its humanitarian efforts to help resettle those whose families have been uprooted and who live in fear for their lives. In 1986, “the people of Canada” received the UN Nansen Medal, an award given to individuals or groups for excellence in service to refugees.

Today, two-thirds of privately sponsored refugees come through one of 85 Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs). SAHs are incorporated organizations that have a signed agreement with Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) to submit sponsorship applications for their own organization and for other sponsoring groups who work through them to submit their applications. The sponsorship commitment consists of financially and emotionally supporting a refugee or refugee family for their first year in Canada, a task that includes raising about \$20,000 to \$30,000

depending on the family size and helping find accommodations, furniture, groceries, and eventually jobs. Since the inception of the PSR program in 1978, the majority of SAHs have been churches and church-connected organizations.



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