



March 21, 2016

Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories
P.O. Box 1320
Yellowknife, NT
X1A 2L9

Dear Members,

Re: Syrian Refugee Crisis and Resettlement Efforts

I write to you on behalf of the Northwest Territories (NWT) Branch of the Canadian Bar Association (CBA) regarding the CBA's efforts to assist with Syrian refugee applications.

The CBA is a professional, voluntary organization representing more than 36,000 lawyers, judges, notaries, law professors and law students from across Canada. The CBA promotes fair justice systems, facilitates effective law reform, and is devoted to the elimination of discrimination. A significant part of the CBA's mandate is to improve the law, advance the administration of justice and improve and promote access to justice.

The CBA both applauds and supports the efforts taken by the Government of Canada on this important issue, including the pledged commitment to welcoming 25,000 Syrian refugees to Canada.

We have a great interest in the ongoing Syrian refugee crisis and the corresponding refugee relief efforts being undertaken federally, provincially and territorially. That's why the Chair of the CBA's National Immigration Law Section and CBA President, Janet Fuhrer, have taken action on this issue by writing to the Government of Canada in support of expediting the processing of refugee claims and petitioning the skills of our CBA membership who are offering their services to help prepare applications for refugees and their families and sponsors across Canada.

In this regard, we are pleased to advise that the CBA has successfully solicited the volunteer services of lawyers from across the country that are eager to assist either individuals or groups seeking to sponsor Syrian refugees coming to Canada on a *pro bono* basis.

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This assistance is currently being offered on an as requested basis through a compiled database of lawyers that have agreed to volunteer their time in the provision of such services via a refugee Sponsorship Support Program (SSP). The link to the SSP database can be accessed here: <http://refugeessp.ca/sponsorship/sponsorship-support-lawyer-list/>.

While the NWT CBA Branch does not currently have an active Immigration Law Section or any resident lawyers listed on the SSP database, the CBA's National Immigration Law Section has offered the services of its membership to interested parties in the Northwest Territories who are seeking assistance in the preparation and completion of refugee applications. Further, the NWT CBA Branch is happy to coordinate connecting SSP services with any interested party in the NWT.

We hope that you will find this information useful and share it with any of your interested constituents.

In this way, we are hopeful that we can work with the GNWT and your officials in order to help individuals and groups in the NWT who wish to sponsor Syrian refugees. The CBA wishes to foster a strong and fruitful relationship with 18th Legislative Assembly on this and other issues of mutual interest and we look forward to your attention in this matter.

Yours truly,

Nick Leeson
Vice-President, Northwest Territories CBA