



Saanich Peninsula Refugee Initiative Group

UPDATE #28

January, 2023

VERY DISAPPOINTING NEWS

After more than six long years of waiting and hoping, Safaa's application to come to Canada with her four children has been denied again for complex legal reasons.

Safaa's application to the Federal Court of Canada to set aside the earlier denial decision on the grounds of unfairness was settled in December 2021 under the terms that her refugee application be sent back to the Beirut visa office to be redetermined by another Migration Officer. An updated application package was submitted on April 1, 2022, Safaa was interviewed at the end of August 2022, and the redetermination decision was issued in December 2022. Sadly, the application was denied again. We reached the end of the road.

Safaa and her children are still in Lebanon exploring their options. SPRIG's formal association with the family has ended. However some in the Steering Committee continue to connect with her and with her brothers and their families who have settled here in Victoria. Please continue to pray for Safaa and her family.

THANK YOU AGAIN

Over the past two years, we have asked for financial help to continue to work with the immigration lawyer. Your prompt donations enabled SPRIG to challenge what appeared to be an unfair decision. Thank you so much for your support.

Your patience and care has also been greatly appreciated over these long years of waiting for resolution.

NEXT STEPS

Seven years ago, we raised approximately \$70,000 for refugee sponsorship. SPRIG, the community group, partnered with St. John's United Church which has held the donated funds in trust since December 2015. First, we applied to sponsor Safaa and her children in May 2016. Next, we used 20% of the funds to sponsor Fatma from September 2016 to 2017 through the Blended Visa Office Refuge program. Last year Fatma became a Canadian citizen, was married and now she is settling in Calgary with her husband and the Kurdish community there.

But because Safaa will not be coming to Canada, we must decide what to do with the remaining 80% of the donated money in the St. John's refugee sponsorship fund. The SPRIG Steering Committee is in contact with the two local Sponsorship Agreement Holders, namely the Anglican Diocese and the Intercultural Association of Greater Victoria, to explore our options of how to put that money to work.

We are committed to including SPRIG supporters in this decision-making process. As soon as we have some clarity about the possible options, we will call a community meeting of St. John's and SPRIG supporters.

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS

If you have any questions or comments, please phone Mabel Jean Rawlins, SPRIG chair, at 250 656 0834.

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