



## Canadian Resettlement Scheme in partnership with ProtectDefenders.eu

### Information Sheet and Frequently Asked Questions

#### About the program

The Government of Canada is working with ProtectDefenders.eu (PD.eu) and its partner organizations to identify and refer Afghan human rights defenders for potential resettlement in Canada under its Government-Assisted Refugee Program.

In this program, ProtectDefenders works with Reporters Without Borders, the World Organization Against Torture, the International Federation for Human Rights and the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development as "Referral Organizations". A core group of Canadian NGOs and organizations will also be making referrals to this program.

#### Who is eligible for this program?

This program is for Afghan nationals who:

- 1) be a human rights defender who has faced risks related to their human rights activities
- 2) be outside of their home country and cannot return to their home country due to a well-founded fear of persecution
- 3) meet the criteria to qualify as a Convention refugee (see [UNHCR definition](#))
- 4) meet Canada's criteria for resettlement under the Refugee Resettlement Program, including eligibility and admissibility criteria ([link](#))
- 5) be without access to a durable solution in the host country
- 6) be interested in travelling to Canada to establish permanent residence, and such travel is expected to be logistically feasible

#### I am in Afghanistan. Am I eligible for this program?

Applicants in Afghanistan are not excluded from this program; however, evacuation and legal travel with appropriate documentation remains a challenge in these cases. Therefore, decisions for this group are made on a case-by-case basis and only for the most at-risk and vulnerable cases.

#### How can I apply for this program?

You can contact any of the partner organizations OR PD.eu directly [Canada-program@protectdefenders.eu](mailto:Canada-program@protectdefenders.eu) to be screened for eligibility in this program. If you have already contacted one of the referral organizations, you do not need to contact PD.eu. If you have already contacted PD.eu, there is no need to separately reach out to the Referral Organizations as we are coordinating our efforts.

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### **How should I write my request to PD.eu?**

Please include accurate and factual information regarding the length and nature of your work, the risks you have faced, your current situation, and your legal documentation (refugee registration slip or ID card, residence permit, valid visas or other forms of legal registration with the government and/or UNHCR of the country of current residence) . You are also encouraged to attach [supporting documents](#).

If you are reaching out to PD.eu, please download and fill out the [Eligibility Screening Request Form](#) and send it back to "[Canada-Program@protectdefenders.eu](mailto:Canada-Program@protectdefenders.eu)".

If you cannot send your request in English, you can contact us in Dari, and we will make arrangements for you. Please note that this might take some additional time.

### **Will I receive an answer?**

All applicants will receive a response regarding the result of their request. We will aim to reply to these applicants within six weeks of the date of their first contact with us, although processing times can vary based on case complexity and the volume of incoming case load.

### **What help will I receive?**

If you are eligible for this program, we will assist you in preparing an application for resettlement in Canada. We will provide you with assistance to complete the necessary forms.

We will then refer and submit eligible applications on behalf of PD.eu to the Government of Canada. The Government of Canada will complete the assessment of your case and will contact you directly to complete the required steps. Further information on the process is available on [this website](#).

### **What happens after my application is submitted?**

PD.eu will provide you with a copy of your final application package and its receipt of submission. You have to wait until you are contacted directly by an official of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).

### **How long does the whole process take?**

If you are eligible for this program and we are able to work with you to prepare an application, it can take between two weeks to three months to submit an application. The preparation time of the application depends on a number of factors such as the complexity of your case, the timeliness and accuracy of your information and our internal workload. After the submission, it can take several months for you to be contacted by IRCC. Processing times vary by country.

For successful applicants, it can take up to 1 year from the date of the application to travel to Canada.

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### **How will I travel to Canada if I am accepted?**

For candidates who are approved for resettlement to Canada, transportation loans are available via the Immigration Loans Program. The Government of Canada works closely with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to coordinate travel to Canada. Details on the Immigration Loans Program are available on this [website](#).

**Please be advised that we are unable to provide financial support while you apply and wait for your response.**

### **I do not have a passport/travel documents. Can I be considered for this program?**

Applicants have to be able to travel to Canada upon approval of their application. PD.eu has a very limited capacity to facilitate applicants' passport/travel documents/exit permits. Therefore, while we will do our utmost to support you throughout the process, we highly encourage you to obtain a legal travel document on your own. Decisions regarding supporting cases without a valid travel document will be made on a case-by-case basis.

### **Which members of my family can I include in my application?**

You, your spouse, and your children who are younger than 22 years old and unmarried can be included in the application. However, unmarried children above 22 and extended family members (mother, sister, father, brother, niece, nephew) might be considered "de facto dependents" under exceptional circumstances.

**Please note** that polygamy is a criminal offense in Canada, and Canadian laws do not recognize a polygamous marriage. Therefore, we cannot submit an application for polygamous families.

### **Does this program provide living costs or financial assistance to applicants?**

No living costs are provided under this program. A small financial stipend is available for eligible applicants who need support to be able to complete their applications, aimed at covering costs associated with the application process such as printing and scanning their documents, internet access, any required commute for the process. This stipend will be allocated based on the request of the applicant and/or assessment of their Case Officer within PD.eu. Living costs are not included.

Exceptionally for Afghan HRDs transiting in third countries who have been approved, IRCC may be able to assist with temporary accommodation/meals for resettled refugees with resettlement applications in process while in staging country and awaiting travel to Canada. Clients should contact the Canadian embassy in that country to request these arrangements.

### **I have a complaint about this program. Who can I contact?**

If you are an Afghan national and a participant of this program, please write to [Complaints@protectdefenders.eu](mailto:Complaints@protectdefenders.eu)

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