

For immediate release – September 26, 2018

PRESS CONFERENCE: September 27, 2018

9am Ceremony, 10am Press Conference

The Women's Monument in Thornton Park, Main St and Terminal Ave, Vancouver, BC

The Canadian government must keep its promise to provide female survivors of ISIS with trauma care

Vancouver – Today, feminist and human rights activists, educators, advocates against gender violence and concerned citizens demand comprehensive trauma care for Yazidi refugees in Canada. The Yazidi, who were brought to Canada as a humanitarian gesture, are victims of genocide, torture and enslavement.

A Yazidi family and Human Rights activist Rev. Majed El Shafie from Toronto will be in attendance.

We, the Women Refugees Advocacy group, invited El Shafie to Vancouver to speak about the situation of Yazidi women and girl refugees in Canada who survived the campaign of genocide, rape and enslavement perpetrated by ISIS in Northern Iraq. El Shafie is the founder of One Free World International, an organization that works to rescue the Yazidi who are still enslaved and advocates for all people who are persecuted for their religion. “Without him, we would go back,” says Adiba, [a Yazidi survivor] speaking through a translator. “He is the only one who is helping us with everything.” [i]

After an international campaign to defeat ISIS, the UN reports that the enslavement of up to 3,000 Yazidi women and girls continues. The federal government has brought 1,200 Yazidi refugees to Canada, primarily women and girls who are survivors of ISIS.

A group of women in Vancouver formed the Women Refugees Advocacy Project after reading about the suffering of the survivors in Canada in *Chatelaine* and *The New York Times*. The unimaginable suffering of the Yazidi women and girls continues because they have not been provided with the comprehensive trauma care they were promised by the federal government. [i-ii]

“We urge all levels of government to deliver on the promise of financial and medical support and trauma treatment including safe housing, so the Yazidi refugees may begin to settle in and heal.”

“In Germany, significant support was successful in assisting a similar number of Yazidi refugees settling there.” [iii]

“Canadian refugee services are already working beyond their capacities. Against all advice, and the federal government’s own internal research [iv], the Yazidi have been pushed onto existing agencies. Instead, specific comprehensive support is needed, including the culturally appropriate provision of translators.”

“We are gathering signatures for a petition to insist the federal government provide the resources necessary for these 1,200 women and girls.” Fulfill the promise.

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WRAP website: <http://womenrefugeesadvocacyproject.ca>

Petition: <http://tinyurl.com/YazidiTraumaCarePetition>

[i] Chatelaine: <https://www.chatelaine.com/living/yazidi-refugees-canada-dasni-family/>

[ii] New York Times: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/16/world/canada/canada-refugees-yaz...>

[iii] German trauma care: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/06/jan-kizilhan-isil-rape-victi...>

[iv] Road to Recovery: Resettlement Issues: <http://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/421/CIMM/Reports/RP97157...>