

For immediate release – October 25, 2018

## **Now is the time for the Canadian government to keep its promise and provide comprehensive trauma care to survivors of ISIS torture**

Ottawa – Representatives from the Women Refugees Advocacy Project (WRAP) and Yazidi women from BC and Ontario, will be on Parliament Hill\* in Ottawa on Monday October 29<sup>th</sup> to deliver a petition from a coalition of groups and individuals asking for promised resources for Yazidi survivors of sexual torture and genocide by ISIS. We will deliver the petition to MP Jenny Kwan at 9:00 am on Parliament Hill, followed by giving a press conference with Jenny Kwan and Elizabeth May at 10:00 am in the Press Gallery.

*We are petitioning the government to provide the comprehensive trauma care that has been provided in other countries and was promised by our government. By intervening now we can greatly reduce the Yazidi refugees' suffering. These women and girls are among the most traumatized people on Earth and need our help. We can also enable them to adapt to Canada, and prevent the passing on of the effects of trauma to their children.*

Dr Leora Kuttner, Clinical Psychologist and WRAP member

The Women Refugees Advocacy Project is a group of Vancouver women bringing attention to the need for comprehensive trauma care for the 900+ female survivors of ISIS who are now living in Canada. WRAP's national coalition of co-petitioners includes Unitarian churches across Canada and the two separate coalitions of Women's Shelters and Women's Centres across Quebec, the largest feminist network for community action in Quebec. All co-petitioners join WRAP in urging the federal government to act swiftly. Although Prime Minister Trudeau and Minister of Refugees Ahmed Hussen have promised to provide specialized care, it has not been delivered.

Nadia Murad, now a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, came to Ottawa two years ago to urge the Canadian government to bring Yazidi genocide survivors to Canada. Later, partly as a result of her advocacy work, the federal government voted unanimously to bring the refugees here, and promised the Yazidi refugee program would include social and psychological supports, such as trauma counselling, for "the unimaginable trauma" the Yazidi women and girls had suffered. [i]

It is time that the promise was kept and the severe post-traumatic suffering of the Yazidi survivors alleviated.

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

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

Footnotes:

[i] Macleans [Canada will take in 1,200 primarily Yazidi refugees](#)

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

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

## CO-PETITIONERS

Women Refugees Advocacy Project, Vancouver, BC  
Battered Women's Support Services, Vancouver, BC  
One Free World International, Toronto, ON  
Safeteen International, Vancouver, BC  
Women Transforming Cities, Vancouver, BC  
Ishtar Transition Housing Society, Langley, BC  
Women in Film & Television, Vancouver, BC  
DWI: Dragu Worker International  
Reel Causes, Vancouver, BC  
Signée Femmes, le centre de femmes, Rivière-Rouge, QC  
Persons Against Non-State Torture, Truro, NS  
Centre de Solidarité Lesbienne, Montréal, QC  
InterSpiritual Sustainability Council  
Canadian Unitarian Council, Canada  
Centre des femmes d'ici et d'ailleurs, Montréal, QC  
Yezidis of British Columbia, Surrey, BC  
Regroupement des maisons pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale, Montréal, Québec *Regroupement des maisons represents 42 women's shelters across Quebec*  
L'R des centres de femmes du Québec, le regroupement québécois des centres de femmes  
*The Quebec group of women's centers is the largest feminist network for autonomous community action in Quebec*  
Fédération des maisons d'hébergement pour femmes (36 maisons)  
La Corporation de développement communautaire des Hautes-Laurentides (CDCHL) (50 organizations)  
RFL (Réseau des femmes des Laurentides) (20 organizations)  
ROCL (Regroupement des organismes communautaires des Laurentides) (145 organizations)

## Statements of Support

"We are thankful that Canada, following the United Nations, has recognized the genocide of the Yazidi people and that Yazidi women are used as weapons of war and require Canada's assistance. Today, we implore Canada to honor its commitments and to provide the promised psychological and social assistance "trauma care", which is more than necessary. We know that women who are victims of war crimes – torture, unimaginable sexual violence, kidnappings and enslavement – arrive here with very heavy mental health issues, suffer horrific traumas, combined with the many challenges that they must already confront, as refugee women, recently arrived in a new country. This aid and support is long overdue for Yazidi women. They need support to be able to learn to live again, and separate themselves from the horrors that inhabit and haunt them. Canada, we ask you to respect your commitments and finally provide funding for appropriate psychological and social support for survivors of the Yazidi genocide."

~ *Le Centre des femmes d'ici et d'ailleurs* (The Intercultural Women's Centre)

Read more here: <http://womenrefugeesadvocacyproject.ca/petition-co-sponsors/>

\*We plan to hand MP Jenny Kwan the petition on the grass in front of Centre Block, just west of the centre sidewalk.