

## *Ottawa*

Room 930, Confederation Building  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6  
Tel/Tél: 613-992-6030  
Fax/Télec: 613-995-7412



*Jenny Kwan*

Member of Parliament for Vancouver East  
Députée de Vancouver-Est

## *Constituency*

2572 East Hastings Street  
Vancouver, BC V5K 1Z3  
Tel/Tél: 604-775-5800  
Fax/Télec: 604-775-5811

**September 15, 2020**

### **Re: Women Refugee Advocacy Project call for action statement**

It is with deep regret that I am not able to join you at today's important event to support the Yazidis. I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to everyone engaged with the Women Refugees Advocacy Project. Your tireless advocacy on behalf on the Yazidi people is commendable and deeply appreciated. As you know, the Yazidis have survived genocide and faced unimaginable horrors at the hands of ISIS. In particular, Yazidi women and girls were subjected to captivity, torture and repeated rapes. They are having to continually relive these nightmares.

While the Government of Canada has committed to resettling 1,200 Yazidis women and girls, it remains that we have yet to fully meet this commitment. For those who have resettled in Canada and are still struggling with the trauma they experienced, I want to take a moment to once again thank the Women Refugees Advocacy Project for your persistent advocacy for the Canadian government to provide proper mental health support to these survivors of genocide. The Federal Liberal government has an obligation to ensure that they receive the appropriate counselling and support.

In October 2018, I tabled a petition in October 2018, asking the government to deliver on the promised support for Yazidi survivors; unfortunately, we are still waiting. The lack of action is unacceptable. We must remember that even though we are dealing with a pandemic, we cannot forget the extreme trauma and destruction experienced by the Yazidi people, which remains ever present.

I also note that, since March, the refugee system has slowed to a crawl and the Canadian Government continues to ignore the calls to lift the travel restrictions for refugees. I cannot emphasize enough that even in the face of a pandemic, people continue to face persecution, and action needs be taken to support them by exempting refugees from the travel restrictions. It is more important than ever that the government steps up to meet its humanitarian obligations that it claims to champion.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
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Aside from resettlement support, Canada could also look to other options to support the 450,000 Yazidis who are displaced and live in refugee camps in northern Iraq return home safely. As a country, we can't continue to ask survivors to put their life on pause at a critical moment. I am reaffirming my call for the federal government to support Yazidi survivors. The opportunity for tangible action has long been before us and intervention from the Canadian government is needed now.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jenny Kwan'.

Jenny Kwan  
Member of Parliament for Vancouver East  
NDP Critic for Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship