

Irish Refugee and Migrant Coalition welcomes Irish government's commitment to new Community Sponsorship refugee programme

New Sponsorship programme will enable communities across Ireland to directly assist with Ireland's refugee response

Civil society organisations working on refuge and migration issues in Ireland welcomed the announcement that Ireland has committed to the development of a Community Sponsorship Programme for Refugees. The announcement was made yesterday at the Annual Concordia Summit in New York.

Community Sponsorship is a model for refugee resettlement which was developed in Canada in the late 1970s which invites local communities to provide to come together to support the effective resettlement of refugees. It has been enormously successful in Canada and now a number of countries are beginning to develop their own programmes. The UK and Argentina have recently launched programmes and yesterday Ireland and New Zealand announced that they are in the process of developing their own initiatives.

Caoimhe Sheridan, Coordinator of the Irish Refugee and Migrant Coalition, stated 'this programme will bring peace to turbulent lives and allow refugee families and children to live and grow up in safety, in welcoming and peaceful communities across Ireland'.

She continued, 'This is a momentous commitment from the Irish government. It is a credit to Coalition member organisations as well as the many groups and individuals across the country that have worked tirelessly to ensure Ireland plays its part in the ongoing global humanitarian crisis. In other countries, the refugee resettlement programmes have proven stronger thanks to the active participant and support of a vibrant civil society sector. We hope that the same will be true in Ireland'.

Colm O'Gorman, Executive Director of Amnesty International Ireland, stated "I visited Canada earlier this year and saw their community sponsorship programme in action. It was a hugely inspiring experience. I saw communities coming together with a fantastic sense of purpose to support refugees as they settled into their new lives. It is a programme which delivers really positive outcomes for refugees, but which also strengthens, deepens and enriches host communities.

"Given the outpouring of support for refugees in Ireland, with people from all around the country pledging solidarity with those fleeing persecution and conflict, I am confident that this programme will be hugely successful. We look forward to working with everyone involved to help support its development. Ireland is a welcoming country; a programme like this will help to ensure that people across the country are able to extend a welcome to those who desperately need our support."

Fiona Finn, CEO of Nasc stated 'We are delighted to see this initiative from Minister Stanton and Minister Flanagan. We look forward to working together to roll out this programme, as it will give Irish communities the opportunity to support and provide a safe haven to people fleeing unimaginable situations of conflict and persecution'.

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For more information, contact:

- Caoimhe Sheridan, Coordinator, Irish Refugee and Migrant Coalition: +353877723834
- Amnesty International Ireland's press office: media@amnesty.ie, 01 863 8300 or 085 814 8986.
- Jennifer DeWan, Campaigns and Communications Manager, Nasc: +353 86 085 3923

Notes

- The [Irish Refugee and Migrant Coalition](#) is comprised of 23 organisations working in the area of asylum and migration, locally, nationally and internationally.
- A Community Sponsorship refugee programme enables communities to play an active role in welcoming refugees, by providing some forms of in-kind support as well as social and/or emotional support to refugees in the local community. Such initiatives not only provide a real future for the refugees themselves but also have proven to bring communities closer together.
- This announcement comes on the anniversary of the New York Declaration which was adopted at a UN High-level Summit on Refugees and Migrants in September 2016 which Ireland co-chaired. It reaffirms the importance of the 1951 Geneva Convention and its additional Protocol, and achieved a common objective for States to address the global refugee crisis including the recognition for more global solidarity.
- The Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative (GRSI) is a multi-stakeholder coalition that aims to build worldwide refugee resettlement capacity by encouraging and supporting the development of community sponsorship programs. It is led by the Government of Canada, UNHCR, the Radcliffe Foundation, the Open Society Foundations, and the University of Ottawa.
- [Backgrounder:](#) Canada's [Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program](#)