April 20, 2016

The Hon. John McCallum Minister of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship House of Commons, Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6
E-mail: john.mccallum@parl.gc.ca

Dear Minister McCallum:

Re: Delays in Processing Syrian Refugees in the System as of February 29 and
Imposition of Air Fare Costs for New Syrian Refugees

Milton SAFARI is a local Syrian refugee sponsoring group. We applied last year through the United Church of Canada Sponsorship Agreement, to sponsor a Syrian refugee family. On February 4th we were approved and a family of 5, who had been registered and approved through the BVOR process, was assigned to our group.

Our family has not yet come to Canada although we were approved as their Sponsor on February 4th. We are currently in limbo waiting for their arrival from Turkey. We have raised sufficient funds to support our family for at least their first year. We have temporary accommodation arranged. A substantial number of volunteers are ready and willing to provide integration assistance. An Arabic speaking doctor and dentist are in place. Furnishings have been donated and household goods are ready.

Our family has been in the BVOR system since at least January 4th and they have had a sponsor since February 4th. The Government of Canada and the Ministry of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship have failed our sponsored family, Milton SAFARI and many others by creating lengthy delays in the steps necessary to get Syrian refugees in the system promptly to Canada. In addition, the imposition of travel costs for Syrian refugees who were unlucky enough to meet the February 29th cutoff date is unjust.

SAFARI appreciates your government’s commitment to refugees as an integral part of Canada’s future. There are many gifts and strengths that refugees bring, and private sponsors such as Milton SAFARI willingly share the responsibility for their successful integration.

Milton SAFARI urges the Canadian government to do more to quickly process Syrian refugee families who have been matched with sponsors prior to February 29th. Milton SAFARI also urges the Canadian government to make travel contribution grants available for all Syrian refugees whom Canada has chosen to protect.

Sincerely,

**Insert Your Name, Address and Email Address Here**

CC. Lisa Raitt, Member of Parliament for Milton – lisa.raitt@parl.gc.ca