



**Musée Holocauste Montréal**  
**Montreal Holocaust Museum**

**Museum Statement on Canada's  
Private Refugee Sponsorship Program**

**Tuesday, December 11, 2024** - In the immediate aftermath of the Holocaust, the Canadian Jewish Congress spearheaded a groundbreaking initiative to welcome young survivors to the country. This 1947 effort became known as the War Orphans Project, and it allowed 1,127 young Holocaust survivors to rebuild their lives in Canada after facing the horrors of concentration camps, ghettos, and life in hiding. This historic project marked Canada's first private refugee sponsorship program.

Several of these survivors including Ted Bolgar, Tommy Strasser, Paul Herczeg, George Reinitz, Musia Schwartz, and Eva Shainblum became beloved volunteer speakers at our Museum, educating generations of Canadians about the Holocaust and the perils of hate and indifference.

With this legacy in mind, our Museum expresses its concern about Canada's recent decision to pause its private refugee sponsorship program until the end of next year. The pause specifically affects applications from community organizations and groups of five or more.

We echo the fears expressed by refugee aid organizations about the timely resumption of the program, the impact on family reunification, and the perilous journeys people will be forced to take to seek safety in Canada.

While we acknowledge the program's administrative challenges and the government's intention to help manage a backlog of applications, this pause ultimately delays safety for people who are forced to flee their homes.

We ask that the sponsorship program be reopened, upholding the human rights legacy of the Holocaust in Canada.

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