



2026 World Day of Migrants & Refugees

Pope Leo XIV has chosen “Even Just One of These Children” as the theme for the 112th World Day of Migrants and Refugees, which will be observed on Sunday, September 27, 2026.

The World Day invites Catholics to pray for migrants and refugees around the world, particularly those who have been forced to leave their homes because of conflict, persecution, violence, poverty and other hardships, and to reflect on our shared responsibility to welcome and accompany those who are most vulnerable.

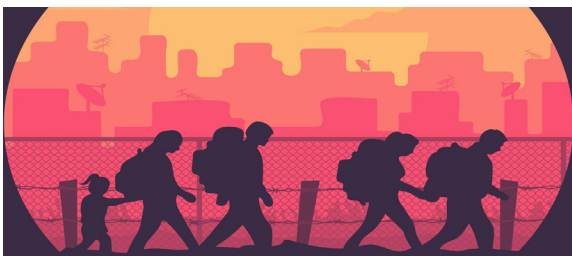
Drawing on Matthew 18:5 — “*Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me*” — this year’s theme focuses particularly on children and minors on the move. It reminds us of the Lord’s promise, and of the Church’s call to welcome, protect and accompany every migrant child, emphasizing that each individual life has immeasurable dignity and value.

For a full copy of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV’s message for the 112th World Day of Migrants and Refugees, please click [here](#).

Special Mass in the Archdiocese of Toronto: The Archdiocese of Toronto invites you to join us for a special Mass commemorating the 112th World Day of Migrants and Refugees. Mass will be celebrated by the Most Reverend Bishop Vincent Nguyen, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Toronto, and will take place at 11:30AM on September 27th at St. Isaac Jogues Catholic Church, located at 1148 Finch Avenue in Pickering.

A short program will take place immediately following Mass in the parish hall.

Please refer to the poster for additional details.



The Archdiocese of Toronto together with the parish community of St. Isaac Jogues Catholic Church invites you to a special Mass on the occasion of the 112th

World Day of Migrants *and* Refugees

Sunday, September 27, 2026
11:30 AM

at St. Isaac Jogues Parish
1148 Finch Ave., Pickering, Ontario

Celebrant & Homilist:
Most Reverend Vincent Nguyen

RECEPTION TO FOLLOW

“You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.”
LEVITICUS 19:34

 Archdiocese
of Toronto
www.archtoronto.org/refugee

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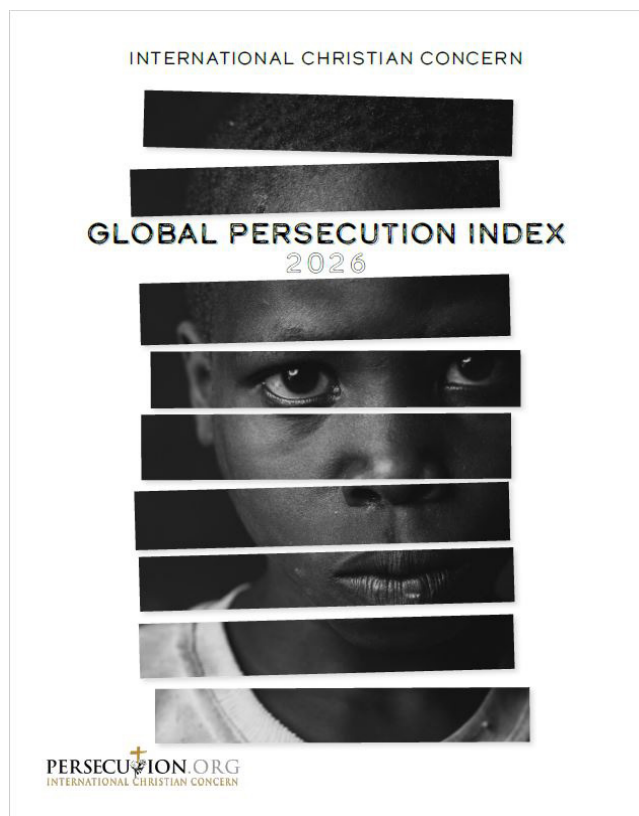
2026 ICC Global Persecution Index

International Christian Concern (ICC) has released its 2026 Global Persecution Index (GPI), a comprehensive report examining the persecution and challenges faced by Christians in more than 20 countries. The report combines in-depth country analysis, key statistics, current news, and personal testimonies under the heading “Faces of the Persecuted,” offering a firsthand look at what it means to follow Christ in some of the world’s most difficult environments.

The report also examines emerging trends affecting religious freedom, including the rise of religious nationalism, transnational repression, increasing state control over religious organizations, and the growing use of technology and markets to facilitate persecution. It highlights countries where conditions are deteriorating and profiles leaders and other key actors whose policies are affecting religious freedom.

While the GPI is designed in part for policymakers, journalists, and other stakeholders, it is also a valuable resource for Christians who want to better understand the suffering of their brothers and sisters in Christ around the world. The report encourages readers to respond through prayer, advocacy, and practical action.

To read the complete report click 2026 [Global Persecution Index by ICC](#).



Canada Child Benefit (CCB) Increase

The Government of Canada announced an increase in the Canada Child Benefit (CCB) for the 2026–27 benefit year.

For families with children, everyday expenses can add up quickly—from groceries and clothing to school supplies and childcare. The CCB is a monthly, tax-free payment that helps ease some of this financial pressure.

Starting July 1, 2026, eligible families can receive up to:

- \$8,157 per year for each child under age 6 — an increase of up to \$160 from the previous year
- \$6,883 per year for each child aged 6 to 17 — an increase of up to \$135 from the previous year

The CCB is adjusted for inflation each year, which means that benefits may increase from year to year as the cost-of-living changes

What does this mean for newcomer families?

Understanding and accessing benefits such as the CCB can be an important part of building financial stability and settling successfully in Canada. For newcomer families, the CCB can help with everyday necessities and the costs of raising children as they establish themselves in Canada. CCB can assist with necessities such as:

- Food and groceries
- Clothing and shoes
- Childcare
- School supplies and other school-related expenses
- Housing and household expenses
- Transportation
- Children’s activities and recreation
- Other everyday costs of caring for children

The amount a family receives depends on factors such as the number and ages of the children and the family’s adjusted net income from the previous year. Families with lower and middle incomes generally receive more support.

Families should also remember that filing their income tax return each year is important, even if they have little or no income. The Canada Revenue Agency uses this information to determine eligibility and calculate the amount of CCB a family should receive.

UNHCR Global Report 2025

Source: *The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)*

The UNHCR Global Report 2025 provides an overview of the global displacement and statelessness crisis, highlighting key trends and the work of UNHCR to protect and support forcibly displaced and stateless people around the world.

According to the report, the number of forcibly displaced people rose from 136.9 million in 2024 to 139.3 million in 2025, an increase of approximately 2.4 million people. Of this total, approximately 44 million (31%) are refugees—people who have been forced to flee their homes and cross an international border because of conflict, persecution, or other serious threats to their safety.

These figures serve as a sobering reminder of the scale of the global displacement crisis and the urgent need for continued compassion, protection, and support for refugees and displaced people.

Click [here](#) to download the full UNHCR Global Report 2025.



Urgent Refugee Resettlement Cases

ORAT continues to advocate on behalf of vulnerable individuals and to communicate urgent concerns to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). However, requests for expedited processing are subject to specific criteria and established procedures.

Refoulement Risk: Where there is a direct and imminent threat of refoulement, deportation, or removal, ORAT may request urgent consideration from IRCC. To assess such a request, however, IRCC requires documentation demonstrating the immediate and specific nature of the risk. This would include an official deportation or removal notice in the original language, accompanied by a certified English translation. In the absence of documentation confirming an immediate and specific threat, IRCC is generally unable to consider expedited processing based solely on reports or concerns about difficult conditions.

Other Urgent Risks: IRCC may also consider expedited processing in other exceptional circumstances that extend beyond the vulnerabilities typically experienced by refugee applicants. Examples may include a potentially fatal medical condition requiring urgent treatment that is unavailable in the country of asylum, or an application that has been awaiting processing for four years or longer.

ORAT recognizes the extraordinarily difficult circumstances faced by many refugees, including poverty, restrictions on legal employment, limited access to essential resources, unstable housing, and prolonged uncertainty about their future. While these hardships are serious and deeply concerning, they generally do not, on their own, meet IRCC's criteria for urgent processing.

Nevertheless, ORAT remains committed to supporting refugee families and advocating on their behalf wherever possible. We will continue to monitor situations of heightened risk, work with our partners and refugee families, and ensure that cases meeting IRCC's established criteria for urgent consideration are brought forward appropriately.

Our commitment remains clear: to stand with vulnerable refugees, to advocate for their protection, and to pursue every appropriate avenue to help them find safety and security in Canada.

Thailand Country Report



Thailand is located in Southeast Asia at the heart of the Indochinese Peninsula. It shares land borders with Myanmar to the west and northwest, Laos to the north and northeast, Cambodia to the southeast, and Malaysia to the south. The country also has coastlines along the Gulf of Thailand and the Andaman Sea, making it an important regional hub for trade, transportation, and migration.

Thailand's diverse geography includes mountain ranges in the north, fertile river plains in the central region, tropical forests, and extensive coastlines. Bangkok, the capital and largest city, serves as the country's political, economic, and cultural centre. Thailand's strategic location has long made it an important destination for people seeking safety from conflict, persecution, and human rights violations throughout Asia and beyond.

Thailand's Geo-history: Thailand, formerly known as Siam, is the only country in Southeast Asia that was never formally colonized by a European power. Through diplomatic negotiations and modernization efforts during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the country maintained its independence while neighbouring states became colonial territories.

For decades, Thailand has served as a place of refuge for people displaced by conflict and persecution. While it initially hosted large numbers of refugees fleeing conflicts in neighbouring countries, particularly Myanmar, Cambodia, and Laos, it has increasingly become a destination for urban asylum seekers from countries across Asia, the Middle East, and Africa.

In particular, Thailand has become a temporary

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Congratulations to Sr. Juvênia: A Journey of Service

If ORAT is the hands, feet and face of refugee resettlement in the community, then our volunteers are the hands, feet and face that help us put that mission into action. And, as anyone who has worked in an office knows, sometimes you need an extra pair of hands—and preferably a pair that knows what it is doing!

For the past four years, ORAT has been blessed with one such pair of hands in Sr. Juvênia Augusto, a member of the Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood in Toronto.

Sr. Juvênia began volunteering with ORAT in July 2022 and has been a consistent, generous, and much-appreciated member of our team ever since. Her service has taken her behind the scenes of refugee resettlement, where so much of the important work happens long before a newcomer arrives at the airport.

With our Outreach team, Sr. Juvênia helped create profiles of refugees abroad who were waiting to be matched with parishes and Constituent Groups (CGs) for sponsorship. She also followed up with newcomers after arrival, helping ORAT ensure that they were receiving the settlement support they needed.

In the Case Processing team, she assisted with entering sponsorship cases into the IRCC portal—a task that requires patience, attention to detail and, perhaps most importantly, the ability to remain calm in the presence of a very large amount of paperwork!

This September, Sr. Juvênia will take an important step in her vocation as she makes her final profession of vows. As she prepares to make this lifelong commitment, we are grateful that her journey has included four years of dedicated service to refugees and to the ORAT community.



Thailand Country Report

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asylum for many Pakistani Christians fleeing religious persecution. Its relatively accessible visa policies, the presence of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and established refugee support networks have made Bangkok one of the primary locations where Pakistani Christian asylum seekers await resettlement to third countries, including Canada.



Religious Affiliation & Impact on Religious Minorities: Thailand is a predominantly Buddhist country, with approximately 90 percent of the population identifying as Theravada Buddhists. Buddhism plays a significant role in Thai culture and public life, while the constitution guarantees freedom of religion.

Religious minorities include Muslims, Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, and other faith communities, who are generally free to worship and practice their faith. Unlike many countries of origin for refugees, Thailand does not systematically persecute individuals based on religion.

For many asylum seekers residing in Thailand, however, the greatest challenges are not religious freedom but rather their uncertain legal status. Without formal refugee recognition under Thai law, many face restrictions on employment, education, healthcare, and freedom of movement while awaiting resettlement.

Displacement & Humanitarian Conditions: Thailand has hosted displaced populations for several decades and remains one of the most significant countries of asylum in Southeast Asia. Despite its long history of receiving refugees, Thailand is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee

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Congratulations to Sr. Juvênia: A Journey of Service

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Sr. Juvênia, thank you for these four years of service—for your generosity, your dependability, your willingness to help wherever you were needed, and for the many hours you have given so quietly and faithfully behind the scenes. Your contribution has made a real difference, and we are grateful for all that you have done.

Congratulations, Sr. Juvênia! We wish you every blessing as you prepare for your final profession. May this next chapter of your vocation be filled with joy, grace and many opportunities to continue being a source of welcome, compassion, and hope to others.

And, of course, we hope you will remember us fondly and come back to us (“ahem”) especially when you encounter another immigration form!

Thank you, Sr. Juvênia, and God bless you on this beautiful next chapter of your vocation.



Thailand Country Report

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Thailand is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention or its 1967 Protocol and does not have a comprehensive national asylum system.

Many asylum seekers register with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which conducts refugee status determination for individuals living in urban areas. However, recognition by UNHCR does not provide legal immigration status under Thai law. As a result, many asylum seekers remain classified as undocumented migrants and may face restrictions on employment, education, healthcare, and access to public services, as well as the constant risk of immigration detention.

Among the largest urban refugee populations in Bangkok are Pakistani Christians who have fled religious persecution in Pakistan. Many have escaped false accusations under Pakistan's blasphemy laws, targeted violence, discrimination, forced conversions, kidnappings, and ongoing threats because of their Christian faith. While awaiting resettlement, many families spend years in Thailand living with significant financial hardship and legal uncertainty.

Thailand has also hosted refugee camps along its border with Myanmar for decades. While some refugees have been resettled to third countries or voluntarily returned home, many continue to experience prolonged displacement. In recent years, Thailand introduced a National Screening Mechanism to strengthen protection for displaced persons; however, implementation remains ongoing, and many asylum seekers continue to rely on international organizations and private sponsorship programs for durable solutions.

ORAT's Support: Since 2006, ORAT has assisted with 95 sponsorship applications for 264 individuals residing in Thailand and seeking resettlement through Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program. The overwhelming majority of these applicants are Pakistani Christians who have sought refuge in Thailand after fleeing religious persecution in Pakistan. ORAT has also supported smaller numbers of applicants from Myanmar, Vietnam and

the Democratic Republic of Congo affected by conflict and persecution.

Through ORAT's continued dedication, many individuals and families have been able to rebuild their lives in safety and dignity. To date, 39 applications, representing 104 individuals, have successfully arrived in Canada and begun establishing themselves in welcoming communities with access to legal protection, education, employment, and essential services.

A further 41 applications, representing 103 individuals, are currently under review with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. ORAT remains actively engaged throughout the process, providing guidance, advocacy, and compassionate support to ensure each family is assisted with care and consistency as they pursue a new beginning in Canada.

A Story of Welcome, Service & Gratitude

Volunteering with ORAT is more than an act of service; it is a journey of faith, compassion, and shared humanity. Through the experiences of welcoming newcomers, supporting families as they begin again, and building meaningful relationships across cultures, ORAT reveals how ordinary acts of kindness can become powerful instruments of peace. This narrative reflects on the lasting impact of service—both on those who are welcomed and on those who offer welcome—and celebrates the friendship, gratitude, and hope that grow when people choose to walk together in solidarity.



One of the greatest joys of retirement is the privilege of being accepted as a volunteer in an organization such as ORAT.

My years of involvement with ORAT afforded me an incredible appreciation for the immense freedoms which are ours as citizens of Canada. I came to realize that every refugee/newcomer has a unique story to tell, many of which were filled with terror and cruelty. Reading these applications was an invitation to welcome the stranger, as

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A Story of Welcome, Service & Gratitude

Christ himself taught us, offering not only practical support but also friendship, compassion and hope.

The ORAT staff were often in need of tech assistance as they learned to process new programs along with solving multi computer problems. One day in 2012, I met Mukti assisting those in need and was impressed with the respect he showed to those seeking his help. As I was driving him to the subway, Mukti and I came to believe that the Holy Spirit was with us. The following few days I witnessed first-hand the untold hardships facing a newcomer in need of housing, basic material goods, care for a young wife and newborn son, and employment. Thanks to the generosity of my choir members and a rented U Haul van, we were able to provide the necessities to set up comfortable living quarters for Mukti and his newly arrived family. This family faced hardships unknown to me with hearts filled with gratitude and faith – faith in God, their new Canadian friends and ORAT.

Today, fourteen years later, I continue to be filled with admiration, respect and love for Mukti's generosity and service to his students, parish, community and also to me!



Starting Over & Building Peace Through Service

Before coming to Canada, I spent many years working with Caritas Nepal, leading peacebuilding, community development, and humanitarian programs. Moving to Canada meant leaving behind an established career and beginning again from the ground up. Like many newcomers, I had to rebuild my professional and personal life from scratch.

One of the first places where I found a sense of belonging was ORAT. I began as a volunteer, eager to give back to my new community while finding my own place within it. It was here that I met Catherine Von Zuben, whose kindness, encouragement, and unwavering support became a guiding light throughout my journey. Her generosity has meant so much to me that I proudly call her my Canadian mother.

My experience with ORAT has strengthened a belief that has guided my life's work: every person has the potential to become a peacebuilder through service, empathy, and responsible leadership. ORAT demonstrates this every day by bringing people together to support one another, regardless of culture, background, or life experience. Through volunteering, I have witnessed how generosity and collaboration transform diversity into strength and differences into opportunities for understanding.

This experience has also strengthened my commitment to what I call "Peacepreneurship", the integration of peacebuilding into leadership, community engagement, and social innovation. Volunteering has reminded me that peace is not built only through international agreements or formal negotiations; it is created through everyday acts of compassion, shared responsibility, and grassroots initiatives that empower individuals and strengthen communities.

The values I have experienced through ORAT align closely with my lifelong mission to design peace programs, facilitate dialogue, teach conflict resolution, and mentor future leaders. Every volunteer opportunity has reaffirmed that lasting peace is built one relationship at a time.

*Serve with
compassion,
humility, and
generosity*

For me, volunteering with ORAT is far more than community service. It is a meaningful expression of my life's purpose. It reminds me that when people choose to serve with compassion, humility, and generosity, they become architects of peace, helping to build communities that are more resilient, inclusive, and united for generations to come.

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Starting Over & Building Peace Through Service

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Today, I am proud to serve as a Professor at Canadore College, where I teach courses in Entrepreneurship Academy, business, leadership, human resources, supply chain management, and Change management. My classroom is more than a place for academic learning; it is a space where students develop the knowledge, skills, and values needed to become ethical leaders, effective professionals, and responsible global citizens.

In the end, this story reminds us that service has the power to transform both the giver and the receiver. Through ORAT, relationships rooted in faith, compassion, and generosity have become a source of hope, belonging, and peace. From the

first acts of welcome to the continued work of teaching, mentoring, and community building, this journey shows that peace is created not only through great initiatives, but through everyday gestures of kindness and solidarity. When people choose to serve with humility and love, they help build stronger communities and leave a lasting legacy of gratitude, resilience, and hope.

Supporting ORAT

Our work is supported by the generosity of the Archdiocese of Toronto, ShareLife, various collaborating organizations and the faithful. If you would like to donate to support the work of this office, please click the donate button.



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