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Hon. Hedy Fry, P.C., M.P.
Vancouver Centre

February 19, 2009

The Canadian Embassy
Immigration Section
Cinnah Caddesi 5806690 Cankaya
Ankara
Turkey

Immigration Fax: (90-312) 409-2714
ankara-im-enquiry@international.gc.ca

To whom it may concern;

Re: [Names Deleted for Security Reasons]

I am taking this opportunity to write on behalf of the Hon. Hedy Fry, Member of Parliament for Vancouver Centre regarding an application submitted by the UNHCR in Ankara on behalf of the five men listed above. She had recently met with members of a refugee support group for Gay Iranians who had fled Iran because of intolerance to their sexual orientation by the Islamic Republic of Iran and is very concerned about the safety of these men as they await the department to process their applications to be re-settled in Canada.

According to Mr. Arsham Parsi from the Iranian Queer Railroad (IRQR) in Ottawa, the UNHCR officials recently received a letter from CIC with this enclosure as an explanation to why these five men's files might be much further delayed:

"...In the case of the resettlement procedure for Canada, unfortunately we expect that those cases that are to be referred to this country will experience a long waiting period. Recently we have been informed by the competent Canadian authorities that the target established for the Government Assisted Resettlement Programme for refugees in Turkey has been considerably reduced in such a way that with the number of cases that are currently pending decision with the Canadian Embassy in Ankara, the target for 2009 will be covered. As a consequence, the Canadian Embassy will not be in a position to consider new cases submitted by UNHCR until 2010"

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In most other cases when a refugee is in a NATO country awaiting re-settlement to Canada the applicant could be deemed to be much safer than he was in his home country. In the case of Turkey, a predominantly Islamic country, safety for these men can not be assured and frankly allows them to remain at great or greater risk. News reports here in Canada have been consistently critical to the State and Community intolerance to Gays and Lesbians in Turkey and these men being from Iran, that intolerance and risk to their safety is only increased exponentially.

Whereas this office appreciates there may be quotas assigned regarding the numbers of refugees processed from Turkey this year and those quotas have been reached; we do feel that interim measures, such as the transfer of these men to a safer Western European country might be considered if these men's applications could not be expedited, given the quota for 2009 has been reached. If we have concurred with the UNHCR in supporting these men's claim as Convention Refugees, then it is imperative that we act as quickly as possible to assure their safety and security.

If you could please let me know as soon as possible what you might be able to do regarding these men's applications and an anticipated time frame for resolution. Anything your office could do regarding these five applications would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter and should you require any further information from this office with respect to this case please do not hesitate to contact me through the Vancouver office facsimile at (604) 666 0114?

Sincerely,

Steven R. Bourne
Senior Special Assistant