



**Government of Canada**  
Permanent Mission of Canada  
to the United Nations and the  
Conference on Disarmament

**Gouvernement du Canada**  
Mission permanente du Canada  
auprès des Nations Unies et de  
la Conférence du désarmement

**Note No.: GENEV-6593**

**Reference:** Canada's response to JUA CAN 2/2020

The Permanent Mission of Canada to the Office of the United Nations at Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and has the honour to refer to the joint letter JUA CAN 2/2020 dated 12 May 2020. The Permanent Mission of Canada further has the honour to submit Canada's response.

The submission consists of one document.

The Permanent Mission of Canada to the Office of the United Nations at Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.

Geneva, 10 July 2020.



**Responses by the Government of Canada to the Joint Urgent Appeal From Special Procedures,  
reference UA CAN 2/2020**

**1. Please provide any additional information and any comment you may have on the above-mentioned allegations.**

The Government of Canada treats this consular case with utmost importance. The Government is monitoring this situation very closely and is concerned by the situation facing this child. Government officials continue to communicate with Syrian Kurdish authorities on the child's case, as well as with the NGO currently caring for the child. Government officials continue to advocate for the child's health and safety while identifying possible ways forward to resolve the child's situation.

**2. Please clarify what if any due diligence consular services have been provided to the child, and if the appropriate protection measures to ensure the child's safety, health and well-being have been sought and guaranteed.**

The safety and well-being of Canadian citizens abroad is a priority for the Government of Canada. Global Affairs Canada's *Consular Services Charter* outlines the consular services the Government of Canada may provide to Canadians, and Canadian government officials are committed to the effective and impartial delivery of consular services. There are, however, certain locations and circumstances in which the ability to provide consular support may be extremely limited, such as in a country or territory with which Canada does not have diplomatic relations and where there are no accredited Canadian consular staff.

Canada does not have a diplomatic presence in Syria and, in light of the security situation, it is extremely difficult to provide consular services anywhere in Syria. Canadian government officials do not travel to northeastern Syria for safety and security reasons. These difficulties have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nevertheless, Canadian officials remain in contact with the Syrian Kurdish authorities on the child's case, as well as the NGO that is currently caring for the child to advocate for the child's safety, health and well-being.

**3. Please share information on the possible repatriation of the child to Canada and how your Government will ensure that such repatriation is compliant with international law including human rights law in addressing the fact that the child is a five-year old orphan in need of special protection.**

Despite the existing challenges mentioned above, Canadian government officials continue to identify possible ways forward, while also advocating for the child's health and safety on an ongoing basis. The Government of Canada is not able to release detailed information regarding consular assistance provided due to Canadian privacy laws.

We can, however, confirm that, in any consular efforts involving the child, the Government of Canada is committed to upholding its international law obligations, including human rights law. Canada takes its human rights obligations seriously, including its obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Government of Canada remains committed to maintaining a constructive dialogue with the United Nations human rights Special Procedures Mandate Holders, and will continue to engage on this Joint Urgent Appeal as new developments arise.

**4. Please share what measures are being taken to continue working with and supporting the child's surviving family in Canada.**

This is an extremely complex situation and the Government of Canada is mindful of how difficult it is for the child and the child's extended family. The Government shares their concerns.

To support the child's extended family, government officials have established contact with relevant provincial authorities who have a mandate for child protection to bring the child's case to their attention and to connect them with the family in Canada. Government officials have also worked with the family to confirm the child's identity and Canadian citizenship.

Consular officials remain in close contact with the extended family in Canada.

**5. Please share information about what reintegration and rehabilitation assistance your Government would envisage for the child upon return.**

The Government of Canada, along with other levels of government and civil society organizations, supports intervention programs that employ health and social service professionals who have the training and experience to assess and intervene with individuals with complex needs, including those coming to Canada from conflict-affected countries. It is these health and social service professionals, not the Government of Canada, who would determine the specific reintegration and rehabilitation needs of the child. These interventions are trauma-informed, as well as age and gender appropriate to address the needs and vulnerabilities of individuals, including children and their families. In some cases, should the individual present complex multi-faceted needs, professionals from various disciplines, such as health, housing, law, mental health, education, and child welfare services, come together —often through a "situation table" or "hub"— to coordinate the intervention.