



**Access Alliance calls on Minister Kenney to reverse course on Mexico**  
*~Expansion of Designated Country of Origin list a death sentence for vulnerable refugees~*

**For Immediate Release**

**(Toronto, ON) February 17, 2013:** Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services is renewing its call for Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Jason Kenney to rethink the ministry's refugee policy after he announced several additions to the Designated Country of Origin (DCO) list. Eight countries, including Mexico, were added to the Government's list of so-called "safe" countries.

"Patients that we see from Mexico have had some of the most horrific stories of abuses that our medical team have ever heard," says Axelle Janzcur, Executive Director of Access Alliance. "Calling this country 'safe' is absurd. Fast-tracking these individuals will certainly result in errors in decisions, which will see legitimate refugees deported. This bureaucratic decision will result in the loss of lives."

The Designated Country of Origin list prejudicially limits the time that refugees have to gather vital documents for their hearing, removes their rights to appeal decisions, and blocks steps that ensure that they are not being deported to countries where they could be killed or tortured. Further, refugees on the DCO list effectively lose their health care coverage, which can potentially cause them and other Canadians irreparable harm.

On Thursday, Kenney added Mexico, Israel, Japan, Norway, Iceland, New Zealand, Australia and Switzerland to the 27 countries already on the DCO. Access Alliance joins other front-line agencies that serve refugees in urging the Government to remove Mexico from the DCO with immediate effect. It also calls on the Government to reverse its draconian cuts to refugee health care.

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Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services works to promote health, wellbeing and improved access to services for immigrants and refugees in Toronto. From three locations in the city, we offer resources, provide links, conduct research and build capacity to enable individuals, families and communities to achieve health with dignity. Our range of programs, services, advocacy and partnerships address medical, social, economic, environmental, settlement and integration issues for immigrants of all ages at all stages of their life. Find out more about our work at [www.accessalliance.ca](http://www.accessalliance.ca).



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