

Mapping the Needs of Syrian Families of the Missing in Ontario

Findsuri | www.findsuri.org

Dima Aldera | dima.aldera@findsuri.org

About the Problem

Across Ontario, a significant number of Syrian families are living with the unresolved disappearance of loved ones due to conflict, detention, or migration journeys. Despite the size of the Syrian community in the province, there is no comprehensive data capturing where these families live, how many of them are affected by missing-person cases, or what types of emotional, social, and legal challenges they face.

Families of the missing experience a unique form of trauma known as *ambiguous loss*—a prolonged state of uncertainty that deeply impacts mental health, decision-making, family dynamics, and community integration. Many affected individuals struggle to access appropriate psychosocial support, navigate legal systems, or find trusted spaces to share their stories. Without clear knowledge of their distribution or needs, local service providers in Ontario remain limited in their ability to design culturally informed and trauma-sensitive support systems.

This research aims to map the presence of Syrian families across Ontario, identify those living with a missing loved one, and understand the patterns of need across different cities and demographic groups.

About the Community Partner

FindSuri is a humanitarian, tech-enabled initiative dedicated to supporting families searching for Syrians who disappeared due to conflict, forced disappearance, or migration routes. The platform operates under Canadian and international data-protection standards, ensuring that families always maintain full ownership and control over their information.

Beyond digital documentation, FindSuri provides safe spaces for storytelling, offers pathways to psychosocial support, and connects families with trusted partners inside and outside Syria. Its mission is to protect affected families from exploitation, amplify their voices, and build long-term solutions that honor truth, healing, and memory.

Impact on the Organization

A detailed system map of Syrian families in Ontario—and the needs of those with missing loved ones—will significantly strengthen FindSuri's work. The findings will help the organization design more targeted programming, improve outreach strategies, and build partnerships with mental health providers, legal clinics, and community groups across the province.



Kindred Credit Union
**CENTRE FOR PEACE
ADVANCEMENT**



This research will also provide an evidence-based foundation for advocacy, funding applications, and future support initiatives. By understanding where gaps exist, FindSuri can expand its services in a way that directly responds to the realities of the community.

Potential Connections & Data Sources

FindSuri is well connected with Syrian communities across Ontario, including in Toronto, Kitchener-Waterloo, Hamilton, London, and Ottawa, etc. Additional connections include mental health and trauma-support networks, newcomer-serving organizations, legal aid clinics, and international partners working on documentation and missing-persons issues.

Student researchers may draw on:

- Community conversations and dialogue sessions facilitated by FindSuri
- Anonymized data from the FindSuri platform (within ethical boundaries)
- Interviews and consultations with families of the missing
- Collaboration with local NGOs, settlement agencies, and trauma-support providers
- Public data on Syrian settlement patterns in Ontario

These sources will help build a deeper understanding of how the issue unfolds across different regions and what systemic factors shape the experiences of affected families.