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For Immediate Release

MOSAIC's statement on Shen murder case

Vancouver, BC – In response to calls from media seeking comment about the Shen murder suspect's immigration status, Olga Stachova, Chief Executive Officer has released the following statement on behalf of MOSAIC (Multilingual Orientation Services Association for Immigrant Communities).

As with all Canadians, the thoughts of MOSAIC staff are with the Shen family at this very difficult time.

MOSAIC has worked with refugees for over 40 years and our experience has most often been positive since they come to Canada to escape violence, and are seeking a peaceful life. It is incomprehensible that anyone could commit an atrocious act like murder, regardless of immigration status. That said, we are as shocked and dismayed as anyone else to learn that the suspect is a refugee.

It has been shown that immigrants are statistically less likely to commit crimes than others, but as in everything else, there are always exceptions.

The fact that the suspect is a Syrian refugee is the main focus of most news commentary and coverage. As one of BC's largest immigrant serving organizations, MOSAIC is concerned that the focus on immigration status will negatively impact support for refugees, and erode the goodwill and generosity that the majority of Canadians have for this vulnerable population.

Ibrahim Ali is accused of a terrible crime, but if he is guilty, he is not representative of all refugees, nor of all Syrians.

Refugees have access to a wide variety of services in BC to better integrate and settle in the community. In this case, due to BC Privacy Laws, MOSAIC is unable to disclose if Mr. Ibrahim has ever received services from MOSAIC.

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With over 40 programs, MOSAIC provides employment services, family services, interpretation and translation, language instruction, legal information, settlement services, and victim and family violence services from multiple sites in Metro Vancouver. MOSAIC also operates the WorkBC Centre for Vancouver Northeast catchment area, as well as MOSAIC Translations and Interpretations Services.

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Empowering newcomers to fully participate in Canadian society