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\*\*\*MEDIA ADVISORY\*\*\*

## **Former Refugee from Iran to Walk 35 miles from Fort Worth to Dallas in One Day to Raise Awareness for Drastic Reduction in U.S. Refugee Resettlement**

*Proceeds from the event will benefit refugee families served by Refugee Services of Texas*

### **WHAT**

On **Thursday, December 10**, in celebration of International Human Rights Day, former refugee Sadra Najafi will walk 35 miles from Fort Worth to Dallas in a single day to bring attention to the pressing concerns of the 26 million refugees and nearly 80 million forcibly displaced people worldwide waiting to be resettled.

Born and raised in Iran with a loving family, Sadra was forced to flee persecution and spent nine years imprisoned on the island of Manus in Papua New Guinea. Sadra was eventually resettled in the United States and lives in Dallas where he remains committed to the plight of his fellow refugees, spending their lives in camps.

Refugee admissions have sharply declined in the past four years due to the current presidential administration's unprecedented assault on one of the nation's most successful, bipartisan programs. Sadra's 35-mile walk will bring attention to the millions of refugees who remain in dangerous situations or temporary camps, waiting to be resettled. President-Elect Biden has indicated that he will adjust the refugee resettlement determination for FY 2021 to resettle 125,000 refugees in the U.S. next year.

The walk is being hosted by Refugee Services of Texas (RST) and will include live-streamed updates on RST's Facebook page with Sadra and several RST participants checking in with viewers along the way.

The walk will end at about 5:30pm at Trammell Crow Park in Dallas and include a celebration of Sadra's journey with a live performance by five West African drummers and dancers from the group Bandan Koro (<http://bandankoro.com/>).

Visitors at the finish line will enjoy a special selection of free coffee, lemonade, and baked goods from Jane Gow, a former refugee from Vietnam and the owner of the newly launched Be Kinder Coffee that will begin hiring Dallas-area refugees in January 2021. The celebration is free to attend, and face masks will be required.

At 6:30pm, Russell A. Smith, LMSW, CEO of Refugee Services of Texas, and Bill Holston, CEO of the Human Rights Initiative of Dallas, will co-host a live conversation on Zoom on the meaning and purpose of International Human Rights Day.

At 7:30pm, a live performance by hip-hop artist David Shabani will be live-streamed from Austin (Listen to David's music here: <https://open.spotify.com/artist/10tmEpWAvuar7nGsOeqdQN>)!

Details on the two live-streamed programs will be made available at RSTX.org

There are several ways to partner with RST in celebration of Sadra's historic walk:

- 1) Text-to-give by sending **SUPPORTRST** to **44321**
- 2) Shop RST Amazon wishlists to give directly to clients
- 3) Drop off Walmart or grocery gift cards, new winter coats, or other accessories to published drop-off locations

The following sponsors are donating 15% of revenue on December 10<sup>th</sup> and serving as winter coat/accessory and gift card drop-off locations (11/23-12/11):

Fav's, Amarillo; Barrett's, Austin; Austin Habibis, Austin; Nixta's Taqueria; Breve Co Craft Coffee Bar, Ft. Worth; Taqueria San Andres, Ft. Worth; Khao Noodle Shop, Dallas; Craft Pita, Houston

The following locations will be available for clothing/gift drop-offs:

Epoch Coffee, Austin; Buenos Aires Cafe, Austin; Black Swan Yoga, Austin and Dallas locations; Union Coffee, Dallas (only 12/10); Old Navy, Flower Mound (starting 11/13)

Si Lom Thai of Dallas has provided two \$50 gift cards for the raffle.

## **WHEN**

Thursday, December 10, 2020 – International Human Rights Day  
6:00am – Walk begins

5:30pm – Walk ends, celebration begins  
7:00pm – Streamed live performance by David Shabani

Tune into RST’s Facebook page at these times for live broadcasts of the walk:

6:30am  
9:00am  
12:00 noon  
3:00pm  
5:15pm

### **WHERE**

Sadra’s journey will begin at Trinity River Trails Gateway Park, near the North Entrance, located at 4323 E 1st St, Fort Worth, TX 76117.

His journey will end at Trammell Crow Park, located between the Trinity River levees at 3700 Sylvan Ave, Dallas, TX 75207.

To see the exact route Sadra will be taking, visit:

<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/34467893>

### **DETAILS**

For interviews and access, contact Chris Kelley at [chris@kelleynotes.com](mailto:chris@kelleynotes.com) or call 214-457-5266.

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### **About Refugee Services of Texas**

Refugee Services of Texas is a social service agency dedicated to resettling and providing services to refugees and other displaced persons who are fleeing persecution based on race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, and/or political opinion. Since its founding in 1978, RST has successfully resettled more than 15,000 refugees. The original and longest-running branch, RST Dallas provides services to refugees, asylees, and survivors of human trafficking from over thirty different countries of origin.