



23 October 2015

Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister Designate

Dear Mr Trudeau,

On behalf of the Executive Committee and members of the Canadian Council for Refugees, we congratulate you and your colleagues as you form the next government of Canada.

We thank you for the strong position you have taken in favour of refugees. We are reassured to know that you recognize the enormous contributions that refugees have made to Canada and that you share our conviction that all Canadians benefit when we protect and welcome refugees.

The commitments that you have made to the full respect of human rights, to the equality of all Canadian citizens, and to diversity as a source of strength are very important to us. We have been deeply troubled by the currents of xenophobia and particularly anti-Muslim sentiments. We therefore welcome your strong messages that Muslims are valued members of the Canadian family and that everyone has the right to practise her religion as she chooses.

We look forward to working with your government on issues related to Canada's immigration and refugee protection systems. Throughout its 38 years, the Canadian Council for Refugees has been committed to dialogue with government. We know that we will not always agree, but we offer our expertise in policy analysis and the front-line experiences of our 170 members. We share your belief in the importance of consultation and good communication with stakeholders and experts.

We urge your government to address the priorities identified by the Canadian Council for Refugees, which we have summarized in the attached document, "Seven Keys to Protecting and Welcoming Refugees and Newcomers: A vision for Canada." The seven keys are:

- Making status in Canada secure
- A broad, inclusive and effective refugee resettlement program
- Access to protection
- Speedy family reunification
- Rights and dignity for all
- Accountable immigration enforcement
- Welcoming communities

We understand that achieving this vision will require substantial work over the longer term and will necessarily involve legislative change.

There are also some immediate actions that your government could undertake in the short term. These simple actions would make an enormous difference to significant numbers of people, as well as signaling your government's commitment to addressing priority issues for refugees and other vulnerable migrants.

1. Introduce flexible measures (such as Temporary Resident Permits) for Syrians with family in Canada.

Temporary Resident Permits are faster to process and can respond to Syrians still in Syria as well as those outside. Family-linked admissions make sense as having family here makes it easier to settle. In the event that achieving the Liberal Party goal of 25,000 Government Assisted Refugees by the end of 2015 proves logistically difficult, family-linked admissions will ensure that significant numbers of Syrians are able to quickly find refuge in Canada.

2. Convene a **national meeting** involving all levels of government as well as representatives of civil society to plan Canada's resettlement response to Syrian refugees.
3. Commit to removing limits and ceilings on privately sponsored refugees. (Sponsorship Agreement Holders are currently limited by overall caps on the numbers of non-Syrian or Iraqi refugees they can sponsor, and by sub-caps for specific regions, including large parts of Africa).
4. Direct CBSA to **stop pursuing cessation applications** against Protected Persons living in Canada.
5. **Provide the resources necessary to reduce wait times for accepted refugees** (Protected Persons) in Canada applying for permanent residence (currently 28 months).
6. Withdraw the government's appeal to the Federal Court of Appeal of the ruling that refugee claimants from **Designated Countries of Origin must have access to the Refugee Appeal Division**.
7. **De-designate all countries of origin** so that refugee claimants are subject to the same rules in the determination process, without discrimination based on their country of origin.
8. Commit to **Expresss Entry family reunification** (immigration processing for immediate family members – especially children – within a six month timeline).
9. Drop the government's appeal to the Federal Court of Appeal of the **Interim Federal Health** (IFH) case and restore pre-2012 IFH coverage.
10. Impose a **Temporary Suspension of Removals** on Burundi in view of the dramatic increase in violence in that country.
11. **Continue to make strong statements** about the importance of respecting the rights of refugees and highlighting the contributions that refugees and immigrants make.

We would be happy to meet with you to discuss these priorities and look forward to working with the relevant Ministers once your Cabinet is formed.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Loly Rico". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the bottom.

Loly Rico
President



Seven Keys to Protecting and Welcoming Refugees and Newcomers: A vision for Canada

Traditionally a leader in welcoming refugees and other newcomers, Canada can and must renew its efforts to protect their rights. This means acting in seven key areas:

Making status in Canada secure

This means:

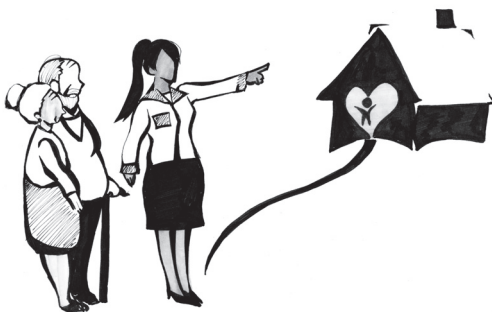
- Making pathways to permanent residence open to all, including:
 - migrant workers
 - persons who have been trafficked
- Permanent residence for sponsored spouses is unconditional
- Access to Canadian citizenship



A broad, inclusive and effective refugee resettlement program

This means:

- The government resettles a significant number of refugees to Canada
 - particularly the most vulnerable
 - from around the globe
 - without discrimination
- The private sponsorship of refugees is quick and simple, and respects the principles of additionality and naming



Access to protection

This means:

- Opportunities for refugees to reach Canada
- A fair refugee determination system, without discrimination
- Effective protection for trafficked persons without permanent status
- Adequate support for refugee claimants and trafficked persons
- Adequate protection in the immigration system for women in situations of violence





Speedy family reunification

This means:

- Express entry family reunification
 - where children are reunited with their parents in 6 months or less
- The definition of family member is broad and inclusive
 - reinstating the previous age of dependants
 - eliminating the ‘excluded family member’ rule
- Government makes family reunification a top priority

Rights and dignity for all

This means:

- Access to essential healthcare
- Access to Canada’s social safety net
- Protection from exploitation for migrant workers
- Immigration detention is reduced to a minimum
 - respect for non-citizens’ fundamental right to liberty



Accountable immigration enforcement

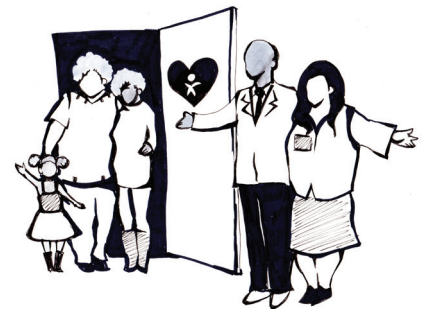
This means:


- An independent and effective complaints and monitoring mechanism oversees Canada’s border agency (CBSA)

Welcoming communities

This means:

- By words and actions, governments and civil society show they are proud to protect refugees
- Governments and civil society honour and celebrate the contributions of newcomers



 For more information: ccrweb.ca/en/refugees-newcomers-vision-Canada

