



Conseil canadien pour les réfugiés  
Canadian Council for Refugees

# Protecting refugees = stronger communities

## Campaign recommendations

On April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2018 (Refugee Rights Day), the Canadian Council for Refugees is calling on the Government of Canada to:

- Resettle 20,000 government-assisted refugees annually.
- Ensure applications of privately sponsored refugees are processed within 12 months, across all regions.
- Reform the refugee determination system so that all claimants have access to a fair hearing before an expert independent tribunal (the Immigration and Refugee Board).

Protecting  
Refugees



Stronger  
Communities

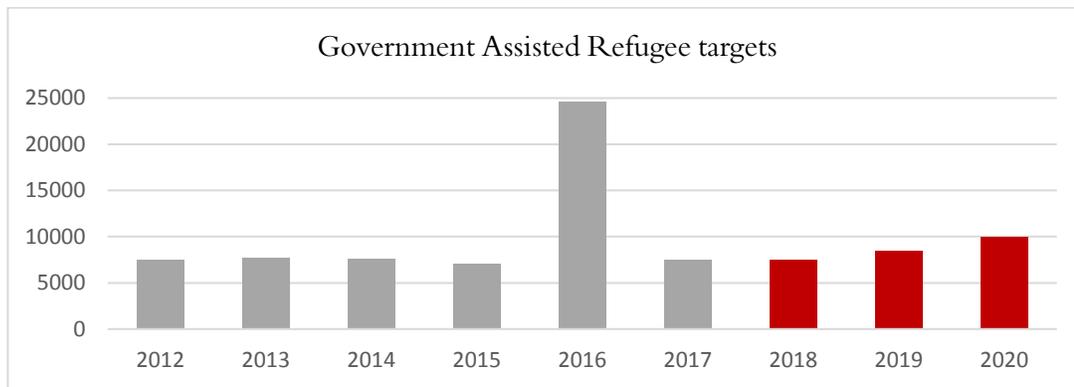
Canada can do more for refugees. When we welcome refugees, we all benefit because refugees work hard and contribute their talents and energies.

*Refugee Rights Day is celebrated each year in Canada on April 4<sup>th</sup>, the anniversary of the Supreme Court's 1985 Singh decision. In this decision the Supreme Court found that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects the fundamental rights of refugees. Refugee Rights Day is an opportunity to bring attention to the advances made in the protection of refugee rights in Canada and the need to keep working to ensure those rights are respected.*

## Canada should resettle 20,000 government-assisted refugees annually

According to the UN, more than one million refugees are in need of resettlement. The UN counts just the most vulnerable – the total number searching for a durable solution is much higher.

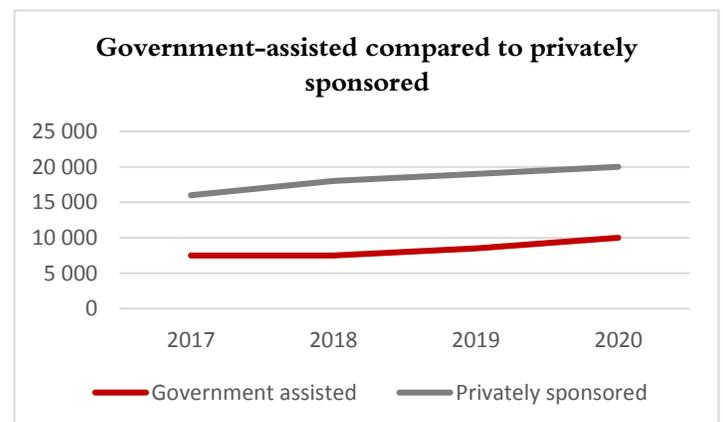
In 2016, the Canadian government committed to resettle 24,600 government-assisted refugees, but in 2017 and 2018 that commitment shrank to just 7,500 government-assisted refugees per year.



The need is great. Canada has the capacity. That is why we are calling for the government to commit to 20,000 government-assisted refugees annually.

### Five reasons why:

- Refugees are our neighbours, part of our global family. We need to help our neighbours.
- Government-assisted refugees are the most vulnerable people, chosen by the UN because of their particular need.
- In our response to the Syrians, we have shown that we have the infrastructure and the capacity to resettle.
- Refugees contribute in many ways to our communities once given the time and access to services to help them re-start their lives and become citizens.
- The government must take the lead on resettling refugees, on behalf of all Canadians. For 2018, the government's plan is to resettle 7,500 government-assisted refugees and to rely on private citizens to resettle 18,000. The government is shifting the responsibility to protect refugees to civil society.



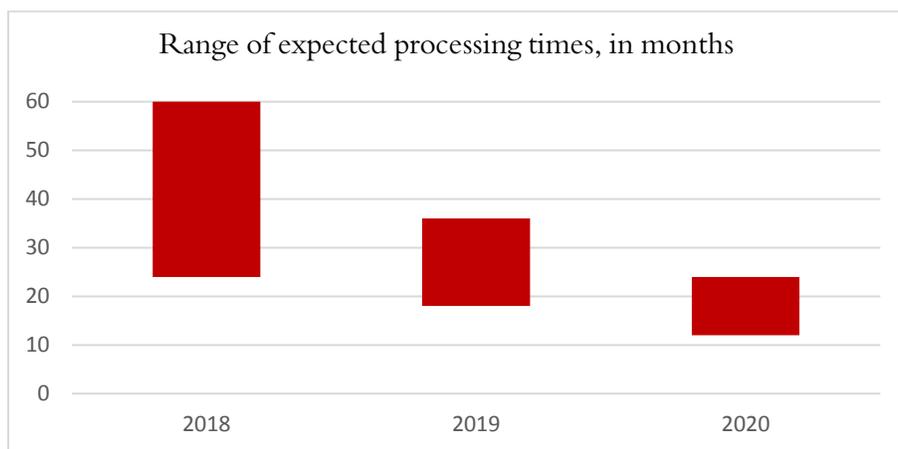
## Canada should ensure applications of privately sponsored refugees are processed within 12 months, across all regions

The government has said that it will clear the backlog of private sponsorship applications and bring processing times down to 12 months.

Privately sponsored refugees arriving in 2018 are expected to have waited 24-60 months while being processed by the Canadian government.

Historically, refugees in Africa have waited much longer than those in other regions.

Refugees who are privately sponsored are waiting years in unsafe situations. Other refugees cannot be sponsored because of strict limits on new applications. According to the government's plans for privately sponsored refugees, processing times will continue to be well over 12 months until 2020.



The need is great. When the government plays its role to resettle the most vulnerable refugees, Canadians are willing and ready to sponsor more refugees. That is why we are calling for the government to bring processing times, in all world regions, down to 12 months.

### Five reasons why:

- It is unfair to make refugees wait years in crisis situations before they can resettle in Canada. Some die while waiting. Those in Africa tend to wait longest.
- The government has committed to processing times for other immigration categories.
- Welcoming refugees is a national strength. They make our communities stronger and better.
- Time after time, Canadians who sponsor refugees say that this experience makes their lives richer and that refugees give back in so many ways.
- Canada's private sponsorship program is being promoted as a model around the world. We need to make sure it is working here in Canada!

## **Canada should reform the refugee determination system so that all claimants have access to a fair hearing before an expert independent tribunal (the Immigration and Refugee Board)**

Canada's refugee determination system is one of the best in the world, but it urgently needs some changes. Government evaluations have shown that some current rules are not functioning as intended (as well as being unfair). The government was expected to introduce legislative reform in 2017 but failed to do so.

Recently, there have been suggestions that the government might be considering taking refugee determination away from the IRB. The CCR is strongly opposed to such a move.

### **What we are urging**

#### **Preserve refugee determination at the Immigration and Refugee Board**

Refugee determination must be done by an expert, independent quasi-judicial tribunal, given the gravity of the rights issues at stake.

The IRB has earned a reputation around the world as a model for refugee determination.

With adequate resources and changes to the law, the IRB can be efficient. It has already improved its efficiency within current constraints.

#### **Reform the system so that all claimants have access to a fair hearing before the IRB.**

Eliminate the Designated Country of Origin regime.

Amend the law so that there are more flexible and responsive timelines.

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