

# Protecting Refugees = Stronger Communities: Preparing for April 4th lobby day

Protecting Refugees  Stronger Communities

6 March 2018

The meeting will start at 2pm Eastern



Conseil canadien pour les réfugiés  
Canadian Council for Refugees



# About this session

○ Who is here: Janet Dench and Colleen French

## Agenda

1. Overview of the campaign
2. Campaign demands
3. Planning a meeting with your MP
4. Presenting the demands
5. Questions



# 1. Overview of the campaign

Protecting  
Refugees  Stronger  
Communities

## Campaign goals

- A. Public support:** Welcoming attitudes towards refugees in all categories among Canadians
- B. Policy advocacy:** Canadian government adopts recommendations for resettled refugees and reforms to the refugee determination system

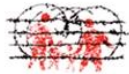


## 2. Campaign demands

- Resettle 20,000 government-assisted refugees annually.
- Ensure applications of privately sponsored refugees are processed within 12 months.
- 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).



# 3. Planning a meeting with your MP



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## Protecting refugees = stronger communities: advocacy

**act>on**

As part of the CCR campaign, Protecting refugees = Stronger communities, the CCR invites members and others to take action so that Canada offers protection and a safe home to more refugees.

Join the CCR in 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.
- 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.

**Visit your MP on or around April 4**

CCR members and other allies are invited to join in a 2018 CCR lobby day focused on these three campaign demands. The lobby day will involve visiting MPs in their constituencies, during the period around April 4 (Refugee Rights Day).

**Resources**

- CCR members are invited to join a [webinar March 6](#) (or listen to a recording if you can't make it live), to help prepare for the visits with MPs.
- General guidance about contacting your MP and planning a visit
- Document outlining campaign demands (to present to MPs)

Attachment	Size
 <a href="#">refugee-campaign-demands-2018.pdf</a>	291.58 KB



# Why should your MP meet you

- Part of a nation-wide CCR lobby day
- Marking Refugee Rights Day
- To hear the concerns of MP's constituents
- To hear about realities in the riding, ask questions, strengthen relationships.



# Some models of meetings

- Join up with other CCR members in the region
- Involve clients, Board Members, volunteers and visit all the MPs in the region.
- Invite the MP to your organization.
- Invite all the MPs in your region to your organization.



# Planning the meeting

- How long is the meeting?
- Who will attend? (for shorter meetings, a small delegation is better)
- What is your connection to the MP/riding?
- What are the key points you will present and who will present them?





# Do's and Don'ts

- Be confident. MPs want to hear from their constituents. You don't need to be an expert on everything.
- Highlight how the issues affect people in the riding.
- Engage the MP in discussion. Leave time for questions.
- Don't try to cover too much.
- Don't assume your MP knows policies.
- Don't get too technical



# 4. Presenting the demands

Please present all 3 demands – at least briefly!



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## 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.*



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## Protéger les réfugiés = société plus forte: Revendications de la campagne

Le 4 avril 2018 (Journée des droits des réfugiés), le Conseil canadien pour les réfugiés demande au gouvernement du Canada de :

- Réinstaller 20 000 réfugiés pris en charge par le gouvernement, et ce, par année.
- Garantir que les demandes des réfugiés parrainés par le secteur privé soient traitées à l'intérieur d'une période de 12 mois, et ce dans toutes les régions du monde.
- Réformer le système de détermination du statut de réfugié afin que tous les demandeurs aient accès à une audience équitable devant un tribunal expert et indépendant (la Commission de l'immigration et du statut de réfugié).

Protéger les réfugiés  une société plus forte

Le Canada peut faire plus pour les réfugiés. Lorsque nous accueillons les réfugiés, nous sommes tous gagnants, parce que les réfugiés travaillent fort et contribuent leurs talents et leurs énergies.

*La Journée des droits des réfugiés est célébrée le 4 avril, l'anniversaire de la décision Singh rendue par la Cour suprême en 1985. Dans cette décision, la Cour suprême a conclu que la Charte canadienne des droits et libertés protège les droits fondamentaux des réfugiés. La Journée des droits des réfugiés nous permet de célébrer les progrès accomplis dans le domaine de la protection des droits des réfugiés, et de nous rappeler de l'importance de poursuivre la lutte en faveur de ces droits.*

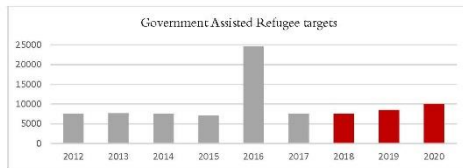
# Preparing for April 4th lobby day

Protecting refugees = stronger communities: Campaign recommendations

## 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 most vulnerable – the total number searching for a durable solution is much higher.

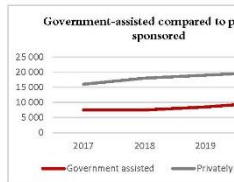
In 2016, the Canadian government committed to resettle 24,600 government-assisted refugees, but in 2017 and 2018 that commitment shrank to just 7,500 government-assisted refugees per year.



The need is great. Canada has the capacity. That is why we are calling for the government to commit to 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 need.
- In our response to the Syrians, we have shown that we have the infrastructure and the capacity to receive refugees.
- 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.



Protecting Refugees = Stronger Communities

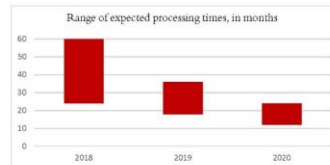
Protecting refugees = stronger communities: Campaign recommendations

## 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, Canada is 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 are 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 in so many ways.
- Canada's private sponsorship program is being promoted as a model around the world. We need to ensure it is working here in Canada!

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Protecting refugees = stronger communities: Campaign recommendations

## 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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# Talking points for IRB

- There are more detailed talking points if you are going to focus on the IRB.