



Support Refugee Resettlement in Canada: Backgrounder

Every year at the beginning of November, the federal Cabinet releases a decision on immigration and refugee settlement levels—this is the total number of people Canada will admit as refugees and immigrants in the coming year. As our government makes these decisions in the next few weeks, it's important for citizens to encourage generous settlement levels, and continued efforts to reduce wait times in the refugee sponsorship system. [Citizens for Public Justice](#) and the [Centre for Public Dialogue](#) are working together to raise these important issues of hospitality and welcome of refugees and encourage you to act today.

There are 65.6 million forcibly displaced people worldwide today. Of those, more than 1.9 million people are refugees in need of resettlement—more than any time since World War Two. The Christian Reformed Church has responded consistently to this humanitarian crisis through participation in [refugee sponsorship with World Renew](#). Citizens for Public Justice has a long history of advocacy in support of refugees, most recently in an excellent study of the private sponsorship system called [A Half Welcome](#) (Spring 2017). The displacement of millions of God's image-bearers due to violence, war, disasters, and climate change requires a consistent and generous response on the part of Canada and Canadians. The current government's positive messages of welcome and openness to all are good symbols, but require the continued encouragement of citizens to be implemented fully.

Decreased Government-Assisted Refugee Levels

In 2016, due to international outcry about the crisis in the Middle East, Canada fulfilled a deep commitment to refugee resettlement. We celebrate this historic response! The total number of resettled refugees topped 40,000, almost 25,000 of whom were Government-Assisted Refugees (or GARs—people chosen by the UN because of significant need and vulnerability). In 2017, however, Canada's GAR levels trailed off to just 7,500. It's important, particularly in the ongoing and deepening international human displacement crisis, that Canada show great leadership in refugee resettlement. Along with our colleagues at the [Canadian Council for Refugees](#), we are asking that Canada step up its global leadership once again, and resettle 20,000 GARs in 2018 and beyond.

Backlogs in Private Sponsorship

In addition to GARs, private sponsorship plays an essential role in Canada's resettlement capacity. Citizens for Public Justice's study, *A Half Welcome*, drew on the perspectives and experiences of refugee sponsorship and settlement organizations and uncovered some of the challenges in the private sponsorship system. A particularly important finding of *A Half Welcome* had to do with wait times for

sponsors. A combination of mistakes on applications and delays in the processing system can mean long delays between the time a sponsoring community hears that a refugee family is coming, and their actual arrival. These wait times are frustrating for sponsors and can diminish their enthusiasm.

Sponsoring communities are vital to the success of Canada's Private Sponsorship system, which is highly regarded internationally. For this reason, it's essential to address the wait times issue as a matter of urgency. In 2017, the government promised to clear the backlog of private sponsorship applications by 2019. It is important to encourage the implementation of this promise as soon as possible and hopefully before 2019.

[Take Action](#)

As Christian citizens, many of us have experienced amazing blessings through our connections with refugees—we know that in the process of sponsorship, strangers become neighbours and cherished members of our communities. Canada's government has demonstrated an ability to address migrant crisis situations in the impressive efforts of 2016. The world watched this effort and many heard the message: Canada welcomes refugees. As Canada continues to welcome the world, let's join our voices and ask our elected representatives to set generous refugee settlement levels, clear backlogs, and reduce wait times in the system.

[TAKE ACTION HERE!](#)

Learn More

CCR Links:

<http://ccrweb.ca/en/call-increased-levels-refugees>

<http://ccrweb.ca/en/time-to-lead>

CPJ Link:

<https://cpj.ca/half-welcome>