

## GLOBAL REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT AND CANADA

In 2018 Canada received more planned refugees than any other country, a first in 72 years of organized resettlement.

The figure presents data showing the 2009-2018 intake of 99% of resettled refugees. Resettled refugees differ from asylum seekers. Their arrival in Canada and other destination countries is planned. Their refugee status is pre-vetted by participating governments, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and other relief organizations.

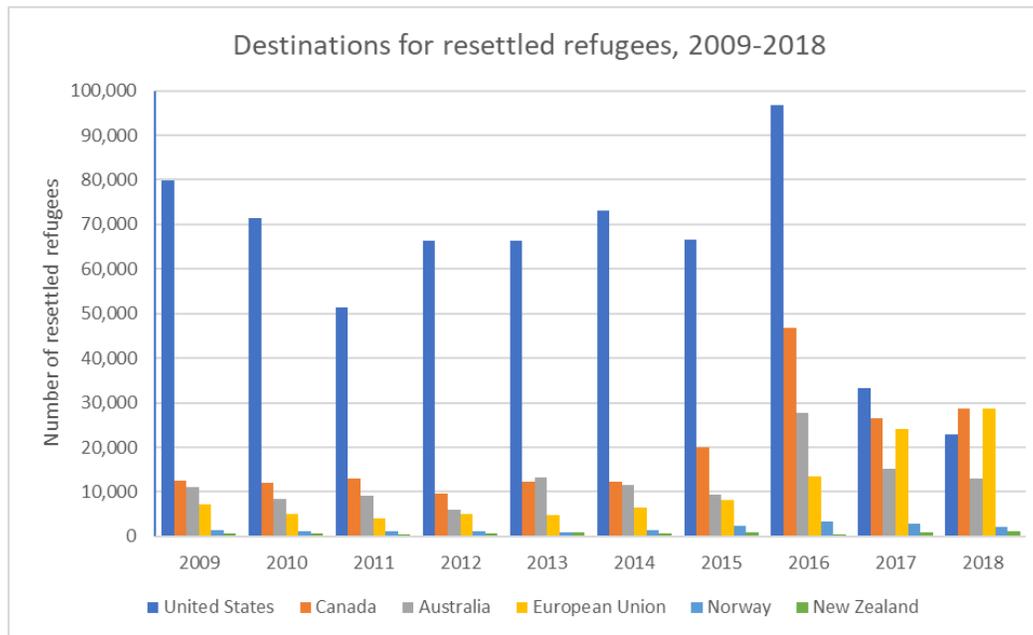
Refugee resettlement began at the end of WWII, when the International Relief Organization was founded in 1946 to repatriate, integrate, or resettle persons displaced by the War. Its successor, the UNHCR, follows the same model: prioritizing repatriation of displaced persons to their home countries, followed by efforts to integrate them in their country of first asylum. It is only when these efforts are considered overly risky or impossible that they are selected to be resettled elsewhere.

Canada's leading role in refugee resettlement should be considered in light of the large U.S. decrease, and struggles in Europe to process 3,200,000 asylum seekers since 2015.

The UNHCR and participating countries negotiate the intake of resettlement refugees, in exchange for countries like Turkey and Lebanon hosting millions more. "Traditional" resettlement countries include Canada, the US, Australia, New Zealand, the Nordic Countries, and the Netherlands. The US has traditionally led annual resettlement efforts and the negotiation of new resettlement programs in other countries. 37 countries currently have resettlement programs.

Canadian intake of resettled refugees includes some of the following:

- 1947-1952: 250,000 displaced by WWII and the Soviet Occupation of Eastern and Central Europe
- 1956 and 1968: 37,000 Hungarians and 11,000 Czechoslovaks fleeing Soviet oppression



**Source:** Resettlement arrivals of refugees, Global Trends Annex Tables, UNHCR, 2009-2017; 2018 estimates sourced or calculated from relevant Government immigration, refugee, and asylum ministries and departments.

**Notes:** Numbers provided by UNHCR are self-reported by contributing governments.

- 1979-1980: 60,000 Vietnamese "boat people" escaping the fall of South Vietnam
- 2016: 47,000 newcomers, mostly from Syria, in a record-setting year

As shown in the figure, 2018 marks Canada passing the US in leading refugee resettlement. Though Canada has increased its resettlement intake, this lead is mostly attributable to US cuts of 66% and 32% in 2017 and 2018. The US plans further cuts in 2019. The EU is filling some of the gap, with an estimated intake just below Canada's. However, reactions within the EU are not uniform. Countries like the UK have increased intake, while others like Denmark have closed resettlement. Some see resettlement as a more preferable, organized alternative to the recent unplanned arrival of 3,200,000 asylum seekers. Others see it as an additional quota that erodes national sovereignty.

The implications of Canada's increases and America's cuts to resettlement are many, but countries are likely to be similarly divided. Two UN agreements have been signed, seeking to harmonize responses to refugee and migrant flows and influxes. The US has rejected both. It is uncertain whether international consensus or public trust in resettlement will be affected as a result.