



Discussion Points

- The government's efforts on behalf of Syrian refugees in recent months is appreciated. The government ramped up hard in November, December, and January, and the resulting influx of 25,000+ Syrian refugees fleeing war was encouraging.
- The government should live up to suggestions it would settle up to 50,000 by end of 2016. In March, Minister of Immigration and Citizenship John McCallum said the government might welcome up to 50,000 Syrian refugees by year-end,¹ but then scaled that number back to 35,000.² Given the humanitarian crisis in Syria, Canada should stick with the larger number.
- In refugee resettlement, the Federal government should work more closely with local partners to improve efficiency. The ramp up to meet its 25,000 target in November, December and January was impressive, but it's now clear that processing costs and inefficiencies were much higher as a result.³ Canada should work more closely with on-the-ground partners to ensure that refugee funds are used efficiently to enable the greatest number of refugees to come to Canada.
- Federal and provincial governments should provide more incentives for private sponsorships. The government cannot reasonably foot the bill for all the refugees that could come to Canada. As such, the government should provide additional incentives to encourage Canadians to launch private sponsorships. Incentives should include education programs, matching funds for private sponsorship, lower thresholds for private sponsorship, and additional support for landed refugees.
- The government should ensure a balance within the Syrian refugee population arriving in Canada. Traditionally, Canada has favoured refugees and immigration based on 1) need, and 2) existing relationships in Canada. Several communities in Canada are well-positioned to privately sponsor members of their community to come to Canada. Others are less well-positioned, either because they are less affluent, or because they are newer communities. The government should ensure that the refugee population arriving in Canada is balanced in need, and ethnicity, and that the process does not disproportionately favour affluent communities.

¹ Zilio, Michelle, "Liberals reach resettlement goal as 25,000th Syrian refugee arrives in Canada," The Globe and Mail, Feb. 27, 2016

² Payton, Laura, "Liberals hope bigger immigration target boosts economy," iPolitics, March 22, 2016

³ Burke, Ashley, "Federal spending spiked during final scramble to meet Syrian refugee deadline," CBC New: Politics, April 18, 2016