

SEEKING REFUGE

AMSSA's BC Refugee Resource Network Bulletin

Edition 16, May 2023

Canada's Response to the Conflict in Sudan

On April 15, 2023, armed conflict broke out between rival military factions in Sudan with the deteriorating situation endangering civilian lives. According to the [International Committee of the Red Cross](#), an estimated 100,000 people have fled the country since this most recent conflict began. In response, the Government of Canada has quickly introduced a number of measures to provide support for those seeking safety in Canada.

Many Sudanese people in British Columbia are supported by schools, refugee sponsorship groups, health authorities and community service agencies along with settlement organizations. For those working with people of Sudanese background, it is important to note these new avenues to help them and their families in these difficult times.

- For those already in Canada, [Sudanese nationals can apply for an extension of their status in Canada](#). This will allow them to move between the temporary streams allowing them to continue studying, working or visiting family free of charge.
- Foreign nationals who fled Sudan with their Canadian family members—including Canadian citizens and Canadian permanent residents—[will be able to apply for temporary residence without paying the processing fee](#). Upon arrival to Canada, they will be able to apply without charge for an open work permit or study permit, and permanent residence under the family class.
- There will be priority processing of completed temporary and permanent residence applications from those living in Sudan, and fees will be waived on passports and other travel documents for Canadians and permanent residents in the area.

Learning from the Syrian Refugee Experience

In the past two years, Canada has also mobilized in response to the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan with over [31,000 Afghans arriving in Canada](#) since 2021, and the crisis in Ukraine, where over 150,000 Ukrainians have arrived in Canada under the [Canada Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel \(CUAET\) visa](#). However, these were not the only mass migrations of displaced people coming to Canada in recent history.

In 2015-2016, Canada responded to the humanitarian crisis in Syria with the Syrian Refugee Resettlement Initiative. This was an unprecedented mobilization for Canada at that time with almost 40,000 refugees from Syria arriving in Canada, the largest single group of refugees since the Vietnamese sponsorship program in the late 1970s. Similar to the Afghanistan and Ukraine response, key community stakeholders such as schools, health authorities, refugee sponsorship groups, and community volunteers along with settlement organizations, played a crucial role in providing services and supports to Syrians and helping them adjust to life in Canada.

The [Syrian Refugee Lived Experience Project](#) was a nation-wide research project by the Environics Institute. This project consisted of in-depth interviews with over 300 Syrian refugees across Canada to explore their experiences several years into their resettlement in Canada. Some key findings were:

- Most respondents reported having community connections and a sense of belonging to Canada, and some had a greater attachment to Canada than with their ethnic/cultural group.
- Most parent respondents felt their children adapted well to life in Canada and likely to credit the school system for supporting their children in adjusting.
- While respondents' rating of their physical health was comparable to that of the Canadian population-at-large, less than half described their mental health as positive and feelings of daily stress were higher than the population-at-large.
- Respondents continue to face ongoing challenges of underemployment and financial insecurity.

As British Columbia continues to address the humanitarian crises in Afghanistan and Ukraine, lessons learned from the Syrian response is crucial. The similarities between the Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine responses include the large number of refugees, the urgency with which they were moved, and the scale of resources dedicated to resettlement. As other conflicts continue to arise globally, the lessons learned as well as positive outcomes achieved from these three responses can help everyone supporting displaced people in B.C. be better prepared for future migrations.

For the full Syrian Refugee Lived Experience Report, [click here](#).



Afghans who have arrived in Canada since August 2021 as of May 2023:

31,360



Number of people who arrived in Canada under **CUAET** program since March 2022 as of May 2023:

153,493

Source: [Government of Canada - #WelcomeAfghans: Key Figures](#), [Government of Canada - Ukraine Immigration Measures: Key Figures](#)

[Afghan Resettlement Resources](#)

[Ukrainian Migration Resources](#)

Please take the time to fill out the feedback survey so AMSSA can make Seeking Refuge more relevant to your needs

[Survey](#)



AMSSA's BC Refugee Resource Network is an initiative to strengthen community capacity to support resettled refugees and displaced Ukrainians through education, information dissemination, research and training. The Seeking Refuge bulletin has been created to keep service providers up-to-date on news, resources, and to provide information on frequently asked about topics related to recent migrations of displaced Ukrainians and resettled refugees. If you know someone who would like to receive this bulletin, please share this [link](#).

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