



Syrians:

- In 2016, the Liberal Party of Canada promised to bring 20,000 Syrian refugees to Canada by Christmas, and they did it! It cost us \$1 billion but the country generally supported it.
- We put aside the former policy of the Harper government that made refugees pay for their transport and settlement fees and we just stepped in and brought those Syrians here.
- We say let's not stop there! The African Diaspora Association of the Maritimes says let's keep up the good work and bring in the next 20,000 – this time from Africa.
- If the Trudeau government plans to welcome 300,000 new Canadians every year, there is no reason why we can't open the doors to 20,000 African refugees in 2017.

Stats on refugees in Africa:

- over 2.5 million refugees in Africa today.
- African refugee camps have been in place since well before the Syrian conflict, some for decades.
- Many refugee camps have been in existence for so long they are larger than most Canadian cities:
 - o Dadaab Camp in Kenya is home to over 240,000 people,
 - o Dollo Ado in Ethiopia to over 200,000,
 - o Kakuma in Kenya to over 100,000.

Desperate people waiting in camps:

- fleeing banditry and mass rape in the Congo, running from civil war in South Sudan, challenging the autocracy of Robert Mugabe, hiding from the secret police of Togo, escaping the conflict zones of Mali, Nigeria, Burundi and the Central Africa Republic.
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- Of for example, refusing to live under a dictatorship in Eritrea – to the point where we have had a member of our own community, Habtom Kibraeb, commit suicide in 2010, here in Halifax, in the woods behind Keshen Goodman Library in Clayton Park. This was a very sad day for us because we didn't know why he would take such measures. But now we know it was because he refused to return to Eritrea to live under the dictatorship of President Isaias Afwerki, who has imprisoned thousands, murdered countless people, tortured thousands more.

Favouritism in refugee policies

- Africa is a continent of 1 billion people. So, for instance, there is no reason why there shouldn't be as many people of African descent in Canada as there are of Indian descent. Right now there are 1.6 million people of South Asian descent, but less than 1 million of African descent, and most of those are descendants of African immigrants from the USA (loyalists and so on) or the Caribbean. People from Africa in the 20th century make up only a small percentage – and we are asking why?



The next “20,000” -- Talking Points

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- The small number of African refugees, which is around 2-3000 per year, that do come here, have to pay back their expenses! Imagine, asking people with nothing, who come to Canada with nothing, to take one year and pay back loans that average around \$10,000 per adult? The Syrian refugees did not have to pay this, which we applaud, so we say, let's bring Africans here for free too. There is no reason they should have to pay.
- Canada can't play favourites. The death of toddler Alan Kurdi, whose body washed up on a beach in Turkey, in 2015 was deeply saddening, but the sad truth is that his photo could have been replaced with dozens of photos of African toddlers
 - o toddlers washed up on Mediterranean shores, child soldiers shot dead Sudan, girls who died as victims of sexual assault in the Congo.

A Warning:

- This position paper is also a warning
- If we do not help Africans now, we can expect to be bombarded with more images of misery in the news.
- Or, the refugees we are ignoring might even find their way here. The only reason we don't get boatful after boatful of refugees in Canada is because of the distance across the Atlantic, but we are now seeing people at the Manitoba border. That trickle could turn into a flood.
- When Trump was elected we expected white liberals to turn up at the border, but instead we are getting refugees from Africa, who have been discriminated against in their home countries and in the USA.

We have done this before

- In 1956, Canada let in 37,500 Hungarians when the Soviet armies invaded the country. At that time Canada only had a population of 16 million.
- From 1975-1980 69,000 “boat people” from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos came when Canada only had a population of around 24 million.

Africans make great Canadians

- most of them can come here already speaking an official language, sometimes both.
- Rarely do they come from countries with radical nationalist or religious leanings.
- Many are educated and skilled - Canada can essentially pick and choose the best from refugee camps and, crudely speaking, we could take all of the professors, engineers, mathematicians, scientists, artists, writers, musicians, athletes we want. We should do it now – in 2017.

Positive Action

- We say let's be proactive - let's open our hearts and return to the airports to greet the next 20,000 - this time, from Africa.