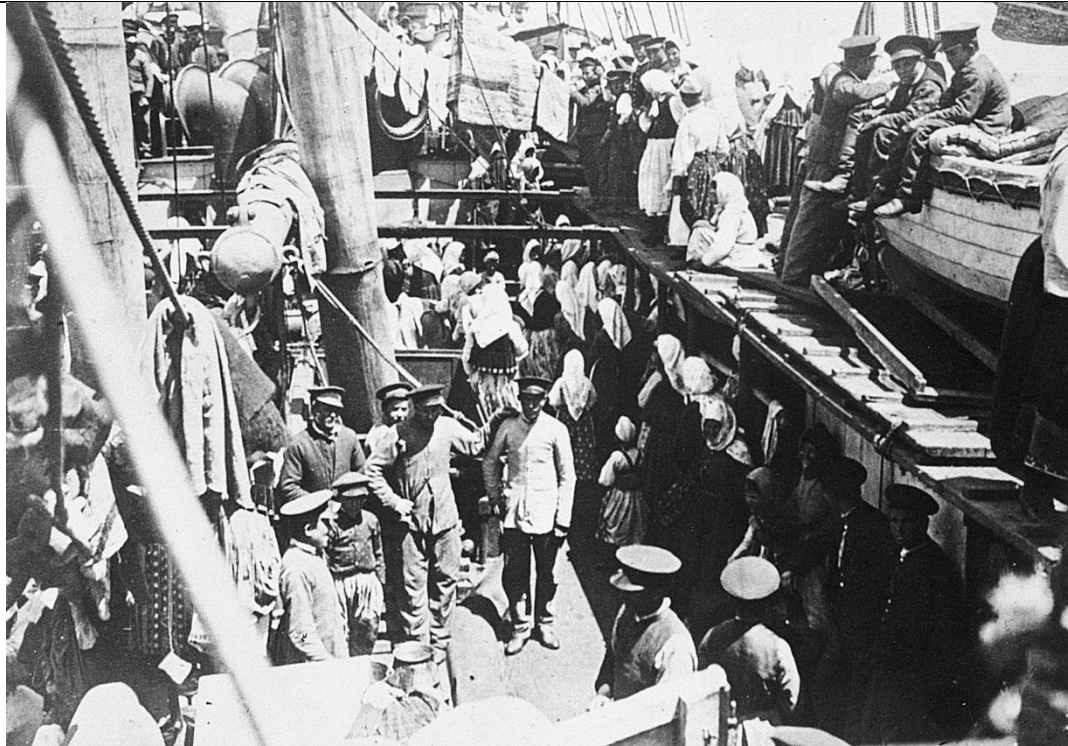


DOUKHOBORS

1899 – 1914



Passengers on board the *SS Lake Huron*, bringing the first group of Doukhobors to Canada, 1899.
Library and Archives Canada, Doukhobors collection, c005208

CONTEXT

The Doukhobors are a Russian religious group whose pacifism drew brutal persecution from the leaders of their country.

The first 7,500 Doukhobors arrived in Canada aboard the *SS Lake Huron* and headed for Saskatchewan. A further 500 Doukhobors arrived in subsequent years. Once there, they occupied three large areas in the east-central part of the province.

CANADA'S RESPONSE

The Canadian government excused them from military service and permitted them to live in communal villages.

Yet, in 1905, much of the land given to the Doukhobors was taken away because many Canadians did not like how some of the Doukhobors lived. Another reason was that their religious beliefs prevented Doukhobors from taking an oath of allegiance to the Crown, which was an important step to own land in Canada.

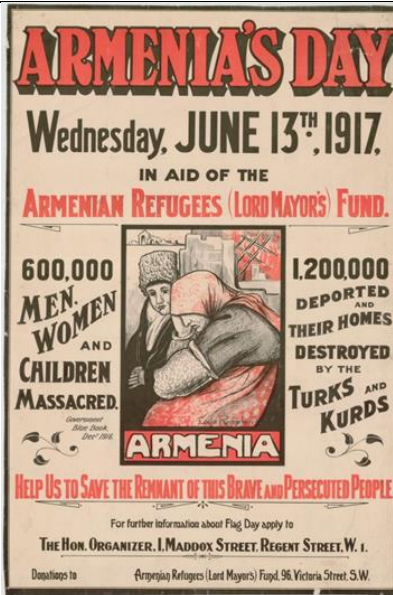
Canada's population in 1899 was 5,235,000 (Statistics Canada).

"But after a time – in the reign of the last Nicholas – they tried to compel us to carry guns, and because we would not, they said we were not good Russians. And they drove us from our farms, and harried us like the partridges on the mountains. They imprisoned the men and ill-treated our women. They burned our homes and drove us down towards the Caucasus in the winter." Jacob Iwachin (Ewashen)

Jonathan E. Rhoads, "A Day with the Doukhobors," Doukhobor Genealogy Website, <http://www.doukhobor.org/Day-Doukhobors.html>.

ARMENIANS

1919 - 1930



Armenia's Day poster, June 13, 1917. Public support and pressure from the Canadian Press, voluntary aid organizations and immigrant groups forced a reluctant federal government to resettle some survivors of the Armenian genocide.

Library and Archives Canada, National Archives of Canada fonds, e010697418

CONTEXT	CANADA'S RESPONSE
<p>More than 500,000 Armenians were fleeing the Armenian Genocide, a campaign of mass killings and deportation of Armenians by the Ottoman Empire, and its successor state, Turkey.</p> <p>Public awareness and pressure forced Canadian immigration officials to admit orphaned boys and girls on an experimental basis.</p>	<p>During this time, anyone coming from Asia had to pass strict admission requirements and had to have \$200 when they arrived in Canada. Despite public pressure, Canada would not relax their entry requirements. An exception was a special scheme, "Canada's Noble Experiment," which brought 109 boys and 39 girls to the country between 1923 and 1927.</p> <p>Between 1919 and 1930, Canada admitted 1,250 Armenian refugees. The United States admitted 23,000 and France admitted 80,000 Armenian refugees. Canada's population in 1919 was 8,311,000 (Statistics Canada).</p>

"We had to leave our doors open — with us we took no baggage, only our lives. And we had to flee on foot. During our month-long journey with a Bedouin and Kurdish caravan, which would have taken only two days by the forbidden train, my parents lost every valuable they had managed to save. My father's last silver coin went to rescue me after I was caught foolishly making a sketch of piled-up human bones and skulls, the last bitter landmark of my country."

Yousuf Karsh

Yousef Karsh, "A Brief Biography," Karsh, <https://karsh.org/a-brief-biography/>.

SOVIET MENNONITES

1923 - 1930



A large group representing the first Russian Mennonites arriving in Rosthern, Saskatchewan, July 23, 1923. Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies (via Mennonite Archival Image Database); NP029-01-12

CONTEXT

The Mennonites faced hardship during the Russian Revolution when they refused to take up arms, which angered both sides of the conflict. In the early 1920s, Mennonites faced intimidation and discrimination in the form of physical violence, having their land taken away, religious intolerance and threat of expulsion to Siberia.

CANADA'S RESPONSE

In 1922, the Canadian government made an exception in restrictive postwar immigration regulations, permitting Mennonites from the Soviet Union to enter Canada. Between 1923 and 1930, over 20,000 Soviet Mennonites settled in Canada. They were admitted with the understanding that they would receive no special privileges, except selective exemption from military service.

Canada's population in 1923 was 9,010,000 (Statistics Canada).

"My dad writes now in his memories, "If I just had the money, I'd go back." But he didn't—couldn't—didn't have enough to go back...But the one thing was—In Canada, they didn't have to be afraid of each other anymore and there was trust between them, which was something that was not in Russia. You couldn't—They couldn't sleep well at night. You never knew when somebody would come and they —The trust was gone there but, in Canada, they felt safe." John H. Dick

Arrived from the Mennonite colony of Molotschna (present day Ukraine), August 1924. Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 Oral History Interview [07.09.17JHD].

GERMAN JEWS

1939-1945



The Echt family in Danzig, (today known as Gdańsk, Poland) c. 1935-1939. They fled to Canada to escape Nazi persecution in 1939. L-R: Marianne Ferguson, her father Otto Echt, and sister Brigitte. Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 [DI2013.1018.3]

CONTEXT

Between 1933 and 1939, over 300,000 Jewish people fled Germany and its anti-Semitic laws for neighbouring states.

An urgent international conference was convened at Évian-les-Bains, France in 1938 to develop a unified response to the plight of Jews fleeing Nazism.

CANADA'S RESPONSE

At the Évian Conference, Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King declined any commitment to refugee intake.

Canada raised financial requirements for Jewish immigrants from \$5,000 to \$20,000. Even those with enough funds to enter the country were still often denied entry.

From 1933 to 1945, the United Kingdom admitted 70,000 and Argentina, 50,000; Canada admitted 5,000 Jews.

Canada's population in 1939 was 11,267,000 (Statistics Canada).

"On the day that Hitler came to power, I remember going down the stairs with my father. He was going to work; I was going to school and a neighbour of ours who had always greeted us very kindly, "Good morning... How are you?" spit at my father and called him a dirty Jew." Rose Ruschin (née Wulkan)

BALTS

1948 – 1949



Baltic Refugees in Halifax, Nova Scotia, circa 1948. Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 [D2013.1912.91]

CONTEXT

During the Second World War, hundreds of thousands of Baltic people fled their home countries, which were under Soviet occupation. Approximately 30,000 sought refuge in Sweden. By 1948, the Soviet Union pressured Sweden to forcefully send back these refugees. Many refused to go, knowing that they could face imprisonment or even death.

As a result, some Baltic refugees began to cross the Atlantic Ocean in small boats, nicknamed the “Viking boats,” to Canada in the hopes of being accepted. The International Refugee Organization was not in Sweden to provide assistance and Canadian immigration officers did not arrive until November, 1948. Most of the refugees departed without proper travel documentation.

CANADA’S RESPONSE

Upon arrival in Canada, the Baltic refugees were detained and processed on a case-by-case basis. Of the nearly 1,000 refugees who arrived on the “Viking boats” between 1948 and 1949, most were accepted into Canada while 12 were refused.

Canada’s population in 1948 was 12,823,000 (Statistics Canada).

“Each family had to present their reasons for coming to Canada without the proper documents. Their first reaction was to send us back to Estonia...it took our people until September 28 to change the deportation order by explaining to the officials that by returning to Estonia we would perish in Siberia...” Marje Suurkask

Arrived from Estonia on board Pärnu, August 9, 1949. Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 Story Collection [S2012.1427.1].

HUNGARIANS

1956



Demonstrations in Budapest, Hungary, during the Hungarian Revolution, October 25th, 1956. Nagy Gyula, Wikimedia Commons.

CONTEXT

In October 1956, a group of students were imprisoned following a protest in Budapest against the Soviet occupation of Hungary. After demanding their release, crowds were fired upon by Hungary's state security police. The protest quickly became a national revolt against the communist government. In November, Soviet forces entered Hungary and enforced more strict rules.

In the aftermath of the Hungarian revolution, over 200,000 Hungarians fled and became refugees.

CANADA'S RESPONSE

Canada was very anti-communist, and so supported the protesters by relaxing medical and security screenings. The Canadian government also provided free transport to Canada.

By 1958, approximately, 37,500 Hungarians refugees had arrived in Canada. Despite fears of communist infiltration, their arrival was met with considerable public support.

Canada's population in 1956 was 16,081,000 (Statistics Canada).

"The revolution that started with so much hope was beaten, Budapest was in ruins and bleeding...I was 15 years old."
Eva Kende

Arrived from Hungary, February 4, 1957. Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 Story Collection [S2012.1026.1].

CHINESE

1962



A People's Commune Canteen, China, 1958. Unknown author, Wikimedia Commons.

CONTEXT

Chinese refugees had been coming to Hong Kong (then a British colony) for a number of years, escaping famine and other hard conditions in the People's Republic of China. Then in the spring of 1962, due to various factors, there was a sudden jump in the number refugees coming to Hong Kong.

CANADA'S RESPONSE

Following this rapid increase of Chinese refugees, the Canadian government implemented a special refugee program in Hong Kong. In the end, 109 families were admitted into Canada by this program.

This was one of the earliest instances of the Canadian government offering safe haven to non-European refugees.

Canada's population in 1962 was 18,583,000 (Statistics Canada).

"At first we were scared, we thought it was a trap... We knew nothing of Canada except that it was extremely cold. We also heard from people that if you were willing to work you would never starve." Unknown

Val Werier, "One of the Hundred Starts New Life Here," *Winnipeg Tribune*, 18 February 1963, 6.

<http://digitalcollections.lib.umanitoba.ca/islandora/object/uofm:1996956>

AMERICANS

1965 – 1974



Mark Satin (left) counselling American Vietnam War resisters at the Anti-Draft Programme office in Toronto, August 1967.
 Laura Jones, Bennett Jones Phillips, Wikimedia Commons.

CONTEXT

Tens of thousands of Americans arrived in Canada, fleeing conscription into the Vietnam War. During this period, the United States was the largest source country of immigration to Canada.

CANADA'S RESPONSE

Between 1965 and 1974, approximately 50,000 to 125,000 war resisters, often called "draft dodgers," arrived in Canada seeking refuge from American authorities.

Canada's population in 1971 was 21,961,999 (Statistics Canada).

"I had spent months agonizing over whether to go to Canada and no time at all finding out what Canada was like. The next month was like that: a series of mild culture shocks, the bizarre sense of living in exile in a city an hour's drive from a border you're no longer allowed to cross." Jack Todd

Jack Todd, "A Vietnam War deserter crosses the line into Canada," Montreal Gazette, 7 January 1995. <http://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/from-our-archives-a-vietnam-war-deserter-crosses-the-line-into-canada>.

CHILEANS

1973 – 1978



Chilean refugees at a hotel in Buenos Aires, Argentina, March 1984. © UNHCR/I.Barki

CONTEXT

The Chilean military, led by General Augusto Pinochet, violently overthrew the democratically elected socialist-communist government of President Salvador Allende.

In the months that followed, Pinochet's authoritarian government used methods to control the people, including assassinations, disappearances, coercion, isolation and exclusion in an effort to rid Chile of suspected Allende supporters.

Over 200,000 Chileans fled the country.

CANADA'S RESPONSE

The Canadian government was slow to act because Canada was anti-communist and the refugees were persecuted for their socialist-communist views. Lobbying by churches and humanitarian groups pressured the government to act. The government resettled 6,990 Chilean refugees, with a majority arriving from Argentina, where they had initially sought safety.

Canada's population in 1973 was 22,043,000 (Statistics Canada).

"My Law degree was useless, no work, no family, no social network, no money. Nothing. I remember well that I had just forty-eight dollars, a backpack, and a suitcase, that's it." Jaime Llambias-Wolff

Francis Peddie. "Young, Well-Educated and Adaptable People: Chilean exiles, identity and daily life in Canada, 1973 to the present day." (PhD diss., York University, 2012), 132, https://yorkspace.library.yorku.ca/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10315/31962/Peddie_Francis_2012_PhD.pdf.

SOUTH EAST ASIANS

1975 – 1981



The arrival of a small boat with 162 Vietnamese refugees on board. It sank only two meters from shore, December 1978. © UNHCR/Kaspar Gaugler

CONTEXT	CANADA'S RESPONSE
<p>After the Communist victory in the Vietnam War, American forces withdrew from Vietnam and the surrounding region. The fall of Saigon in 1975 sparked a massive exodus of Vietnamese, Cambodians, and Laotians in search of safe haven. They were prey to rough seas and violence from pirates. Those who survived the ordeal found themselves in camps in Thailand and Malaysia.</p>	<p>From 1975 to 1981, Canada resettled over 77,000 South East Asian refugees. More than half of these refugees were privately sponsored. The remainder were sponsored by the Canadian government or by family members. Their resettlement became the single most generous record of any major country in proportion to its population.</p> <p>Canada's population in 1975 was 22,697,000 (Statistics Canada).</p>

"I got on a small boat about twelve metres long and about two and a half metre large, the width. And we spent five days and four nights on the ocean and in the middle of the night, maybe one or two o'clock in the morning we got to Malaysia...Twenty-one, including kids and adults." Dau-Thi Huynh

Arrived from Malaysia, via Brussels, on December 30 1977. Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 Oral History Collection [15.12.04DTH].

SALVADORANS

1979 – 1993



Salvadoran refugees in Colomoncagua refugee camp, January 1988. © UNHCR/J.C. Bruet

CONTEXT	CANADA'S RESPONSE
<p>In 1979, a violent overthrow of the government by the military in El Salvador resulted in a brutal civil war between the United States-supported government and the left-wing Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front.</p> <p>The war in El Salvador coupled with a severe economic decline during the 1980s forced more than 22,000 refugees to seek safe haven in Canada between 1982 and 1993.</p>	<p>In March 1981, the Canadian government implemented special measures to bring Salvadorans to Canada. A year later, the special measures were expanded to include Salvadorans who had arrived in the United States.</p> <p>Canada's population in 1981 was 24,820,393 (Statistics Canada).</p>

"To tell you the truth, the first day I was here was the first day I could sleep in six years" Flora Barillas

Douglas Martin, "Salvadorans Find a Haven in Canada," *The New York Times*, 4 July 1985. <http://www.nytimes.com/1985/07/04/world/salvadorans-find-a-haven-in-canada.html>

SRI LANKANS

1983 - 2004



© UNHCR/Masanori Kobayashi



Sri Lankan refugees who were forced to seek shelter during the years of brutal war. © UNHCR/Masanori Kobayashi

CONTEXT

In July 1983, a civil war broke out in Sri Lanka between Hindu Tamil Tigers and the predominantly Buddhist Sinhalese government. Thousands of Sri Lankans sought refuge in the West.

CANADA'S RESPONSE

Canada made it easier for some to secure permanent residency, but imposed visa requirements on all Sri Lankans wishing to visit the country. This made it harder for most Sri Lankans to enter Canada. From 1989 to 2004, over 37,000 Sri Lankans arrived in Canada.

The civil war ended in May 2009.

Canada's population in 1983 was 25,366,969 (Statistics Canada).

"I was a refugee - my parents brought me to Canada. We were escaping Sri Lanka after our home was looted and set ablaze during the 1983 Black July riots" Radheyan Simonpillai

Radheyan Simonpillai, "I am Tamil," *NOW Magazine*, 4 May 2016. <https://nowtoronto.com/news/i-am-tamil-in-toronto/>

SOMALIS

1989 - 1997



Somali refugee in Hartisheik camp, Jijiga region, Ethiopia. May 01, 1998. © UNHCR/Liba Taylor

CONTEXT	CANADA'S RESPONSE
<p>Following widespread droughts in the 1970s, Somalia was ravaged by famine. In 1986, a civil war erupted in Somalia which forced the UN and various international aid agencies to withdraw from the country.</p> <p>Thousands of Somalis fled their homeland in search of refuge.</p>	<p>In 1989, the acceptance rate for Somali refugee claimants in Canada was 95 percent. This led to an expedited process a year later.</p> <p>In 1991 and 1993, Somalia was the largest source of refugee claimants in Canada. Between 1990 and 1997, over 20,000 Somali refugees entered Canada.</p> <p>Canada's population in 1989 was 27,281,795 (Statistics Canada).</p>

"I remember that everyone would sleep with fear of not knowing what would happen tomorrow to you, your family, and not having protection or anywhere where you could receive safe haven." Sharmarke Mohamed

Fram Dinshaw, "No country for young men? One refugee's story of getting to Canada," *National Observer*, 1 December 2015.
<https://www.nationalobserver.com/2015/12/01/no-country-young-men-one-refugees-story-getting-canada>

RWANDANS

1991 - 1997



Photographs of Genocide Victims at the Genocide Memorial Centre, Kigali, Rwanda. Adam Jones, Ph.D. Wikimedia Commons

CONTEXT

In 1959, the first instance of organized persecution and killing of the Tutsi took place. Hundreds of thousands ended up in exile, while those who stayed remained targets. Civil war broke out in 1990.

In April 1994, Rwandan authorities launched a pre-planned genocide against the Tutsi. Over a 100-day period, well-organized networks of militias, as well as ordinary citizens, murdered their neighbours. Some estimates put the number of victims as high as one million.

CANADA'S RESPONSE

As a result of the genocide, an estimated 2.3 million Rwandans fled their country, most of whom went to neighbouring countries.

Between 1991 and 2016, just over 4,200 Rwandans came to Canada as refugees.

Canada's population in 1991 was 28,031,394 (Statistics Canada).

"My mom came to the school and said, "Pack your suitcase. Make it ready; in case you see that you're next to be killed. Just grab your suitcase and run...I remember the day I felt it was my last day to react. I said this is it, I'm leaving. So I left the dormitory immediately without picking up the suitcase my mom told me to carry with me" Beatha Kayitesi
Global News, "From Fear to Freedom," 5 April 2014, 16 x 9, <https://globalnews.ca/news/1250328/shedding-light-on-a-lesser-known-chapter-of-the-rwanda-genocide/>

BOSNIANS

1992 - 1999



Refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina in Split, Croatia, May 1992. © UNHCR/Anneliese Hollmann

CONTEXT

In 1991 and 1992, Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina declared their independence from Yugoslavia, leaving only Serbia and Montenegro. The ethnic Serb minority clashed with the existing Croat and Muslim populations, ultimately leading to a bloody civil war.

By 1994, over 320,000 Bosnians had become refugees.

CANADA'S RESPONSE

Following a brokered ceasefire with Western support, in 1995, Canada deployed a peacekeeping force to the region under the support of the UN.

Between 1992 and 1999, approximately 25,300 Bosnian refugees entered Canada, with the majority arriving in 1994 and 1995.

Canada's population in 1992 was 28,366,737 (Statistics Canada).

"Division was complete—police did not exist, government didn't exist, nothing, nothing, nothing. We smelled the war in the air...And, and I left—managed to leave, but actually I still had the hope that I'm going to come back... it's still unbelievable, but that's why I didn't even take my passport with me. Of course I'm going to come back. I never came back. I'm in Canada."
Mooshie Zahirovich

Arrived from Serbia, February 28 1994. Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 Oral History Collection [14.03.06YMZ].

SYRIANS

2015 - PRESENT



The first Syrian refugee family to disembark at Toronto Pearson International Airport, December 11, 2015.
Ken Allan CBSA-ASFC

CONTEXT	CANADA'S RESPONSE
<p>During a pro-democracy protest, government security forces opened fire on demonstrators, killing several people. Nationwide protests ensued, demanding President Assad's resignation. Violence escalated into civil war, and by August 2015, an estimated 250,000 people had been killed and 11 million had fled their homes.</p>	<p>By January 2017, 40,081 Syrians refugees had been permanently resettled in Canada. As a specific resettlement scheme, the Syrian movement represents the largest group of refugee arrivals to enter Canada since the movement of Southeast Asian "boat people" to Canada.</p> <p>Canada's population in 2015 was 35,832,500 (Statistics Canada).</p>

"My family had one side happy, the other side not happy. Do you understand what I mean? When you leave everything you've done in your life and you go to another land, you are starting from zero. It is hard." Ilia Alaji
 Michael Friscolanti and Aaron Hutchins, "The First Flight," *Maclean's*, 29 November 2016. <http://www.macleans.ca/an-oral-history-of-the-first-flight-of-syrian-refugees-to-canada/>

Important Moment

1951: United Nations Convention

In 1951, a United Nations conference at Geneva dealing with the millions of European refugees from the Second World War created a definition of refugee. "The Convention Definition," with amendments, still guides refugee decisions and policy all over the world.

The United Nations drafted the Convention in 1951, with 12 nations signing on. Nations signing were Austria, Belgium, Colombia, Denmark, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and Liechtenstein, United Kingdom and Yugoslavia. Canada did not sign the convention. The Canadian government was concerned over the ability to deport refugees who were deemed undesirable, especially those who might threaten security.

Important Moment

1979: Atkey's Argument

Canada's immigration minister in 1979, Ron Atkey, faced resistance to welcoming more refugees in an era of high unemployment. He was sent a copy of the book *None is Too Many*, about Canada's reluctance to admit Jews fleeing Nazi persecution in the 1930s. Atkey used the deadly consequence of this past decision to convince the federal cabinet to increase Canada's refugee target from 8,000 to 55,000.

Important Moment

1979: The Creation of Private Sponsorship

In 1979, Canada was the first country to develop a permanent private sponsorship program for refugees. Groups as diverse as churches, book clubs and sports teams could now work together to personally resettle refugees by providing financial and other support for at least one year after their arrival. It is now the most advanced in the world, and is regarded as a model for other countries.

Important Moment

1990: Indigenous Refugees

Canada became the first country to recognize an Indigenous man from Brazil as a refugee due to repression of Indigenous Peoples in Brazil. This irony was not lost on some Indigenous leaders in Canada, who noted that colonialism and displacement has made many Indigenous People in Canada feel like refugees in their own country.

Important Moment

1993: LGBTQ Refugees

Canada became the first country to allow women to make refugee claims based on gender-related persecution. In the same year, a Canadian Supreme Court decision specified that a person could claim persecution due to their sexual orientation, making Canada a leader in LGBTQ refugees. Since then, other countries have followed Canada's example in both categories.

Important Moment

1985: The Creation of the Immigration Refugee Board

In 1985, a decision by Canada's Supreme Court declared that refugee claimants in Canada were covered by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, meaning they have the same rights as Canadians to access the courts. This led to the creation of the Immigration Refugee Board in 1989, an independent tribunal which decides on individual refugee claims.

Important Moment

1969: Canada signs the Convention

On June 4th 1969, 18 years after it was adopted by the United Nations, Canada signed the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

In signing the convention, Canada officially recognized its obligations towards refugees. From this point forward, protecting refugees was no longer simply a humanitarian gesture, but a legal requirement.